Local Input Meeting Report

#1

Beaver, Oklahoma

Beaver County
Fairgrounds Pavilion
April 12, 2007

Project Description

The Water Research Institute, at Oklahoma State University, is working under contract with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to update Oklahoma's Comprehensive Water Plan. The Institute has designed an innovative process that combines citizens' ideas with the assistance of water experts in formulating policy recommendations. This process seeks to rely on the citizens' values for guidance in making tough choices about management of our State's water resources.

The first phase of this process consisted of 42 Local Input Meetings held throughout the State beginning in April 2007, at Beaver and ending on Nov. 15, 2007, at Idabel. The purpose of the meetings was to gather citizens' ideas, questions, suggestions and concerns about Oklahoma's water resources. This report is a comprehensive list of the comments received at this meeting.

In addition to the Local Input Meetings the public participation process consists of four other components. During the second phase, beginning in 2008, the Institute will conduct 11 regional meetings where selected participants will review the comments, consolidate similar issues, and prioritize them. Planning workshop, where participants will work to development management alternatives, is scheduled to begin in 2009. The Oklahoma Academy for State Goals will hold a special Town Hall meeting, in the spring of 2010, where citizens will develop consensus recommendations. These recommendations will be forwarded to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board for consideration/inclusion in a draft updated Comprehensive Water Plan. In the final phase the Institute will again conduct 11 regional meetings. At these meetings, the Institute will receive feedback and implementation suggestions on the draft Water Plan. Comments received at these meetings will be forwarded to the Water Board who will finalize the Plan and submit it to the legislature and the governor.

For more information visit the Institute's website at http://okwaterplan.info, email them at waterplan@okstate.edu, or by phone at 405.744.9994. You may also contact the Oklahoma Water Recourses Board at www.owrb.ok.gov or 405.530.8800.

Meeting Agenda

Time	Topic	Speaker
6:35 pm	Welcome	Rick Nelson, Educator Beaver County Cooperative Extension Service
6:40 pm	Purpose of Meeting	Mike Langston, Assistant Director Water Research Institute
6:45 pm	Water Challenges in Oklahoma	Duane Smith, Executive Director Oklahoma Water Resources Board
7:05 pm	Introduction of WRI Staff and Facilitator	Mike Langston
7:10 pm	Explanation of Meeting Process	Andrea Braeutigam, Facilitator Institute for Dispute Resolution
7:15 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:20 pm	Meeting adjourned	

Attendees

Water Research Institute Staff

Dr. Will Focht, Director
Mike Langston, Assistant Director
Jeri Fleming, Communications Specialist
Alison Stone, Administration Specialist
Andrea Braeutigam, Facilitator

Oklahoma Water Resources Board Staff

Duane Smith, Executive Director
Dave Dillon, Water Plan Coordinator

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Staff

Rick Nelson, Beaver County Extension Educator
Beth Crumpler, Beaver County Extension Educator

Council of Government Representative

Kirk Fisher, Deputy Director, Oklahoma Economic Development Authority

Public Participants

103 citizens

Comments

Sixty-six comments were received from the meeting participants. Comments were submitted both orally and by comment card. The comments are organized alphabetically by topic. Each comment is preceded by a unique identification number that will remain with the comment throughout the process. *Additional comments were submitted online to the website and are not included below; however, there is a separate report that lists all comments received through the website, by fax, mail and phone.*

Water Management

Agencies

- *Funding*
    - **Bv17** The State should allocate additional funding for education regarding fertilization and irrigation, as well as for alternative fertilization and irrigation methods.

Conjunctive Management

- *Legislation*
    - **Bv7d** We should change the law regarding the relationship between stream water and groundwater.
    - **Bv39c** Water law needs to recognize the interconnection between ground and surface water.

Conservation

- **Bv8b** Water conservation should be considered in the plan.
- **Bv33e** We need to conserve the water we have.
- **Bv33i** Home swimming pools should be limited at city homes. That's a waste of water. Instead of private pools, use public pools, which should be free to kids.

- *Education*
    - **Bv11c** There should be a proactive education plan for all Oklahoman's regarding water conservation.
    - **Bv24** There should be more education on water quality to address contamination of aquifers from agricultural activities.
- *Incentives*
    - **Bv39f** Water conservation incentives and requirements need to be incorporated into the water plan and State statute.
- *Research*
    - **Bv34** Research money needs to be spent on reclaiming as much water as possible from industrial uses. Produced water is just one example.
- *Sustainability*
    - **Bv7a** The State should go from a utilization approach to a conservation approach to manage water.
- *Technology*
    - **Bv23** We should encourage conservation by xeriscaping, i.e. landscaping to match the area's climate.
    - **Bv33g** City people need to use drought resistant grasses, plants, etc. Leave water for human consumption. Most farms use drought types of plants and grasses such as buffalo.
    - **Bv37b** We need to use water conservation techniques for agriculture/horticulture such as building in organic matter to soils, using moisture-holding polymers, using anti-transpirants for some crops, xeriscaping yards and using improved varieties of buffalo grass.

- **Bv37c** The State should encourage water recycling using biofiltration and other purification technologies and bio-remediation for waste water and reclaimed water, and encourage on-site conservation.

Economic Impacts

- **Bv15** We need to recognize water's economic impact and its value to economic development across the State.

Health

- *Ecological*
  - **Bv35** I am concerned about the quality and quantity of water. The banks of Paloduro Creek are covered in salt cedar which can use 200 gallons of water a day and add salt to the water.
  - **Bv39d** The water needs of State federally-listed and at-risk species needs to be addressed in not only the water plan, but Oklahoma law as well and it needs to be done now to avoid future conflicts.

Infrastructure

- *Needs*
  - **Bv4** I think that the State should be working with municipalities and rural communities to maintain adequate water supplies.
  - **Bv11b** Maybe more dams to help keep our water here.

Planning

- **Bv13** The water plan should include projections of water resources for the next 50 years – need to know how much water we have.

- *Interstate Cooperation*
  - **Bv18** We need coordination between the states that overlay the Ogallala aquifer.

- *Priorities*
  - **Bv6** The 5 F's (food, fuel, fiber, fun, and feed) priority list should be addressed in the plan.
  - **Bv27** How will the plan prioritize water uses?
  - **Bv38** There should be a priority list of water uses for now and for next 50 years.
  - **Bv16** What happens when water runs out and then how water will be distributed across the State?

- *Public Participation Process*
  - **Bv28** Make sure rural Oklahoma is informed throughout the water planning process and stays informed about what is going to happen with Oklahoma's water resources.

- *Regional Differences*
  - **Bv19** Oklahoma City needs to be educated about where their water comes from and recognize the needs of western Oklahoma.
  - **Bv12** The water plan should take into account regional differences, especially regarding aquifers and watersheds to consider the different needs of each area. The Panhandle's needs must be addressed and not overlooked in the water plan.

- **Bv36** I think the three Panhandle Counties water resources should be more regionalized, as they receive less rainfall than the rest of Oklahoma and are in a drought condition more often than the rest of the State.

Policy/Regulations

- *Enforcement*
  - **Bv1b** There should be a penalty for overuse on all wells.
  - **Bv33h** The State should meter all corporate farms for use of water.
- *State Regulations*
  - **Bv1a** We should meter wells and place a seal on the meter so the use or overuse is recorded.
  - **Bv9** Corporations are not monitored as far as well water use and this is drawing down other wells in the area. I am specifically concerned about the effect on Six-Mile Creek.
  - **Bv3** We should require accurate well logs and identifiable information regarding the wells.
  - **Bv5** I am concerned about how overuse is defined – agriculture use may require additional water at certain times of the year or during certain years and this should not be considered overuse.
  - **Bv14** The OWRB needs to set flat rules that everyone must follow and not based on the type of entity or use.
  - **Bv33a** Pollution laws should be more strict and should include older corporate swine farms.
  - **Bv41** Use of water should be regulated in a way that is fair to all.
  - **Bv37a** I would like to see a change in the surface water policy to allow for private uses in the Panhandle. Such as ponds, catchment systems and reservoirs.
  - *Permits*
    - **Bv7c** There should be no new irrigation wells or if new ones are drilled, then close older ones.
    - **Bv33b** Limit water to corporate farms now, as they use enormous amounts.

Sales and Transfers

- *Control*
  - **Bv30** Oklahoma City has the right to surface water in Beaver County and conservation by area citizens should be considered to help recharge the area's aquifer or use farm ponds to keep the water from flowing into the surface water area that Oklahoma City owns.
- *Interstate*
  - **Bv20** I am concerned that other parts of the State and other states think Oklahoma has surplus water to sell which may not be true.
- *Intrastate*
  - **Bv22** What happened to the study about bringing water from eastern Oklahoma to Western Oklahoma? Maybe should be looked at again instead of selling to Texas, bring the water out west.

Water Rights

- **Bv8a** I am concerned that municipalities are not able to obtain groundwater via wells, because they are not landowners.

Watershed Management

- **Bv10** I am concerned about Tamarisk or Salt Cedar along riverbanks because they use so much water.
- **Bv31** Encourage land stewardship that conserves water resources on a basin wide scale.
- **Bv39b** Control of invasive woody species in riparian zones and in watersheds should be encouraged in the Water Plan as water conservation measures.

Water Sources

Both Groundwater and Surface Water

- *Quality*
  - **Bv32b** We should identify all the sources of pollution; don't just blame agriculture.
- *Quantity*
  - **Bv11a** I am concerned about groundwater being depleted. We need to conserve our surface water for the future.

Groundwater

- *Quantity*
  - **Bv25** The State should monitor recharge rates on the State's aquifers.
  - **Bv33c** When drought hits, water is short until recharge and farm people don't want to re-drill water wells deeper. Do something now so we don't run out!
  - **Bv26** I'm concerned T. Boone Pickens will deplete the Ogallala Aquifer through his plans to sell water within Texas.

Surface Water

- *Both Quality and Quantity*
  - **Bv21** Surface water affects more than just drinking water or household use. It affects wildlife and recreation and those should be considered in the water plan.
  - **Bv39g** The relationship between stream water quantity and quality needs to be addressed.
- *Quality*
  - **Bv40** I am concerned about the quality of the water coming into the State.
- *Quantity*
  - **Bv33j** Our springs have all dried up from overuse of water.
  - **Bv7b** I am concerned about the decrease in the flow of the rivers in the area. We are losing our history and I am concerned future generations won't have the same opportunities that past and current generations do.

Water Uses

Agricultural Use

- **Bv2** Use of water for agricultural purposes should be recognized as important.
- **Bv33f** Corporate swine farms need to clean and reuse those huge amounts of waste water left in those retention ponds at each farm. Sludge needs to be squeezed and dried to reuse as fertilizer. Effluent should not be sprayed on land.

Conservation Use

- *Reuse*
  - **Bv29** How can salt water from oil/gas wells pumped into disposal wells be reclaimed for use in an economically feasible way?

Ecological Use

- *Habitat*
  - **Bv39a** Protection of stream flows needs to be incorporated into the water plan – for environmental flows reservations.
- *Research*
  - **Bv39e** Environmental flow standards need to be established for all stream reaches State-wide based on the best scientific techniques and information available.

Public Domestic Use

- *Municipalities*
  - **Bv33d** Drought in several parts of Oklahoma nearly shut down water supplies for towns.

Recreational Use

- **Bv32a** Some surface water should be available for water sports.

ADDENDUM

Category Descriptions

- **Water Management**
  - Agencies – Includes, but is not limited to, federal, state, and local agencies. Also includes rural water districts, jurisdictional issues, and additional funding needs by individual agencies
    - Federal – Comments regarding federal agencies that are not necessarily related to a law or regulation
    - Funding – Additional federal, state, or local funding opportunities for various projects
    - Jurisdiction – Limiting, expanding, or consolidating agency jurisdiction
    - Local – Includes cities, conservation districts, and other locally led authorities
    - Rural Water Districts – Suggestions that would affect rural water districts
    - State – Comments regarding State agencies
  - Conjunctive Use/Management – Consideration of the interaction between ground and surface water
    - Legislation – Changes in Oklahoma law to recognize/not recognize the interaction of ground and surface water
    - Research – Identification of additional research needs concerning conjunctive use
  - Conservation – Decreasing use and preservation of Oklahoma's water resources
    - Education – Conservation education and educational resources
    - Incentives – State or local incentives to encourage water conservation
    - Research – Directed at water conservation measures
    - Sustainability – The continuous long-term availability of water resources
    - Technology – Equipment or other innovations intended to help conserve water
  - Economic Impacts – The effects water has on the State's economy
    - Development – Increased housing, industry, tourism, or other types of development requiring water resources
    - Population Change – The effect population change has on local and State economies
    - Recreation & Tourism – The impact recreation and tourism have on the State's economy as well as the effect water management has on recreation and tourism
    - Regulations – The effect both federal and State regulation has on water districts
    - Sales – Concerns regarding the effect the sale of water will have on the State's or basin of origin's economy
  - Health – The effect water quality and water quantity have on both human health and the environment
    - Ecological – The environmental impacts of water quality and water quantity
    - Health – The health effects resulting from a lack of available good quality potable water
  - Infrastructure – Includes, but is not limited to, drinking water and waste water treatment facilities, pipelines, dams and other associated structures
    - Needs – New infrastructure needs
    - Maintenance – Maintenance of existing infrastructure

        - Funding – Additional, continued or increased State or federal funding opportunities
    - Planning – Comments regarding the planning process for the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan
        - Interstate Cooperation – Working with surrounding states to avoid conflicts regarding water flowing into and out of Oklahoma
        - Priorities – The prioritization of water usage during times of shortage to avoid later conflicts
        - Public Participation Process – Comments regarding issues with the public participation process
        - Regional Difference – Recognizing water availability, uses, and rainfall variations across the State
        - Research – Identification of possible research needs during the planning process
        - Revision – The need for updating the plan more frequently than once every 10 years or so
    - Policy/Regulations – Comments regarding various State and federal statutes (laws) and regulations (rules)
        - Adjudication – Court involvement in the management of Oklahoma's water resources
        - Enforcement – Enforcement of current laws and regulations by the appropriate agency
        - Federal Regulations – Comments about federal laws and regulations
        - Incentives – Federal and State incentive programs to promote compliance with laws and regulations
        - State Regulations – Comments about State regulations or rules
            - Permits – Comments about the permitting process
            - Water Rights – Comments about regulations concerning water rights
            - Taxes – The levying of taxes to collect money for various reasons
        - State Statutes – Comments regarding Oklahoma's water law
    - Regionalization – the consolidation of water treatment facilities or other infrastructure by municipal and/or rural water districts
        - Funding – Federal or State funds available to help facilitate regionalization
        - Incentives – To help encourage regionalization of water treatment facilities
    - Sales & Transfers – The artificial movement of water either in-state (intrastate) or out-of-state (interstate)
        - Compensation – Who should be compensated, how should they be compensated, and how much should they be compensated if water is sold or transferred
        - Control – Concerns about who would control the water and land if water is sold or transferred
        - Interstate – Out-of-state water sale or transfer
        - Intrastate – In-state water sale or transfer
    - Water Rights – Who has the right to control or use ground or surface water
        - Private Property Rights – Rights to groundwater on private property
        - Permitted Water Rights – Both surface and groundwater permitted water rights
        - Native American Rights – Tribal claims to both surface and groundwater

- Water Security – Natural and man-made threats affecting water supplies
  - Disasters – Natural or man-made disasters affecting either water infrastructure or supply
  - Terrorism – Terrorist attack on water infrastructure or supply
- Water Treatment – Includes both natural and man-made water treatment suggestions
  - Artificial – Technologies for treating both drinking and waste water
  - Natural – Ecological (environmental) ways of treating both drinking, and waste water i.e. wetlands
- Watershed Management – The management of land, including development that affects water quality and water quantity

- **Water Uses**
  - Agriculture Use – The way water is used in the agriculture industry
    - Biofuels Growth – Suggestions and concerns regarding the increased growth of crops for biofuels
  - Commercial Use – The use of water by commercial enterprises such as small businesses, etc.
  - Conservation Use – Suggestions and concerns regarding various ways to use water in a way that will conserve it
    - Reuse – The reuse of various water supplies such as treated wastewater, gray water, and storm water run-off
  - Ecological Use – Maintaining sufficient water levels to ensure the health of wildlife and ecosystems e.g. in-stream flows
    - Habitat – Water uses to protect wildlife habitat
    - Research – Identification of additional research needs regarding the ecological use of water
  - Hydropower Use – The use of dams to produce electricity
  - Industrial Use – The use of water by factories, power plants and other industrial uses
    - Biofuels Processing – The use of water in processing biofuels in the State
  - Mining Use – The use of water in the mining industry
  - Oil & Gas Use – The use of water by the oil and gas industry
  - Private Domestic Use – Household water that is not supplied by a municipality or rural water district and includes both ground and surface water
    - Wells – The use of private domestic wells
  - Public Domestic Use – Household water that is supplied by a municipality or rural water district
    - Municipality – Household water supplied by a town or city
    - Rural Water District – Household water supplied by a Rural Water District
  - Recreational Use – The use of water for recreation and to promote tourism
    - Aesthetics – Concerns about the aesthetic beauty of Oklahoma's water resources
    - Boating – The use of water for water recreation such as boating
    - Fishing – The use of water for fishing in the State's water resources
    - Golf Courses – The use of water in maintaining the State's golf courses
  - Storage – The storage of water in reservoirs, or in aquifers either naturally or artificially; may also include other storage methods such as cisterns
  - Transportation Use – The use of water to maintain Oklahoma's navigation channels, i.e. McClellan-Kerr Navigation System

- **Water Sources**
  - *Both* Ground and Surface Water – Comments referring to *both* surface and groundwater concerns
    - Quantity – The quantity of *both* surface and groundwater
    - Quality – The quality of *both* surface and groundwater
    - Both – *Both* the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater
  - Climate – The effect climate has on water sources including global warming and rain
  - Groundwater – Concerns about the State's groundwater
    - Quantity – The quantity of groundwater
    - Quality – The quality of groundwater
    - Both – *Both* the quality and quantity groundwater
  - Recycled Water – Non-traditional sources of water
    - Waste Water – Treated waste water as a water source
    - Gray Water – Gray water (water that comes usually from washing machines, showers, bathtubs, etc.) as a water source
  - Surface Water – Concerns about the State's surface water
    - Quantity – The quantity of surface water
    - Quality – The quality of surface water
    - Both – *Both* the quality and quantity of surface water