

Local Input Meeting Report



#14

**El Reno, Oklahoma
Canadian Valley Career Tech
Conference Center
June 21, 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
6:33 pm	Welcome	Brad Tipton, Educator Canadian County Cooperative Extension Service
6:36 pm	Purpose of Meeting and Introduction of Staff	Mike Langston, Assistant Director Water Research Institute
6:44 pm	Water Challenges in Oklahoma	Dave Dillon, Director of Water Planning Oklahoma Water Resources Board
7:14 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:08 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

Dave Dillon, Director of Water Planning

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Staff

Brad Tipton, Canadian County Extension Educator
Susan Meitl, Canadian County Extension Educator
Tom Manske, Canadian County Extension Educator

Public Participants

58 citizens

Comments

Forty-nine 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

Conjunctive Management

- **ER12** I would like to see the plan address the interaction between ground and surface water.
- **ER14** We need to generate a process which our State can use to look at how to manage surface and groundwater.
- **ER54** We need to address the interaction and interdependency of surface and groundwater.

Conservation

- *Education*
 - **ER46** Our state's education system should require students to read Bob Kerr's vision for water in Oklahoma ["Land, Wood, and Water"]

Economic Impacts

- *Development*
 - **ER6** Infrastructure plans need to emphasize economic development so needs of growth are met.
 - **ER10** We need to always keep in mind that our future growth, particularly with industry, relies on businesses having confidence that Oklahoma can provide all the water needed to support long-term aggressive growth.
- *Population Change*
 - **ER29** We need to keep in mind that agriculture is the backbone of rural Oklahoma and water is the lifeblood of agriculture and we need to remember how important it is. If we don't, then people will begin to move away from rural areas. Any change in allocation of water rights to the agriculturists can have a huge impact on their economic well-being and before any change is made in the plan this needs to be remembered.

Health

- *Human*
 - **ER55** The water in Canadian County (El Reno) is horrible. The taste is bad and it is very foul smelling. When you use the water to clean with, you have to go back over it twice because it leaves a white film on the surface that you clean.

Infrastructure

- *Funding*
 - **ER21** The federal government should continue financial support for maintenance and construction of upstream water impoundments.
 - **ER28** The costs of maintaining water infrastructure is considerable and we are going to have to get additional money to maintain and replace our infrastructure and the cost of doing this is only going to increase. We need to make our legislators and ratepayers aware of this need.
 - **ER32** A lot of agricultural ponds were built back in the 60's and 70's and the recent drought has brought attention to the sedimentation in these ponds and because of the recent rains many of these are breaking and this will add to sedimentation of our

reservoirs. Ponds need the sediment cleaned out. (some suggestions: tax incentives, low interest loans, government cost share, decrease sediment rate in major reservoirs).

- **ER33** There are no incentives to repair CRP terraces once they break, and there should be.
- **ER38** There should be more funding available for pond clean-out.
- **ER51** I would like to see a federal or State cost-share program to dredge out farm ponds to restore or increase holding capacity since you talk about surface and groundwater being tied together.
- *Maintenance*
 - **ER16** We should address the issue of sedimentation in our reservoirs - not just for storage capacity but also other uses of our reservoirs.
 - **ER27** Some of the reservoirs in the State are beginning to silt in and there should be some future thought given to reclaiming the life of these reservoirs.
- *Needs*
 - **ER34** As more ground is covered with asphalt and concrete, due to development of residential areas, we should consider using retention ponds to help capture sediment, recharge aquifers, and use the captured water for other uses besides drinking water to help alleviate demand on potable water.
 - **ER36** There should be a new lake on the South Canadian River between Union City and Norman.

Planning

- **ER25** Oklahomans need to be educated about the value of water - not just the water quality but the infrastructure as well.
- **ER53** We need to assess current water quantity, but we also need to look at water quality including future trends. Not including water quality in this study will result in an incomplete plan and waste taxpayer money.
- *Public Participation Process*
 - **ER23** The younger generations who will be impacted by this plan do not appear to be that involved in it and they should be.
- *Research*
 - **ER15** I would like to see an in-depth study on Rush Springs aquifer before any laws or policy changes are considered.

Policy/Regulations

- *Federal Regulations*
 - **ER8** Mustang relies on two current sources of water, deep wells in the Garber-Wellington aquifer and water contracts with Oklahoma City. Recent changes to drinking water standards have heavily impacted Mustang and other communities in Canadian County that rely on groundwater. We're greatly concerned about additional groundwater restrictions that may be imposed in the future.
- *State Regulations*
 - **ER37** There should be some way to prevent upstream people from putting up dams that stop the flow of water and affecting the people downstream.

- **ER43** Any plan enacted into a State statute should include flexibility for addressing inequities caused by future unforeseen events.
- *State Statutes*
 - **ER13** There is a disparity between our surface water law and groundwater law and we need to look at the law in a holistic manner.

Regionalization

- **ER22** In areas without a lot of water, it is difficult for small towns and rural water districts to get the water they need. There should be an entity (co-op) formed to provide water to these areas.
- *Incentives*
 - **ER26** There should be federal incentives for regionalization of water systems.

Sales and Transfers

- *Control*
 - **ER9** The municipalities in Canadian County have come together for a decade to find a permanent source of water from other regions in the State. At every turn, our efforts have been blocked. There are regions of the State in which water is a bountiful resource. Unfortunately, the people living in those regions have claimed some false sense of "ownership" for this natural resource that, in fact, belongs to all the people in the State.
- *Interstate*
 - **ER7** There should be no sale or transfer of water outside of the State until we are certain that all of Oklahoma's long-term needs have been satisfied.
 - **ER19** Do not let our water leave the State until the "in-state" need is met.
 - **ER42** Oklahoma needs to look out for Oklahomans first. Just because Plano, Texas may be able to pay more that doesn't mean we need to allow it because this may have a deleterious impact on the State's economy, which in turn could increase the money required for social services because of a lack of economic development in Oklahoma.
 - **ER44** The plan should include an option to limit water sales to other states when water becomes scarce in Oklahoma.
 - **ER45** We may not be able to put time limits on water sold out-of-state due to the purchasing municipality's long-term planning horizon. Therefore, it will be difficult to include an option in the contract stating that Oklahoma gets priority to the water in times of scarcity. In other words, once its gone, its gone.
- *Intrastate*
 - **ER4** The water plan should identify the regions and volumes of surface water that can be exported from other regions of the State to support the needs in central and western Oklahoma.
 - **ER18** We should move water to areas of Oklahoma that need it from areas that have surplus.
 - **ER24** Transporting water from eastern Oklahoma to western Oklahoma helps everyone in the State economically.
 - **ER48** If the water in reservoirs belongs to the State, then why are so many cities and counties so against someone else buying the water to be piped to us here in Canadian County? Why doesn't the State step in, if the State owns the water?

Water Rights

- **ER41** One challenge for the comprehensive water plan will be to address water ownership.

Watershed Management

- **ER40** Municipalities should work more with their population to educate them about how to properly use fertilization and other lawn chemicals because it runs into the stormwater drains and then into our stream water. Agriculture gets the blame for a lot of water contamination when urban areas also contribute.
- **ER52** I would like to comment on the impact eastern red cedar and salt cedar have on groundwater, due to the amount of water they take out of our river/stream systems. Some type of comprehensive management plan that addresses these two invasive species needs to be devised in order to increase stream flow.

Water Sources**Both Groundwater and Surface Water**

- *Quality*
 - **ER11** I am concerned that we will spend all of this time and money just on water quantity when the plan should also address water quality. If quality is not looked at then it is a disservice to the people who are paying for the plan.
 - **ER47** I think it is important that the plan also address water quality.

Water Uses**Conservation Use**

- **ER5** The water plan should identify conservation measures and take a look at easing some of the current restrictions (for example: municipalities are discharging treated wastewater effluent into rivers, but they're heavily restricted on reuse of that same water for irrigation or other beneficial uses).
- **ER20** Preservation and reuse should be emphasized in the plan, even of treated wastewater.

Public Domestic Use

- **ER39** The municipalities, towns, and rural water districts should cooperate to help keep the cost of water down and to make water available for all people.

Storage Use

- **ER17** We need to look at how to impound more water in the State, especially in the drier areas.
- **ER30** Many of our reservoirs have reached the end of their life-span, yet we are still trying to hold them to their original performance expectations and we need to keep this in mind.
- **ER35** OWRB should attempt to influence city planners or legislators by requiring more holding ponds or neighborhood ponds.

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