

## Workshop Themes

Based on our analysis of the results and comments received from the RIMs, we identified 10 workshop themes that address those issues that Oklahomans wanted discussed. Themes were designed to:

- address issues that possess statewide significance;
- be internally coherent so that the issues could be discussed together;
- be externally distinct so that issues discussed in one workshop are unlikely to spill over into other workshops;
- avoid reinforcing conflict among water users; and
- represent a balanced workload across thematic workgroups.

Some of the themes correspond with (have the same names and include the same issues as) issue “buckets.” Other themes represent a combination of issues from different “buckets” based on RIM comments and priority ratings.

We had anticipated that as many as 12 planning workshops themes would necessary to accommodate RIM priorities. However, our initial analysis suggested only eight themes, which left room for four more. Since we think it is important to err on the side of inclusion, we defined two additional themes (themes 8 and 9) that include issues that some participants judged as less important but were not opposed to discussing if time permitted.

The first five themes will be addressed in the morning session, entitled “Water Supply” and the last five themes will be addressed in the afternoon session, entitled “Water Management.” In the discussions below, we identify each theme, present our rationale for its inclusion, list some of the topics that could be included, and state the expected workshop outcome.

### Morning Session: Water Supply

#### Theme 1. Balancing Water Supply & Demand

##### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme includes issues from different “buckets.” The central concern of this theme is the need to balance water supply and demand over the long term, which was rated as highly important in all regions. Other issues related to water balancing such as designing the plan as a living document and dealing with changes in water supply and demand are also included.

##### Discussion Topics

- “Adaptive” management to build in opportunities for quickly learning about changes in population dynamics, economic conditions, precipitation patterns, etc.
- Monitoring of plan outcomes and comparison against plan goals
- Procedures for technical review and revision of the plan
- Identification of research needs
- Funding of technical studies

##### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for responding appropriately to changes in population projections, economic conditions, water uses, and climate so that water supply and demand are balanced.

#### Theme 2. Water Conservation

##### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme includes all five of the issues in the Water Conservation and Reuse “bucket.” The first three enjoyed widespread support for their inclusion in subsequent discussions. Though the remaining two (incentives to promote water conservation and research programs that assess improved methods for water conservation) received mixed ratings, they were included because of their relevance to water conservation.

### Discussion Topics

- Reduced consumption
- Gray and black water reuse and reclamation
- Marginal water use
- Increased water use efficiency
- Incentives for water conservation
- Monitoring programs
- Educational programs and curricula
- Research needs
- Funding

### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for improving water use efficiency and reducing water waste.

## **Theme 3. Water Availability**

### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme addresses the importance of maintaining the availability of water in the face of potential disruptions. Water storage issues were judged as highly important all across the state whereas use prioritization and hazard mitigation received mixed ratings; no region rated either of these issues as unimportant.

### Discussion Topics

- Hazard mitigation (flood control, drought response, and storm damage mitigation)
- Water storage/banking (wetlands, reservoirs, aquifer storage, etc.)
- Prioritization of water allocation during periods of water shortage (water uses include agricultural, cultural, domestic, ecological, hydropower, industrial, oil and gas, recreational and tourism, and transportation)
- Funding needs
- Research needs

### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for enhancing the safety and reliability of water supplies.

## **Theme 4. Surface-Ground Water Relationship**

### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme includes issues concerning the interaction between ground and surface waters and water rights. These issues were judged important by most regions; a few gave mixed ratings.

### Discussion Topics

- Monitoring the impacts of withdrawals on surface and ground waters
- Minimum in-stream flows for environmental purposes
- Rights of use versus rights of ownership (property rights)
- Compensation for water rights restriction or infringement
- Coordination of surface and groundwater permitting

### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for the coordinated management of surface and ground water resources.

## **Theme 5. Land Use Practices**

### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme addresses the group of issues associated with land use practices that affect water quality and quantity. These issues were judged as highly important all across the state.

### Discussion Topics

- Watershed level management and land use planning (to also address water transfer requirements)
- Urban sprawl
- Development in floodplains
- Riparian areas, bottomlands, wetlands, and conservation easements
- Runoff controls
- Road maintenance and erosion control
- Fertilizer and pesticide application
- Invasive species
- Wellhead protection
- Septic tanks
- Education and research needs
- Funding

### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for protecting and enhancing water quality and quantity through land stewardship.

## **Afternoon Session: Water Management**

### **Theme 6. Water Sales and Transfers**

#### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme is one of the more contentious issues but was considered important in all regions. This theme includes all four of the issues in the Water Sales and Transfers “bucket.”

#### Discussion Topics

- Control over water exports (who and how, timing, amounts)
- Distribution and use of funds generated from sales and transfers, including compensation to source regions
- Infrastructure for water movement
- Costs to buyers
- Ecological considerations of water transfer (both at source and at destination)

#### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for transferring water within the state and selling water to neighboring states.

### **Theme 7. Inter-Governmental Water Resource Management**

#### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme includes several issues concerning how to work more effectively with other governments on the management of water resources. These issues were rated as highly important in most regions.

#### Discussion Topics

- Intergovernmental agreements (e.g., compacts, MOAs and MOUs to address conflicting rights and standards)
- Coordinated planning and plan implementation
- Elimination of regulatory conflicts and overlaps
- Unfunded mandates
- Data and resource sharing

#### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for effective cooperation between Oklahoma and neighboring states, tribal governments, local governments, and the federal government.

### **Theme 8. Inter-Agency Water Resource Management**

#### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme addresses six issues that concern how State agencies can work more efficiently. All of these issues received mixed results both within and between regions. Four of them were rated as relatively unimportant in four to six regions. Nevertheless, these four issues were included because of their relevance to this theme and their mixed ratings in other regions. Again, we want to be sure that issues that people in Oklahoma want to discuss are included in the workshops, if possible.

#### Discussion Topics

- Agency consolidation
- Agency reorganization
- Redefinition of agency jurisdictions, authorities, responsibilities
- Changes in the services offered by agencies
- Procedures for agency coordination and oversight
- Streamlined permitting
- Consistent enforcement and incentives for compliance

### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for effective cooperation among State water management agencies.

## **Theme 9. Stakeholder Involvement and Conflict Management**

### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme addresses two of the 54 issues discussed in the RIMs. The conflict management issue received highly important or mixed ratings in all but one region. The public involvement issue received mixed ratings in most regions but was not rated highly in any region. We believe that relatively low ratings for public involvement were based on participants' satisfaction with the current public involvement process and thus they didn't think that it needed further discussion. However, comments received during the RIMs and LIMs stated that Oklahomans want to continue to be involved in water planning. Therefore, they believe that provisions for public involvement should be included in the plan.

### Discussion Topics

- Organization of stakeholder advisory groups
- Group responsibilities and authorities in plan implementation
- Stakeholder involvement in plan revision
- Alternative dispute resolution procedures
- Funding needs

### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for effectively involving citizens and non-government organizations in implementing water plan programs so that the goals of the plan will be realized.

## **Theme 10. Consideration of Local and Regional Issues in the State Plan**

### Rationale for Inclusion

This theme emerged from RIM comments concerning local versus state roles in infrastructure construction and maintenance as well as the regionalization of water systems. Several commenters suggested that these are local issues and should be dealt with on a local level; however, others argued that infrastructure funding relies on state and federal sources, so further discussion is warranted. Six of the nine issues included in this theme were rated as highly important across the state; the remaining three received mixed ratings.

### Discussion Topics

- Interface with regional and local planning processes and/or the inclusion of region and local provisions
- Division of responsibilities between state and regional/local authorities
- Technical assistance in local and regional planning
- Coordination of access to water supply (reservoirs, aquifers, rivers)
- Regionalization of infrastructure (shared infrastructure)
- Funding of local and regional infrastructure (water and wastewater collection, treatment, and distribution)

### Expected Workgroup Outcome

Develop alternatives for defining the appropriate role of the State in local and regional planning while respecting regional and local differences and preserving as much local independence as possible.