

Local Input Meeting Report



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Sayre, Oklahoma
Western Technology Center
Conference Center
May 8, 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	Greg Hartman, Educator Beckham 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
8:15 pm	Meeting adjourned	

Attendees

Water Research Institute Staff

Dr. Will Focht, Director
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

Greg Hartman, Beckham County Extension Educator
Danny Cook, Roger Mills County Extension Educator

Public Participants

28 citizens

Comments

Thirty-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*
 - **Sa25** The State should consider funding for exploratory water well drilling.
- *Rural Water Districts*
 - **Sa4** I'm concerned about the expansion of rural water systems. The rural water systems may be drawing too much water and sending it to other communities thereby expanding their authority.

Conservation

- **Sa10** Everyone should use water efficiently.
- *Education*
 - **Sa20** The education that is available including the rural water districts' program should be promoted.
 - **Sa14** Education is important to include in K-12, as well as, to adults regarding availability, quality and conservation of water resources.
 - **Sa30** "Celebrate Water Day" should be expanded to increase awareness of water issues in Oklahoma. This education should be done now.
- *Research*
 - **Sa31** The State should develop a stream and lake biodiversity database for Oklahoma housed in one location to be shared by people doing aquatic studies.
- *Technology*
 - **Sa11** We should encourage xeriscaping in towns to help conserve water.
 - **Sa28** The State should consider developing markets for profitable crops that require little water to grow.

Economic Impacts

- **Sa24** I'm concerned about the loss of industry in small towns due to the quality of water.
- *Development*
 - **Sa12** Tie development to the available water to ensure there is enough water for everyone.

Infrastructure

- *Funding*
 - **Sa7** I'm concerned that smaller communities have to deal with unfunded mandates and can't meet water quality standards due to lack of funds or increasing cost of potable water. I would like to see some sort of funding program to meet those needs.
 - **Sa23** Very small communities can't afford to clean the nitrates out of their drinking water. If they are not close to other communities, it may be difficult for them to cooperate with others, so there should be some type of exemption or help with funding for them.

- *Needs*
 - **Sa27** There should be some place for water plant operators to call with a problem to find help regarding treatment plant questions without being drug over the coals – both drinking and wastewater plants. There should also be expansion of existing programs such as those of the OML and ORWA.
 - **Sa18** Additional reservoirs should be built to trap the water here for both use and to help recharge the aquifers.

Planning

- *Priorities*
 - **Sa6** There should be programs to set priorities for water use during drought periods. Find some way to balance the uses.

Policy/Regulations

- *Federal Regulations*
 - **Sa26** DEQ [EPA] should reconsider their nitrate level requirements and roll it back from 10 to 15 ppm. It makes it very difficult for all systems to meet those requirements.
- *State Regulations*
 - **Sa5** Would like to see less stringent regulations for getting construction permits to reuse treated wastewater.
 - **Sa3a** I'm concerned about the disparity between the regulation of irrigation wells and municipal wells. The irrigation wells don't seem to be regulated/metered but municipal wells are closely regulated.
 - *Water Rights*
 - **Sa8** I'm concerned about a municipality coming in to take water rights by eminent domain.
 - **Sa9** I would like to see some type of law to protect irrigators' and other private citizens' water rights.

Regionalization

- *Funding*
 - **Sa22** There should be some regionalization of smaller water systems and government funding assistance should be greater for those systems. Consolidation helps spread the cost and makes it more cost effective.

Sales and Transfers

- **Sa2** I'm concerned about Boone Pickens purchasing water rights in Texas and that he will buy water rights in Oklahoma.
- *Interstate*
 - **Sa1** I am concerned about selling water to Texas. We should not sell Oklahoma water to Texas

Water Treatment

- *Artificial*
 - **Sa21** Is there a way to make the desalinization plants smaller and more cost effective?

Watershed Management

- **Sa29** Prohibit development and farming along the edge of streams and other water bodies. The goal is to reduce sedimentation.

Water Sources

Groundwater

- *Quality*
 - **Sa3b** I'm concerned about both groundwater withdrawal and pollution from farming being carried to the aquifer by irrigation.

Recycled Water

- *Waste Water*
 - **Sa17** I would suggest that wastewater treatment plant effluent could be supplied to ethanol plants to conserve water.

Water Uses

Commercial Use

- **Sa15** I am concerned about the enormous amount of water that is wasted in the hospitality and restaurant industries and suggests education and self-regulation by these industries.

Industrial Use

- *Biofuels Processing*
 - **Sa16** I'm concerned about the amount of water ethanol plants will use and whether they are regulated.

Oil and Gas Use

- **Sa13** I'm concerned about the pollution caused by the oil and gas industry in both ground and surface water, especially when used for drinking water. My concern includes abandoned wells.

Storage Use

- **Sa19** Smaller reservoirs could be useful to store water before it flows out of the state.

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