

## DEVICE AND METHOD FOR DYNAMIC PROCESSING IN WATER PURIFICATION

**[0001]** Conventional municipal water treatment (MWT) includes multi-stage filtration and sequential process steps for coagulation, flocculation, and sedimentation. Typically, a minimum of two stages of filtration must include coarse 2-3 mm mesh filters at the inlet and 20-40 $\mu$ m multi-media filters for finishing although many utilities have more intermediate filtration steps. The hydraulic retention time (fluid residence time) in the combined coagulation-flocculation-sedimentation process can be 5-10 hours long, depending on the quality of the source water.

**[0002]** With reference now to Figure 1, a conventional water treatment facility is illustrated. This, of course, is merely an exemplary system. As shown, a system 10 includes a source 12 of any of a variety of types of fluid such as surface water, ground water, waste water, brackish water, seawater ... etc. This water is fed to a screen filter 14 -- which is typically operative to filter out particles in the 1 mm to 3 mm range. After these relatively large particles are removed, a pH adjustment is made to the water and potassium permanganate ( $\text{KMnO}_4$ ) is added to the supply in a carbon reactor/mixer 16. This chemical is typically added for taste and odor control. Other substitutes may include ozone and other oxidizing agents. Next, chlorine is added to the supply and mixed in a mixer 18. Flash mixing wherein coagulants (e.g., Alum,  $\text{FeCl}_3$ , ACH, etc.) are added is then performed in a flash mixer 20. Flocculants -- made of long chain polymers with a high molecular weight -- are added at a flocculation stage and mixed in a slow mixer 22. The supply is then sent to a sedimentation tank 22 where particles settle out of the effluent as a result of gravitational forces. The flow from the sedimentation tank is then provided to a multimedia filter 26 which operates to remove remaining small particles. The output of the system

can then be used for a variety of purposes. In one form, chlorine is added to the output. The multimedia filter is frequently backwashed, and the backwash is optionally fed back to the water source. In this backwash, or feedback, path, a dewatering stage 28 may be provided whereby water is provided back to the source and sludge is removed.

**[0003]** As noted above, the water purification process described requires a substantial amount of time. With reference now to Figure 2, it is seen from an example flow 50 that the basic steps include rapid mix (including coagulation), flocculation, sedimentation, and filtration. As shown, the rapid mix stage 52 takes 30 seconds to 2 minutes to complete. The flocculation stage 54 requires 20 to 45 minutes of processing time. Sedimentation 56, or any other alternative solid removal process, typically requires at least 1 to 4 hours (and possibly up to 10 hours) of processing. Last, filtration 58 also requires a definitive amount of time. The extended time periods are not only a problem for municipal-type purification systems but also water purification systems that are used in other environments, such as a lab environment.

**[0004]** Therefore, it would be desirable to have available an alternative water treatment system that can more efficiently and effectively purify water.

**[0005]** In one aspect of the presently described embodiments, the system comprises an inlet to receive water from a source, a filter stage operative to filter first particles, a mixing stage operative to receive and coagulate the filtered water, a spiral stage operative to receive the coagulated water, treat with flocculant, and separate second particles from the water, a second filter stage operative to filter third particles from the water; and, an outlet.

**[0006]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the first filter stage is a screen filter.

**[0007]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the spiral stage is incorporated in a single spiral device.

**[0008]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the mixing stage is incorporated in a single spiral device.

**[0009]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the mixing stage is incorporated in a flash mixer.

**[0010]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the spiral stage is incorporated in a first spiral device to receive the coagulated water and treat with flocculant and a second spiral device to separate second particles from the water.

**[0011]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the second filter stage is a filter device.

**[0012]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the system further comprises a feedback path to the source.

**[0013]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the feedback path includes a spiral stage for dewatering.

**[0014]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the first particles are approximately 1-3 mm in diameter.

**[0015]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the second particles are approximately 5  $\mu\text{m}$  or larger in diameter.

**[0016]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the third particles are 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  or larger in diameter.

**[0017]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the method comprises receiving water from a source, filtering the water to remove first particles, flash mixing the filtered water with chlorine and coagulant, slow mixing output of the first spiral stage with flocculant in a spiral stage, separating second particles in the spiral stage, and, filtering the output of the spiral stage to remove third particles.

**[0018]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the filtering of the water to remove first particles comprises passing the water through a screen.

**[0019]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the slow mixing and separating are accomplished in a single separation device.

**[0020]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the filtering of the output of the spiral stage comprises passing the output through a filter having multiple media or membrane filters.

**[0021]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the method further comprises dewatering in a feedback path.

**[0022]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the first particles are approximately 1-3 mm in diameter.

**[0023]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the second particles are approximately 5  $\mu\text{m}$  or larger in diameter.

**[0024]** In another aspect of the presently described embodiments, the third particles are 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  or larger in diameter.

**[0025]** Figure 1 is a schematic diagram showing a conventional water treatment.

**[0026]** Figure 2 is a typical timing diagram for stages of coagulation, flocculation, and sedimentation in a conventional water treatment system.

**[0027]** Figures 3(a) and 3(b) illustrate systems according to the presently described embodiments.

**[0028]** Figures 4(a)-(c) illustrate an example of a spiral device designed for 1 $\mu\text{m}$  particle cut-off and 100L/min throughput.

**[0029]** Figure 5 illustrates another embodiment;

**[0030]** Figures 6(a) and 6(b) illustrate still another embodiment;

**[0031]** Figures 7(a) and 7(b) show a Coulter counter quantification of particle extraction.

**[0032]** Figure 8 is a chart showing a relation for particle size to NTU reading.

**[0033]** Figure 9 is a chart showing typical cost of chemicals for coagulation and flocculation.

**[0034]** Figures 10(a) and 10(b) show coagulation and sedimentation times and savings calculation.

**[0035]** Figure 11 illustrates an experimental setup for jar test experiments.

**[0036]** Figure 12 shows turbidity as function of time for a jar tests with standard (sample B) and step-wise (sample A) coagulant addition.

**[0037]** Figure 13 is a comparison of the measured turbidity data for two different jar tests to a diffusion driven aggregation model.

**[0038]** Figures 14(a) and 14(b) show NTU data for a typical jar test experiment. The blue data shows the standard jar test results, the pink curve the modified jar test results. The inset shows the turbidity measurements during the first 30 minutes.

**[0039]** Figure 15 shows fits of test data to Eqn. (7). Black: standard jar test; red: modified jar test; the solid line is the fit to the data points.

**[0040]** The presently described embodiments represent a transformational approach to water treatment that incorporates membrane-free filtration with dynamic processing of the fluid to significantly reduce treatment times, chemical cost, land use, and operational overhead. The approach provides hybrid capabilities of filtration together with chemical treatment as the water is transported through various spiral stages.

**[0041]** Features of the system include, but are not limited to, the following:

**[0042]** 1) Use of a spiral particle extraction capability as a front-end to lighten the TSS (total suspended solids) loading on the system. The

flash mixing at the front-end of the process also enhances chemical kinetics and results in a more complete reaction;

**[0043]** 2) Use of a dynamic transport capability in narrow flow channels where the high rate of shear from rapid parabolic flow and coagulants results in seed particles of uniform size which are ideal for accelerated agglomeration kinetics;

**[0044]** 3) Allowance for removal of pin floccs (particle size at transition point between the end of coagulation and start of flocculation) as small as 5 $\mu$ m by the spiral device rather than rely on the conventional practice of allowing them to agglomerate to hundreds of microns in size before settling out in the sedimentation basin. This process also results in accelerated agglomeration;

**[0045]** 4) Allow for the entire or near elimination of the flocculation and sedimentation steps together with all the attendant chemicals. This will also allow for reduced land use and maintenance labor; and,

**[0046]** 5) Allow for gradual dosage of chemicals.

**[0047]** In this regard, Figs. 3(a) and (b) show schematics of example water treatment plants according to the presently described embodiments. These embodiments illustrate replacing selected components of the conventional system with components shown within the inscribed ellipse of Figure 3(a). Elimination of, for example, the flocculation step results in a reduced footprint and a reduced use of chemicals.

**[0048]** As shown in Fig. 3(a), a system 100 is used to process water from a water source 102. The system includes a screen filter 104 operative to remove relatively large particles from the supply. These particles are typically in the range of 1 mm to 3 mm. Other larger particles and objects (e.g., fish, trash, etc.) are also filtered out through this screen. An optional pH adjustment may be made to the fluid as it proceeds through the system.

**[0049]** The system 100 further includes a first stage 106, a second spiral stage 108 and a third spiral stage 110. It is to be appreciated that the spiral stages may be incorporated within a single spiral separator device. As an alternative, any one of the spiral stages may be implemented in its own unique spiral separator device. In any case, the first stage 106 is a flash mixing stage. It should be understood that this stage may take the form of a flash mixer, a turbulent mixer or another spiral mixing stage. If a spiral mixing stage is used here, a sufficient amount of turbulence is introduced into the spiral stage to achieve sufficient mixing. The second spiral stage 108 is a spiral slow mixing stage. And, the third spiral stage is a spiral separating stage. In the third stage, particles of 5µm or larger are typically separated from the fluid.

**[0050]** A filter 112 is also provided to the system. The filter 112 may take a variety of forms. However, in one form, it comprises multiple filtering media or membrane filters to, for example, conform to EPA mandates for physical barriers. The particles that are filtered by the filter device 112 are typically in the 0.5 µm or larger range. Also shown in the system 100 is an optional spiral stage 114 that provides for dewatering. In this stage, the spiral dewatering device receives backwash fluid from the filter 112 and separates sludge from water which is provided back to the water source.

**[0051]** In operation, the system 100 receives water from the source 102 which may include ground, surface, brackish, sea or waste water. This water is filtered through the screen filter 104 to remove a first group of particles in the noted range. The water supply is then flash mixed in stage 106 along with the potassium permanganate, coagulant, and chlorine. Next, flocculant is slow mixed into the supply in spiral slow mixing stage 108. In the third spiral stage 110, another group of particles is separated out from the supply. As noted, these particles are

typically in the 5  $\mu\text{m}$  or larger range. Then, the filter 112 filters out a third group of particles that are generally smaller and are in the range of 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$  or larger. The output is then transmitted on for any of a variety of uses.

**[0052]** It should also be understood that the filter 112 may be subjected to a backwashing process which will provide fluid to an optional spiral dewatering stage 114 to, again, separate sludge from water that is provided back to the water source.

**[0053]** With reference now to Figure 3(b), another embodiment is illustrated that uses a flash mixer and a single spiral device to achieve desired separation. As shown, a system 101 includes screen filter 104 operative to filter out relatively large particles from the supply (e.g., particles/objects in the 1mm to 3 mm range or larger). Also shown is a flash mixer 105 operative to flash mix coagulant and other suitable chemicals into the supply. Turbulent mixing may be achieved in the flash mixer 105 or in a separate device. A spiral device 109 is shown. The spiral device 109 includes an inlet 107 and outlets 111 and 113. The spiral device 109 effectively replaces the flocculation and sedimentation stage of conventional systems and is designed to achieve substantially similar objectives through the use of spiral separation. Flocculant may be added at this stage as well.

**[0054]** The outlet 111 connects to a waste stream 115 which, as shown, includes particles greater than 1-5 micrometers in size. Also shown is an optional recirculation path 117 that may have disposed therein a reduced coagulation tank 119. The recirculation path connects with the inlet 107 of the device 109. The outlet 113 connects to a filter 112, which operates and is configured as described above in connection with Figure 3(a).

**[0055]** An example of spiral wound prototype of a spiral device is shown in Figure 4(a). The device is designed for 100L/min throughput.

As shown, Fig. 4(a) illustrates a spiral device 200 that includes an inlet 202 and a body portion 204 that comprises at least one spiral channel that connects to an outlet 206. The outlet 206 comprises a split channel egress -- a single channel egress 205 for effluent and a single channel egress 207 for concentrate. As shown in Fig. 4(b), the body 204 of the spiral device may be comprised of a single spirally wound channel 210. As an alternative, Fig. 4(c) shows an embodiment wherein the body 204 is divided into eight parallel channels 210, 212, 214, 216, 218, 220, 222, and 224. It is to be understood that other numbers of parallel channels are possible depending on desired throughput, manufacturing option, and fabrication cost.

**[0056]** The spiral device 200 may be structured so that a single spiral stage, as noted above, or multiple contemplated spirals stages are incorporated therein. Of course, the objectives of flash mixing, slow mixing and separating are taken into account in the design of each of the stages. For example, the channel width and flow velocity of each of the stages is taken into consideration in the spiral device implementation. In this regard, it should also be understood that the spiral device shown is merely an example. Any similar spiral device may be implemented to achieve the objectives of the presently described embodiments. For example, spiral devices may be used. It should be appreciated that any suitable material may be used to implement the spiral devices of the contemplated system.

**[0057]** Further, the dimensions of the spiral channel may vary depending on the implementation. In one form, however, the diameter of the spiral device is 12 inches and the height may vary from 1 inch to 16 inches. The dimensions may have an impact on pressure and output power of the system. Likewise, dimensions of the actual channels may impact pressure and power output. Generally, more pressure (which can be a result of a narrow channel) will result in more power.

**[0058]** Also, the device may be cascaded and/or placed in parallel to achieve greater control of the output and/or greater throughput through the system. As a mere simple example used for explanatory purposes, with reference now to Figure 5, a further embodiment to the presently described embodiments is shown. In this embodiment, a purification system 500 includes a two-stage spiral separation system to isolate particles of different sizes. In the example system shown, the particles are isolated in a 1 to 10 micrometer range. As shown, the system includes an input water source 502 connecting to a spiral separator 504 having an inlet 506, as well as a first outlet 508 and a second outlet 510. The second outlet 510 is connected to a second spiral separator 520 by way of an inlet 522. The spiral separator 520 includes a first outlet 524 and a second outlet 526 as shown.

**[0059]** In operation, the system 500 with the cascaded spiral stages facilitates a first separation of particles between those of greater than 10 micrometers being output from the first spiral separator in a waste stream and particles less than 10 micrometers being input to the second spiral separator 520 for further processing. The second spiral separator then separates particles greater than 1 micrometer and outputs fluid within which those particles reside by way of outlet 524. The remaining fluid or effluent is output through outlet 526. In this manner, the system 500 is able to isolate particles between 1 and 10 micrometers for various sampling processing. This concept can be extended by continued cascading of spiral structures with smaller size cut-offs to achieve fractionation of particles with decreasing size ranges.

**[0060]** With reference to Figures 6(a) and 6(b), an example parallel system is shown. The embodiment of Figure 6(a) shows a spiral device 700 that is a spiral wound device. Other types of spiral devices may also be used—this is simply an example. This device 700 includes a spirally wound body 704 having inlet 706, a first outlet 708 and a second

outlet 710. The device 700, as shown in Figure 6(b), may be disposed in a system wherein a plurality of devices 700 are connected in parallel to a water inlet main 720 from a fluid manifold. Similarly, the first outlet lines for the devices are connected to a first outlet main 722. The second outlet lines of the devices 700 are connected to a second outlet main 724.

**[0061]** In Figure 7(a), the quantified results using a Coulter Counter are shown where 300 times difference in concentration are seen at the particulate outlet at 99.1% extraction efficiency. The device can be further optimized to improve performance. In Figure 7(b), the single channel 210 having the egress channel 205 and concentrate channel 207 is shown. The particles subject to separation are shown at 211.

**[0062]** Fig. 8 contains data to estimate the cost advantage in adoption of the presently described embodiments. Daily potable water usage in the US in 2000 is 43,300 MGD, representing 10.6% of total water consumption. Total chemical cost for coagulation and flocculation is \$2B to \$4B depending on source waters. The total annual US market for potable water is \$41B. Turbidity in nephelometric units (NTU) is a uniform metric used in the water industry to determine the type and level of water treatment. This is a measure of optical transmission and scattering, and includes effects of particle size, density, and color. By using the spiral device to reduce particles in the effluent stream to sub-micron size, the turbidity is reduced to less than 0.78 NTU (Fig. 8). Using the data in Fig. 9, the reduction in turbidity of 23 NTUs would result in chemical costs of \$2.1B per year ( $43,300 \times 23 \times 5.79 = \$5.766$  M/day @2.104B/year). Figs. 10(a) and 10(b) show the combined coagulation and sedimentation times based on estimated rates of agglomeration assuming that a 30nm particle grows into a 1 $\mu$ m particle in 20 minutes. For a combined coagulation and sedimentation time of less than 4 hours, a suitable particle size is 70 $\mu$ m in 44 minutes.

Assuming that flocculant costs are 50% of the total chemical cost, the savings in eliminating the flocculant step is \$698M for the year. The numbers used here are representative of the chemical cost advantage of the spiral device. Other cost advantages include land cost and associated construction cost.

**[0063]** Dynamic processing of the water during transport through the various spiral stages refers to the use of coagulants and high shear rates to enhance agglomeration kinetics. Proof of concept is demonstrated in water treatment experiments using conventional jar tests with and without a spiral device. Jar tests are a standard lab-scale procedure for optimizing the aggregation/flocculation/sedimentation dosage and performance in the water treatment process. The type and amount of coagulant needed depends on the turbidity and native pH of the sample water. Our sample water had a turbidity level of between 25 to 30 NTU and a native pH value of about 9. The standard jar test is typically performed in three phases: In the first phase the liquid is stirred at a high rate (e. g. 275 to 280rpm) during which the coagulant is added rapidly and the pH level of the sample is adjusted to a value of 9 using 1N NaOH solution. In a second phase stirring is reduced to a moderate level (e.g. 25 to 30rpm) that promotes some mixing, but allows the growth of larger flocs. In the third phase no external stirring takes place while the particles grow even larger and sediment out of solution.

**[0064]** In a first modification of the standard jar test (subsequently referred to as “step wise coagulant addition”) we added the coagulant gradually in small doses, and adjusted the pH level to a value of 9 after each of these additions.

**[0065]** In a second modification (subsequently referred to as “modified jar test”), we pumped the fluid at a fixed flow rate through a spiral channel device during phase 1, and optionally during phase 2. The average shear rate inside the channel is approximately 300/s,

corresponding to a conventional square jar. In comparison, the average shear rates inside the cylindrical glass beaker are 100/s and 10/s for the rapid and slow mixing phases, respectively.

**[0066]** Fig. 11 shows the experimental setup 1000 for the jar tests. The aggregation and flocculation is performed in a 1000 ml glass beaker 1001. Mixing is achieved with a marine turbine rotor and/or stirrer 1012 that can be operated at different speeds. For the modified jar test, an additional peristaltic pump 1003 is used to push the liquid through a spiral channel 1004. The fluid inlet 1005 and outlet 1006 are submerged but well above the bottom to prevent sediment pickup. They are also located diametrically across from each other. In all the experiments turbidity values are recorded at frequent time intervals to monitor the progress of the flocculation. Other test devices in the set-up 1000 are also illustrated but not specifically discussed for ease of explanation.

**[0067]** There are different modes of aggregation: For small particles and/or slow stirring diffusion driven aggregation dominates. For larger particles (approx 1 $\mu$ m and above) and/or higher mixing rates aggregation is shear dominated. In this case the maximum particle size is limited, since the shear force on the particles will increase with the aggregate size and eventually exceed the binding force between the individual (primary) particles. Most of the particle aggregation and flocculation happens while the sample liquid is not agitated or only moderately stirred. In this case, diffusion driven aggregation is the dominant growth mode for particles below a few  $\mu$ m in size. The total particle number decreases over time as

$$N(t) = \frac{N_0}{1+t/\tau}, \quad (1)$$

where  $N_0$  is the particle concentration at the start of the experiment,  $t$  is time, and  $\tau$  is the characteristic time scale of the process. For the diffusion driven (or perikinetic) aggregation  $\tau$  depends on the fluid viscosity, temperature, the

initial concentration of particles, and the type of aggregates that grow (loose and light vs. compact and dense).

**[0068]** Turbidity is a measure that includes both light absorption as well as light scattering off particles. Though it is not an exact measurement of the particle concentration or size distribution inside the sample liquid, we may still expect a similar time dependence of the NTU value, if particle scattering dominates the measured value. To compare measured turbidity vs. time curves with model predictions, we fit the experimental data to the function

$$f(t) = \frac{b_0}{t + b_1} + b_2, \quad (2)$$

which was derived from Eqn. (1) by adding a time offset and a constant background:

$$NTU(t) = \frac{f(N_0)}{1 + 8\pi Dr N_0(t - t_0)} + NTU_{base}, \quad (3)$$

with

$$b_0 = \tau f(N_0); \quad b_1 = \tau - t_0; \quad b_2 = NTU_{base}. \quad (4)$$

#### **[0069] Comparison of standard jar test vs. step-wise coagulant addition**

To start the aggregation process coagulant is added and the pH is adjusted to an alkaline level of about 9. The rate and order of addition of these two substances to the sample liquid matter, as they define the ionic strength of the solution and the surface charge of the colloidal particles. Rapid mixing at this stage is essential, as the coagulant destabilizes the sample solution at the injection point and leads to the formation of very large, but loosely connected, flocs that increase the local viscosity substantially. Sufficient shear will break up this floc network and promote good mixing of all the coagulant within the sample volume. In the standard jar test, all the coagulant is added first at a rapid rate, and then the pH is adjusted with 1N

NaOH solution. Here we compare this standard process with a step-wise procedure, where the coagulant is added in small amounts, followed by an immediate adjustment of the pH level with NaOH solution.

**[0070]** Fig. 12 shows turbidity measurements as a function of time for both of these approaches on a dirt water sample using alum as the coagulant. The coagulant (80mg/L) and NaOH is added at the beginning of a 5 minute rapid mixing phase, which is followed by a 25 minute slow mixing phase before the aggregates are allowed to settle. In the step-wise procedure, the coagulant was added in 8 steps of 10mg, each. The total amount of NaOH solution needed to adjust the final pH to 9 varied between 1.1 ml for the standard to 1.2 ml for the step-wise coagulant addition process, suggesting a slight difference in either the ionic composition of the solution and/or the surface charge on the colloidal particles. From Fig. 10 we see that the step-wise addition of the coagulant followed by an immediate pH adjustment leads to a faster and more complete reduction of the turbidity. Fig. 13 shows a comparison of the experimental data with the model predictions. Eqn. (8) fits the data quite well, suggesting that the perikinetic model is a good description of the aggregation process in both of these jar test experiments. Assuming that we start with the same initial concentration of colloidal particles, and that we keep the temperature in both experiments the same, the faster aggregation rate for the step-wise coagulant process suggests that the colloidal particles form denser aggregates that diffuse faster through the solution. In other words, maintaining the pH close to the native pH of our sample water during coagulant addition helps in the formation of compact seed floccs that consequently lead to faster aggregation.

**[0071] Comparison of standard jar test vs. modified jar test**

Figs. 14(a) and (b) compare turbidity measurements for a standard and a jar test experiment which uses an additional spiral device. In this case, the sample was stirred initially at a high rate. After 3 minutes the stirrer was

turned off. In the modified setup, the liquid was pumped at a flow rate of 333ml/min through a spiral channel with a 3 by 3 mm<sup>2</sup> cross section for the 3 minutes of rapid stirring and for another 27 minutes afterwards. At this flow rate the average shear rate inside the channel is about an order of magnitude larger than the average shear rate inside the cylindrical beaker (during phase 1). For the standard jar test, NTU readings drop immediately after the rapid stirring was stopped (square annotated curve). In the modified jar test, the NTU readings stayed high throughout the 30 minutes while the sample fluid was pumped through the channel (see Fig. 14(b)), but dropped even more rapidly thereafter (circle annotated curve). The substantially higher shear rate within the fluidic channel will cause a more severe break-up of the initial floccs that have formed immediately after the coagulant addition, and only small and very compact floccs (primary particles) will have survived. On the other hand, during the 30 minutes while the sample fluid was circulated through the channel, all the coagulant was well mixed within the sample and rapid aggregation started after the pump was turned off. In the standard jar test, loose floccs that form does not break up even during rapid mix. Because of their large size, they will diffuse more slowly than more compact aggregates and completion of the growth process will be slower.

**[0072]** Fig. 15 shows fits of the experimental data to the perikinetic aggregation model of Eqn. (3). Again, the fits are excellent; suggesting that the turbidity decrease seems to be closely related to the reduction of total particle number in solution. The more rapid drop-off in the turbidity readings at long times is most likely caused by sedimentation, which is not included in the fit model, but is expected to have a larger effect on compact particles than on loose floccs.

**[0073]** In summary, the aggregation dynamics depends crucially on the rate and mode of coagulant addition and pH adjustment. Initial inhomogeneities in the coagulant concentration appear to create large

loose floccs that do not break up even under the applied stirring rate. These loose floccs have a low diffusion rate due to their large size which leads to a slower growth rate. Step-wise coagulant addition with immediate adjustment of the pH of the sample liquid prevents the uncontrolled growth of large, loose floccs and promotes the formation of more compact aggregates that grow faster due to their faster diffusion rates. Moving the sample fluid through a channel at sufficient flow rate (causing sufficiently large shear rate) will prevent aggregate growth and will lead to break-up of the loose floccs that form during coagulant addition. Once the sample liquid is no longer moving through the micro channel, aggregates grow rapidly, suggesting again the formation of compact particles.

**[0074]** The advantages of the presently described embodiments include:

**[0075]** 1) Particulate extraction based on design cut-off down to 1um

**[0076]** 2) Dynamic processing – transport and enhancement of agglomeration kinetics

**[0077]** 3) Replacement of intermediate filtration steps

**[0078]** 4) Front-end to MWT to lighten the TSS loading

**[0079]** 5) Cascaded operation

**[0080]** 6) Parallelizable operation

**[0081]** 7) Scalable, high-throughput, continuous flow

**[0082]** 8) Shorter processing time, smaller footprint, reduce TCO (total cost of ownership)

**[0083]** 9) Elimination of flocculation and sedimentation steps – savings on chemicals, land, and operating incidentals including labor, power, etc.

**[0084]** 10) May be used for other applications in water including but not limited to IC fab reclaim, cooling tower water, MBR (membrane bio

reactor), pre-treatment for RO (reverse osmosis), and waste water reclaim.

## CLAIMS

1. A system for dynamic processing for water purification, the system comprising:

- an inlet to receive water from a source;
  - a filter stage operative to filter first particles;
  - a mixing stage operative to receive and coagulate the filtered water;
  - a spiral stage operative to receive the coagulated water and treat with flocculant and separate second particles from the water;
  - a second filter stage operative to filter third particles from the water;
- and,
- an outlet.

2. The system as set forth in claim 1 further comprising a feedback path to the source.

3. A method for dynamic processing in water purification, the method comprising:

- receiving water from a source;
- filtering the water to remove first particles;
- flash mixing the filtered water with chlorine and coagulant;
- slow mixing output of the flash mixing with flocculant in a spiral stage;
- separating second particles in the spiral stage; and,
- filtering the output of the spiral stage to remove third particles.

4. The method as set forth in claim 3 further comprising dewatering in a feedback path.