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Water prospecting on the Moon

By [Physics Today](#) on September 30, 2009 6:07 PM | [No Comments](#) | [No TrackBacks](#)

[Space.com](#): NASA has long planned to mine water on the moon to supply human colonies and future space exploration. Now the discovery of small amounts of water across much of the lunar surface has shifted that vision into fast-forward, with the US space agency pursuing several promising technologies.

A hydrogen reduction plant and lunar rover prospectors have already passed field tests on Hawaii's volcanic soil, and more radical microwave technology is being evaluated.

"You can make back costs fairly quickly [within a year] compared to the launch costs of just throwing tanks of water and oxygen at the moon," said Gerald Sanders, manager of NASA's [In-Situ Resource Utilization Project](#).

Still, Sanders cautioned that there are big unknowns—how much water the moon holds, where it is, and how deep will they have to excavate to get to it.

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