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Abstracts of the presentations given on Thursday, 26 July 2007, in Session 20 of the UCOWR Conference.

Recommended Citation
Rogers, Callie S., "Identifying Most Economic Sources of Potable Water-Case Study in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas" (2007). *2007*. Paper 5.
http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/ucowrconfs_2007/5

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Indentifying Most Economic Sources of Potable Water-Case Study in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas

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ABSTRACT

Conventional municipal water treatment plants are the norm for producing potable water for large metropolitan areas. Rapidly growing urban populations, competing demands for water, an imperfect water market, and uncertainty of future water supplies contribute to high interests in alternative sources of municipal water. Desalination plants using either brackish groundwater or seawater as the source are viewed as among the viable alternatives in the Texas Rio Grande Valley. Economic analysis and capital budgeting methods are utilized to analyze the costs of desalinated water relative to conventionally-treated surface water originating from the Rio Grande. Sensitivity analyses are used to evaluate alternative prices for water rights associated with sourcing water for conventional municipal treatment plants.

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