

Local Input Meeting Report



#6

Lawton, Oklahoma

**Center Plains Technology
Center**

Worley Center 301B

May 15, 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	Alan Vandeventer, Educator Comanche County Cooperative Extension Service
6:37 pm	Purpose of Meeting and Introduction of Staff	Mike Langston, Assistant Director Water Research Institute
6:40 pm	Water Challenges in Oklahoma	Dave Dillon, Water Plan Coordinator Oklahoma Water Resources Board
7:11 pm	Explanation of Meeting Process	Mike Langston
7:21 pm	Comments from the public	Public Participants
8:35 pm	Meeting adjourned	

Attendees

Water Research Institute Staff

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

Oklahoma Water Resources Board Staff

Dave Dillon, Water Plan Coordinator

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Staff

Alan Vandeventer, Comanche County Extension Educator

Public Participants

85 citizens

Comments

Seventy-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

- *Funding*
 - **Lw26a** The legislature should fund the scientific investigation on aquifers and groundwater basins by the Oklahoma Geological Survey.
- *State*
 - **Lw17o** Avoid the State's participation and support of long-term speculation of water development.
 - **Lw26b** The administrative rules of the OWRB need to be independently reviewed.

Conjunctive Management

- **Lw29c** The plan should consider the relationship between ground and stream water.
- *Legislation*
 - **Lw4** The water flowing under a streambed should also be considered and is part of stream water law.

Conservation

- **Lw17a** Water resources need a program of control, conservation and beneficial use.
- *Education*
 - **Lw17d** Education is key in making people understand the value of water.
 - **Lw24** Conservation is very important and conservation education should be included in the plan in several different levels including schools, towns, industries, and individuals.
 - **Lw30** There are already several types of water education programs out there such as Project Wet, which is water education for teachers, and those programs should be made more known to the public for their utilization.
- *Research*
 - **Lw6a** There should be adequate studies done in this part of the State or statewide to tell us how much water we have underground.
- *Sustainability*
 - **Lw19a** The focus of the plan should be sustainability in the use of water and conservation.
 - **Lw37e** Consistent water availability can add not only the production of new, better and larger crops; but the key factor is "consistent availability" not the up and down spikes that we now see in our semi-arid state. We must utilize our most valuable resource and not let it get away from us.
 - **Lw17i** Our water resources should be conserved, preserved and protected from pollution, exploitation by development and waste by depletion.

Economic Impacts

- **Lw37d** The ability to clean water that has been used and reuse it for other purposes can magnify the economic gains that water provides.

- *Development*
 - **Lw14** Need to look at increasing the water supply to stimulate economic development in Tillman County. Several dairies were brought in and they have built some of their own reservoirs. The water in Tillman County has a lot of salt in both its ground and surface water and this has limited development in the area. We should look at desalination plants.
- *Recreation*
 - **Lw29a** The plan should take into account all uses of water including recreation, which brings in millions of dollars of sustainable funds.

Health

- *Ecological*
 - **Lw17q** We should protect the environment and local ecosystems before the mineral rights of property owners.

Infrastructure

- **Lw17b** New projects should be approved for feasibility and in the public interest, only through coordinated, well-established and well-regulated channels for official consideration.
- *Funding*
 - **Lw10a** The state of Oklahoma should provide more funds for rehabilitation and building of reservoirs. There are matching funds available at the federal level but not enough is appropriated by the State to take full advantage of them.
 - **Lw9c** We need to take a hard look at and our legislature needs to appropriate funds for denitrification plants. It has been done in other communities, for example Burkburnett, Texas.
- *Maintenance*
 - **Lw16** Flood control structures should be refurbished to improve them as impoundments as well as flood control and groundwater recharge.
 - **Lw19d** The State should consider surface water reservoir augmentation.
- *Needs*
 - **Lw5b** There should be more development of surface water in western Oklahoma through additional reservoirs.
 - **Lw31** I would like to see serious consideration of establishing a new lake on East Cache Creek in order to capture the water before it discharges to the Red River. Let's don't let Texas have the water. Southwest Oklahoma desperately needs this water resource
 - **Lw37a** Retention, redistribution, recovery, and reuse of the water that is available to Oklahomans will determine the future of our State. Agriculture is the backbone of our State's economy. In order to feed and clothe a growing population, we need to retain the rainfall that we receive via lakes, ponds, impoundments and recharge systems.

Planning

- **Lw32** How will the plan address water resources between the "haves and the "have-nots"? Specifically, if a town had the foresight to develop infrastructure and water resources via bond issues, good planning, and good fortune – will that entity have to

supply its hard fought resources to other towns that did nothing to help themselves due to various circumstances at no cost to the have-not town? Does the term “Water Wars” mean anything to you?

- **Lw2** I am concerned that if the plan takes too long to develop, the federal courts may have already stepped in with rulings that will make the plan a moot point, especially regarding riparian areas.
- *Interstate Cooperation*
 - **Lw17t** We should correlate our State Water Plan and work with that of other state and national plans.
 - **Lw28** The plan needs to include something that allows Oklahoma to safeguard water flowing into the State.
- *Priorities*
 - **Lw6e** There may need to be some priorities of use such as drinking water first, then agriculture, then industrial.
- *Regional Differences*
 - **Lw12** There should be regional management of water as the Conservancy Act language requires Conservancy Districts to be the water planners for their area.
 - **Lw18a** Water resources should be managed regionally.
 - **Lw20** There are already regional institutions for water management in the State and those don't need to be recreated but in areas that lack them we do need such regional institutions.
- *Revision*
 - **Lw22** We need to encourage our legislature to make wise decisions about cutting our taxes so we can pay for water infrastructure. We need to keep this planning process going until we finally deal with some of the issues in it.
 - **Lw1** The plan should be flexible enough to change as population changes. It is difficult for small communities to provide the institutional and infrastructure resources to keep up with growth (for example, the current growth in Cotton County).

Policy/Regulations

- *Enforcement*
 - **Lw17m** The OWRB should monitor and verify test wells and pump logs by using locked meters to ensure permit holders remain within their specified limits.
- *Federal Regulations*
 - **Lw18c** Establish equality between municipalities and rural water districts regarding requirements for domestic use including drinking, fire protection, etc. As rural Oklahoma is developed, new and/or updated/upgraded water lines should be standardized (held at least to a minimum standard) to allow fire departments access to a dependable water supply. This should include mandatory fire hydrants every half to one mile (maximum distance).
- *State Regulations*
 - **Lw10b** Homeowners and golf courses should have to test soil like farmers do to see if fertilizer is needed before it is used.
 - **Lw17c** Beneficial use should serve the best interests of the people who live in the area and best understand it.

- **Lw6c** If water is taken for commercial purposes, then we should force pool it in a manner similar to what is done for oil and gas production.
- **Lw9a** There are no meters on irrigation pumps, however; municipalities must report their use daily. Therefore, the non-metered wells and the appropriated acre-feet could have a detrimental affect during a drought period.
- **Lw25** The seven-year rule discourages conservation and encourages using up the entire allocation during that period or they lose it.
- **Lw35** I think a water permit protestor should have to pay for the protest.
- o *Permits*
 - **Lw6b** The burden of proof when someone protests a water permit should be shifted to the applicant from the protester.
 - **Lw17n** We should avoid improvident expenditures where assured benefits will not warrant same, and granted permits must show clear benefits required.
 - **Lw17k** Exhaustive basin and aquifer studies should be conducted statewide and issued permits should be based on best practice science.
 - **Lw26c** The OWRB needs to look at what they have allocated and those permits should be metered. What gets measured gets managed.
- *State Statutes*
 - **Lw8b** The seven-year "use it or lose it" rule destroys long-range planning.
 - **Lw7** Water rights may need to be changed to be more like mineral rights.
 - **Lw36** We should promote legislation to provide for water recycling/water reuse. Particularly indirect potable reuse and surface water reservoir augmentation. We can meet water quality objectives and have potable reuse.
 - **Lw17f** Water statutes should be reformed and restructured to protect the best interest of the residents and the environment affected by water development placing the burden of proving the adequacy of supply to meet beneficial use on the applicants.
 - **Lw19c** We need to start with legislation and then education.

Regionalization

- *Incentives*
 - **Lw18b** Provide incentives to develop regionalization of water treatment plants and water systems.

Sales and Transfers

- *Compensation*
 - **Lw6d** There should be some rational relationship between the sale price of water and the cost of providing that water.
- *Control*
 - **Lw23** We need some law or other consideration to keep Texas from coming here and using eminent domain to build a reservoir. They should not have the right to come to our state and use eminent domain.

- *Interstate*
 - **Lw21** The State needs be more effective in competing for bond dollars with Dallas/Ft. Worth. D/FW can outspend us and I am concerned that they will be taking our water that way.
- *Intrastate*
 - **Lw17e** There should be a plan for rural and municipal growth to align water supplies in the local area so water is not imported from distance areas.
 - **Lw17h** Rain should be held where it falls and not sold out of its basin of origin to ensure the beneficial use of area residents.
 - **Lw37b** The resources we do have need to be redistributed to achieve the most good. We should not ask what it will cost, but rather what it will accomplish.

Water Rights

- **Lw8a** Municipalities spend the majority of the money to develop potable water and they should have priority access to the water they have developed.
- *Native American*
 - **Lw3** Is the plan going to address the Indian water rights? The Indian nations should be included in the planning process and should also be included in the technical side of the planning process.
 - **Lw17p** Avoid desecration of Native American cultural and religious sites and not attempt to exert authority over lands and water rights recognized to be theirs.
- *Private Property Rights*
 - **Lw5a** I am concerned about protecting irrigation rights and about some abuses of irrigation rights. People must remember that irrigation water supports several different industries. People don't realize the importance of farming and irrigation to that farming.
 - **Lw11a** The highest priority issue for Waurika Lake Master Conservancy District is the ability of irrigators to defend and retain water rights. Retention of water rights for reservoirs through the wet/dry cycles is very important. The law's seven-year "use it or lose it" is not synchronized with nature's wet/dry cycles therefore we need to assure the capital and water value is retained. We need additional support to assure water rights are not affected, either by judicial decree or by out-of-state entities wanting our water. We are concerned there may not be enough water to go around during drought conditions.

Water Treatment

- **Lw10c** When groundwater is depleted, [the contaminants become more concentrated], then it has to be mixed with surface water to provide potable drinking water.
- *Artificial*
 - **Lw37c** Desalinization of salt water produced by oil wells and other mineral burdened waters could add to the available water supplies.

Watershed Management

- **Lw9b** Nitrate problems from fertilization have limited the available groundwater supplies for towns. Fertilization should be tied to soil tests and applied according to need to help stop nitrates going into especially permeable aquifers.

- **Lw17g** We need to provide a good drainage program and engineer against flood devastation.
- **Lw17r** We should conserve and protect our watersheds to lakes and reservoirs.

Water Uses

Conservation Use

- *Reuse*
 - **Lw13** Reclaimed water should be recycled where possible.
 - **Lw19b** The plan should consider indirect potable reuse.

Ecological Use

- **Lw27** We need to maintain in-stream flows and springs (some springs really need to be safeguarded) for cultural, recreational and wildlife.
- **Lw29b** The plan should consider in-stream flow minimums.

Hydropower Use

- **Lw17j** Water flow should be used to generate electricity whenever feasible.

Private Domestic Use

- **Lw17s** We should claim and hold no more [of our water] than our portion alongside of our neighbor.

Public Domestic Use

- *Municipalities*
 - **Lw11b** The Conservancy Act requires that anything costing over \$7,500 must be put out for bid. This restricts our ability to repair our pipelines and pumps. The bidding process costs us in time and legal fees. Other agencies like rural water districts have limits of \$25,000 - \$35,000. Also, a city could be without water for an extended time during a leak.

Storage Use

- **Lw17i** Water should be held to save soil erosion and for irrigation of our semi-arid lands.

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