Los Alamos reduces water use by 26 percent in 2014

March 16, 2015

Use of reclaimed water fuels decrease

LOS ALAMOS, N.M., March 16, 2015—Los Alamos National Laboratory decreased its water usage by 26 percent in 2014, with about one-third of the reduction attributable to using reclaimed water to cool a supercomputing center.

“Our goal during 2014 was to use only re-purposed water to support our mission at the Strategic Computing Complex (SCC), and we achieved that goal,” said Cheryl Cabbil, associate director of Nuclear and High Hazard Operations, which administers the Sanitary Effluent Reclamation Facility (SERF).

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The reclamation facility contributed more than 27 million gallons of re-purposed water to the SCC, a secured supercomputing facility that supports the Laboratory's national security mission and is one of the institution's larger water users.

"Using reclaimed water from SERF substantially decreased our water usage, supporting our overall mission," Cabbil said.

SERF collects industrial wastewater and treats it for reuse. A video that explains how SERF works is available online.

In addition to the strategic water reuse program at SERF, the Laboratory reduced water use in 2014 by focusing conservation efforts on areas that use the most water, repairing leaks identified in routine surveys and upgrading to water-conserving fixtures.

"Part of our role as good stewards of the environment is to conserve finite resources such as water whenever possible," said Michael Brandt, associate director of Environment, Safety and Health at the Laboratory. "Conserving water while achieving our mission is a great example of how we are pursuing long-term environmental sustainability."