

# Local Input Meeting Report



**#16**

**Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

**Oklahoma County Extension  
Office**

**Auditorium**

**July 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](mailto:waterplan@okstate.edu), or by phone at 405.744.9994. You may also contact the Oklahoma Water Resources Board at [www.owrb.ok.gov](http://www.owrb.ok.gov) or 405.530.8800.



**Meeting Agenda**

| Time    | Topic   | Speaker  |
|---------|---|--|
| 6:33 pm | Welcome   | Samantha Snyder, Educator<br>Oklahoma County Cooperative Extension Service |
| 6:34 pm | Purpose of Meeting and<br>Introduction of Staff | Mike Langston, Assistant Director<br>Water Research Institute              |
| 6:42 pm | Water Challenges in Oklahoma                    | Duane Smith, Executive Director<br>Oklahoma Water Resources Board          |
| 7:21 pm | Comments from the public                        | Public Participants  |
| 8:05 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*

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

*Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Staff*

Samantha Snyder, Oklahoma County Extension Educator  
 Ray Ridlen, Oklahoma County Extension Educator  
 Dr. Steve Smith, Southwest District Extension Director

*Public Participants*

59 citizens

**Comments**

Sixty-eight 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*
  - **OC27** Environmental documentation for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loans needs to be made more reasonable. For example, I spent about 12 hours assembling environmental information so a city near Oklahoma City could build up a pump station within a fenced enclosure that is already a city utilities yard. This is not a good use of my time or that city's money, or the taxpayer's money for time spent by DEQ reviewing this. That was supposed to be the simple form - the "Categorical exclusion." I think some projects do require full EID's, some really should require nothing, and the requirements for the many that fall in between should be tailored to the specific project.
- *State*
  - **OC16** The OERB should clean up marginally plugged oil and gas wells.

### Conjunctive Management

- *Legislation*
  - **OC22** The plan should recognize the link between groundwater and surface waters and integrate both in any permitting processes.
  - **OC31** Regulations should recognize the connection between surface and groundwater.

### Conservation

- **OC11** Agricultural irrigation is a huge use of water; however, it is very important to the economy of the State. Farmers/ranchers are also concerned about conservation and they are looking at various ways to conserve water.
- **OC26** City-treated water used for lawn irrigation should be controlled or limited. People should not be allowed to waste water by irrigating so much that it runs down the street. The usage seems to be unlimited. Some ideas for solutions: Lawn watering systems should have rain sensors to turn off sprinklers. Cities should only allow watering on either odd or even days, or during certain hours. These should be practiced all the time, not just during dry times. Unlimited use runs up treatment costs for others and decreases water supply in dry times. We need to learn to conserve all the time.
- **OC42** Encourage (perhaps require) rainwater catchment systems.
- **OC48** Conserve! Conserve! Conserve! Every drop counts!
- *Education*
  - **OC8** There should be public awareness (education maybe done by the OWRB or included in water bills) about how much water can be wasted just by a small drip. This is not only an extreme waste but also costs to treat it as wastewater.
  - **OC10** Public education on water should be done through radio or TV ads because people tend not to read info sheets that come with their water bills.
  - **OC41** Require large-scale conservation education in all schools and communities to increase public awareness.
  - **OC50** I would like to see education curriculum developed around efficient use of water.
  - **OC65a** Because water conservation can extend the life of aquifers and groundwater resources, we, the city of Edmond advocate Statewide public education about water

conservation. The misconception that the water supply in Oklahoma is inexhaustible leads to waste of this valuable resource.

- OC68 The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service has the potential and ability to serve as a vehicle for information to the public and stakeholders. We want to help.
- *Incentives*
  - **OC33** We should require that communities institute water conservation policies as a condition for financial assistance. All feasible conservation and efficiency measures must be implemented before developing new sources.
  - **OC37** We should implement increasing block rates [step-up rates, where increased use results in higher rates] for water usage to encourage water conservation.
  - **OC65b** We, the city of Edmond support giving preference for funding and other incentives to communities that are actively and successfully promoting water conservation.
- *Sustainability*
  - **OC67** We, the city of Edmond, commend your long-range planning for this critical resource. Our State's growth in the next century depends on the foresight of those who can envision a bright future and can plan for the critical components of that success. A wisely allocated, sustainable water supply is one of those critical components.
- *Technology*
  - **OC38** Require cities to install moisture sensors in automatic sprinklers so they won't operate in the rain.

### **Economic Impacts**

- **OC59** We, OKC, believe the cost of water supply improvements will be high. A mechanism for fair distribution of such costs without windfall profit or economically debilitating prices is needed for Oklahoma's future.
- **OC64** The State's water supplies must be allocated in a way that recognizes where economic growth is occurring and fuels that growth. This requires the big-picture view that preservation and promotion of growth where it is occurring stimulates the State's economy, and the resulting increases in the State's revenue benefit every Oklahoma community.
- *Recreation*
  - **OC25** The plan should require that recreational aspects (especially fishing and hunting) be included in any studies done on economic value/impact of water projects.

### **Infrastructure**

- **OC54** Oklahomans should not forget their history. The 1920's saw construction of major water supply projects to bring reliable, clean drinking water to OKC and Tulsa: OKC with Lake Overholser and the Overholser Water Treatment Plant, and Tulsa with Lake Spavinaw and the Spavinaw Flow Line. Oklahomans were at the forefront in design and construction of flood control and water supply improvements.
- *Funding*
  - **OC6** Rural areas are tying on to the Oklahoma City water system and if there is a sufficient increase in demand then another supply pipeline will need to be built and who will pay for it, as it will cost over \$200 million. You need revenue to replace and repair infrastructure and additions to current systems. Water suppliers need to set aside money for these purposes, and so, may need to increase water rates.

- *Needs*

- **OC63** We, the city of Edmond, believe there is adequate water supply for all beneficial uses across the State, but we must find cost-effective distribution mechanisms to get the water where it is most needed.

## ***Planning***

- **OC1** In Oklahoma, we are not only seeing a great deal of growth but also an increase in water usage for each consumer. We need to identify an alternate source when groundwater is not available, such as surface water.
- **OC47** A dedicated, dependable source of funding for water resource planning, management, and education is vital to efficient management and wise use of water.
- **OC51** Please complete the plan soon. Many communities and individuals suffered for lack of water in the recently-ended drought. Many of us realize we need more water sooner than previously forecasted.
- **OC52** Oklahoma City's Water Utilities Trust will join with others in central Oklahoma to share the water from water supply improvements expected to cost many millions of dollars. The board of directors for thousands of water customers, Oklahoma City's Water Utilities Trust, needs to know the infrastructure we plan to build will have water to put in it when our existing supplies are fully-used, less than 25 years from now. We need a plan with clear direction in place as soon as possible, both for those of us with short-term needs and those of us planning farther in the future.
- **OC56** The new plan must be in place soon. The complexity and cost of water supply development requires water users to commit themselves decades in advance of water supply needs. Changes late in the game, as may be expected with a new State plan, will cost real money at the local level. We owe it to permitted water users to complete the plan earlier than scheduled, so affected users can redirect their own investment plans affordably.

- *Priorities*

- **OC55** Our new plan must serve many needs fairly and affordably: Water for human consumption, water for industry, water for agriculture, and water for recreation.

- *Public Participation Process*

- **OC20** Recreational activities need to be given high priority, and representatives from all resource agencies and recreational stakeholder groups should be included in any water discussions (i.e. don't limit this to discussions about water sales. This could also include things like water release schedules and development projects).
- **OC24** The plan should require the involvement of ODWC and other appropriate stakeholder groups in planning for future water development projects where recreation is likely to be a component.

## ***Policy/Regulations***

- *Enforcement*

- **OC44** The plan should address waste of surface water resources by non-point source pollution. Non-point source pollution affects the cost of water treatment and in some cases, availability. It makes no sense to have to abandon a surface lake because the water quality is so poor. We should not have to build new lakes due to the bad acts of a few industries. Adopt a "pollution pays" policy.

- *Federal Regulations*
  - **OC5** If we are to consume more water for our health, we need to make sure we have good water quality. If we don't need chlorine in our drinking water why should we have to add it to our municipal systems?
  - **OC18** The plan should include working with Congress to designate recreation as an authorized purpose of federal reservoirs.
- *State Regulations*
  - **OC15** The plan needs to specify who is responsible, the landowner or well driller, for plugging newly drilled wells that don't produce usable water. Sometimes the responsibility falls on the well driller - they can not always know where the bad water areas are. This is causing the drillers to make some tough choices about whether to complete the drilling of a well. The landowner should be responsible if the groundwater is bad.
  - **OC17** Abandoned water wells should be plugged properly. Because they can contaminate the groundwater and because of safety issues for children.
  - **OC46** The impact of housing developments with individual wells and septic systems needs to be accounted for and addressed by law and/or water policy.
  - **OC49** I would like to see the State implement licensing for irrigation contractors.
- *State Statutes*
  - **OC19** The plan should include legislation to maintain adequate in-stream flows to ensure quality wildlife habitats.
  - **OC29** End the groundwater mining policy. Planning for a 20-year life is ridiculous. Groundwater should be managed for sustainability.
  - **OC43** Legalize use of greywater systems in Oklahoma.

### **Regionalization**

- **OC57** OKC believes regional coalitions of water utilities will be required to supply affordable water throughout Oklahoma in the future. We are committed to pursuing projects for shared use with other communities.
- **OC61** We, the city of Edmond, urge you to give the metro area coalition consideration as you are developing system-level plans to meet the current and long-term needs of the citizens of Oklahoma.
- **OC62** We, the city of Edmond, support other regional coalitions for shared-use projects to provide sustainable water supplies, as well as, the cataloging and management of the State's water resources.

### **Sales and Transfers**

- *Interstate*
  - **OC9** There should be a law stating groundwater can not be pumped out-of-state.
  - **OC35** Don't sell any water to Texas.
  - **OC40** Avoid large-scale, out-of-state water transfers.
  - **OC45** We need a law that would prohibit groundwater being sent out-of-state via pipeline for any use, particularly to develop (frac) natural gas wells in the north Texas area (Bartlett Shale).

- *Intrastate*
  - **OC21** The plan should include limiting interbasin water transfers to avoid transport of aquatic nuisance species.
  - **OC34** The State should avoid water transfers. Importing water means the local carrying capacity of the land has been exceeded. This is an unsustainable situation.
  - **OC39** Do not allow water transfers from the Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer. It has already been lowered 21' in 5 years' time.

### **Water Rights**

- *Private Property Rights*
  - **OC12** The domestic well rights should not be changed.
  - **OC32** End private ownership of groundwater. All water should be a public resource, not a private commodity.

### **Watershed Management**

- **OC14** Land use planning should be considered to help plan for urban sprawl.

## **Water Sources**

### **Both Groundwater and Surface Water**

- *Both Groundwater and Surface Water*
  - **OC53** Oklahoma City believes an abundant and affordable supply of good-quality water is critical to a good quality of life and a healthy and growing economy. We desire a positive and affordable water supply for all Oklahomans.
- *Quality*
  - **OC4** We have to look at water quality and the cost to maintain that quality.

### **Groundwater**

- *Quality*
  - **OC2** Water quality needs to be addressed in the plan; we need to protect the groundwater we have.
  - **OC7** Arsenic in groundwater is a concern because it could mean some wells will become unusable and this can increase the demand for surface water.
- *Quantity*
  - **OC58** Management of all water resources must be included in the plan. We should prepare to protect [the] slow-recharging Ogallala Aquifer, now by considering it fully in this statewide plan and work with other states to assure the aquifer survives for thousands of years to come.

## **Water Uses**

### **Conservation Use**

- *Reuse*
  - **OC66** We, the city of Edmond, advocate encouraging reuse of treated effluent for uses such as crop and landscape irrigation, as well as, researching the potential for capturing

and reusing stormwater. Stormwater will become more viable for reuse as a result of the federal mandates for pollutant discharge elimination.

### ***Ecological Use***

- *Habitat*
  - **OC30** Protect in-stream flows. We must have a way to preserve enough water in streams to support ecological needs.
  - **OC36** We should ensure minimum in-stream flows to maintain a healthy habitat for aquatic life.

### ***Private Domestic Use***

- *Well Water*
  - **OC3** There are areas of the State that are becoming more urbanized and the people living there are using domestic wells that are not tested for contaminants. To address this problem we should either provide infrastructure to make sure they can have a clean water supply or education to teach them how to take care of their well water and to understand its quality.

### ***Recreational Use***

- **OC23** The plan should insure that public access to public water for all recreational purposes is maintained/enhanced.

### ***Storage Use***

- **OC28** I suggest a feasibility study regarding costs and other related factors to build filtration plants to pipe filtered water from overflowing/flooded rivers and lakes back into aquifers to replenish and conserve underground water. Currently, many areas have an over abundance of flood water. This could be done and makes more sense than spending money trying to go to Mars. How many of us would ever go there and what would we do when we get there? Let's spend our money wisely and take care of things here on earth. This could be very beneficial to many of our country's citizens.

### ***Transportation Use***

- **OC13** The Kerr/McClellan Navigation system is very important to our State as it moves a lot of products into and out of the State.

## 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