

# Water Research Institute Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan Monthly Update

March 2008



It's hard to believe that spring is already here. We had snow just last week and now the forecast is for temperatures in the 60s, and Easter is just around the corner.

Work at the Institute is changing almost as much as the weather right now. The comments received during the local meetings have been re-categorized and the revised comment database will be available on the website in the next few days.

There are still several different ways to search the comments. You can search by category, region, county, meeting location, comment id or you can enter your own search term.

Although we have closed the comment period for the purposes of finalizing the local meeting reports, we are still accepting comments on any aspect of the planning effort, including comments already entered. New comments will be included in the online database and in the discussions in the regional meetings.

All of the comments have a unique comment number, so that you can easily refer to one comment in another. Also, you will be able to track specific comments throughout the process using that number.

We revised the draft local input meeting reports for consistency sake and have posted them on the website as final reports. This includes one with all of the online comments we received. The format of the final reports is much the same as the draft reports, however; we have included a brief description of the process, as well as an addendum that includes the definitions for all the categories.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the comments or would like a printed copy of a report.

## Regional Input Meetings

We have been working with Oklahoma Cooperative Extension educators across the state, as well as the Councils of Government to identify the best locations to hold the regional meetings. Our goal is to make the meeting locations as accessible as possible to everyone within each

region. We will have the meeting date and locations available by the end of this month.

## Nominations

Nominations for the regional input meetings ended on Feb. 29. We are very excited by the response to the call for participants. We received over 575 nominations! Of course, now the hard part begins. We have begun organizing all the nominees by region and will be contacting individuals to gather more information.

Our first step will be to make sure we have contact information for all the nominees. Please don't be surprised if we contact you to get more information.

On March 31 we will be mailing applications to all the nominees to gather information about their particular water interest, their stake in the region they wish to participate in and information about their knowledge and/or experience. We are requiring applications be returned to us no later than April 11.

Once we have received all the applications we will screen the applications to ensure that all perspectives and interests in each region are represented. If we identify perspectives that are not represented, we will recruit additional people to fill those gaps.

The Institute, however, will not be making the final decisions on who should participate in the regional meetings. We will consult with leaders of state, federal and non-profit organizations to help us narrow the list and fill any gaps. We will then forward the final list to a Water Planning Advisory Board comprised of governor-appointed officials including the Secretary of Environment Miles Tolbert and Secretary of Agriculture, Terry Peach for approval. The final list will be published on our website.

Just a reminder, the regional meetings are open to the public and there will be an opportunity for public comment. This is so that all voices that want to be heard can be heard. As we have said since we began this innovative project, we want everything to be fair, transparent and in-

clusive. We want to hear from all Oklahomans; the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan is a plan for all of Oklahoma for the next 50 years.

## Other Information

The Oklahoma State University Edmond Low Library will host a workshop titled *Researching Oklahoma Water Resources*, March 28, 2008.

The workshop begins at 9:30 a.m. with me, Jeri Fleming, and Marilyn Jacobs, of the Cartwright Law Library. I will discuss water-planning in the state of Oklahoma, and some of the issues Oklahomans feel are important to water planning. I will show you how to search the public comment database for the comprehensive water plan.

Ms. Jacobs will teach participants how to track legislation, search Oklahoma's statutes for current laws concerning water and find attorney general opinions.

In the afternoon, from 2 – 4, you can join Steve Beleu and Cliff Broadworth of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries for a hands-on workshop on how to use online water data resources.

For more information or to register call 405-744-6546 or email [suzanne.holcombe@okstate.edu](mailto:suzanne.holcombe@okstate.edu).

If your organization would like me to come discuss the water planning process please contact me at [jeri.fleming@okstate.edu](mailto:jeri.fleming@okstate.edu) or at the number listed below.

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

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