Local Input Meeting Report

#10

Tonkawa, Oklahoma

Northern Oklahoma College
Walcher Conference Center
June 5, 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
6:31 pm	Welcome	Larry Klumpp, Educator Kay County Cooperative Extension Service
6:32 pm	Welcome	Representative Ken Luttrell
6:33 pm	Purpose of Meeting and Introduction of Staff	Mike Langston, Assistant Director Water Research Institute
6:34 pm	Water Challenges in Oklahoma	Derek Smithee, Water Quality Programs Division Chief Oklahoma Water Resources Board
6:58 pm	Explanation of Meeting Process	Mike Langston
7:00 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:40 pm	Meeting adjourned	

Attendees

Water Research Institute Staff
Mike Langston, Assistant Director
Jeri Fleming, Communications Manager
Alison Stone, Administration Specialist

Oklahoma Water Resources Board Staff
Derek Smithee, Water Quality Programs Division Chief

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Staff
Larry Klumpp, Kay County Extension Educator
Chad Otto, Kay County Extension Educator
Shane Martin, Kay County Extension Educator

Public Participants
32 citizens

Comments

Forty-seven 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*
  - **Tk8** There is some money through FEMA to help clean out ponds and stream flows but it is for limited purposes and there is paperwork that has to be done to access the money and this slows the process.
  - **Tk20** We need to spend more money on our water resources.
  - **Tk29** Old cisterns and farmsteads are falling in and this can cause asbestos contamination in the water. There should be some funding available to help clean these up otherwise they will just stay there and continue to cause pollution.
  - **Tk30** I would suggest the conservation districts have a program to provide funding to help clean up old farmsteads which could be sources of pollutants due to stored chemicals and other contaminants.
- *State*
  - **Tk5** Information about the extent of floodplains is not being made available to landowners for building. It should be easier to access.
  - **Tk6** There may not be enough information available in floodplain elevation maps to help recognize where there could be a flood problem.
  - **Tk35** When an oil well is being drilled, how well do the Corporation Commission and the OWRB communicate regarding the water issues? What is going to happen when oil and gas are gone and we are left with the contamination of the water?
  - **Tk42** There are several State agencies that deal with water regulations.

Conjunctive Management

- *Legislation*
  - **Tk9** The municipalities in this area feel the existing groundwater laws are fine and should not be changed. Therefore, we oppose conjunctive management of the State's water. We have spent millions of dollars developing our well fields and upgraded our water treatment plants to treat groundwater and do not want to see a riparian system developed here.

Conservation

- **Tk10** Municipalities support water conservation; the more we conserve the less we have to provide.
- **Tk18** We need to conserve our water and stop wasting it. We need to remember that we cannot control the future and we must seriously consider conservation. We need to look at what we have done in the past and consider those things for future planning.
- **Tk27** We should all be good stewards about our State's water resources especially with the increase in our State's population and to provide for economic development.
- **Tk40** As a State, we don't recognize what we have in the way of water resources and we need to do better at protecting it.

Economic Impacts

- **Tk37** State and federal emergency management does not realize the impact of flood effects on rural areas and only seem to care if it affects large populations.

Health

- *Ecological*
  - **Tk14** Water quality issues associated with deep water releases from dams are also important because they can contribute to fish kills.

Infrastructure

- *Funding*
  - **Tk2** There is no incentive to build ponds on private property nor is there any incentive to clean ponds out during dry times, and there should be.
  - **Tk3** It seems the way things are done doesn't encourage cleaning out ponds when they dry out. But there is money available to build new ponds so landowners tend to let the older ponds fill in with sediment. We should provide incentives and machinery or some means of encouraging people to clean out their ponds to retain more water.
  - **Tk4** There is not enough federal money available to help clean out farm ponds.
- *Maintenance*
  - **Tk19** The rural water districts and communities have a lot of waste of the water in their distribution systems due to leaks.

Planning

- **Tk28** We need to make use of the plan, not just develop it. Get the plan to the citizens in all regions of the State.
- **Tk32** Will the plan differentiate between processed water and raw water?
- **Tk33** The water planning process should be interconnected with the Dept. of Commerce's capital improvement plan.
- **Tk23** I am concerned the water plan could all be negated by a federal entity taking the State to court.

- *Interstate Cooperation*
  - **Tk45** I feel strongly the water plan should include considerations for the inflow/outflow of surface water into the State.

- *Priorities*
  - **Tk16** I understand drinking water is essential but the plan should give equal weight to environmental issues, like downstream flow, water quality, reservoir storage, and pollution. These issues are important because fisheries recreation brings millions of dollars to our state annually.
  - **Tk21b** Domestic use of water should have precedent over irrigation/agriculture use.

- *Public Participation Process*
  - **Tk11** It is important for the rural areas to work together. As the OCWP planning process moves towards the large metropolitan areas such as Tulsa and Oklahoma City, we need to make sure we have a voice.
  - **Tk31** I suggest that the planning process consider how frequently comments are made throughout the State.

- *Regional Differences*
  - **Tk13** It is important for Oklahoma to do this plan - it is very needed. It is important that the plan address regional issues. Money should not rule the plan.

- *Revision*
    - **Tk26** We should be ahead of the game in our planning process. In the future, money should be appropriated in order to keep the water plan updates on schedule.

Policy/Regulations

- *Enforcement*
    - **Tk24** Large industrial users tend to respond only to regulatory pressure and I would like to see more regulatory pressure applied in a prioritized way.
- *Incentives*
    - **Tk25** Incentives could be used in an effort to address industrial water quality issues. Produced waters, for example, can cause questions about who is responsible and it is possible the producer could clean up the water and then re-inject it into a reservoir and without incentives companies will not do it.
- *Federal Regulations*
    - **Tk36** The State should support efforts to waive interest for storage fees in US Army Corps of Engineers lakes.
    - **Tk38** Rural water districts have a problem applying for and receiving funding due to frequent changes to the laws governing them.
- *State Regulations*
    - **Tk21a** Even with water permitting there is no real way to monitor what is done with the water.
    - **Tk48** The plan should define "surplus" and "excess" water to make clear whether the terms include allocated but currently unused water.
    - **Tk1** The current threshold (based on volume) above which a landowner must obtain a permit to build a new pond needs to be increased to encourage construction of new water impoundments.
    - *Water Rights*
        - **Tk17** Water rights in the future are critical for our State and should be protected.
        - **Tk34** The current groundwater law should not be changed.
        - **Tk44** The current groundwater and surface ownership laws should not be changed.
- *State Statutes*
    - **Tk46** Water law is extremely complex and our water plan should provide sufficient clarity to avoid an increased burden on our courts as the number of challenges increase.

Regionalization

- **Tk41** The cost of water treatment makes it more difficult for municipalities to provide water and; therefore, regionalization of smaller water systems/wastewater treatment systems should be considered.

Water Rights

- *Private Property Rights*
  - **Tk39** It bothers me that people are coming in from out-of-state, purchasing large areas of land, and then getting water permits to use the water. They don't live here and so don't take into consideration what is in the best interest of all Oklahomans.

Watershed Management

- **Tk22** The use of fertilizer in irrigation can cause problems if the equipment doesn't work properly, this can lead to an abundance of fertilizer in the groundwater.
- **Tk12** Government entities should consider the impact of construction along streams such as bridges because it can contribute to erosion of the banks and the river bottom. This contributes to sedimentation in lakes. The solution is good surface water management

Water Sources

Groundwater

- *Quality*
  - **Tk15** I am concerned about contamination of the aquifers in the panhandle due to cattle and swine feedlots.
  - **Tk47** The water plan should address concerns about chemicals and pesticides in rural wells.

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