



OKLAHOMA

news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA
WATER RESOURCES BOARD

Gerald E. Borelli, Chairman

Earl Walker • L.L. Males • John B. Jarboe • James H. Norick • R.G. Johnson • Ralph G. McPherson • Boyd Steveson • Ernest R. Tucker

State's Biggest Water Meeting Hosted by OWRB Brings 850 to Capital City December 15

In his keynote address to water specialists gathered at the Sheraton Century Center, Gov. George Nigh told conferees that adequate water supply is the most critical issue facing Oklahoma in the eighties, and although the state's economy presently is flourishing, the 1990's may bring a darker chapter if the state fails to rise to the challenge of developing water supplies sufficient for ever-growing needs.

Nigh also predicted that historians may pass over the man who first walked on the moon to name as the greatest man of our century the person who economically converts salt water to fresh water.

Throughout the day-long session concerns continued to surface for the ever escalating costs of water development. Dr. Herbert Grubb, Director of Planning and Development for the Texas Department of Water Resources, said federal funding of water resource development has decreased, pressing state and local governments to seek new ways to pay for water supplies. "But just when the need to develop this resource has become critical for continued economic growth, the feds are eyeing cuts in water development as a means of balancing the budget," he warned.

Grubb named general obligation and revenue bonds, a water bank, federal block grants and state water resources trust funds as options open to state and local planners in financing water development and said some legislatures are considering using taxes on one depleting resource (energy) to develop a renewable resource — water.

In his address to the crowd assembled for the general session, Joe Hall, Conservation Officer for the Western Area Power Administration, chided both state and federal agencies for not moving rapidly enough to implement a statewide water management plan. He said the state must decide how much it can afford in financing a conveyance system, then ask for support from the federal government for the rest.

"We need a new outlook on water development — more initiative — a new attitude. And we must realize that the fleas come with the dog in developing these resources," Hall concluded.

Other speakers in the morning session included Gerald Borelli, chairman of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board; Robert S. Kerr, Jr., president of Oklahoma Water Inc.; James R. Barnett, OWRB executive director; and Bill Gamel, Chief of Engineering, Tulsa District Corps of Engineers.

Featured speaker at the luncheon in the Skirvin Plaza was Jim Gillie, assistant to the vice-president of Phillips Petroleum Company.

In concurrent afternoon sessions, conferees split into interest groups to hear panelists discuss water in agriculture, energy, industry, municipalities; tourism and recreation / fish and wildlife; the environment, conservation / education and rural water districts.

Gov. Nigh declared in his late afternoon wrapup, "This meeting is a landmark, and I am dedicated to making it an annual event — a place where we can continue to talk and work and plan together for Oklahoma's water future."

Approval of Regular Permits Scheduled in Western Counties

J.A. Wood, OWRB Ground Water Division chief, announced that in 1981 the Board plans to approve regular permits for the use of ground water in 11 western Oklahoma counties overlying three basins.

Regular permits can be issued by the Board only after the determination of maximum annual yield and appropriate hydrologic studies. The maximum annual yield is based on the total land overlying the basin or sub-basin, the amount of fresh ground water available for use, rates of recharge and discharge and the possibility of natural pollution. Equal proportionate shares are allotted to overlying landowners according to estimates of the maximum annual yield and assuming a basin life of at least 20 years from the July 1, 1973 effective date of the Oklahoma Ground Water Law.

Continued on page 4

"Water Will Replace Energy as the



Jim Gillie uses a candle to make his point to the luncheon crowd at the Skirvin Plaza.



OWRB Board members Ernest Tucker and Earl Walker visit between sessions of the Governor's Water Conference.



Marvin Johns, Augusta Phillips and Gene Whatley, Rural Water Districts panelists



Far left: OWRB secretary Mary Hunt at table and wait for late conferees to p

Left: Conference Coordinator Sherry Q success of the largest water conferenc

Far right: Water enthusiast Ray Trent I Gillie's luncheon speech that drew mo

Right: Dr. Lloyd Church summar Agriculture during the late afternoon Robert S. Kerr Jr.

Challenge of the 80's," Says Nigh



OWRB Executive Director James R. Barnett introduces a slide show on the statewide water plan.



Panelists Dr. Ted Mills, Dr. Norman Durham, Ed Montgomery and Rep. Robert S. Kerr III



Pat O'Meara, right, NWRA executive director, fills in Sen. Herb Rozell and Gov. George Nigh on national water news.

arian Susan Lutz oversee the registration luncheon tickets.

s responsible for the planning behind the held in Oklahoma.

attentively to the humorous satire in Jim n 650.

s ion of his panelists on Water for o presided over by Conference Chairman



Regular Permits, continued from page 1

This year regular permits will be approved in Texas, Cimarron and Beaver Counties overlying the Ogallala Basin; Beckham, Greer, Kiowa and Jackson Counties overlying the North Fork of the Red River Alluvium and Terrace Basin; and Harper, Woodward, Dewey and Major Counties overlying the North Canadian River Alluvium and Terrace Basin.



Ground Water Nitrate Study Begins this Month

Concern for the nitrate contamination of ground water in western Oklahoma's Ogallala Aquifer has resulted in a \$62,000 EPA grant to OWRB to design a prototype project for the management of such pollution.

The investigation, under the direction of Ron Jarman, OWRB Water Quality Division chief, will focus on the Woodward area, where state officials earlier discovered high nitrate levels in domestic water wells.

Water samples will be collected to pinpoint significant sources, and soil sampling will document nitrate concentration and movement. The study will produce recommendations for curtailing nitrate contamination, more effective permitting procedures, best management practices and ground water quality standards for nitrates.

Economic Benefits of McGee Creek Studied

A new Project Area Council will work to assure that southeastern Oklahoma's \$1.3 million McGee Creek dam, a project of the Water and Power Resources Service, has long-range economic benefits in the area. The Atoka County and Oklahoma City reservoir project is one of five in President Carter's Rural Development Initiative to demonstrate that large-scale construction programs can have lasting benefits.

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The Council, comprised of Gov. Nigh, U.S. Rep. Wes Watkins, elected officials, businessmen, civic leaders and residents of the 7-county area, will work toward making more than 400 construction jobs permanent through job training and skills development programs.

EPA Grant Boosts Tar Creek Study

Ron Jarman, OWRB Water Quality Division chief and co-chairman of the Tar Creek Task Force, announced that EPA has contributed an additional \$100,000 to OWRB in developing a solution to the pollution of waters in Ottawa County's Tar Creek area. OWRB is the state agency named by Gov. Nigh to head the Task Force.

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continue regular monitoring of fish in the Neosho River and Tar Creek, and USGS and OWRB representatives conduct continuous water sampling at mine and stream sites.

Jarman also alerted Task Force members to the January 15 meeting at 10 a.m. at OWRB offices, N.E. 10th and Stonewall.

OACD Schedules Meeting January 11-13

Representatives of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts will convene at the Lincoln Plaza Inn in Oklahoma City for their annual meeting Sunday afternoon, January 11 through noon Tuesday, January 13.

Monday's activities will include a "Thanks Hour," with the state's conservation districts hosting the Oklahoma Congressional delegation and a banquet "Roast or Toast" for retiring Congressman Tom Steed emceed by Gov. Goerge Nigh.

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