

Local Input Meeting Report



#31

Pryor, Oklahoma
Northeast Technology Center
Seminar Center
September 20, 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
6:36 pm	Welcome	Michael Rose, Educator Mayes County Cooperative Extension Service
6:38 pm	Purpose of Meeting and Introduction of Staff	Mike Langston, Assistant Director Water Research Institute
6:54 pm	Water Challenges in Oklahoma	Dave Dillon, Director of Water Planning Oklahoma Water Resources Board
7:32 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:34 pm	Meeting adjourned	

Attendees

Water Research Institute Staff

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

Oklahoma Water Resources Board Staff

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

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Staff

Michael Rose, Mayes County Extension Educator
Vernon Scogin, Rogers County Extension Educator
Roy Ball, Craig County Extension Educator

Public Participants

28 citizens

Comments

Forty-eight comments were received from the meeting participants. Comments were submitted both orally and by comment card. The comments are organized alphabetically by topic. Each comment is preceded by a unique identification number that will remain with the comment throughout the process. *Additional comments were submitted online to the website and are not included below; however, there is a separate report that lists all comments received through the website, by fax, mail and phone.*

Water Management

Agencies

- *Funding*
 - **Pr24c** There should be more funding, or help with funding, for the upkeep of mapping and hydrological modeling, and each generation [of the map or modeling] thereafter.
- *Jurisdiction*
 - **Pr7** Does the OWRB have any say over the water in Lake Hudson and the other lakes GRDA controls? If you are going to conduct this type of research, everyone should be on the same page, and I don't think that's happening. I think the GRDA needs to be subject to the state's Comprehensive Water Plan. GRDA should not have any more rights than anyone else.
 - **Pr11** I am concerned about the control GRDA has over surface water.
 - **Pr21h** It is good that GRDA does permitting within their jurisdiction because it keeps things localized.

Conservation

- **Pr20c** The CWP [Comprehensive Water Plan] should consider additional methods to conserve, recycle, and curb household use (watering lawns with treated water, etc.).
- **Pr21g** We should require rural water districts to implement water use restrictions during high water use and drought periods.
- *Education*
 - **Pr21b** The plan should require conservation education in all school and communities to increase awareness.
- *Incentives*
 - **Pr25e** Consider potential tax credits for households that use water saving devices.
- *Technology*
 - **Pr21f** We should require moisture/rain sensors for irrigation and licensing for irrigation contractors.

Health

- *Ecological*
 - **Pr4a** Spring Creek is one of the few natural Ozark springs that has not been dammed and has been used as a reference stream both by OSU and NSU. I do not want to see it dammed.
 - **Pr3b** We pay a lot of tax money to Mayes County. Our property values have increased mainly due to the pristine nature of Spring Creek and it needs protection. We would like to see Spring Creek used as a reference stream and thus, have extra protection. We are concerned about our water quality and water supply for recreation and wildlife.
- *Human*
 - **Pr1** The city of Wagoner has a lot of problems with water quality and they are constantly sending out boil notices. What can be done about that?

Infrastructure

- *Funding*
 - **Pr2c** The federal government has imposed new caps on the size of grants for water infrastructure that are much lower than previously. This seriously limits the ability of municipalities and rural water districts to update their infrastructure.
 - **Pr2b** Much of the State's water infrastructure was designed for a 40-year life span and many are now 50 and 60 years old. They are going to have to be repaired and this will be expensive.
 - **Pr12** I would like to see the Comprehensive Plan address the co-existence of agriculture and water quality issues. We need to take a hard look at possible public funding for infrastructure (a slurry pipeline) to take chicken litter from eastern to western Oklahoma. Litigation is a poor solution.
- *Maintenance*
 - **Pr16** Sediment is the biggest pollutant on our planet. All of the things we have talked about over the past 50 years regarding sediment need to be remembered. We need to keep in the mind the EPA requirements for new construction and what is done when the topsoil is removed. Sediment is not supposed to get in our water systems and storm sewers, but it does.
- *Needs*
 - **Pr24a** We need additional sources (built in regions).
 - **Pr24d** Agencies should use a sensible, common sense, and logical approach in helping systems achieve their water supply goals, not political or above reproach attitudes.

Planning

- **Pr25a** Non-biased Plan – OWRB's goal should be to prepare a non-biased plan when it comes to the cities and rural water districts. As a consulting engineer, I've had the opportunity to work for both large and small cities and rural water districts. It has been my experience that the so-called "PROBLEM" between cities and rural water districts is founded more in greed than anything else. The cities, just like the rural water districts, need to run their individual utility services- each like the individual businesses they are. If they set their rates properly and make good business decisions (e.g.; let private development pay for itself) then there won't be any need to worry about the adjacent rural water districts.
- **Pr3a** Is the GRDA collaborating with OWRB in this planning effort? For example, are they monitoring water flow and sharing that information. Are they (GRDA) as concerned as the State is about water quality?
- **Pr13b** My concern is that if you don't have the groundwork for the infrastructure study laid now, it will cause problems down the road. There is no consistency regarding the formatting of the infrastructure data [such as the computer program that holds the GIS data].
- **Pr21j** GRDA and US Army Corps of Engineers should be required to participate in the OCWP.
- *Interstate Cooperation*
 - **Pr13a** We need to remember a lot of our water comes out of Kansas. They talk about not sending water to us like we talk about not sending water to Texas and we need to

look at this. The plan needs to look at the source of our water and to do this we need to look at other states.

- **Pr15** I am concerned about the water quality coming into our State from other states. Most of the pollutants coming into Grand Lake are coming from agriculture production in other states (Kansas). We need to look at those other states and their water quality as well.
- **Pr20a** The CWP [Comprehensive Water Plan] should take into consideration what is happening in other states (Ag, manufacturing, other industry, etc.) that may be affecting/might affect our water supply.
- **Pr20d** We need to look at surrounding states' CWP [Comprehensive Water Plan].
- *Public Participation Process*
 - **Pr4b** I think the Tribes need to be involved in the planning process. The Cherokee Nation has had a program in place where they would test people's well water and found that an unusually high percentage of the wells were contaminated.
 - **Pr22** Representatives of the US Army Corps of Engineers and GRDA and other control authorities would be good candidates to attend Regional Input Meetings.
 - **Pr26** Are they, the Water Board, really going to listen to what the people say? I mean, aren't they just going to do what they want anyway? I see it happen all the time where the legislature asks the people what they want, but go and do what they [the legislature] want. So, after many times of that happening, you just get to the point where you say, "What's the point of even trying? My opinion doesn't matter anyway."
- *Research*
 - **Pr21k** The State needs to research the best possible way to permit.

Policy/Regulations

- *Federal Regulations*
 - **Pr2a** Some of the State's drinking water quality problems are not really due to bad water but because of the EPA's more stringent regulations and the inability of some systems to test for new contaminants.
 - **Pr24b** Unfunded mandates from EPA are out of control. Please give feedback to EPA.
- *State Regulations*
 - **Pr5b** The quality of bottled water needs to be regulated by the State. The plan should identify where the bottled water comes from.
 - **Pr25c** Water Rights – As I understand it, the current OWRB rules regarding the allocation of water rights (ground and surface water) allow a user to keep his allocation as long as he/she can show increasing beneficial use every seven (7) years. Having no flexibility in this rule has given some of the largest water systems an unfair advantage. It has forced systems in adjacent growth areas to develop new sources that would not have been their first choice. We believe that a more flexible allocation/re-allocation rule must be developed and implemented.
- *Water Rights*
 - **Pr10** I think water supply should be taken out of reservoirs instead of streams now and in the future. It is my understanding that the Peggs Water District is taking water out of Spring Creek to meet the needs of a growing population. I think it should be in "the plan" to take this water from a reservoir (i.e. Ft. Gibson) which is a reliable water source (and not a creek) and does not "punish" those downstream.

- **Pr5a** First and foremost, I would like to see the plan take into consideration public water rights; specifically how the state of Oklahoma controls entities' rights to process raw water. There is a 1960's Supreme Court case [U.S. Government v. GRDA 1960] that stripped GRDA of its rights to the water in Ft. Gibson. I would like to see the legislature take on the water rights. Water rights need to be spelled out specifically so the federal courts can not come in and change things. It is going to become vitally important especially in light of other states wanting our water, we need to care of our own first. Then we will let anyone else have what's left - at a premium price, of course!

Regionalization

- **Pr25b** Regionalization – Regionalization is a great concept but it won't work everywhere. Unfortunately local politics will likely complicate, if not kill, this opportunity anywhere it is identified. I've seen it happen. Water quality also deteriorates with age. This is not conducive to large regional systems unless the distribution systems are optimized. If the political barriers can somehow be overcome, we would suggest that the OWRB consider how the existing water systems in each region are performing both operationally and financially. Dig deep and you'll likely find that the best operated systems have the most skilled individuals and a council/board and manager that runs the system like a business.

Sales and Transfers

- *Interstate*
 - **Pr9** We should not sell water out-of-state without making sure we have taken care of our own. I don't want to see other states come in and purchase our water through the US Army Corps of Engineers rather than our State agencies. Once the people in Rogers County have enough, the people in Wagoner County have enough, then sell the rest.
 - **Pr20b** The CWP [Comprehensive Water Plan] should consider whether Oklahoma should sell water to other states for profit.
 - **Pr21e** We should avoid out-of-state water transfers.
- *Intrastate*
 - **Pr8b** The water in this region should stay in this region to meet the needs for future growth.

Water Rights

- *Permitted Water Rights*
 - **Pr8a** If a water district does not have a treatment plant and they want to get water out of a reservoir, do they have to prove they are using it or can they send it to a treatment plant for treatment? I'm concerned that GRDA could sell a water right out from under a district in this area just because they don't have a treatment plant.

Watershed Management

- **Pr17** The homes that are built right on Grand Lake and the septic systems for those homes also contribute to the pollution in the Lake. It is going directly into the water.
- **Pr23** 2007 Status Report page 7 omitted Lake Optima. Why? If you are not going to use the project as intended, then give the land back to the original landowner.

Water Uses

Conservation Use

- *Reuse*
 - **Pr21c** Encourage the reuse of treated effluent for irrigation.
 - **Pr21d** Reuse of storm water should be encouraged.
 - **Pr25d** Water Re-use – Water re-use needs to be heavily emphasized in the plan. Let's quit using high quality potable drinking water to irrigate our lawns.

Storage Use

- **Pr14** Maybe we should look at how other states are replenishing their groundwater. For example, California is using treated wastewater to replenish their aquifers.

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