

BUSINESS DAILY

✎ CORPORATE NEWS

Turkana gets first drops of water from vast aquifer

✎ IN SUMMARY

- Four boreholes have been sunk at Napuu area, one of the regions where a huge underground water reserve was discovered last year.
- The water from the first batch of bore holes will be supplied to Lodwar town beginning next month.
- Plans are already under way to irrigate fifteen thousand acres of land in Lodwar with water from the reserve.

Turkana County is set to benefit from its vast aquifer following successful drilling of boreholes and installation of pumps, easing water scarcity and making the resource affordable in the drought stricken region.

Four boreholes have been sunk at Napuu area, one of the regions where a huge underground water reserve was discovered last year.

READ: Contractor begins drilling for Turkana water <URL: <http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/-/539546/2146186/-/159v73r/-/index.html>>

This will lower the cost of water from the current price of Sh30 per 20 litre jerrican that residents are paying vendors to Sh2.

Hydrologists project that the 250 billion cubic metres of water discovered in September last year on the foot of Mt Mogila in Lotikipi, along the Kenya-South Sudan border, could meet Kenya's water needs for 70 years.

The Rift Valley Water Service Board (RVWSB), the overseer of the project, said one of the boreholes has been fitted with solar panels for power.

“We have managed to get more than enough water in the four boreholes and currently we are waiting for instructions from engineers on the right size of the water pump to be fitted on the remaining boreholes,” said Japheth Mutai, executive officer at RVWSB.

The water from the first batch of bore holes will be supplied to Lodwar town beginning next month.

A scientist who led the discovery of the aquifers has called for caution in the drilling of wells, saying overexploitation could lead to depletion.

READ: Scientist calls for caution in using Turkana aquifers <URL: <http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/Gachet-Turkana-aquifers/-/539546/1990456/-/7irsdjz/-/index.html>>

“There is a need to ensure a balance between the reserves and the amount of water that is being recharged. It is just like your bank account — if you take out more money than you have then you will become bankrupt,” Radar Technologies International president Alain Gachet said when the water was discovered.

Director of water John Nyaoro said the ministry is targeting to use 70 per cent of the 3.4 billion cubic meters that is estimated to be the annual recharge of the underground water.

“We want as much as we can to try and use the recharge while maintaining the water that has been there,” he said.

Water coming from the recharge alone is more than the three billion cubic metres that the entire country uses annually.

Plans are already under way to irrigate fifteen thousand acres of land in Lodwar with water from the reserve.

The Water Resources Management Authority has embarked on the second phase of locating more aquifers in Turkana and Marsabit regions.

gandae@ke.nationmedia.com