

OKLAHOMA Water News

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board

In This Issue

Groundwater Focus of 2005 Water Conference

Utilization of Oklahoma's Groundwater

Coop Illinois River Study Concludes

Governor's Water Conference Agenda

New Tool Maps US Drought Impacts

Aging Dams Need Repair

Most Endangered Rivers of 2005

Reflections: Mixing Boots & Birkenstocks
by Miles Tolbert, Sec. of Environment

Oklahoma Drought Monitor

From the Director



Duane A. Smith
OWRB Executive Director

In June, the OWRB's Management Team met at the Oklahoma City Zoo to update the agency's Strategic Plan for FY 2006. During the day-long planning session, the team identified three High Priority Opportunities (HPOs) on which to focus during the next fiscal year based upon the program or activity's importance to the agency's mission, ability to advance the OWRB in its position as "The Water Agency," relevance to Legislative directives, and potential contributions to the citizens of Oklahoma.

All three of our HPOs (all described later in my column)—Statewide Water Development Revolving Fund Recapitalization, State Water Plan, and Special Water Resource Studies—are essentially carryovers from last year's Strategic Plan, although action plans for each

See From the Director, Page 2

Groundwater Focus of 2005 Conference

Registration for the 26th Annual Governor's Water Conference, November 1-2, begins at 1:00 p.m. Tuesday and 8:00 a.m. Wednesday at the Cox Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City.

Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director, will welcome guests and speakers to a symposium on groundwater on Tuesday afternoon, featuring keynote speaker Robert Glennon, author of *Water Follies: Ground Water Pumping and the Fate of America's Fresh Waters*. Other state and national experts will also discuss pertinent groundwater issues, including an update on the Arbuckle-Simpson Hydrology Study.

On November 2, a full complement of state, federal, and local experts has been invited to address the current status of water quality, planning, development, infrastructure financing, and other current water issues of importance to the state and nation. The morning session will culminate with an update by Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmonson on Oklahoma's efforts to reduce phosphorus levels in the state's scenic rivers.

The Conference luncheon will feature presentation of Oklahoma Water Pioneer Awards for 2005. A state and



26th Annual Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference
Investing in Water
November 1-2, 2005
Cox Convention Center
Oklahoma City, OK
It's time for action!

federal legislative update will follow, and the Conference will adjourn around 3:00.

Reservations for overnight accommodations at the Renaissance Hotel (10 North Broadway, Oklahoma City) can be made by calling 1-405-228-8000 or 1-800-468-3571. A block of rooms and special room rate of \$66, single or double, has been reserved for conferees until October 1. After that date, the Conference rate will be offered as available.

To register for the Water Conference, call 405-530-8800 and ask for Mary Nell Brueggen, Registration Coordinator, or fill out and mail the registration form on page two. Registration costs \$60 and includes the half-day Groundwater Symposium and evening reception on November 1, and the traditional Water Conference program and luncheon on November 2.

From the Director . . . Continued from page 1

have been retooled and expanded. The level of our success with these opportunities will be determined in large part by the strength of our alliances with the many local, state, and federal partners who assist us in finding feasible solutions to Oklahoma's water issues and problems.

Statewide Water Development Revolving Fund Re-Capitalization—The ever-increasing demand for water and wastewater infrastructure financing, and corresponding stress upon the Statewide Water Development Revolving Fund, has made it a priority of the OWRB to secure additional funding to support its financing activities. From initial investments of \$40 million in the Water Board's financial assistance programs, we have provided almost \$1.4 billion in water and wastewater loans and grants while collectively saving Oklahoma communities more than \$435 million in project costs.

Without a considerable and immediate infusion of new funds, Oklahoma's ability to offer extraordinarily low interest rate and grant financing to our communities will be crippled by an estimated \$5.4 billion financial assistance demand through 2025. According to our calculations, a \$25 million investment could provide up to \$350 million in the next four years for water and wastewater infrastructure financing that would save Oklahoma communities \$117 million. This investment could come from a number of sources, including a one-time state appropriation of funds, a multi-year appropriation of funds, or state general obligation bond issue. However, recapitalization success will require ample support from public finance and engineering professionals, public interest groups, communities, state agencies, and members of the State Legislature.

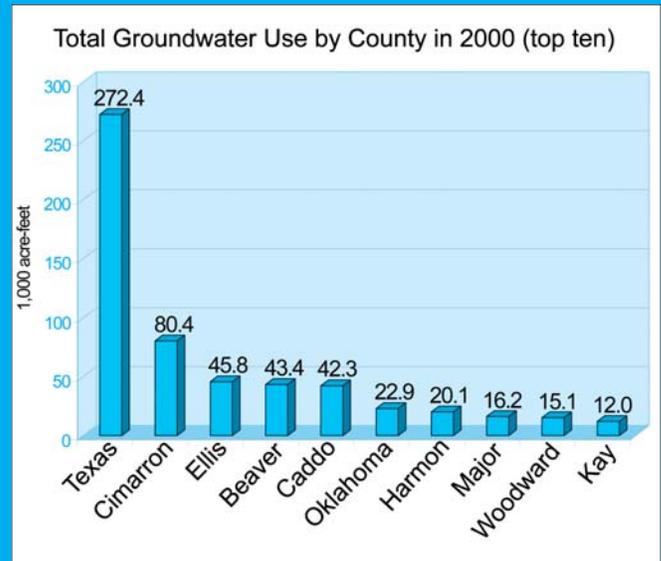
State Water Plan Update—The state's official water planning document, the *Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan*, was last updated in 1995. In response to the Water Board's standing legislative mandate to prepare decennial (10-year) updates of the OCWP, we are not only working

(continued on page 3)

Utilization of Oklahoma's Groundwater

According to the USGS, the total quantity of freshwater withdrawals for all purposes in 2000 was estimated to be 1,772 million gallons per day (mgd). Irrigation withdrawals accounted for 40 percent of the total withdrawals and water supply accounted for 38 percent.

Total groundwater withdrawal in Oklahoma was about 773.7 mgd, 44 percent of all freshwater withdrawals. Irrigation withdrawals accounted for 73 percent of groundwater withdrawals. The top 3 counties withdrawing groundwater for irrigation were Texas (253.6 mgd), Cimarron (77.2 mgd), and Ellis (42.5 mgd). Public water supply withdrawals accounted for 15 percent of groundwater withdrawals. The top 3 counties withdrawing groundwater for public supply were Oklahoma (17.6 mgd), Cleveland (8.9 mgd), and Kay (8.3 mgd). Total groundwater use by the top ten counties is shown below.



Information courtesy USGS

26th Annual Governor's Water Conference Registration Form

Please mail form to

Governor's Water Conference
3800 N. Classen Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Please enclose \$60 check, money order, or purchase order payable to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. No refunds after October 10.

For more information, call (405) 530-8800 or visit the OWRB Web site at www.owrb.state.ok.us

Check all that apply*:

- I will attend the symposium on Nov. 1, 2005.
- I will attend the reception on Nov. 1, 2005.
- I will attend the conference and luncheon on Nov. 2, 2005.

* One price (\$60) includes any or all of the above.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip _____ Phone (_____) _____

From the Director . . . *Continued from page 2*

now on a new plan, but we have resolved to take water planning to a higher level, one that fully contemplates the state's inherent water distribution problem. The limiting factor in meeting Oklahoma's future water demands is not availability. Instead it is the increasingly exorbitant costs associated with water distribution and treatment.

Plans are good, of course, but action is better. Consistent with the theme of the upcoming Governor's Water Conference—*Investing in Water: It's Time for Action*—the state's Water Plan must address the immediate need for the local infrastructure that is required to get water to those who need it most. And we need to take a hard look at how we manage and administer our water supplies, then offer up feasible solutions to obstacles that stand in the way of intelligent water use and protection. While we currently lack the funding and authority to commence a truly comprehensive water supply strategy, such as the \$22 million effort recently undertaken by the State of Texas through Senate Bill 1, there remains growing support for such a venture in the Governor's Office and Legislature and among our many state and local partners. The OWRB's financial assistance programs stand ready to back the implementation of identified infrastructure projects, but only if the Revolving Fund receives much-needed replenishment.

Special Water Resource Studies—The Arbuckle-Simpson Hydrology Study, Oklahoma's first basin study addressing surface/groundwater interaction, is probably the most comprehensive and visible water resource investigation ever undertaken by the OWRB. While the controversy surrounding water rights in the Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer was a critical factor in securing federal and state funds to initiate the study, it became apparent that a standard, systematic process is required to plan for, promote and obtain funding for special water resource studies. This is especially true considering that these projects are of extreme importance to the day-to-day operations of the OWRB.

Traditional OWRB activities, such as hydrologic studies, an unfunded component of water rights appropriation, lack a stable source of revenue and often rely upon funds received through special, temporary projects. As a result, the agency must be proactive in securing this essential funding often within a relatively short time frame. We must be prepared to address water resource issues before they become contentious as well as actively seek potential local partnerships for required studies and projects.

Opportunities for baseline funding must be pursued to ensure the viability of permitting and other more traditional Board programs. Costs for processing water rights requests have escalated due to the increased number of protested water use permit applications and associated hearings as well as the need for additional technical information requiring field investigations, studies, and analyses. We have streamlined our permitting operations and are reviewing our fee and appropriations structure to ensure that it supports our water rights administration program.

At the same time, we are actively seeking appropria-

tions to assist users in meeting local water needs, such as water augmentation studies involving the City of Norman and Lugert-Altus Irrigation District/North Fork of the Red River area; investigating potential construction of Mangum Reservoir as a recreation and water supply source for southwest Oklahoma; regional water system studies involving Robert S. Kerr and Tenkiller Reservoirs; and recent erosion control and related water quality projects at Lakes Thunderbird, Carl Blackwell, and Wister.

In addition to the three High Priority Opportunities identified for the coming year, two programs/activities will receive significant attention for development during FY-2006: the Holistic Water Monitoring Program and Public Promotion/Education. The updated Strategic Plan is available for viewing and/or download on the OWRB's Web site at www.owrb.state.ok.us. I encourage all citizens of Oklahoma to read the Plan and learn about the priorities that encompass our agency direction for FY 2006 through 2010.

In conclusion, I want to invite anyone with an interest in the use and protection of Oklahoma's water resources to attend the Governor's Water Conference in Oklahoma City on November 1-2. An agenda and registration form are available in this issue of the *Oklahoma Water News*. Of special interest will be the Groundwater Symposium on day one of the Conference where many notable speakers will explore the various issues surrounding groundwater use, both in Oklahoma and regionally. See you there!

Coop Illinois River Study Concludes

In June, the OWRB and U.S. Geological Survey completed a \$126,600 project to monitor water quality in the Illinois River watershed. The study was requested by the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office, which financed \$96,600 of the data collection effort. The USGS contributed \$30,000 in federal matching funds.

Of primary concern are elevated levels of phosphorus, which stimulates algae growth and also affects the odor and taste of water. Storm water runoff saturated with dissolved phosphorus from litter generated on chicken and turkey farms in Oklahoma and Arkansas is suspected to be a major contributor of the nutrient.

Beginning in April, the Water Board coordinated USGS sampling of four "high flow" events and two "base flow" events at six locations in the watershed in Oklahoma. Water quality samples collected by personnel were analyzed for water temperature, pH (alkalinity/acidity), dissolved solids, suspended solids, total organic carbon, electrical conductivity, turbidity, phosphorus content, total nitrogen, ammonia, metals, sulfate, chloride content, estrogen metabolites, and bacteria such as fecal coliform, e-coli, staphylococcus and salmonella.

The OWRB's final report on the Illinois watershed data should be released this fall.

Information courtesy Oklahoma Publishing Today, 2005

26TH ANNUAL GOVERNOR'S WATER CONFERENCE
Investing in Water: It's Time for Action

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1**Oklahoma Groundwater Symposium****1:00 Registration****1:30 Welcome and Overview**

*Duane A. Smith, Executive Director, OWRB

1:40 Keynote Address***Water Follies: Ground Water Pumping and the Fate of America's Fresh Waters***

*Robert Glennon, Professor

University of Arizona College of Law

2:25 Oklahoma Groundwater Law

*Dean Couch, General Counsel, OWRB

2:40 Oklahoma's Dependence on Groundwater

*Kim Winton, Director, OK Water Sciences Center, USGS

2:55 Pitfalls in Groundwater Planning

*Todd Halihan, Professor of Geology, OSU

3:10 Break**3:25 Unconstitutional Takings of Water Interests**

*James H. Davenport, Esq., Chief

Water Division, Colorado River Commission of Nevada

3:45 Groundwater Quality Standards & Implementation

*Derek Smithee, Water Quality Division Chief, OWRB

4:00 Groundwater Panel***The Water Well Drilling Industry: Protecting Our Groundwater***

*Cheryl Cohenour, Cherokee America Drilling (CRC&Associates) Tulsa

Developments in USGS Groundwater Research

*Scott Christenson, USGS

Arsenic in Our Groundwater: A Municipal Approach

*Brad Gambill, City Manager, Norman, Oklahoma

Arbuckle-Simpson Hydrology Study Update

*Noel Osborn, OWRB

5:00 Adjournment to Reception**Professional Continuing Education Credits:**

- Approved for 4 hours training credit for Water and Wastewater Operators by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.
- May qualify for 8 Professional Development Hours by the Oklahoma State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2**8:00 Registration****8:30 Welcome and Introductions***Rudy Herrmann, OWRB Chairman
Mick Cornett, Mayor, OKC**8:45 Keynote Address**

Governor Brad Henry

or Stephen Johnson, EPA Administrator
or Governor Bill Richardson**9:05 Oklahoma Cabinet Secretary Panel*****Water for the Environment***

*Miles Tolbert, Secretary of Environment

Water for Agriculture

*Terry Peach, Secretary of Agriculture

Water for Industry and Tourism

Kathryn Taylor, Sec. of Commerce and Tourism

10:00 State of the State's Water

*Duane A. Smith, OWRB

10:20 Break/Exhibits**10:35 Federal Water Resources Development and Planning Panel*****U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Activities***

*Colonel Miroslav Kurka, Tulsa District Engineer

Bureau of Reclamation Activities

*Mike Ryan, Great Plains Regional Director

Natural Resources Conservation Service Activities

*Larry Caldwell, National Policy Coordinator, Watershed Rehabilitation

11:25 Protecting the Nation's Waters

Richard Greene, EPA Region 6 Administrator

11:45 Illinois River Update

*Drew Edmondson, OK Attorney General

12:15 Luncheon Program***Oklahoma Water Pioneer Awards******Water Outlook from Washington D.C.***

*Blu Hulsey, Majority Counsel, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

Oklahoma's Congressional Delegation

Oklahoma State Legislative Update

*Rep. Susan Winchester

*Rep. Don Armes

Speaker Todd Heitt

*Rep. Curt Roggow

Sen. Ted Fisher

Sen. Kenneth Corn

Sen. Mike Morgan

*Sen. Richard Lerblance

3:00 Adjournment

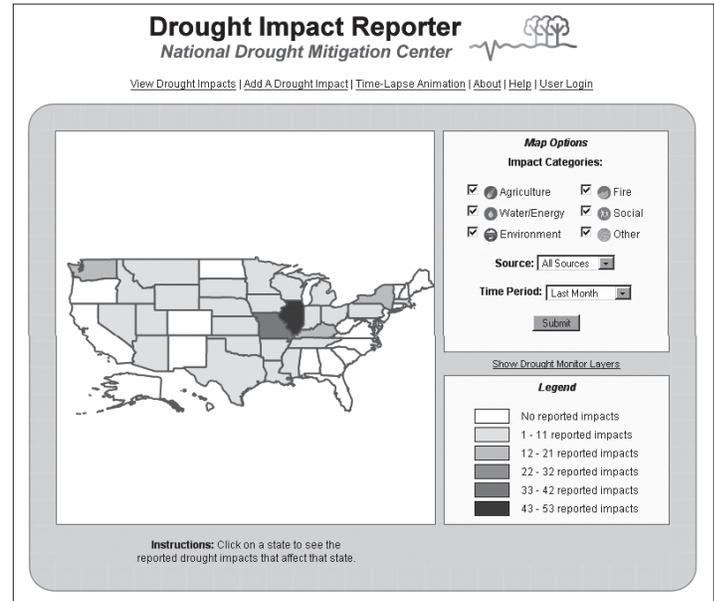
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New Tool Maps U.S. Drought Impacts

Following months of development, the National Drought Mitigation Center, headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, has released an effective new Web-based tool to track and quantify drought-related impacts in the U.S.

The Drought Impact Reporter, available at <http://droughtreporter.unl.edu>, serves to collect, quantify and map reported drought impacts from individuals, state and federal agencies, university and private sector reports/assessments, municipalities, and news media reports. The Reporter has been discussed as a component of the National Integrated Drought Information System, currently in development, which will serve as a national early warning system to monitor and forecast impending drought episodes.

The Drought Reporter also includes an extensive drought impact database and archive that can be accessed through an interactive search tool. Reported impacts, as well as documents, reports, assessments, and research from outside parties, may be submitted to NDMC staff through the Web site.



Aging Dams Need Repair

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 132 small watershed dams in Oklahoma—many of which protect agricultural lands from damaging floodwaters and serve as important sources of water for livestock, irrigation, recreation, and wildlife habitat—have reached or exceeded their 50-year design life. And that number will continue to increase. Within 10 years, 1,090 dams, or more than half the dams constructed in the state, will surpass their projected lifespan and require renovation and repair.

In 2000, U.S. Representative Frank Lucas authored the Small Watershed Rehabilitation Amendments Act, a law that evaluates which upstream flood control structures are most in need of immediate attention. The law establishes up to a 65/35 percent cost-share agreement between the federal government and local sponsors, such as conservation districts, municipalities, or county commissioners. A major goal of the rehabilitation program is to extend the life of the dam for another century by increasing the structure's ability to effectively catch and store sediment.

"Unfortunately, when legislation

was originally passed to begin construction on these small earthen dams in the late 1940s, no language was put in place to address rehabilitation needs that this national infrastructure system would one day face," says Rep. Lucas. "Although some aging dams remain in good shape, others' rusting, cracking drain pipes, sediment-filled lakes, and crumbling concrete or earthen structures are deteriorating in a rapid fashion."

Oklahoma's 2,105 small upstream flood-control dams represent a \$2 billion infrastructure, according to officials with the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. While the original cost of construction 50 years ago averaged around \$50,000, the current cost of rehabilitation is about \$500,000. Current funding needs, based on dam age alone, exceed \$65 million. By 2015, state funding needs are expected to exceed \$545 million, according to the NRCS.

Since 1998, when rehabilitation planning started on Sergeant Major Creek Watershed in Roger Mills County, rehabilitation plans have been completed on 25 dams. Construction has been

completed on six dams with several others in the design and construction phases. NRCS requests funds for up to five rehabilitation planning projects each year, focusing on high hazard dams due to their potential for loss of life should the structures fail.

Nationally, there are over 10,000 small upstream flood control dams in 47 states. The first flood control dam in the nation was Cloud Creek Dam Number 1 built near Cordell in 1948.

Information courtesy Oklahoma Publishing Today, 2005



Reconstruction in April 2000 of a small flood control dam in Roger Mills county, one of 6 dams built in the Sergeant Major Creek Watershed from 1948 to 1963. This site was selected for reconstruction as a result of a hazard classification change due to downstream development, structural problems with the principal spillway, and excessive foundation seepage.

Most Endangered Rivers of 2005

American Rivers, a national non-profit conservation organization, "dedicated to protecting and restoring healthy natural rivers and the variety of life they sustain for people, fish, and wildlife," released its annual list of America's Most Endangered Rivers. Topping the charts for 2005 is the Susquehanna River, which flows through New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. The river suffers from impacts of aging sewage systems and inadequate sewage treatment, which is a primary threat to all the nation's waters. America's top ten most endangered Rivers of 2005 are the Susquehanna, McCrystal Creek (NM), Fraser River (CO), Skykomish River (WA), Roan Creek (TN), Santee River (SC), Little Miami River (OH), Tuolumne River (CA), Price River (UT), and Santa Clara River (CA).

According to American Rivers, 860 billion gallons of untreated sewage makes its way into America's rivers

each year due to aging and/or insufficient treatment systems, posing a significant public health risk. Researchers believe that as many as 3.5 million Americans get sick each year after swimming, boating, fishing, or otherwise touching water they thought was safe. Between 1985 and 2000, the Centers for Disease Control documented nearly half a million cases of waterborne illness in the United States.

Among other remedies, the organization calls for increased investments of federal funds to upgrade community wastewater infrastructure throughout the U.S., claiming that more than 30% of the 600,000 miles of sewage lines across the nation will be in poor or very poor condition by the year 2020.

The complete list of American Rivers' most imperiled rivers, and their individual problems can be found at www.americanrivers.org.

Reflections

By Miles Tolbert
Oklahoma Secretary of Environment

Mixing Boots and Birkenstocks

If, like Will Rogers, all you know is what you read in the papers, you could be forgiven for thinking that agriculture and the environment are at war. "The sometimes bitter struggle over the right way to address the impact of poultry production on Oklahoma's scenic rivers has dominated the headlines and much of the Legislature's attention this past year. In future sessions, the Legislature will have the opportunity to move this debate in a far more productive direction."

The key to bringing agricultural production and environmental protection together is to understand a few basic facts. Nearly 95 percent of Oklahoma's land is privately owned. More than three-quarters of private land is devoted to agriculture. This means that the health of Oklahoma's environment will rise or fall on the individual decisions of the state's 119,000 farmers and ranchers.

What Oklahoman, given adequate resources and information, would not act to conserve the land from which he earns his livelihood? The challenge then is to provide these producers with the right tools and incentives to change the environment for the better.

The most ecologically important acreage of any piece of property is the

portion along a stream or river. A good stand of natural vegetation along a waterway can filter out contaminated runoff, improve stream conditions and add to wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, all too often we have cleared stream banks of trees and other native plants in order to gain a few acres of additional cropland or pasture.

Gov. Brad Henry has proposed that the state institute a program to assist interested landowners with reestablishing these buffer strips. Under the enhanced Conservation Reserve Program, every \$1 spent by the state for this purpose will be matched with up to \$4 in federal money.

Of course, the best way to ensure that landowners make decisions that will benefit the environment is to help them to make money at it. Income from hunting leases has already shown many landowners the economic value of protecting habitat. Prime habitat today brings landowners up to \$3,500 per hunter in annual income.

We can build on this success by expanding the market beyond hunters and fishermen to include bird watchers, hikers and others. A joint effort by the state departments of Tourism, Agriculture, and Wildlife seeks to do just that by promoting agritourism as a means of

providing additional income to farmers and ranchers and additional tax revenue to rural communities.

When we see oil derricks at work across Oklahoma's countryside, what we are really seeing is extraction of a fuel formed from plants that grew in Oklahoma millions of years ago. Unfortunately, proven oil reserves are limited and new fields increasingly difficult to find.

To supplement our energy production we need look no further than what is growing around those derricks. Fuels derived from crops like corn, soybeans, and, someday, native grasses can provide a sustainable, domestically produced alternative to gasoline without the negative effects on air quality or the need to wait millions of years. In fact, Love's Country Stores is in negotiations to begin offering diesel fuel from soybeans at some of its locations. Additionally, three important pieces of legislation were passed during the 2005 legislative session that would promote the development of crop-based fuels.

Environmentalists and farm groups have more in common than they think. Oklahoma has the opportunity to lead the way toward a more cooperative approach. Let's take it.

Oklahoma Drought Monitor

Reservoir Storage

Lake storage in Oklahoma remains generally adequate. As of August 16, the combined normal conservation pools of 31 selected major federal reservoirs across Oklahoma (see below) are approximately 88.9 percent full, a 2.1 percent decrease from that recorded on July 25, according to information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Tulsa District). Twenty-two reservoirs have experienced lake level decreases since that time; 22 reservoirs are currently operating at less than full capacity (compared to 20 three weeks ago). Two reservoirs—Lugert-Altus, only 41 percent full; and Tom Steed, 67.3 percent—remain below 80 percent capacity.

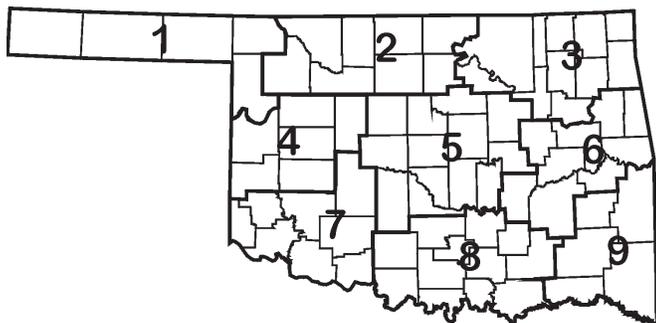
Storage in Selected Oklahoma Lakes & Reservoirs

As of August 16, 2005

Climate Division	Conservation Storage (acre-feet)	Present Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Conservation Storage
North Central	420,480	419,469	99.8
Northeast	3,710,194	3,514,940	94.7
West Central	276,790	273,183	98.7
Central	154,225	146,779	95.2
East Central	2,915,043	2,509,932	86.1
Southwest	301,810	73,685	24.4
South Central	2,973,092	2,625,629	88.3
Southeast	1,512,859	1,335,024	88.2
State Totals	12,264,493	10,898,641	88.9

Drought Indices

According to the latest Palmer Drought Severity Index (August 13, below), five regions in Oklahoma are currently experiencing drought conditions, including the Southeast and East Central climate divisions, which are in “severe drought.” The South Central and Northeast climate divisions are in “moderate drought” while the Central region is in “mild drought.” Five of Oklahoma’s nine climate divisions have undergone PDSI moisture decreases since July 23. The greatest decrease occurred in the North Central climate division.



The latest monthly Standardized Precipitation Index (through July, below) continues to reflect relatively dry conditions in Oklahoma over the past several months. Among the *selected* time periods (3-, 6-, 9- and 12-month SPIs), “very dry” conditions persist in Southeast Oklahoma over the past 3- and 6-month periods. The South Central and Southeast climate divisions also indicate “very dry” conditions over the past 6 months. Considering longer periods (through six years), the Southeast and East Central climate division report “moderately dry” conditions over the past 30 and 36 months

Palmer Drought Severity Index

Climate Division (#)	Current Status 8/13/2005	Value		Change In Value
		8/13	7/23	
NORTHWEST (1)	MOIST SPELL	1.77	2.22	-0.45
NORTH CENTRAL (2)	NEAR NORMAL	-0.17	0.41	-0.58
NORTHEAST (3)	MODERATE DROUGHT	-2.09	-1.75	-0.34
WEST CENTRAL (4)	INCIPIENT MOIST SPELL	0.56	-0.13	0.69
CENTRAL (5)	MILD DROUGHT	-1.57	-2.07	0.50
EAST CENTRAL (6)	SEVERE DROUGHT	-3.08	-2.76	-0.32
SOUTHWEST (7)	INCIPIENT DROUGHT	-0.89	-1.92	1.03
SOUTH CENTRAL (8)	MODERATE DROUGHT	-2.50	-2.84	0.34
SOUTHEAST (9)	SEVERE DROUGHT	-3.48	-3.13	-0.35

Standardized Precipitation Index

Through July 2005

	3-Month	6-Month	9-Month	12-Month
NORTHWEST (1)	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	MODERATELY WET
NORTH CENTRAL (2)	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
NORTHEAST (3)	NEAR NORMAL	MODERATELY DRY	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
WEST CENTRAL (4)	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	MODERATELY WET	MODERATELY WET
CENTRAL (5)	NEAR NORMAL	MODERATELY DRY	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
EAST CENTRAL (6)	MODERATELY DRY	VERY DRY	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
SOUTHWEST (7)	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
SOUTH CENTRAL (8)	NEAR NORMAL	VERY DRY	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
SOUTHEAST (9)	VERY DRY	VERY DRY	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL

Financial Assistance Program Update

Loans/Grants Approved as of August 9, 2005

FAP Loans—310 totaling \$552,740,000

The OWRB's Financial Assistance Program (FAP), created by the State Legislature in 1979, provides loans for water and wastewater system improvements in Oklahoma. The tremendous popularity of the bond loan program is due, in part, to extended payoff periods of up to 30 years at extremely competitive interest rates, averaging approximately 4.762 percent since 1986.

CWSRF Loans—166 totaling \$575,018,715

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan program was created in 1988 to provide a renewable financing source for communities to draw upon for their wastewater infrastructure needs. The CWSRF program is Oklahoma's largest self-supporting wastewater financing effort, providing low-interest loans to communities in need.

DWSRF Loans—51 totaling \$201,188,938

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan program is an initiative of the OWRB and Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality to assist municipalities and rural water districts in the construction and improvement of drinking water systems. These projects are often mandated for communities to obtain compliance with increasingly stringent federal standards related to the treatment of drinking water.

REAP Grants—434 totaling \$37,952,038

The Rural Economic Action Plan (REAP) Program was created by the State Legislature in 1996. REAP grants, used for water/wastewater system improvements, target primarily rural communities with populations of 7,000 or less, but priority is afforded to those with fewer than 1,750 inhabitants.

Emergency Grants—514 totaling \$30,203,180

Emergency grants, limited to \$100,000, are awarded to correct situations constituting a threat to life, health, or property and are an indispensable component of the agency's financial assistance strategy.

Total Loans/Grants—1,475 totaling \$1,397,102,871

Estimated Savings—\$441,591,636

Applicants eligible for water/wastewater project financial assistance vary according to the specific program's purpose and requirements, but include towns and other municipalities with proper legal authority, various districts established under Title 82 of Oklahoma Statutes (rural water, master/water conservancy, rural sewage, and irrigation districts), counties, public works authorities, and/or school districts. Applications for agency financial assistance programs are evaluated individually by agency staff. Those meeting specific program requirements are recommended by staff for approval at monthly meetings of the nine-member Water Board.

More information about the OWRB's Financial Assistance Program can be obtained by calling the OWRB at (405) 530-8800.

Rudy Herrmann, *Chairman*; Mark Nichols, *Vice Chairman*; Bill Secrest, *Secretary*
Harry Currie, Lonnie L. Farmer, Ed Fite, Jack Keeley, Kenneth K. Knowles, Richard C. Sevenoaks

Brian Vance, *Writer/Editor* • Darla Whitley, *Writer/Layout* • Barry Fogerty, *Photography*

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