

# Local Input Meeting Report



**#26**

**Tulsa, Oklahoma**

**OSU-Tulsa**

**North Hall, Room 150**

**August 28, 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	Phil Pratt, Educator Tulsa 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
7:17 pm	Explanation of Packet	Jeri Fleming
7:19 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:20 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*

Phil Pratt, Tulsa County Extension Educator

##### *Public Participants*

39 citizens

#### Comments

Thirty-seven 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

- *Jurisdiction*
  - **Tu4a** The Verdigris River is a major water supply for Coweta and three other suppliers. They get their water out of oxbows off the river. The US Army Corps of Engineers is not maintaining the oxbows and water backs up into them. The jurisdiction over these oxbows needs to be clarified so that whoever does have jurisdiction will clean them out so water flows through them.
  - **Tu8** There should be some consistency in stream water permitting between GRDA and the OWRB. Maybe just one agency needs to do the permitting and it should be consistent across the state.
- *State*
  - **Tu3b** The geo-hydrology studies (major aquifer studies) the OWRB uses are obsolete. The science on the groundwater in the State needs to be updated and the current information the OWRB has is not accurate. OWRB is continuing to do massive water allocation based on obsolete information and this is causing massive harm in some instances and gives our elected officials the wrong information about what is available for the future.

### Conjunctive Management

- **Tu5b** You can not develop a good plan or policy if you do not recognize the connection between ground and surface water.

### Conservation

- **Tu10a** Conservation needs to be encouraged. Cities operate on [depend on the income from] how much water they sell. They need to figure out some other way to support their infrastructure [and promote conservation rather than water consumption].
- **Tu11e** Emphasis should be placed on using best practices to conserve and reuse water to optimize its value.
- *Incentives*
  - **Tu13b** Could we please reward sustainable development and building? Increase prices of water for non-food uses and for unsustainable homes and buildings?
- *Sustainability*
  - **Tu11a** What seems drastically missing currently is sustainable, long-term planning. I would emphasize caution over the current emphasis of using as much as possible. Permits should not be made available for drawing down aquifers in a way that will deplete them in a short time. A standard of at least 100 years should be established, making sure that the aquifers will be still usable in 100 years.
- *Technology*
  - **Tu10b** Consider codes that make it mandatory to have rain sensors on irrigation systems and codes for low-flow toilets in new developments and remodels.

## **Economic Impacts**

- *Sales*
  - **Tu7a** The concern about selling water to Texas is not fear driven it is fact driven. The area that would be selling water is very poor, and selling the water to Texas will prevent taking people off the welfare rolls, and lock the area into their 1980 standard of living.

## **Health**

- *Ecological*
  - **Tu11c** One of my main priorities is the natural environment. We need to place great value on wetlands and streams that remain pristine, and; therefore, useful in naturally filtering our water supplies AND supporting wildlife. Wildlife is a magnificent resource in Oklahoma, for its own sake, as well as hunting/fishing, tourism, etc.
  - **Tu12** Very informative presentation and materials. The idea of a baseline for streams seems like a good one to me. It may be difficult to know what stream to use, but is worth pursuing. (This is a second to comment #Tu6c.)

## **Planning**

- **Tu3a** The plan needs to be done more quickly. There are two competing interests for Oklahoma's water. Texas and Texas. Southeastern Oklahoma will become a water plantation for Dallas if the plan isn't done until 2011.
- *Priorities*
  - **Tu11b** Priorities should be firmly established to ensure that drinking water comes first, then wildlife resources and agriculture, and lastly industry. Recreation should be a very low priority as well!
- *Public Participation Process*
  - **Tu1** According to the OWRB presentation [at the meeting], you already have all the information you need to do the plan. By the time you get this to the legislature and the governor it will take 6 years. Do the plan, then submit it for comments, and this will take less than 6 years.
  - **Tu2a** Tulsa has water supplies and owns land in other regions (counties); can we participate in the regional meetings where we own land?
- *Regional Differences*
  - **Tu6b** I would like to point out the importance of water resources in the rural areas.
  - **Tu9** I like that fact that GRDA does the permitting within their jurisdiction, because it keeps things more regional. We need to recognize the uniqueness of the various regions of the State and manage them in the best way possible.

## **Policy/Regulations**

- **Tu2c** Several Indian tribes have applied for Treatment as a State to set their own water quality standards. The plan should recognize that if the tribes have stricter standards this could cause problems (with compliance). The plan should provide a way to reconcile State water quality standards with those of the tribes if the tribes have stricter standards.
- *Enforcement*
  - **Tu2e** TMDLs and non-point source discharge – there should be some State legislation to allow for the enforcement of TMDLs particularly on sensitive water supplies.

- **Tu3d** The OWRB does not give the proper oversight to water use in our State. Also Arkansas and Louisiana have jump started irrigation projects with the Red River water but in Oklahoma the waters are locked up in allocations for Texas and this is a major misallocation of our water resources.
- *Federal Regulations*
  - **Tu2d** Urban areas do encroach on rural water districts and there should be some recognition in the plan that if the rural water district can not meet the increased demand then the urban area should be allowed to take over that service.
- *State Regulations*
  - **Tu5c** Without metering irrigation wells we don't know how much is coming out for agricultural use; therefore, metering is important not just in the west but for the entire State.
  - **Tu6e** Municipalities should not be allowed to self-report. There should be monitored meters on their pumps.
  - **Tu7b** We need to get the market values of water into the plan. There are different values for different uses. (for example waterstrageis.com the site reports various water prices) OWRB cannot sell the water, they can allocate it and then someone else sells it and makes huge profits. There needs to be a pricing mechanism put in place to protect Oklahomans' interests.
  - *Taxes*
    - **Tu10c** Mandate excessive fines for pollutes of our rivers. We are looking at development of the Arkansas River that is too dangerous to swim in?
  - *Water Rights*
    - **Tu2b** I am concerned about our stream water rights being taken away if stream water appropriation is changed.
- *State Statutes*
  - **Tu3c** The plan should look at futuristic uses of water in Oklahoma. We are not utilizing our water to its best economic benefit for our citizens. For example, we are using water to wash rocks that go to Texas TAX FREE.

## **Regionalization**

- *Incentives*
  - **Tu5a** It is important to recognize cities and towns provide water for the vast majority of the population that will be affected by this plan. There should be some incentives given to regionalization. More and more there are going to be pressures on growing metropolitan areas to serve areas that are served by rural districts. There should be some way to consume those rural districts to provide lower cost water.

## **Sales and Transfers**

- *Interstate*
  - **Tu5d** It is very important for all of us to not get caught up in the fear of water going to Texas and it is more important for us to make sure we have enough for ourselves. And then sell it to Texas so our State gets a benefit.
  - **Tu11d** Water should not be seen as a commodity that is sold off to other states (e.g. Texas) and low-value industry (e.g. quarries).

## Water Security

- *Disasters*
  - **Tu4b** The Verdigris River supports a large amount of barge traffic and industrial facilities. There needs to be an early warning system for cities (who get there water supply from the river), if there is any kind of chemical discharge into the water.

## Water Sources

### Climate

- **Tu13a** Please discuss the effects of global warming/climate change in the report, i.e. by 2050 it is projected western Oklahoma will be a desert.

## Water Uses

### Ecological Use

- *Research*
  - **Tu6c** As we begin to tap into rural water resources more and more I would like to see one stream representative of each ecosystem designated as a reference stream uncompromised in chemical, physical and biological integrity (such as Spring Creek).

### Mining Use

- **Tu6d** The Martin Marrietta rock quarry in the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer is wrong!

### Public Domestic Use

- *Rural Water Districts*
  - **Tu6a** Rural water districts are outdated. They need to get off the small streams. They are unchecked, and they need to get on dependable and sustainable water supplies and then distribute that water through their current systems. They also need to plan for future growth.
- *Municipalities*
  - **Tu14** The City of Kellyville's water is not good. I live by Hulah Lake and I see big chlorine trucks go by my house, which is near the water treatment plant. The problem with Kellyville is they won't do anything like pass a bond issue.

## 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