

# Local Input Meeting Report



**#4**

**Alva, Oklahoma**

**Woods County Fairgrounds**

**Women's Building**

**May 3, 2007**

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	Kourtney Coats, Educator Woods County Cooperative Extension Service
6:40 pm	Purpose of Meeting and Introduction of Staff	Mike Langston, Assistant Director Water Research Institute
6:45 pm	Water Challenges in Oklahoma	Derek Smithee, Water Quality Programs Division Chief Oklahoma Water Resources Board
7:05 pm	Explanation of Meeting Process	Mike Langston
7:25 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:25 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*

Derek Smithee, Water Quality Programs Division Chief

##### *Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Staff*

Karen Armbruster, Woods County Extension Educator  
Kourtney Coats, Woods County Extension Educator

##### *Public Participants*

38 citizens

#### Comments

Thirty-four 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*
  - **Av3** The revolving fund at the OWRB should have adequate funding to allow cities to borrow the lower interest rate money.
  - **Av11** The state/federal government should make it easier to access monetary assistance to dredge ponds during dry periods.

### Conservation

- **Av1** The OWRB should have a very active conservation plan. People should be forced to participate in a water conservation plan.
- **Av28** Water conservation and quality issues are being properly addressed by western Oklahomans and this should be made more clear Statewide.

### Economic Impacts

- **Av6** During the drought of 2006/2007 the Great Salt Plains basically lost all the fish in the Lake due to it drying up. As a result, ecotourism has dried up in western parts of the State. Also silting in the lakes has limited the amount of water storage. OKC has pulled out too much water to feed their lakes leaving boat docks in Lake Canton unusable. I am concerned about the impacts on both recreation and ecology.
- *Population Change*
  - **Av29** Where there is water there are communities. If western Oklahoma had more water, then more people may move to this area.
- *Recreation*
  - **Av17** The Army Corp of Engineers has abandoned Lake Optima and that has hurt tourism opportunities. Picnic tables and camping areas have been removed or are unusable.

### Infrastructure

- *Funding*
  - **Av30** Some type of funding needs to be made available for addressing our aging rural water systems.
- *Needs*
  - **Av4** More reservoirs should be built to help retain water flowing through the State so it stays in the State. A study should be done in western Oklahoma regarding building reservoirs here to keep the water and make surface water available to take pressure off groundwater sources and this could contribute to recharge.
  - **Av12** We need more reservoirs or farm ponds to both capture the water and prevent flooding downstream.
  - **Av18** Red Horse Creek and Salt Fork River have been suggested as possible reservoir locations.
  - **Av20** In order to reduce salinity in the Cimarron River we could revisit the idea of bypassing salt deposits in the Great Salt Plains by diverting water.

- **Av31** Groundwater may not be good enough for drinking water in most of Alfalfa County and therefore they must rely more on rural water systems. Therefore, rural water systems are crucial.

### **Planning**

- **Av23** Oklahoma should really look into the future during the planning process and do what is right. We should use some foresight similar to what Robert S. Kerr did.
- **Av24a** Planning for the future needs to address municipal supplies and needs. It should not be urban versus rural; it should be balanced.
- *Priorities*
  - **Av24b** The State needs to set priorities for water use putting people first, economy, then recreational.
- *Regional Differences*
  - **Av26** Rules for water use may need to be regionalized because the use and resources are different in different parts of the state.
  - **Av27** Rural Oklahoma must be heard and not ignored by Tulsa and OKC and they should not be the only areas planned for.
- *Research*
  - **Av25** Hydrological studies of all aquifers need to be done and completed in order to plan into the future.

### **Policy/Regulations**

- *State Regulations*
  - **Av2** All groundwater users should be metered.
  - **Av5** Farmers should cut back on fertilizer to keep our groundwater safer. Possibly the State should enact rules to help balance the groundwater pollution from fertilizer with farming needs. Fertilizer is contributing to nitrates in groundwater.
  - *Permits*
    - **Av9** Oil and gas drilling companies should have to produce a floodplain-drilling permit or exemption before they apply for/receive a drilling permit. Improper drilling on a floodplain could cause groundwater contamination.

### **Sales and Transfers**

- *Intrastate*
  - **Av8** We should revisit transferring water from eastern Oklahoma to western Oklahoma.

### **Watershed Management**

- **Av13** I am concerned that the red cedars, salt cedars and honey locust are stopping the flow of water and there should be a way to remove them efficiently.
- **Av21** Urban areas and golf courses over-use herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers. The farmers get a bad rap for this type of contamination and it does not all come from the farms.
- **Av32** We need to make sure abandoned oil well sites are cleaned up and wells sealed. Working with the OERB is important to get this done.

## Water Sources

### ***Both Groundwater and Surface Water***

- *Quality*
  - **Av19** I'm concerned about groundwater and surface quality due to increased herbicide use.

### ***Groundwater***

- *Quality*
  - **Av15** Drilling mud with excessive chloride is being spread on the ground (soil farming) and that could contaminate the groundwater.
- *Quantity*
  - **Av10** Is it necessary to keep issuing permits for irrigation from groundwater? It may be time to slow the pace of withdrawals.
  - **Av33** I am concerned about aquifer depletion in light of the fact that recharge rates are slow.

## Water Uses

### ***Hydropower Use***

- **Av14** We should make better use of hydroelectric power opportunities on reservoirs in western Oklahoma.

### ***Oil and Gas Use***

- **Av22** Concerned that the gypsum rock used for roads to drilling operations will melt during rains and contaminate both ground and surface water.

### ***Storage Use***

- **Av7** We need to find a way to capture water during the rainy times to use throughout the year.
- **Av16** We should consider using Lake Optima as a place to store water that could be pumped from another area.

## 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