

Water Research Institute Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan Monthly Update

June 2008



I know everyone is patiently waiting to find out who has been chosen to participate in the discussion during the regional input meetings. We have made good progress towards finalizing the list and will be sending the information out this month.

Applications

I have explained the nomination and application process in the previous two updates, but would like to get more specific so everyone understands how the participants were chosen. We continue to strive to keep the process as open as possible and if you have any concern about that please let us know. We are always happy to answer questions.

We have spent the last month poring through all the applications we received to catalogue everyone's interests. It has been a monumental task, but we have finished with that part of the process! We based the selections on an individual's interests rather than organizational membership with the intent of ensuring we have a balanced group of discussants.

The next step was to identify interests that were expressed during the local meetings that were not reflected in the applications. This revealed a few interests that were not represented by anyone (a.k.a. gaps). In order to fill those "gaps" we asked the Institute's Water Research Advisory Board (WRAB) to suggest people who could potentially fill those "gaps" (a list of WRAB member organizations is on page 2).

Some of those suggested had not previously been nominated, so we called them to confirm their interests. Although numerous suggestions were made by the WRAB, it was not possible to accommodate them all.

Responsibility of the Water Resource Advisory Board

The WRAB's main purpose is to help guide our research project funding each year. However, during the planning process we have sought their assistance in identifying potential participants to fill the "gaps" discussed above. Other organizations were also asked to suggest "gap fillers." I think there has been some confusion regarding the amount of influence the WRAB has over the selection of

discussants. I would like to reiterate that the initial screening process was conducted by us and the WRAB was asked only to suggest people who could *potentially* fill a "gap." **The final list**, which we have reviewed several times, **will be approved the Water Planning Advisory Board.**

As I mentioned last month the Water Planning Advisory Board is comprised of six individuals that were appointed by the governor to their current positions. They include the Sec. of Environment Miles Tolbert, the Sec. of Agriculture Terry Peach, Jack Keeley, Rudy Herrmann, Mark Nichols and Ford Drummond.

The purpose of the Planning Advisory Board is to ensure there is balance among the selected individuals and that the process is fair. They also have suggested people to help fill "gaps." This Board will approve the final list of discussants.

Once all selected people are notified the list will be published, by region, on our website and I will send an email to let everyone know the list is posted.

Regional Input Meetings

The dates and locations for the 11 regional meetings have been set and a copy of the schedule is available on our website. The meetings begin August 7, in Big Cabin, Mayes County.

I have received several questions about how many of the regional meetings a participant is required to attend. **Selected participants are only required to attend the one meeting in their region.** They will be invited and encouraged to attend the basic water law seminar scheduled for July 28 & 29, and are welcome to attend any of the other regional meetings.

The meeting format for the regional meetings will be different than the local input meetings. We will actually have two sessions each day. In the afternoon session, the ~30 people selected for that region will discuss the issues and will then prioritize them as high, medium or low.

Each meeting is open to the public; however, the public will be asked to hold their comments until the evening session. The evening session provides an opportunity for them to comment on what was decided at the afternoon session. After each meeting

a report will be made available that summarizes the decisions made.

We have begun preparing the reports for the regional meetings and will complete them during July.

Website

We have updated the front page of our website to include links to information about the technical studies that are being conducted by the Water Board. We have also added the schedule for the Regional Input Meetings.

Copies of all of these monthly updates are available on the site, and we are in the process of uploading presentations Dr. Focht has made at various meetings, including the Water Board's monthly board meeting.

We continually work to keep the website up-to-date. If you have any suggestions of things you think we should add, please feel free to let us know.

Water Plan Technical Studies

Demand and supply analyses for approximately 785 water systems in Oklahoma have begun. Utilizing a variety of demographic, economic and related data for counties and water provider systems in Oklahoma, consumptive water demands will be calculated for municipal and industrial, self-supplied industrial (including oil and gas production) and agricultural water use. Sophisticated models will be used to project these demands, as well as supply availability across the state. In those areas where water supply "gaps" are anticipated, modeling and other water management tools will be employed to identify potential solutions to address local water needs.

To augment the development of these analyses, each of these water systems will be receiving a survey this month that will gather pertinent data to enhance the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan's assessment of these systems' needs. Water supply and management opportunities will be more easily identified through the collection of existing treatment/distribution infrastructure, service area population and demands, and both current and planned sources of water supply. The Oklahoma Rural Water Association and the Oklahoma Municipal League will be assisting these systems in completing the survey. The OWRB,

OWRA and OML strongly encourage each system to take the time to supply this information so that their system can be properly evaluated.

The draft Programmatic Work Plan, the roadmap for the technical studies to be performed over the next few years, is now final. The OWRB sought input from the members of the Water Research Advisory Board (WRAB) and received valuable comments. However, while labeled final, it will also be considered a living document subject to some evolution during the development of the OCWP based upon continuing input. A copy of the PWP can be found on the OWRB's website at www.owrb.ok.gov.

Other Information

The OWRB is organizing a basic water law seminar to be held July 28-29 at the Moore-Norman Technology

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Center in Oklahoma City. The seminar will provide information on Oklahoma water law and policy. The ~330 people selected for the regional meetings will be invited to attend and their registration fee will be waived. The seminar will also be open to others. As soon as more information, such as the agenda, cost, and registration dates is available I will let you know.

Again this year the Water Research Institute and the OWRB will combine the Water Research Symposium and the Governor's Water Conference. The Conference will be held at the Reed Center in Midwest City, Oct. 29 – 30th. More information will be sent as it becomes available.

If your organization would like me to come discuss the water planning process, please contact me at jeri.fleming@okstate.edu or at the number listed below.

As always, feel free to contact me if you have any questions.



OWRRI Water Research Advisory Board Member Associations
Environmental Federation of OK
Grand River Dam Authority
Inter-tribal Environmental Council
Lugert-Altus Irrigation District
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Nature Conservancy
OK Association of Regional Councils
OK Conservation Commission
OK Corporation Commission
OK Dept of Agriculture, Food and Forestry
OK Dept of Environmental Quality
OK Dept of Transportation
OK Dept of Wildlife Conservation
OK Farm Bureau
OK Independent Petroleum Assoc.
OK Municipal League
OK Rural Water Association
OK Scenic Rivers Commission
OK Sustainability Network
OK Water Resources Board
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Geological Survey
US Fish and Wildlife Service