

Local Input Meeting Report



#3

Woodward, Oklahoma

City of Woodward

Pioneer Room

April 26, 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
6:35 pm	Welcome	Terry Nelson, Educator Woodward County Cooperative Extension Service C.J. Montgomery President, Woodward Chamber of Commerce Lavern Phillips President, Woodward Industrial Foundation
6:50 pm	Purpose of Meeting and Introduction of Staff	Mike Langston, Assistant Director Water Research Institute
6:55 pm	Water Challenges in Oklahoma	Dave Dillon, Water Plan Coordinator Oklahoma Water Resources Board
7:20 pm	Explanation of Meeting Process	Mike Langston
7:25 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:45 pm	Meeting adjourned	

Attendees

Water Research Institute Staff

Mike Langston, Assistant Director
Jeri Fleming, Communications Specialist
Alison Stone, Administration Specialist

Oklahoma Water Resources Board Staff

Dave Dillon, Water Plan Coordinator

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Staff

Terry Nelson, Woodward County Extension Educator

Public Participants

92 citizens

Comments

Fifty-two 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*
 - **Ww17** We should continue and enhance federal and State programs that provide financial assistance for conservation practices.
 - **Ww40** Concerned about unfunded mandates for city and town water supply.
 - **Ww49** Federally funded programs such as CREP, 319 and EQIP help improve water quality. State funds should also be used to help fund similar programs
- *State*
 - **Ww8** Have any studies been done on allocation of water in this region? Two-acre feet is more water than is actually received in annual rainfall mainly on the North Canadian River.
 - **Ww54** We are confused about the number of agencies in our State that appear to have some authority or impact on Oklahoma water usage. A study could be done to find the most efficient way for State agencies to give the best service to Oklahoma citizens.

Conjunctive Management

- *Research*
 - **Ww11** Have there been any studies done on stream flow and its relation to groundwater – particularly on Beaver River?
 - **Ww31b** The plan should study the relationship between ground and surface water.

Conservation

- **Ww16** I want to be able to use conservation measures (ex. farm ponds) to keep water on private property in order to help enhance the land.
- **Ww37** What about conserving water and enforcement of conservation restrictions?
- *Education*
 - **Ww19a** Education is critical for conservation management.
 - **Ww31a** The plan should encourage education on best management practices.
- *Research*
 - **Ww19b** Possibly the State could conduct regional studies to develop the best plans for accomplishing good conservation practices.
 - **Ww47** In assessing future water quantity, the Board should consider how soil and water conservation efforts affect the quantity. Evidence shows invasive species, particularly salt and red cedars soak up a lot of water.
 - **Ww50** I would encourage the Board to work with the USDA and Oklahoma Conservation Commission in helping to assess the effects of conservation efforts on future water availability and quality.
- *Technology*
 - **Ww18b** In regards to urban areas we should change the types of grasses used or the way landscaping is done to promote conservation.

- **Ww18c** In farming practices, conservation measures could be used to help conserve water. For example, growing profitable crops that use less water.
- **Ww48** Farming techniques could be used to help conserve water such as no till or diversifying crops

Health

- *Ecological*
 - **Ww1** I'm concerned about old abandoned wells not being plugged as this can cause contamination of the groundwater. Landowners should seal the wells themselves.

Infrastructure

- *Maintenance*
 - **Ww5** Has there been a study done about revitalizing our lakes, such as dredging or fixing the dam particularly Lake Ft. Supply?

Planning

- **Ww33** The plan should consider realistic changes in technologies, land use, crops, industry and how that will affect water.
- **Ww39** I would like to see the plan based on good science, not just a plan for the sake of having a plan.
- **Ww43** We should get information about how other states are handling the same problems we face.
- *Interstate Cooperation*
 - **Ww21** Oklahoma should work with other states to make sure the water we save benefits our State.
 - **Ww53** We encourage a study on both ground and surface water flow into Oklahoma from other states. The study should look at what steps Oklahoma could take in working with other states to protect our continuing ability to obtain such water.
- *Regional Differences*
 - **Ww22** Will the plan be set up to manage different districts and run by people who consider the entire district? I'm concerned that the plan recognize regional differences.
- *Research*
 - **Ww20** It is important that hydrological studies be done on all major aquifers and law changes should be based on that science.
 - **Ww52** We encourage more research into hydraulic flow of groundwater. Some studies indicate that water levels in the Ogallala are dropping, whereas in our experience our water wells are rising. More studies should be done to ascertain reasonable flow levels in various areas rather than a "one size fits all" approach.

Policy/Regulations

- **Ww18a** In Oklahoma, voluntary approaches work better than coercion. Individuals and regions could change their own practices without regulations. Local, regional individual control may be a better way to go than state-wide mandates but some oversight may be necessary.

- *Enforcement*
 - **Ww3** I am concerned that wells are not monitored except by the individual landowners and then it is just an estimate. There should be some regulatory enforcement regarding how much water is being used from a well.
 - **Ww12** I'm concerned there are unlicensed well drillers and pump installers working in the State and the laws that are in place need to be enforced.
- *State Regulations*
 - **Ww38** You should have oil and gas operators plug water wells when they have finished with drilling and completing of wells.
 - **Ww44** There is a double standard in place – a business using water in rural areas would have to have a permit while the same business in the city limits wouldn't need any.
 - *Permits*
 - **Ww10** It seems that current policy is more of a right-of-capture plan than a permitting plan.
 - **Ww29b** It should be made clear how many wells are currently being used and what they are used for. Water well permits should be specified as to their use.
 - **Ww46** The definition of domestic use is outdated. The "no-permit" allowance to surface owners should be at least ½ acre foot times acres used.
- *State Statutes*
 - **Ww9** The current law allows an aquifer to be drawn down over a 20-year period and that is short-sighted when looking at a 50-year plan.

Sales and Transfers

- **Ww30** The State should look at both intrastate and interstate water movement.
- *Interstate*
 - **Ww25** Interstate water sales are a concern to me.
- *Intrastate*
 - **Ww4** I am concerned that Oklahoma City decreased water levels in Lake Canton and Ft. Supply to fill their lakes for recreation purposes, and then not enough water is left for recreation or family time in the other two lakes.
 - **Ww7** We need to figure out how to either import water or stop water from flowing out-of-state in order to meet increased demand while the supply remains constant.
 - **Ww15** The plan should include recommendations about what steps should be taken regarding water flowing out of Oklahoma to other states and within the State itself.
 - **Ww27** We should consider moving water from eastern Oklahoma to central and western Oklahoma
 - **Ww45** Absolutely do not allow eastern Oklahoma's water abundance go out-of-state when western Oklahoma could use it.

Water Rights

- *Permitted Water Rights*
 - **Ww32** When does Oklahoma City's water rights to the surface water in western Oklahoma expire?

- *Private Property Rights*
 - **Ww6** I'm concerned that groundwater rights will be decreased during the planning process.
 - **Ww41** I'm concerned about retaining our water rights.
 - **Ww51** If the drought does continue, surface water becomes less available and ranchers and farmers then must rely more on groundwater. Landowners need assurances that current rights and ownership of both surface and groundwater on the land will be maintained.

Water Sources

Groundwater

- *Quantity*
 - **Ww42** Are we over-using our groundwater?

Surface Water

- *Quantity*
 - **Ww2** Have any studies on permits of water allocation on the Cimarron and North Canadian been done?

Water Uses

Agricultural Use

- **Ww28** I'm concerned if restrictions on water use are put in place, agriculture might be hit first.
- **Ww35** What about pollution from hog farms?

Oil and Gas Use

- **Ww29a** Is there a study that shows how much water the oil and gas industry uses?

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