2009

The WAVE: Water Vapor Condenser

Shawna Brierly  
*Worcester Polytechnic Institute*

Bianca Castagna  
*Worcester Polytechnic Institute*

Ryan Kimmel  
*Worcester Polytechnic Institute*

Daniel Miller  
*Worcester Polytechnic Institute*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/gps-posters](http://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/gps-posters)

Part of the *Architecture Commons, Arts and Humanities Commons, Business Commons, Education Commons, Engineering Commons, Life Sciences Commons, Medicine and Health Sciences Commons, and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons*

Recommended Citation

Brierly, Shawna; Castagna, Bianca; Kimmel, Ryan; and Miller, Daniel, "The WAVE: Water Vapor Condenser" (2009). *Great Problems Seminar Posters (All Posters, All Years)*. 150.

[http://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/gps-posters/150](http://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/gps-posters/150)

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Problems Seminar at DigitalCommons@WPI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Problems Seminar Posters (All Posters, All Years) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@WPI. For more information, please contact akgold@wpi.edu.
The WAVE – Water Vapor Condenser
Shawna Brierly (Civil), Bianca Castagna (Environmental), Ryan Kimmel (ECE), Dan Miller (RBE)
Advisor: Professor Richard Sisson (Mechanical Engineering)

Abstract

The Earth is almost completely covered in water, but only 0.007% is accessible drinking water. Sadly, in many of the world’s developing countries, there is a serious scarcity of clean drinking water. Many of their possible sources have become contaminated due to poor sanitation throughout the developing world and is one of the main causes of this scarcity.

In order to address these water shortages, our group has designed two water vapor condenser models, the “Refrigerator Style Model” (Model A) and the “Metal Nalgene Bottle Model” (Model B), with Model B being the most feasible. Both of our designs condense water vapor from the air and produce clean potable water. However, each design has its own characteristics, and in order to compare them, we used a decision matrix. These designs are still in the developing stages, and require extensive prototyping and analysis in order to optimize water production. Our target areas are where there is both a high demand for water, and the air is humid for most of the year.

Methods/Process- Model A

The Refrigerator Style Model

This design works just like the refrigerator in your average kitchen. It begins by pressurizing a refrigerant to the point where it becomes a liquid, cooling it with the copper cooling fins, then allowing it to expand into a gas, cooling it even further. The coolant then passes it through a series of glass tubes cooling the surface of the tubes, where water then condenses.

The water then drips off of the tubes and through a charcoal filter, where it is then stored for later consumption.

Although we estimated that this model would produce more water than Model B, it would be much bulkier, harder to repair require significantly more electricity, and much more costly.

Methods/Process- Model B

The Metal Nalgene Bottle Model

Unlike the first design, a Peltier cooler would be attached directly to the inside of a large piece of metal with maximized surface area (left). The cold metal would condense water out of the air which would then drip down, pass through a charcoal filter and be collected into a large storage container.

The Peltier cooler (Right) operates on a standard 12 volts, but can work at almost any voltage. When powered, the Peltier cooler transfers all of the heat from one side of the plate to the other, leaving one side hot and the other cold. We plan to cool the heated side with a large copper heatsink, which will cool the cold side even further.

Project Objectives

• Goal: To provide potable water in an effective, inexpensive, maintainable way
• Where: Villages which do not have safe water readily available but are humid for most of the year (see map left)
• How: Design a machine that will condense, filter and store water extracted from the air (See Methods/Process panels)
• Power Source: Solar panels as our primary energy source because they are easily scalable and low maintenance

Decision Matrix

Our team implemented a decision matrix in order to compare the two models. A decision matrix is a chart that rates a certain devices or processes in a number of categories in order to compare qualitative data in a quantitative manner.

For our matrix, we chose water production, complexity, power consumption and cost as our categories. We found that they best summarized our models, and easily expressed their strengths and weaknesses. You can see an example chart below.

Conclusions/Recommendations

• Final Design - Model B
• Further analysis needed- Prototypes and water production measurement
• Speculative Numbering to be done once prototypes are made
• Solar efficiency analysis

Acknowledgments

Thanks to those who helped us on our project:
Diran Apelian, Richard Sisson, James D. Van de Ven, Lon Stuebinger, and Karin Numan

Background

• 1 in 6 people do not have access to clean water
• Only .007% of the Earth’s supply of water is available for consumption
• Humans cannot survive for more than one week without water
• Why is there a lack of potable water in the developing world?
• Overcrowding
• Improper disposal of waste
• Lack of funds to invest in water distribution (ie. pumps, filters, pipes etc.)
• Contaminated sources from animals
• Effects of thirst:
  • Disease (i.e. Malnutrition, cholera, typhoid, hepatitis A)
  • Inhibits education, success in business, formation of relationships.
  • Neck and back problems due to transportation of large amounts of water.
  • Death

Decision Matrix

Global Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Water Production</th>
<th>Complexity</th>
<th>Power Consumption</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kg/day</td>
<td></td>
<td>kWh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model A</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>5.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model B</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>7.50</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>7.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- In No Way
- In High Probability
- On Power Bag
- In Very Likely
- In Risk

Sources