

OKLAHOMA WATER NEWS

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board



*from
the desk
of the
Director...*

It was my pleasure late in January to visit with many of you at public meetings throughout the state concerning the updated Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan. Although the 1980 OCWP spawned numerous improvements in management of our water resources, the 15-year interim since its publication has seen profound changes in social, political and economic conditions. Declines in the world oil market and the agricultural industry impacted Oklahoma's economy, significantly altering growth patterns in population, industry, water use and all other factors related to economic well-being.

Another change expected to dominate the 21st century is the federal government's declining role in state funding for new water projects.

Recognizing that a dynamic plan is crucial if the state is to move forward with confidence that its water supplies are adequate and protected, the 1994 Legislature, in House Bill 2036, directed the OWRB to continuously update the Water Plan. This first update is the document we have introduced at hearings in January.

We have worked hard to make the OCWP more realistic, responsive and implementable. The primary objective was to explore solutions to water resource problems from a policy perspective. The policy approach focuses on assessing general needs, identifying problem areas and opportunities, establishing objectives, and recommending specific policy choices

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Water Board Mentors Students In Solving Pollution Problems

High school students attending the Environmental Summit at the Omniplex Science Museum in Oklahoma City January 17 dove into a real water pollution problem. Paul Koenig, OWRB environmental specialist who heads up a Phase I Clean Lakes Study at Lake Arcadia, described the lake's potential pollution problems and asked the 80 students to help him solve them.

The Board's Diagnostic and Feasi-

bility Study, enabled by a \$148,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state matching funds, will begin in February. The OWRB staff's technical expertise earlier earned recognition by EPA as the leader in Region VI in Clean Lakes initiatives.

Lake Arcadia, a water supply, flood control and recreation lake north of Oklahoma City, was completed by

Paul Koenig of the Water Resources Board answers questions for a group of students during their brainstorming session. The larger group of 80 broke into small groups to discuss solutions to Arcadia's pollution problems.



We're Moving!

Early in February, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board will move to 3800 N. Classen. Since the April 19 bombing that disabled the OWRB offices at 600 N. Harvey, the Water Board has been temporarily housed in the State Insurance Building.

Now, we proudly move into our new offices at 3800 N. Classen, Oklahoma City, 73118. Call us at:

(405) 530-8800.
FAX (405) 530-8900.

the Corps of Engineers in 1986 and already shows signs of aging.

Largemouth bass populations are declining and bio-diversity is low; water quality is variable; sediments, trash and pollutants are increasing in the watershed.

Its proximity to Edmond and Oklahoma City have made it popular with fishermen, campers and recreationists who crowd its shores and parks every warm weekend.

"After breaking into brainstorming groups of 10, the students came up with a list of intelligent, incisive suggestions for stemming pollution in the watershed," said Koenig. They

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to achieve desired goals. The Plan addresses 11 categories of water policy issues from new perspectives. Public meetings such as those just completed, give Oklahoma citizens opportunities to shape the final Water Plan document, and indeed, the destiny of our state.

We appreciate your being part of this process and we look forward to your continued interest and participation.

Mentor, continued from page 1

included filtering inflows to the lake; planting grass cover to prevent erosion and sedimentation; cleaning up



Koenig describes the OWRB Clean Lakes Project at Lake Arcadia to students attending the Environmental Summit in Oklahoma City January 17.

trash by volunteers or prisoners, stricter enforcement and stiffer penalties for littering; educating farmers, industries and citizens in the use of chemicals; building barriers to slow inflow; providing brush cover to protect young fish; encouraging civic groups and Arcadia Lake homeowners to "adopt" segments of shoreline for cleanup; constructing terraces and other conservation structures in the watershed; and pinpointing pollution by monitoring before and after rains.

The students who participated in the Sixth Annual Environmental Summit came from high schools throughout the Oklahoma City metro area. The Summit was sponsored by the Omniplex and Students Acting for a Vital Earth (SAVE).

Canton Advisory Committee Reaches Accord

An agreement signed at the December 12 Board meeting proved that Oklahomans can work out problems amiably and on their own. The agreement was forged by the Water Resources Board on behalf of the Oklahoma City Water Utilities Trust, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Canton recreationists, Oklahoma City Boat Club members, and fish and wildlife interests. The Canton Lake Agreement signaled accord between all who shared an interest in the operation of Canton Lake, Oklahoma City's water supply lake located 100 miles northwest of the city.

"It's a splendid example of mediation between friends, before a problem gets out of hand," said OWRB Executive Director Gary Sherrer.

During last summer's prolonged dry spell, the lake became the center of a debate among those groups, all of whom had different ideas concerning use of Canton's waters.

The Corps of Engineers, who operates the lake, suggested that the Water Board coordinate a committee to address the issues concerning water levels at Canton.

Water in Canton Lake, on the Canadian River in northwest Oklahoma, is released from the dam to flow down the river for storage in Lake Overholser and Lake Hefner. The water supply "belongs" to the Oklahoma City Water

Utilities Trust. However, recreationists at Canton said low water levels resulting from big water releases impair fishery and have catastrophic effects on the Annual Walleye Rodeo, a fishing tournament that attracts some 180,000 fishermen. On the other end of the river channel and the other side of the debate are members of the Oklahoma City Boat Club, whose interest is maintaining water levels and protecting Lake Hefner's national reputation as a prime sailboat lake.

"We brought together all the interests, put the various issues on the table, and engaged in amiable discussions," Sherrer said.

The Canton Lake Advisory Committee represented the Oklahoma City Water Utilities Trust, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Corps of Engineers, Canton Lake Association, Oklahoma City Boat Club and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. The dialogue developed in a half dozen meetings resulted in two important measures.

The first was that the Corps of Engineers adopt a seasonal pool plan in an effort to protect the fishery. The second was the adoption of a release policy to guide Oklahoma City Water Utilities Trust in determining when releases of Canton Lake water are needed.



Present at the Board meeting were Mike Mathis and Duane Smith of the OWRB, Jim Couch of the Oklahoma City Water Utilities Trust, Buddy Kidd of the Oklahoma City Boat Club, Curt Roggow of Congressman Frank Lucas' office, Bill Stewart of the Canton Lake Authority and Dean Couch of the OWRB.

Dr. Lloyd Church Died Dec. 27

Dr. Lloyd E. Church, retired Wilburton dentist, lifetime soil and water conservationist and member of the first Water Resources Board, died at the age of 99. Wilburton's mayor honored Dr. Church by requesting businesses to close during the afternoon funeral on December 29.

Church was born in 1896 near Carmen, Cherokee Strip, Oklahoma Territory. He had been a resident of Wilburton since 1952, when he moved from Clinton.

He was a friend and advisor to Sen. Robert S. Kerr, and their discussions formed the foundation upon which Kerr built support for the Arkansas River Navigation Project.

In Wilburton, Church spearheaded the Fourche-Maline watershed project of 14 flood control structures. One of these, a 185-acre lake that supplies water to Wilburton and Latimer County RWD #1 was named "Doctor Church Lake in his honor."

Church served on the Planning and Resources Board and was named by the 25th Legislature to chair the Water Study Committee. The committee recommended creation of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board in 1957, an agency Dr. Church served for two decades, until his retirement in 1977. Church was named "Oklahoma Water Pioneer" at the 1985 Governor's Water Conference.

Friends may address memorials to the Lloyd E. Church Foundation, Eastern Oklahoma State College, Wilburton, 74578.

Texans Target Cedar Trees

Farmers and ranchers in the Texas Hill Country have long exterminated cedar trees as water wasters in their dry lands. Now, five years of research at the Texas Agricultural Research Station at Temple backs up the ranchers' claim. Researchers concluded that clearing native mountain cedar (named the ashe juniper by scientists) provides more recharge to the Edwards aquifer.

Over a two-year period, two 40-acre tracts in Uvalde County were studied for rainfall and evaporation before any cedars were cut. Researchers axed only small, young trees on one

plot and left mature trees standing. The other plot was untouched. Careful studies revealed that the cleared land yielded about 60,000 more gallons of groundwater recharge per acre in the first year of study. Because grasses have replaced the young cedars, total water savings amount to 150,000 gallons per acre per year.

In similar studies nearby, U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers determined that clearing 80 percent of the mountain cedars from rangeland yielded increased spring flows. USDA researchers say they noted an increase of about 20 percent in spring flows with 30 percent less rainfall.

Freeman Named to RDC Board

Joe S. Freeman, chief of the OWRB Financial Assistance Division, was elected to the executive committee of the Oklahoma Rural Development Council at its December meeting. He replaces Anna Belle Wiedemann of the Department of Agriculture.

Freeman joined the OWRB in 1990 and was promoted to chief of the Financial Assistance Division in 1993. In that position, he oversees the state loan and grant program that makes loans and grants available to Oklahoma cities, towns, rural water and wastewater districts for the construction or renovation of water and wastewater facilities.

Freeman is a member of the Governor's Oklahoma Rural Enterprise Team and Oklahoma Funding Coordinating Task Force.

The ORDC, with a membership representing state, federal, local, tribal and private interests, was formed to assess rural development needs, identify suitable resources and prepare long-range plans to meet the needs.

ORWA Plans Annual Meeting

Gene Whatley, executive director of the Oklahoma Rural Water Association, announces the 26th Annual ORWA Technical Conference and Exposition will be held April 10-11 in Tulsa.

The Marriott Southern Hills, 1902 East 71st Street, will host the meeting and offer a special \$57 room rate.

According to Whatley, ORWA will sponsor a golf tournament and barbecue for its members and friends on April 9. For more information, call ORWA at (405) 672-8925.

Well Measurement Underway

"Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds," is inscribed on a New York Post Office, but it could as well describe the Water Resources division. Every January since the mid-70's, OWRB teams have begun the annual well measurement program, a statewide effort to measure water levels in selected wells. The current network consists of 798 wells.

It began in the Panhandle on January 8, as Gary Glover and Gene Doussert were the first to the field. According to Mark Belden, who oversees the effort, 250 wells will be measured in the Panhandle. "We pay special attention to the area underlain by the Ogalalla Aquifer because it is a vital irrigation water supply and sensitive to the enormous demands put upon it," Belden said.

He also noted that the number of wells in the network has declined from more than 1,000 measured in previous years. To provide a balanced assessment of the state's groundwater supplies, the Board seeks wells to replace those abandoned, plugged or made inaccessible. Wells in the network include municipal, industrial, irrigation, domestic and observation wells in all 77 counties.

With the assistance of OWRB Field Office staff, the program will be completed by its March 31 deadline.

You're on a Board or Council?

The Oklahoma Rural Water Association announces a new, understandable, easy-to-read text for officials and board members of small cities and rural water and wastewater systems.

Entitled "Water Board Bible," it is a how-to guide in holding effective meetings, streamlining daily operations, designing effective employee policies, generating revenues, insuring against liability, setting realistic rates and many other helpful topics.

It is a handbook of modern water utility management aimed at both new and experienced board/council members; city administrators and clerks; water and wastewater system operators, managers and superintendents.

The "Water Board Bible" costs \$15 and may be ordered by calling (405) 672-8925 or writing the Oklahoma Rural Water Association, P.O. Box 95349, Oklahoma City, 73143-5349.

THE FLOOD CURRENT

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1996

State NFIP Coordinator Reports on Mitigation Activities

The following article is a report from Ken Morris, State NFIP Coordinator, on his recent trips to Virginia to participate in a separate national hazard mitigation conference and workshop.

On December 6-8, I attended the First Biennial National Mitigation Conference in Alexandria. Most NFIP State Coordinators and State Hazard Mitigation Officers from around the nation were in attendance to participate in discussions related to the conference theme, "Partnerships for Building Safer Communities." The goal of the conference was to bring together the people that make mitigation happen; from my viewpoint, the event was an overwhelming success with more than 900 in attendance.

Opening presentations were delivered by James Lee Witt, FEMA Director, and Richard Moore, Deputy Director of FEMA, who stated that we will build a better and safer America only through working together. Their remarks emphasized the importance of an all-hazards approach to effectively address mitigation at the national level. In recent years, wildfires, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, wind and ice storms, and social and economic impacts have all had staggering impacts upon our communities. In Oklahoma alone, we had four Presidential disasters declared during 1995, three involving flooding.

At the conference, I was pleased to discover that FEMA leadership is working very closely with the model building code organizations. Establishing model codes to address an all-hazards approach is a top priority at the national level, an effort which should benefit floodplain managers in Oklahoma. Model code packages that meet all federal requirements of the national flood, hurricane, earthquake

and mitigation assistance and grant programs may be close to becoming a reality.

While at the conference, I had interesting conversations with several FEMA officials and Alison Nicholson, my counterpart in Arkansas. Alison will coordinate the 1997 Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) Annual Conference in Little Rock. Having the 1997 conference so close to home will enable many Oklahoma floodplain managers to attend. I offered Alison my assistance, as well as that of the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Association, to provide support for Arkansas in its hosting duties. Also on the meeting front, I spoke with George Hosek, Chairman of ASFPM, and he indicated that the San Diego conference in June will be one not to miss. Already, James Witt has agreed to address the gathering. I encourage all community floodplain managers to plan and budget now for this conference which will provide

a great opportunity to impact policy at the national level.

While in Alexandria, I also visited with David Preusch of the Michael Baker, Jr. Engineering Company about conducting a one-day workshop on flood mapping procedures and requirements. It is likely that this effort will be held in conjunction with the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Association Spring Technical Workshop scheduled for May 7 at the Midwest City Library.

On December 14, I traveled to Arlington as one of nine participants from across the nation selected to assist in development of a training and education strategy and implementation plan for federal mitigation programs. FEMA's Elizabeth Lemersal provided the necessary guidance and direction for the group whose task was to identify the most important program initiatives. The number one initiative proved to be training for building code officials on mitigation. Also of top importance to group members was mitigation evaluation and cost/benefit analysis and team building training. The results of this

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In January, 20 flood awareness billboards were erected by the OWRB, as coordinator of the National Flood Insurance Program in Oklahoma. Billboard sites in the Oklahoma City metro area, Jones, Guthrie and Chickasha were selected for their proximity to roads that frequently flood. The flood awareness effort is in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency "Cover America" campaign. The message will remain in place through September.

Mitigation, continued from page 4

rewarding effort will greatly assist FEMA in establishing future mitigation training programs. This opportunity also allowed me to discuss with Elizabeth various policy issues of interest to Oklahoma floodplain managers, as well as hear the concerns of other states.

As the state-federal mitigation partnership grows, don't be surprised if you are asked to assist in a similar exercise. Please remember, mitigation will continue to work in Oklahoma only if each one of us pitches in, contributes to the common cause of floodplain management, and guides our respective communities in a responsible manner.

OWRB Notes Value of NFIP Compliance

The OWRB reminds local communities of the importance of complying with terms associated with National Flood Insurance Program participation. According to Ken Morris, State NFIP coordinator, while implementation of program requirements requires some effort from community officials, the benefits far outweigh the time spent administering the program.

"Communities know the value of membership in the NFIP, specifically the availability of affordable flood insurance and reduced loss of life and property due to floods," he points out. "Substantial benefits could be lost if local officials fail to enforce established development permitting system or are lax in their record-keeping and enforcement responsibilities."

According to Morris, the consequences of noncompliance with a community's NFIP agreement include:

- ❖ flood insurance will no longer be available;
- ❖ federal agencies may not provide grants or loans for insurable buildings in identified special flood hazard areas in the community;
- ❖ no federal mortgage insurance may be provided in identified flood hazard areas; and
- ❖ in the event of a federally declared disaster, no federal or state disaster assistance would be made available to insurable structures in identified flood hazard areas or non-participating communities.

Spring Workshop Dates Set

The OWRB and Federal Emergency Management Agency will host five workshops for floodplain administrators throughout the month of April. The one-day gatherings, held each year across the state, serve to educate local officials on various aspects of floodplain management, especially regulation of community development to reduce the loss of life and property due to flooding.

Individual sessions will focus on such basic subjects as determining the base flood elevation, completing an elevation certificate, administering a local permitting system and reading floodplain maps.

Workshop dates and locations are listed below.

April 2 - Antlers
Oliver's Inn & Restaurant
SH 3 & South High Street

April 18 - Woodward
High Plains Institute
3921 34th Street

April 3 - Checotah
Fountain Head Lodge
Lake Eufaula

April 30 - Lawton
Howard Johnson Hotel
I-44 & Gore Boulevard

April 16 - Midwest City
Public Library
Reno & Midwest Boulevard

To register, call the OWRB at (405) 525-4740. After Feb. 5, call us at (405) 530-8800

Ten Rules of Floodplain Management

The following suggestions for community floodplain management officials are courtesy of "Water Talk," the newsletter of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

1. Post your flood insurance rate map and floodway map next to your zoning map. This serves as a constant reminder that you have a floodplain ordinance in effect.

2. Review all development proposals for possible floodplain management implications.

3. Ensure that all residential developments have adequate road access during the 100-year flood. A major goal of floodplain zoning is to protect the lives of floodplain dwellers and rescue personnel.

4. Specify the base flood elevation on every building permit which authorizes construction within the floodplain. Either modify existing permit forms or adopt new ones that provide for the entry of the BFE.

5. Review proposed development to assure that all necessary permits

have been received from appropriate federal and state agencies.

6. Ensure that the floodway is not obstructed by fill or structures.

7. Do not allow floodproofed basements below the BFE.

8. Require permits for the replacement of manufactured homes located in the floodplain and ensure that the appropriate BFE is recognized. Your ordinance needs revision if it doesn't clearly allow you to regulate the siting of mobile homes in flood-prone areas.

9. Require certification and records of as-built elevations and floodproofing measures. These records are especially valuable when a new owner seeks the purchase of flood insurance.

10. If applicable to your community (and it should be), make sure that the permittee is aware that a certificate of occupancy or zoning compliance must be secured before legal occupation of the authorized floodplain development. This is your last opportunity to ensure compliance with the ordinance.

At the January 9 Board Meeting:

The Board held its regular monthly meeting at the Oklahoma Bar Association, 1901 N. Lincoln. In opening remarks, Executive Director Gary Sherrer noted that the meeting would be the last "away from home." Sherrer said the OWRB plans to move to new offices at 3800 N. Classen before the next Board meeting on February 13.

Joe Freeman, Financial Assistance Division chief, asked and received approval for emergency water/sewer improvement grants of \$35,000 to RWSG & SWMD #2 (Beckham Co.), \$25,000 to the Town of Marshall (Logan Co.), and \$100,000 to Rural Water District #13 (Cherokee Co.) and loans of \$170,000 to RWD #13 (Cherokee Co.) and \$2.1 million to RWD #5 (Rogers Co.) The Board approved an extension of term on a previous loan to Beaver Public Works Authority (Beaver Co.) and refinancing under the Small Community SRF loan program administered by the Board. Members also approved release of some collateral securing the 1989 loan to Morrison PWA (Noble Co.)

Freeman reported that the Water Board's SRF program was the first in the nation to apply and the first to receive a matching grant from the EPA to support wastewater projects.

Mike Mathis, chief of the Water Resources Division (a recent combination of the Planning and Water Management Divisions) asked and received approval for 10 temporary permits and seven regular permits for the use of groundwater. The Board also approved amendments to two regular groundwater permits and one prior groundwater right. The Board approved four regular permits and one application to change the point of diversion and area of use of stream water.

New D/PC operators licenses were approved for Michael Barksdale, Steve Bechtel, Floyd C. Cox and Wendell Whichard. Five licensed firms added operators: South Eastern Drilling, Chris W. Brennan, operator; Associated Environmental Industries Corp., Ronald E. Newton, operator; National

Environmental Service Co., Ike Ray, operator; Techrad Environmental Services, Inc., Ben Baggett, operator; Anderson Engineering, Daniel E. Steinshour, operator.

Mathis brought before the Board a protested application to amend the regular groundwater permit of Seaboard Farms, Inc. The firm's permit was approved with the condition that no water be taken until an unplugged well on an old homestead is plugged according to OWRB rules and regulations.

Mike Melton, assistant to the director, announced that the OWRB will sponsor a Legislative Reception at the Capitol to give legislators an opportunity to get acquainted with Board members and Water Resources Board programs.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Approved at January 1996 Board Meeting

FAP Loans (4.472%; 28.5 year maximum term)

Cherokee County RWD #13	\$ 170,000.00
Rogers County RWD #5	\$ 2,100,000.00

FAP Grants

Beckham County RWSG & SWMD #2	\$ 35,000.00
Cherokee County RWD #13	\$ 100,000.00
Town of Marshall	\$ 25,000.00

SRF Loans

None

TOTALS AS OF 1/9/96

	FAP Loans	FAP Grants	SRF Loans
APPROVED	164	381	36
Amount	\$204,075,000.00	\$21,206,077.00	\$146,354,834.23
FUNDED	155	344	30
Amount	\$192,060,000.00	\$18,729,834.41	\$132,079,534.23

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