

# Golf course reservoir raises water concerns

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Keeping golf courses green can be a draw on a precious commodity during the summer months — and one that will be more costly this year with higher water prices.

That's why the Campbell County Public Works Department has initiated discussions about how to fill a reservoir at Bell Nob Golf Course to be used for irrigation during the summer.

Public Works Director Kevin King said the reservoir now doesn't carry the capacity to get the golf course through the summer months and that City of Gillette water prices will be exorbitant during the peak season.

While the increase in prices impacts the county coffers, the need for water at Bell Nob and other big users such as Campbell County School District, Cam-plex, city parks and county parks impacts the city's water consumption. Last summer, the large users accounted for 17 percent of the water consumption, and in 2006, they accounted for 25 percent of the consumption.

The county has a few options on how to get more water for Bell Nob, King said. They include:

- NEW WELLS: Drill new wells to supplement the existing wells.
- RE-DRILL EXISTING WELLS: Utilizing reverse circulation drilling techniques, the county could re-drill its existing wells to meet the capacity of the reservoir. The city has used the process on two of its wells to get a capacity of 300 gallons per minute.

But county commissioners balked at the cost of re-drilling the wells — estimated at \$1.1 million a piece — but did see potential in creating a joint venture with the city to add the water from the wells to the city's existing system when the reservoir is full.

The Wyoming Water Development Commission and the city are in the process of producing a master plan for a regional water system and studying whether it would be possible to connect outlying subdivision, Rozet and Moorcroft to the system. Those discussions could be a factor in what eventually will happen at Bell Nob, commissioners said.

The Gillette-Campbell County Airport was recently turned down for a request to the water development commission to drill a well for a water load-out facility at the airport, Commissioner Craig Mader said.

Both Mader and King expect there will be much competition at the state for money for the water project at Bell Nob.

"It should be a fun process," King said in a tone that didn't sound very fun.