

Local Input Meeting Report



#13

Enid, Oklahoma

Garfield County Fairgrounds

Hoover Building

June 19, 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 Resources Board at www.owrb.ok.gov or 405.530.8800.



Meeting Agenda

Time	Topic	Speaker
6:37 pm	Welcome	Bart Cardwell, Educator Garfield County Cooperative Extension Service
6:39 pm	Purpose of Meeting and Introduction of Staff	Mike Langston, Assistant Director Water Research Institute
6:45 pm	Water Challenges in Oklahoma	Dave Dillon, Director of Water Planning Oklahoma Water Resources Board
7:15 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:40 pm	Meeting adjourned	

Attendees

Water Research Institute Staff

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

Oklahoma Water Resources Board Staff

Duane Smith, Executive Director
Dave Dillon, Director of Water Planning

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Staff

Bart Cardwell, Garfield County Extension Educator

Public Participants

43 citizens

Comments

Seventy-four 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*
 - **En47** The city of Medford is concerned about the lack of funding.
- *Jurisdiction*
 - **En65** The OWRB needs to be included in issues regarding pollution of water.
- *State*
 - **En14** I would like to commend the OWRB for the people they have working for them. I hope they do not combine the OWRB and the DEQ, as it could create a major headache.

Conservation

- **En63** The plan should incorporate a component of reduced water use (for example, how much water is being used to irrigate fields that are being used to water crops that never make it to market?)
- **En12** People are carelessly polluting our water and this creates waste of a resource that we should take better care of.
- *Education*
 - **En58a** I am concerned about water conservation. I suggest more effort in education for water conservation.
 - **En17** There should be more information made available to residential water users to educate them on conservation measures.
 - **En19** Most people do not appreciate the water we have and the plan should encourage people to realize how precious the water we have is.
 - **En23** We should have TV ads that show various ways to conserve water, such as, how to landscape a lawn to conserve water and how to reuse graywater.
 - **En25** There should be an emphasis on water conservation education in the plan.
 - **En28** The plan needs to consider the generations to follow and should include ways to educate children now especially since the plan covers the next 50 years. Education for children should include hands-on experiences so they can see how hard it is to fix pollution, and so, they will want to conserve and help keep the water clean.
- *Incentives*
 - **En26** The plan should include some way to discourage waste such as having water sprinklers on when unnecessary.
- *Research*
 - **En29b** There should be some research on underground drip irrigation systems.
 - **En64** Because we are using more water than we receive each year as rainfall, we should look at how much irrigation water is lost to evaporation and run off. Also, we should consider using more drip irrigation techniques.
- *Sustainability*
 - **En59** The plan should consider additional sustainability components and considerations, in general.

- **En7** We should establish groundwater renewable draw rates. [Withdrawal of groundwater should only be permitted at renewable rates]
- *Technology*
 - **En20** Part of the water plan needs to be about conservation at all levels [in all economic sectors]. Agricultural irrigation has begun to conserve by updating equipment. There are many ways to conserve water, and they should all be considered.
 - **En29a** Tiling of fields [installing underground drainage tiles (pipes)] could be used to help soak the fields with water during dry times [by flooding the tiles]. This is a way to conserve water by utilizing the water we already have.
 - **En58b** I am concerned about water conservation. I suggest we grow crops that do not need irrigation.
 - **En58c** I am concerned about water conservation. I suggest we build subdivisions that promote dry yard landscapes.

Economic Impacts

- *Development*
 - **En53** I am concerned about the increased water demand resulting from additional growth of subdivisions and commercial enterprises.

Health

- *Ecological*
 - **En2** The petroleum industry surrounding our (Logan County RWD 3) well field is a major concern and something should be done to protect our water source. Several private wells in the area have been contaminated and we are concerned that the oil fields will contaminate our rural water district wells also. We serve over 800 meters in 5 counties and 3 cities. If contamination spreads to our wells, it could affect our infrastructure and we have no other feasible source to supply our customers.
 - **En52** I am concerned about the nitrate problem in groundwater in western Oklahoma.
- *Human*
 - **En9** The population in our area (Logan County) is expected to increase significantly, and nitrate pollution of groundwater is becoming a concern. We may not be able to supply the greater demand because of the limited availability of low-nitrate groundwater.
 - **En30** Is there any study or information available regarding nitrates in groundwater in the western part of the State and incidents of cancer compared to the eastern part of the State which uses mainly surface water?

Infrastructure

- *Funding*
 - **En50** I am concerned about the lack of funding for infrastructure improvements. What funding sources are available for infrastructure improvement?
- *Maintenance*
 - **En48** The city of Medford is concerned with aging infrastructure.
- *Needs*
 - **En27** We need more construction of reservoirs and ponds. Even though environmentalist say it should not be done, during times of drought it would help with supply.

- **En68** We should build more dams for water retention.

Planning

- *Interstate Cooperation*

- **En22** During the planning process we should look at what other states have done in their planning processes.

- *Priorities*

- **En1** When will residential use take priority over agriculture uses? I think there should be a priority of use and if the homes are there first, then they should have priority of use over irrigation.
- **En16** Irrigation should be prioritized behind residential use, because residential is a higher and better use. We need to set priorities for use of water and clean water for human consumption should be listed first.
- **En32** The right to domestic use should not be severed from land ownership and it should have priority over commercial or farming use. We need some new statutes as we are way behind the times.
- **En41** The Kremlin-Hillsdale area has very little quality water underground. The towns of Kremlin and Hillsdale and the rural areas surrounding these two towns are served water from the Kremlin-Hillsdale Rural Water District #1. The water district pumps water from wells in the Enid isolated terrace. Recently, the aquifer water table has dropped considerably. What concerns me is the increase in the number of acres irrigated from the EIT for the purpose of raising corn. This not only pulls a lot of water from the EIT, but since corn production requires a large amount of nitrogen fertilizer being applied, this increases the amount of nitrates in the water. I believe the time will come when we must choose between water for people and water for corn.
- **En69** Rural domestic water use should have priority over irrigation use in areas of limited water supply when homes were established first. In our area, whoever has the largest pumps gets the water.
- **En72** At present there are no metering requirements on agricultural irrigation. The reason stated was it would put an undue financial burden on the user. There should be some form of protection for the domestic user when they have a financial burden such as drilling a new well when the old one has gone dry due to the irrigation or having to haul or buy water due to contamination from heavy fertilization of crops. There is going to have to a line drawn between the almighty dollar and people's lives.

Policy/Regulations

- *Enforcement*

- **En70** Irrigators drilling wells and using water without a permit should be severely penalized, rather than merely being told by the OWRB to get in compliance with the law.

- *State Regulations*

- **En42** The rural water districts are required to report to OWRB each year the amount of water they pump. The amount is determined by master meters, usually near the wells. Do the irrigation wells have master meters? I have heard they do not. If they don't they should be required to measure the amount of water they pump accurately.
- **En21** There should be accurate and expansive monitoring of our water resources both now and in the future.

- **En31** Regulations regarding irrigation wells should be reconsidered to protect adjoining landowners who have had their domestic wells go dry due to heavy pumping by the irrigators.
- **En43** The city of Medford is concerned about increased State mandates.
- **En51** I am concerned about the difficulties municipalities have in meeting ODEQ regulations.
 - o *Permits*
 - **En34** The number of irrigation wells on a piece of land should be limited based on the number of acres. If one or two wells can't supply enough water then there may not be enough water under that piece of land to supply the irrigation water needs.
 - o *Water Rights*
 - **En67** Senior water rights should not be displaced by eminent domain.
- *State Statutes*
 - **En5** We should revise Oklahoma water mining standards to allow for a longer-term management plan.
 - **En8** The water rights appropriation legislation needs to be reconsidered. One example, of a regulation that needs revision is the "first come, first serve" regulation. Another is the fact that there is no limit on the amount of water that can be taken from a stream. Furthermore, there should be limits on withdrawals from wells and streams especially during the summer months. Our senators and representatives need to address this law as it is antiquated.
 - **En56** A major concern of mine is the Oklahoma statutes that permit mining of the aquifers.

Regionalization

- **En6** The plan should support regional water management planning.

Sales and Transfers

- *Compensation*
 - **En40** Water consumption is not going to be stopped at property lines and there should be some compensation either monetary or otherwise for adjoining landowners who lose water under their property from adjoining landowner's use.
- *Interstate*
 - **En38** The state of Oklahoma should not be selling any water until the plan is complete.
 - **En54** No selling water out of state. Use it only for Oklahoma.
 - **En55a** Oklahoma should not sell any water rights until studies and research data are available.

Water Rights

- **En55b** Water is a valuable mineral right.
- *Private Property Rights*
 - **En66** Private property rights must be preserved.
 - **En11** Privatization of water rights is a concern as people are turning over their water rights to companies that then control the water (for example Mesa Water).

Watershed Management

- **En4** Well-head protection planning should be improved including working with landowners on groundwater protection.
- **En35** Having a large number of wells in a shallow aquifer may actually spread out the effects on the water table rather than having just one or two wells, which would work well in deep aquifers.
- **En61** We need a cap on water well drilling to ensure stable soil salinity and soil composition sustainability.

Water Sources

Both Groundwater and Surface Water

- *Quality*
 - **En39** Water quality should be addressed in the plan.
- *Quantity*
 - **En15** Irrigation agriculture brings in about \$8 million per year to the Enid economy. Additional land is available for irrigation agriculture but the water is not available nearby. Water is a big deal and the impact of having good water is very critical for all uses.
 - **En45** The city of Medford is concerned about increased water demands

Groundwater

- *Quality*
 - **En13** With water that is close to the surface, any type of contamination on the ground goes right to the water supply and that is why we, as a rural water district, have purchased the land overlying our wells, to protect the wellhead area. This is a concern for us.
 - **En71** The nitrate level in my well is 0.17/100. The use of fertilizer and pesticides polluting our limited amount of water has to be addressed.
 - **En10** I would like to know where the nitrate problem in groundwater is coming from.
- *Quantity*
 - **En44** The city of Medford is concerned about the depletion of water wells.

Water Uses

Agricultural Use

- **En36** The largest irrigated crop in the US is turf, and as this displaces ag crops we need to understand where our food crops will come from such as overseas. This could cause a decrease in the quality of our food.
- **En57** A major concern of mine is agriculture pollution.

Commercial Use

- **En33** We need to watch for commercial water systems coming into Oklahoma and buying water rights.

Conservation Use

- *Reuse*
 - **En18** The water plan should encourage water reuse.
 - **En24** Building industry standards should include/encourage water reuse and low-water-use fixtures in the home such as low-flush toilets.
 - **En62** The plan should encourage water re-use in development and construction such as using graywater when appropriate.

Industrial Use

- **En46** The city of Medford is concerned about the increased industrial use.
- *Biofuels Processing*
 - **En37** Ethanol production plants will encourage more corn crops, which require more water, and this will lead to economic issues including increased food and transportation costs.

Storage Use

- **En60** In general, we should move from subterranean water sequestration to surface water use.

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