

# Local Input Meeting Report



**#19**

**Stillwater, Oklahoma**

**Payne County Expo Center**

**Community Building**

**July 30, 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
6:35 pm	Welcome	Nathan Anderson, Educator Payne County Cooperative Extension Service
6:36 pm	Welcome	Representative Lee Denney
6:37 pm	Purpose of Meeting and Introduction of Staff	Mike Langston, Assistant Director Water Research Institute
6:43 pm	Water Challenges in Oklahoma	Derek Smithee, Water Quality Programs Division Chief Oklahoma Water Resources Board
7:02 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:22 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*

Nathan Anderson, Payne County Extension Educator

##### *Public Participants*

87 citizens

#### Comments

Forty-three 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 Use/Management**

- *Legislation*
  - **Sw12** Surface and groundwater law needs to be addressed in the plan. The plan should look at the interconnection between groundwater and surface water and adjust the laws if need be.

### **Conservation**

- **Sw17a** I am concerned about conservation of the resources we have. We need to protect those resources. Rural water districts are confined to a small space (water supply) and if our water is contaminated then we cannot serve our people. I am concerned about an alternative supply.
- *Education*
  - **Sw29b** The State needs to develop a comprehensive water education program with demonstration applications such as the comprehensive integrated environmental research and education site (IERES-pronounced IRIS) at Oklahoma State University.

### **Economic Impacts**

- *Sales*
  - **SW8a** We must manage the water we have because we do have surplus, but we need to use it in a way that best serves all the people of Oklahoma especially rural Oklahoma. Municipalities need to remember that they get their water from rural Oklahoma and the economic poverty in those rural counties could have been lessened if they had received some benefits from the water they are sending to OKC. We need to address the beneficial use of water. The water plan must allow the watersheds to benefit from the value of that water. It should go back into the economic base of those counties. Water is crucial for economic growth and the plan does not need to take any water out of areas that would limit a county's ability to grow. We could sell 10% of our water and the economic benefit to the area will allow people to remain in some of the more economically challenged counties and bring in a large burst of capital to develop a future for Oklahoma.

### **Health**

- *Ecological*
  - **Sw6** The plan should consider how much water should be left in streams and rivers for fish and wildlife resources.
  - **Sw17b** I am concerned the petroleum industry will not use a sufficient amount of surface pipe [casing] to protect the groundwater or that they are not doing what they say they are doing.

### **Infrastructure**

- *Funding*
  - **Sw2** Will there be any grants opening up to replace older water systems? New treatment systems are needed for groundwater treatment. I would like to see more grant money from either federal or state sources made available to replace older equipment.
  - **Sw8c** The federal funding program for building new reservoirs has changed so 25% of the cost has to be provided up front [by local or state governments] and this limits rural areas as they often cannot come up with the required money.

- **Sw22a** More financing needs to be provided for the existing flood control dams in Oklahoma.
- *Maintenance*
  - **Sw4** The future of the aging flood control dams needs to be considered in the plan. There are over 2,100 of them in Oklahoma. With all the recent flooding, the one story that hasn't been told is how much flooding has been avoided due to these flood control dams. The dams only have a 50-year life span and many of them are reaching the end of their life cycle and we need to maintain them to protect lives. The dams should be cleaned out and more need to be built.
  - **Sw9** The plan should address flooding issues. I would like to see more cleaning out of rivers and drainage ditches.
  - **Sw23b** Flood control dams need to be repaired.
- *Needs*
  - **Sw11** Lake Carl Blackwell has created some of the current flooding problems in Stillwater due to the amount of water that comes over the spillway. Years ago, money was made available through a matching program and OSU chose not to participate. The money was to be used to correct the problem but they did not correct it and OSU needs to be held accountable for that.
  - **Sw19** The oil companies have drilled wells in the past (during the '20s) that were never plugged and this has affected the groundwater as it makes it too salty. This has limited the amount of water we have, and because of this, we need a rural water district in our area (Leland).

## **Planning**

- **Sw1** The plan should balance the needs of municipal and rural areas. How will we balance the two during the planning process? How will minority density areas needs be met and balanced with the municipal needs?
- **Sw25** Many states have already begun studies on water use, conservation, and priorities, especially Texas. Will this State study utilize the information developed in other states to facilitate and possibly improve the Oklahoma deliberations?
- **Sw28b** Four years [to complete the water plan]? Work quicker!
- *Priorities*
  - **Sw3** The State water plan's first priority should be to provide management contingencies for periods of extended droughts. I am concerned that Stillwater and surrounding areas will outgrow their water supply and the plan needs to focus on a 5 or 6 year drought.
  - **Sw7b** The use of water needs to be prioritized. Domestic use should be number one.
- *Public Participation*
  - **Sw13a** The plan is a demand plan and the area with the largest demand will get the most water. The plan has left out riparian owners in the planning process. The soil and conservation districts need to be included in the planning process as they can help facilitate discussions between riparian owners and others.
- *Regional Differences*
  - **Sw5b** The plan should compare the regional uses versus the regional availability.

## **Policy/Regulations**

- *Enforcement*
  - **Sw23a** The laws should be enforced on silt and runoff from construction sites.
- *State Regulations*
  - **Sw5a** The plan should require more metering on all wells and all uses.
  - **Sw7a** The OWRB needs to monitor the records of wells that are drilled and the use of that water. The OWRB receives the records but it appears they are not reviewed closely. They need to coordinate better with well drillers to understand where wells are being drilled and how those wells are used. This information could be used to determine the availability of groundwater in the areas where wells are being drilled.
- *State Statutes*
  - **Sw10** Oklahoma's groundwater law is designed to mine the water out of an aquifer and that law needs to be reviewed, as we need to sustain the aquifer instead of mine it.
  - **Sw16** We need to review the "use it or lose it" water laws for municipalities. Stillwater paid to build a lake and then lost it to another municipality. Stillwater now is going to have to replace water lines because they are having to transport water from another lake and have received little money for the water they lost from McMurtry. Stillwater also now has no backup water supply and the Lake was built to help with future expansion. We need to work together better.

## **Regionalization**

- **Sw5c** The plan should focus on regionalizing our public water systems.
- **Sw26** Is there a possibility that several municipalities could network together to create a "support" region? Create these regions across the State to "network" every municipality, community, and Rural Water District. This would be for public water supplies only, not irrigation. Each region to be supported by water wells and surface water.

## **Sales and Transfers**

- *Control*
  - **Sw15a** The state of Oklahoma owes \$60 million to the federal government for Lake Sardis and I am concerned that another state or another entity could pay off the debt and we could lose that water.
- *Interstate*
  - **Sw13b** The plan needs to start with a supply analysis as the federal government could step in and take our water out-of-state.

## **Water Rights**

- **Sw15bl** am concerned about private ownership of municipal water.
- *Native American*
  - **Sw8b** The Native American tribes must be included in any discussion about moving water out of a watershed and the planning process in general.
  - **Sw14** I would like to see the groundwater rights Logan County has purchased remain ours and I would like to see the legislature recognize the Tribal-State Water Compact. This affects rural Logan, Noble and Payne, Garfield, and Kingfisher counties

- **Sw20** The plan needs to work with Native Americans and the Bureau of Indian Affairs so the water they have can be made available to others in the area.

### ***Watershed Management***

- **Sw17c** The fertilizers being used in farming can affect the water supply. The rural water districts try to limit the impact but they can not control how much fertilizer is used.
- **Sw22b** We need to educate county commissioners on water quality as a lot of silt and pollution comes from mismanaged county roads.
- **Sw23c** County roads need bar ditches that work and drain properly to prevent washing out and protect water quality.
- **Sw24** I live in a flood plain. My house has flooded four times in its life. Two of those times were with my family living there this June. The 1st and 30th, we had 20"-23" in our house. The City [of Stillwater] cleaned and widened the channels under our bridge on Stillwater Creek. This helped tremendously! Although I feel there could be some work done upstream to help our water flow. We also need a drain in our yard to tie onto the street's storm drain. A new road was built in front of our house. It is higher than our driveway, creating a dam.
- **Sw28a** Developers have been allowed to change (raise areas of floodplain) to the detriment of others without protection or real study. It has caused backup of waters on my own land, as has raising roadbeds.

## **Water Uses**

### ***Agricultural Use***

- **Sw18** We need to keep in mind the farmers and ranchers need water as well. They need it for crops and livestock. They supply the cheeseburgers and steaks.

### ***Conservation Use***

- *Reuse*
  - **Sw29a** The State needs to develop a graywater management plan, especially important during drought periods.

### ***Ecological Use***

- *Habitat*
  - **Sw27** Is the OCWP going to consider how much water needs to be left in rivers and streams for environmental needs of fish and wildlife resources and other aquatic organisms?

## 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