

Local Input Meeting Report



#22

Shawnee, Oklahoma

**Gordon Cooper Vo-Tech
Seminar Center**

August 7, 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 |
|---------|--|---|
| 6:34 pm | Welcome | Joe Benton, Educator Pottawatomie County Cooperative Extension Service |
| 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 |
| 7:05 pm | Explanation of Packet | Jeri Fleming |
| 7:08 pm | Comments from the public | Public Participants |
| 8:50 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

Joe Benton, Pottawatomie County Extension Educator
Travis Hanks, Seminole County Extension Educator

Public Participants

64 citizens

Comments

Eighty-one 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

- *Local*
 - **Sh31b** Conduct “knowledge-sharing” with Public Works Departments throughout the State.
- *State*
 - **Sh10** The Wes Watkins reservoir is unusable for drinking water and I think the OWRB should share information and technical expertise with small communities to help provide solutions. The OWRB should coordinate the effort to visit with utility districts throughout the State and provide them with technical assistance and possibly sharing resources.

Conjunctive Management

- *Legislation*
 - **Sh3d** The current groundwater law needs to be looked at. Groundwater and surface water are linked.
- *Research*
 - **Sh34b** [The plan] must evaluate conjunctive use and how surface water and groundwater withdrawal affect each other.

Conservation

- **Sh3f** We need to work on the demand side and figure out how to reduce the amount of water we use.
- **Sh4b** We need to have a section in the plan about water conservation. Oklahoma is subject to drought often and the plan should be linked to a State drought management plan.
- *Education*
 - **Sh19** Education should start in the schools probably at the grade school level. We need to make sure the kids understand if we don't take care of it now, it won't be there later on. We really do need to protect our drinking water.
 - **Sh30c** Get the general public aware of potential water needs of Oklahoma through news media, etc.
 - **Sh33b** Educate and support water conservation at the individual level as well as the business (manufacturing, agriculture, etc.) level.
 - **Sh6c** We need to educate everybody about water conservation. We need to do it now because the population is growing and we can't keep it from growing.
 - **Sh7a** Part of education should include newscasts where water levels are reported and possibly forecasted from area wells. There should be websites designed for easy access by the media to gather information.
 - **Sh8a** The City of Shawnee does not have the resources to provide all of the conservation education needed. I would like to see some type of program made available to help communities with limited resources educate their citizens and help them make the necessary changes to help conserve water. There should be a fund available through the OWRB for education purposes in communities.

- **Sh9** There are several programs available for education in this State and it might be good for the Water Board to coordinate and bring together all of those into one place so they are more easily accessible. Education is the key to conservation.
- *Incentives*
 - **Sh34f** [The plan should] build in incentives for conservation practices prior to permitting.
 - **Sh8b** Cities and municipalities should be setting examples for their citizens by better regulating how they water their green areas. Underground irrigation should be encouraged through tax incentives for cities and golf courses (commercial, large scale users) and possibly private residences.
- *Research*
 - **Sh34e** [The State] needs a real time groundwater network so we understand recharge, vulnerability, and long-term changes of all our aquifers (not just once per year take down of information).
- *Sustainability*
 - **Sh11b** Instead of mining water, we need to look at sustainable yield.

Economic Impacts

- **Sh18b** We need to recognize the value water will have in the future both for population and economic development.
- *Regulation*
 - **Sh1b** We need to pool our resources with other municipalities in our area and educate our citizens that water is not cheap. The government standards are causing the cost of treatment to rise. Area communities need to come together to find other ways besides retail tax dollars to sustain us and even though this may not seem tied to water in the long run it is. And we need to realize we are all neighbors and that we can work together; collectively we can pool our dollars because the federal government is not going to provide the money.
 - **Sh20b** In the education process, we need to acknowledge that in order to provide potable water it is going to become more expensive due to more stringent regulations and municipalities need to be aware of this beforehand. They need to consider incremental rate increases now before they run into problems.
 - **Sh21** The national water quality standards are making it difficult for municipalities to make use of existing water supplies. The impact of a change in regulations needs to be taken into consideration prior to that change.
 - **Sh23** The testing technology is outstripping the treatment technology and this needs to be considered when federal regulations are being changed.

Infrastructure

- **Sh25b** I suggest that major road right-of-ways be utilized to construct pipelines; thereby, avoiding high costs of acquiring right-of-ways.
- *Needs*
 - **Sh13a** The biggest problem the state of Oklahoma has is distribution. Cooperation and distribution are key to supplying the entire State the water they need.
 - **Sh13b** The city of Shawnee has a problem with their distribution process. The City needs a pipeline instead of the current way they transport water from the Atoka line to the lake (running it into a dry creek bed then to the lake).

- **Sh18c** We do have issues with distribution and rather than send water out of state we need to get it where we need it.
- **Sh28a** We need a serious regional collaboration plan to retain more water in our area by developing approved and unapproved reservoirs like Parker and Tate Mountain which are fed by tributaries.

Planning

- **Sh17** We need to be farsighted for our children and great-grandchildren. Maybe we should look at what other states are doing to sustain their water supplies and maybe use some of that same information for Oklahoma.
- **Sh1a** It is important that we do a long-range plan especially because of the drought that we have been in.
- **Sh32** It's not as simple as drilling more wells or building new reservoirs. It's about managing the water we now have better. If you go to www.earth-policy.org, it is really alarming what's going on around the world with falling water tables, aquifer depletion, rivers going dry, levels of old lakes dropping substantially. I don't know if there is only so much water for us on this planet, but it appears it is decreasing. It is said that each reservoir we build will cause 10% more water to evaporate than when it is in its natural state. It all points to the fact that management should be a very big part of our plan and future. [The plan should include] 1.) Increased use of current groundwater and surface water supplies, 2.) Well field development, 3.) Dredging of existing reservoirs, 4.) Creation of new reservoirs, 5.) Municipal and agricultural conservation, 6.) Water reuse 7.) Transfer and acquisition of water rights, 8.) Inter-basin transfers, and 9.) Aquifer storage and recovery.
- **Sh3e** We need to think about the other people that use the water out of the aquifer including the affect on other states.
- *Interstate Cooperation*
 - **Sh18a** We need to be working with and learning from other states. But, I believe Oklahoma water belongs in Oklahoma.
 - **Sh2a** I am concerned that all the irrigation north of us [Oklahoma] will affect our aquifers and I wonder if there could be a way to work with other states on our water supply.
 - **Sh6d** I think we should look at other states and try to come up with an interstate regional plan.
- *Priorities*
 - **Sh2b** I do see a need to prioritize our water use and people should come first.
 - **Sh33a** Prioritize – People (using conservation) Agriculture (using planning and conservation methods.)
 - **Sh3g** Water use priority should list humans first, but we also need to remember wildlife.
- *Public Participation Process*
 - **Sh28b** We need more tribal input and collaboration especially concerning resource sharing.

Policy/Regulations

- **Sh29** We should push our State leaders to write the check for Sardis Lake. Don't let Texas have it.
- **Sh30a** The State should retain Sardis Lake rights. The legislature should find funding to make this possible.

- **Sh7b** The water plan needs to think about federal and State water quality standards. The regulations should have our best interest at heart. These are designed to protect our health and in the long run save us money.
- *Enforcement*
 - **Sh13c** The deep wells in the aquifers are the ones that are using more water than the domestic users – the shallow wells are not getting deep into the aquifers – this could be difficult to control.
 - **Sh14** There should be more teeth in the law or possibly fines for well drillers who do not report the wells they drill.
 - **Sh22** We need to monitor the oil companies to see what harm they are causing our water.
- *Federal Regulations*
 - **Sh20a** The federal government puts stipulations on use and development of new reservoirs that can create problems down the road.
 - **Sh24a** I support a lot of the new federal guidelines for drinking water standards.
- *State Regulations*
 - **Sh11a** The current groundwater law is a good law, but I also think all wells except domestic wells need to be metered.
 - **Sh12a** The current groundwater law that says you can take 2 acre-feet per acre of land if the aquifer has not been studied may need revision. All of the aquifers need to be studied prior to permitting and the permittees need to participate in this.
 - **Sh12b** I think all wells need to be permitted including domestic wells though domestic well permits could be automatic; this will give the OWRB a record of all wells.
 - **Sh12d** The spacing rule needs to be defined by the results of studies of the aquifers.
 - **Sh33c** Regulate high usage.
 - **Sh3c** Recreational use should be limited on reservoirs that are used for drinking water as the additional impact on the water makes it more expensive to treat.
 - *Permits*
 - **Sh34c** [The plan should] consider permitting on a seasonal vs. annual basis.
 - **Sh34d** [The plan] must determine a mechanism to prioritize permitting.
- *State Statutes*
 - **Sh11c** We should look at the current stream and surface water laws and reconsider the “use it or lose it” policy. It encourages waste through pumping to maintain that right. Changing this law would encourage conservation.
 - **Sh12c** There needs to be a definition of “wasting water.”
 - **Sh27b** Water resources used for fish and wildlife habitat should remain a beneficial use.

Regionalization

- **Sh13d** Sharing and regional cooperation is needed but all communities need to be involved.
- **Sh15** There is not enough distribution of water available in Pottawatomie County. There should be consolidation and cooperation of regional water supplies especially for the

small communities in this area. I have a vision for the future that we can come together and not be an “I” society.

- **Sh25a** Oklahoma is blessed with several major river watersheds and large impound lakes in eastern Oklahoma. A regional plan to benefit the greatest number of citizens in order that the impounded lake water can be tapped and delivered back upstream to municipalities would seem feasible. However, regional cooperation and cost sharing must occur.
- **Sh30b** Inter-connect all water systems as electric power companies do.
- **Sh36a** Regional planning, collaboration, and communication are necessary to be successful in distribution (and supply).
- **Sh4c** With our ability to pollute entire aquifers we need overlapping regional water plans to provide back-up supply for an area that loses its water source due to pollution of its current supply.

Sales and Transfers

- *Intrastate*
 - **Sh16a** Communities in central Oklahoma should be allowed to tap into the lakes in northeast Oklahoma that have excess water.

Water Treatment

- *Natural*
 - **Sh27a** The plan should recognize the importance of wetlands and the values they provide, specifically water quality and aquifer recharge.

Watershed Management

- **Sh16b** The watershed areas around the Shawnee Twin Lakes need to be protected to maintain a safe and adequate supply for all the communities these lakes serve.
- **Sh27c** The plan should recognize the importance of playas, beyond wildlife habitat, they are the primary source of recharge for the Ogallala Aquifer. Existing playas should be protected and the functions of altered playas restored, considering their importance to the Ogallala Aquifer.
- **Sh36b** Understanding of watersheds (may need research, education, and regulations) to maximize flow and minimize impact of development.
- **Sh5** The bio-fuel process uses lots of water in itself. There are other crops besides corn which would be good for Oklahoma (such as switchgrass) that produce higher yields and are less water demanding. Using other plants would give Oklahoma an advantage.

Water Sources

Climate

- **Sh3a** If we are going to predict what the water supply is going to be like in the future we should go beyond “it’s going to go up and down” to include global climate change. It would be good for the plan to consider what global weather models are predicting for the State. The State has resources available such as at OU and the National Weather Service for getting that information.

Groundwater

- *Both Quality and Quantity*
 - **Sh34h** We need a comprehensive study of groundwater quantity and quality.
- *Quantity*
 - **Sh34g** We need to do new aquifer studies. Many new models and technologies are now available. All of the studies/models done are old and we are still making permitting decisions with inappropriate assumptions. Couple these studies with enhancements and funding for groundwater and surface water monitoring.

Recycled Water

- **Sh31a** Perform research (and share results) on water re-use methods.

Surface Water

- *Quantity*
 - **Sh6a** I am concerned that the only water that comes into the lakes (Shawnee Twin Lakes) that supply Shawnee's water is rain. Several people have built ponds upslope that have limited any flow into the Lakes.

Water Uses

Agricultural Use

- *Biofuels Growth*
 - **Sh4a** I would like to see a section of the water plan linked to the national bio-fuels strategy specifically addressing the amount of water some bio-fuel crops use.

Ecological Use

- *Habitat*
 - **Sh34a** [The plan] must consider ecological flows.
 - **Sh3b** Humans are not the only organisms that use water and we need to make sure we don't completely appropriate all of the available fresh water. Humans use about 55% of fresh water.

Oil and Gas Use

- **Sh34i** [The plan should] consider water use by oil companies-both quantity and quality, e.g. it takes 5 million gallons of water to frac one well. Only a fraction is reused, and much is saline after use. This is fresh water they use.

Private Domestic Use

- **Sh26** Will you address the fresh water needs of rural residents who do not have good wells or access to a water district? This is a situation that exists in northern Pottawatomie County, with a number of residents who do not have good well water to draw from.

Recreation Use

- **Sh6b** I am concerned we have a recreation lake four miles away from our drinking water lake (Shawnee Twin Lakes) but people don't really use it because it's free to use the Twin Lakes. Our drinking water reservoir is getting close to 85 years old and is deteriorating. I would like to see education about not using lakes for recreation that supply drinking water – use lakes that are for that purpose.

Storage Use

- **Sh24b** When planning a new reservoir the use of the reservoir needs to be foremost in the planning process.

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