

Geothermal History

Geothermal energy has been around since the dinosaurs walked the earth. But we only started using it in the 1900's. Deep drilling gave us more power. In 1977 scientists made the first hot dry rock reservoir in New Mexico at Fenton Hill. In northern California the first power plant was made in 1980.

The whole world made a high level of 1000 megawatts with geothermal power in the 1980's. The world's first magma exploratory well was in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in 1991. In 1995 the world wide geothermal went from 1,000 megawatts to 6,000 megawatts in about one year.

How it works

A geothermal power plant pumps cold water down the long tube (look at the picture). Then it makes dry steam, which goes up the shorter tube into the power plant really fast. Then it goes through a tight space that shoots out the steam and hits a turbine, which spins and makes electricity. The electricity goes to the power lines.

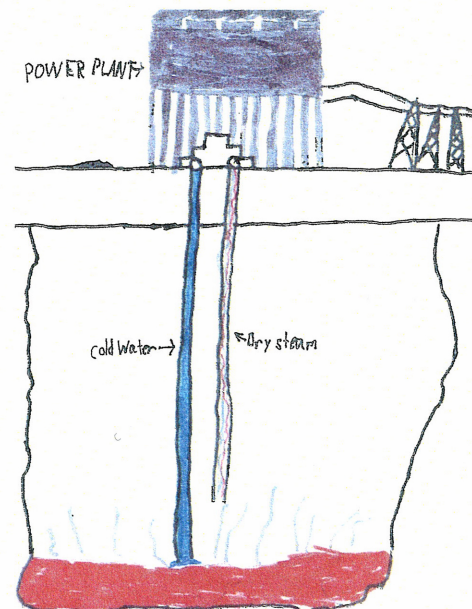
The steam then goes to a condenser then it turns back into water, but it doesn't turn back in to water like presto, it takes time. Then the water is pumped back down and it all happens again.

Advantages

1. Geothermal energy does not produce any pollution and does not contribute to the Greenhouse Effect
2. The power stations do not take up much space, so there is not much impact on the environment
3. No fuels are needed

Disadvantages

1. The big problem is that there are not many places that you can build geothermal power plants. You need a lot of hot rock of the suitable type at depths we can drill down to.
2. Sometimes geothermal power plants run out of steam
3. Hazardous gases and minerals may come up from the ground



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