

OKLAHOMA Water News

3rd Quarter 2008

Inside

Working to Improve
Water Quality

Strong Assumes
Environment Post

Water Law Seminar
Educates Planning Groups

Water Conference Agenda

Online Well Measurement
Data Available

Cunningham Named
Division Chief

Working to improve water quality

The following editorial appeared in the Sunday Oklahoman newspaper, July 13, 2008

By Duane Smith and Steve Thompson

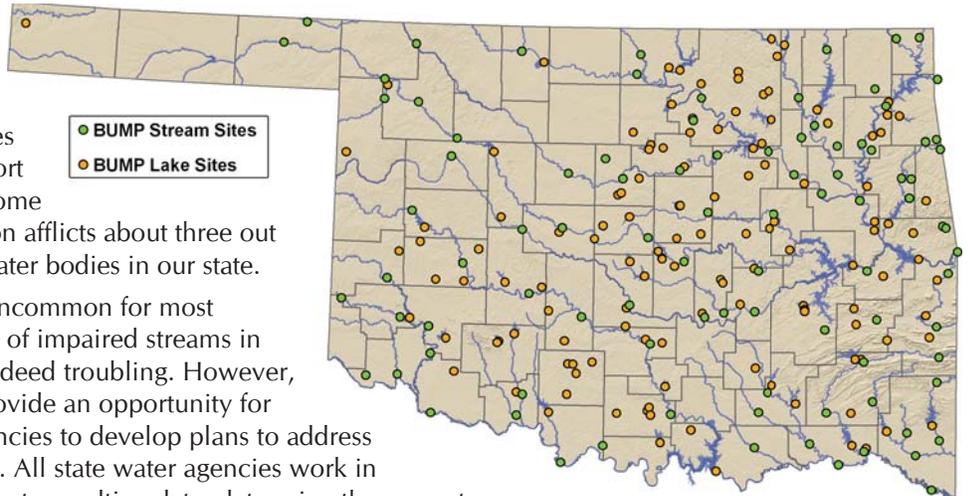
A recent report submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality detailing the pollution status of our rivers, streams, and lakes has received much attention. Required of all states every two years, the report includes a detailed list of "impaired waters," or those not meeting their desired uses, as prescribed by Oklahoma's water quality standards, maintained by the Oklahoma

Water Resources Board. The report indicates that some form of pollution afflicts about three out of every four water bodies in our state.

Although not uncommon for most states, the level of impaired streams in Oklahoma is indeed troubling. However, the list does provide an opportunity for state water agencies to develop plans to address the impairment. All state water agencies work in concert to evaluate resulting data, determine the current status of individual waters and establish protective measures, especially related to human health and the environment.

Maybe more troubling is the fact that many rivers, streams and lakes aren't being monitored. Therefore, insufficient data exist for agencies to comprehensively determine where all impairments are occurring and develop plans to address those impairments. The DEQ and OWRB have entered into an important partnership to survey the surface water resources of Oklahoma. Through the

(continued on page 3)



From the Director

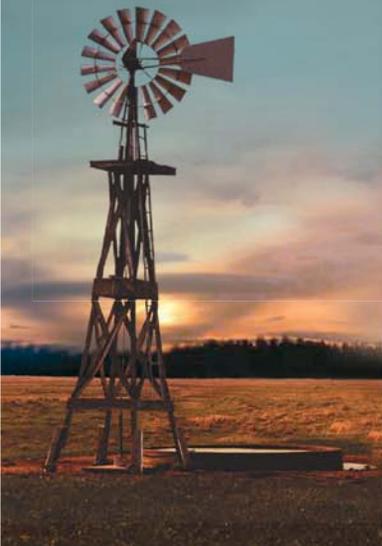
Several legislative interim study hearings in August focused attention on the OWRB's financial assistance, dam safety, floodplain management, and monitoring programs. Mirroring the intense interest in water demonstrated lately by Oklahoma citizens, members of both the House of Representatives and Senate are seeking specific answers to the many tough water questions facing our state. Likewise, we are addressing these issues through the update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan, due for submittal to the Legislature early in 2012.

The House Natural Resources Committee study on general water issues afforded a rare opportunity to present specific information to Oklahoma's key environmental leaders on the state's water quality and quantity monitoring

(continued on page 2)



Duane A. Smith, Executive Director
Oklahoma Water Resources Board



Strong Assumes Environment Post

On August 12, Governor Brad Henry announced that Miles Tolbert, Oklahoma Secretary of the Environment, would leave his cabinet post to take a position in the private sector with Crowe and Dunlevy as head of the firm's environmental practice group.

"Miles Tolbert has been a great asset to my administration and the state of Oklahoma," said Governor Henry. "He has fought tirelessly to protect the environment and the interests of Oklahoma citizens, and played a critical role in developing and implementing the relocation program for families in the Tar Creek Superfund site. I greatly appreciate Miles' service and will certainly miss his leadership, but I understand this is a wonderful opportunity and wish him well."

From the Director (continued)

activities, how we use resulting data, and a tough self-assessment of the job state and federal agencies are doing in protecting our water resources while facilitating economic development.

Typically, we think of a watershed as a geographic area drained by a river and its tributaries, an area characterized by all runoff being conveyed to the same point. However, John Wesley Powell, the noted explorer, scientist, and second director of the U.S. Geological Survey, said it best perhaps when he defined a watershed as "that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community."

Inspired by these words, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Executive Director Steve Thompson and I used the Lake Eufaula watershed to tell Committee members our story about the importance of water monitoring.

Originating in New Mexico at the headwaters of the Beaver/North Canadian and Canadian Rivers, then extending through the Texas Panhandle and western and central Oklahoma, the Eufaula watershed is home to some 1.7 million people who rely on local surface and groundwaters for numerous purposes. These people are impacted in many ways by the varied activities that take place there.

Citizens living in the Oklahoma portion of the Eufaula basin have a total annual personal income of more than \$52 billion. The market value of agricultural products alone produced in this 18,503-square-mile area is about \$2.3 billion. Water, representing only a minuscule percentage of the total area, remains the single most important factor supporting this economy. Almost 50,000 water wells are drilled in the basin. Hundreds of these wells, as well as water intake structures from lakes and streams, tap the source of supply for more than 200 public water systems in cities and rural areas. In all, the OWRB administers 4,888 permits in the Eufaula basin for the use of more than 2.3 million acre-feet, or 762 billion gallons, of water. In addition to drinking water, this water is also

Governor Henry has appointed J.D. Strong, OSE Chief of Staff, as the state's fifth Secretary of the Environment. In his twelve years at OSE, Strong served as lead advisor to three different Secretaries under two Governors. Strong coordinated both the Governor's Tar Creek Superfund Task Force and the Animal Waste and Water Quality Protection Task Force.

Secretary Strong will coordinate the activities of the Environmental Cabinet, including the OWRB, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.



J.D. Strong, OK Secretary of the Environment

utilized for irrigation/agriculture, industry, mining, power, and other uses that fuel the region's economy, and that of our state.

The basin's economic and social activity also brings with it an associated threat to our water quality and environment—more than 550 wastewater discharge points and other permitted operations to handle human waste, 244 concentrated animal feeding operations that contribute a phosphorus pollution load equivalent to a population of 14 to 22 million people, and five Superfund hazardous waste sites. Public health and the environment are at potential risk. This is why we keep close watch on our surface waters through the Beneficial Use Monitoring Program (BUMP) and collect data that tells us where and to what degree the quality of those waters is improving, or declining, and why. But costs associated with BUMP, consisting of data collection by the OWRB with analysis provided by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), have more than doubled since its creation in 1999 but appropriations have remained flat. We've maximized program efficiencies, yet we've been forced to reduce the number of parameters we sample for. And it's alarming to many that we have insufficient data to accurately assess the quality of about 78 percent of our perennial streams in Oklahoma. Moreover, the state lacks a groundwater quality monitoring program altogether.

This is the message that Steve and I passed along to Committee members. And we put to them this question to consider: "How much water-related data does Oklahoma require?" Without data, or enough of it, we subject municipalities and businesses—and ultimately, the taxpayers—to more stringent and costly protection measures, simply because we lack the information required to make informed decisions. Data allows state agencies to focus water quality standards development and implementation (remediation) on the problem areas and to be proactive, rather than reactive, in our decision-making. It allows us to maximize the use of Oklahoma's water supplies. This is why the OWRB and DEQ are advocating an increase in the current annual appropriation for BUMP to \$2 million, at a minimum. What we don't know can indeed hurt us.

Water Quality (continued)

statewide Beneficial Use Monitoring Program (BUMP), OWRB staff collects water samples from hundreds of stream and lake sites each year. Those samples are analyzed for a variety of parameters in the field.

Officials at the DEQ and OWRB continually strive to leverage limited funds and resources to provide the maximum benefit to taxpayers. We prioritize sampling locations and lab analyses and we stretch supplies, all while attempting to maintain the overall integrity of our program. Due to budgetary limitations, our agencies regularly sample and assess only about 25 percent of Oklahoma's surface water bodies, and there is no state program in place to monitor the overall quality of our groundwaters.

Rising program and fuel costs coupled with no new appropriations present even more challenges. Appropriations remain stable, but the need for water-quality data and more informed decision-making only increases. We're at the point where it's not a question of how much water-quality information we need, but how much we are willing to invest

in. Improving Oklahoma's water quality has become a citizen priority and it must become a state priority as well.

Clearly, a balance has to be struck between the cost of water, its treatment and delivery, and the benefits of reducing impairments to Oklahoma's water quality. This issue will be addressed when an interim legislative committee convenes later this year to study Oklahoma's monitoring program. The OWRB and DEQ are making BUMP funding a co-agency



Steve Thompson, Executive Director, ODEQ

priority during next year's legislative session. The ongoing update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan provides a separate opportunity to enhance our monitoring efforts. In the meantime, we want to reassure the public that its state agencies are working diligently together to improve the quality of our waters and the programs we use to manage them.

Water Law Seminar Educates Planning Groups

The "Basic Oklahoma Water Law" seminar, held July 28-29 at the Moore-Norman Technology Center, served to educate Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan Regional Input Meeting (RIM) participants on the many complexities inherent in state water law. The meeting featured numerous presentations by state, federal, and academic water law experts, including Lieutenant Governor Jari Askins and Attorney General Drew Edmondson. Topics included recreation and instream flow, interbasin transfers, federal reserved and Indian water rights, and numerous other issues currently under discussion at the 11 OCWP regional meetings. More than 300 RIM participants and other interested Oklahomans attended the conference.



"If reliability can be impacted by nonconsumptive needs and demands, it is appropriate to include recreation and other instream flow issues in the Water Plan discussions."

-Drew Edmondson, Oklahoma Attorney General

"What we do to define how important water is to us now, and how important we want it to be for us in the future, is really going to determine what Oklahoma's next 100 years are going to be like. We've spent a lot of time trying to get rid of the Dust Bowl image, but it doesn't do us any good if we build ourselves back into it without a plan."

-Jari Askins, Oklahoma Lieutenant Governor

GOVERNOR'S WATER CONFERENCE AGENDA

October 28

- 7:45 Registration
- 8:15 Welcome
Mark Nichols, Chairman, OWRB
J.D. Strong, Oklahoma Secretary of the Environment
- 8:30 **Comprehensive Water Planning in Oklahoma**
Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director
- 9:15 **The Corps of Engineers' Water Planning Role**
Steve Stockton, Director of Civil Works, Corps of Engineers
- 9:30 **The Tulsa District: Working with Oklahoma**
Col. Anthony Funkhouser, Tulsa District Engineer
- 9:45 Break
- 10:15 **OCWP Public Participation**
Will Focht, Director, Water Research Institute
- 10:35 **Panel: OCWP Technical Studies Overview**
Overview - John Rehring, Camp Dresser & McKee Inc.
Statewide Water Supply/Demand Analysis
Kelly DiNatale, Senior Water Resources Engineer, CDM
Public Water Provider/Infrastructure Survey
Bryan Mitchell, Deputy Project Manager for the OCWP, CDM
- 11:40 Break

- Noon **Conference Luncheon**
Oklahoma Water Pioneer Awards
Chairman Nichols, Duane Smith
Legislative Water Perspective
Sen. Glenn Coffee, Co-President Pro Tempore
Rep. Dale DeWitt
Water Outlook from Washington DC
Oklahoma's Congressional Delegation
- 1:40 Break
- 2:00 **Interior Update**
Kris Polly, Dep Asst Sec for Water and Science, Dept of Interior
- 2:20 **The New State/Federal Water Planning Model**
Fred Caver, President, Caver & Associates, Inc.
- 2:40 **The Great Lakes Compact**
Cameron Davis, President, Alliance for the Great Lakes
- 3:00 **Water Supply Management in a Variable Climate**
Ken Crawford, Director, Oklahoma Climatological Survey
- 3:20 **Arbuckle-Simpson Study Proposed Management Options**
Noel Osborn, Water Resources Geologist, OWRB
Scott Christenson, Hydrologist, U.S. Geological Survey
- 4:20 Adjourn to Reception

October 29

- 8:15 Welcome
Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director
Mayor Mick Cornett, Oklahoma City
- 8:40 **The Energy/Water Nexus**
Tom Price, Jr., Senior VP-Corporate Development, Chesapeake
- 9:00 **The Tribal Role in Water Plan Development**
Governor Bill Anoatubby, Chickasaw Nation
- 9:20 **Texas Instream Flow Program**
Bill Mullican, Water Science & Cons, Texas Water Dev Board
- 9:40 **Partnerships in Oklahoma Water Quality**
Steve Thompson, Executive Director, ODEO
- 10:00 Break
- 10:30 **Panel: Protecting Oklahoma's Water Interests**
Michael Fuhr, Director, Nature Conservancy of Oklahoma
Jeff Todd, Attorney, Oklahoma Farm Bureau Legal Foundation
Diane Pedicord, General Counsel, Oklahoma Municipal League
Bob Portiss, Director, Tulsa Port of Catoosa
- 11:20 **Panel: Regional Water Solutions for Oklahoma**
Rob Johnson, CEO, National Rural Water Association
Steve Lewis, Manager, City of Norman
Kelly Hurt, Engineer, Chickasaw Enterprises

- Noon **Luncheon**
4-H Speech Contest Winners

OWRRI WATER RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM AGENDA

October 29

- 1:30 Session 1: Updates and New Developments
- 3:00 Break & Poster Session
- 3:30 Session 2: Trends in Water Use
- 5:00 Reception

October 30

- 8:15 Welcome
- 8:30 Session 3: Climate Change & Water Planning in Oklahoma
- 10:00 Break & Poster Session
- 10:30 Session 4: Information/Data Flow Through Federal Agencies
- Noon Luncheon
- 1:30 Session 5: Water Research by Tribes in Oklahoma
- 3:00 Break
- 3:30 Session 6: Water Budgets as a Basis for Water Management
- 5:00 Adjourn

29th Annual Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference & 6th Annual OWRRI Water Research Symposium

___ **\$275 Oct. 28-30 (3 days)--Governor's Water Conference & OWRRI Research Symposium**

___ **\$225 Oct. 28-29 (2 days)--Governor's Water Conference**

___ **\$225 Oct. 29-30 (2 days)--OWRRI Research Symposium**

Student registration is available online at
<http://environ.okstate.edu/OKWATER/>.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please check all that apply:

I am a Regional Input Meeting (RIM) discussant/alternate.

I prefer a vegetarian plate at the luncheons.

I will attend the following: Oct. 28 reception (5:00 pm)

Oct. 29 reception (5:00 pm)

Register online at <http://environ.okstate.edu/OKWATER/>.

To register by mail, please complete this form and enclose with a check, money order, or purchase order payable to OWRRI, 003 Life Sciences East, Stillwater, OK 74078.



Recent Developments

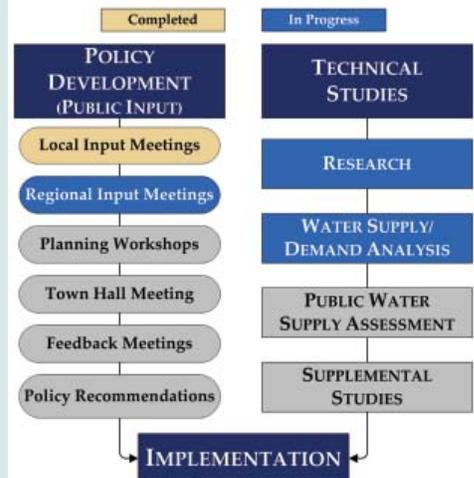
- Regional Input Meetings (RIMs) continue as participants sort through more than 2,500 comments (categorized into 54 separate water issues) received at the 42 Local Input Meetings (LIMs) held statewide in 2007. Priority issues will be pared down for discussion at upcoming planning workshops, scheduled to begin in early 2009.



OCWP Northwest Region representatives debate water issues at the September 11 RIM meeting in Beaver.

The Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan, published and continuously updated by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, establishes guidelines for the present and future use of the state's water resources and outlines policy recommendations for water resources management.

Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan Process



Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan Update UPCOMING REGIONAL INPUT MEETINGS

October 2--Tishomingo

Murray State College, Student Union Ball Room

October 9--Tulsa

Central Community Center Auditorium

October 23--Muskogee

Muskogee Civic Center, Room D

November 6--Oklahoma City

Metro Technology Center, Rooms Big Dipper and Carousel

November 13--Seminole

Seminole State College, Ball Room

Water Plan Objectives

1. Characterize demands by water use sector.
2. Identify reliable supplies to meet forecasted demands.
3. Perform technical studies in support of the evaluation of emerging water management issues.
4. Engage comprehensive stakeholder involvement to make recommendations regarding the management of Oklahoma's water resources.
5. Ensure water resources management programs that create reliability.
6. Make "implementable" recommendations regarding the future of water management in Oklahoma based upon technical evaluations and stakeholder input.

Goals of the OCWP Update

- To provide safe and dependable water supply for all Oklahomans while improving the economy and protecting the environment.
- To provide information so that water providers, policy-makers, and water users can make informed decisions concerning the use and management of Oklahoma's water resources.

For more information on the OCWP, visit the OWRB's website at www.owrb.ok.gov. For questions and comments concerning policy development and public meetings, contact the OWRRI at 405-744-9994, by e-mail at waterplan@okstate.edu, or go to <http://okwaterplan.info>.

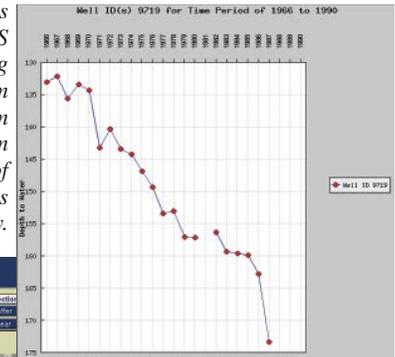
Online Well Measurement Data Available

The OWRB's online mapping application, the Water Information Mapping System (WIMS), now includes statewide groundwater level measurements. The featured data—which can be accessed through the WIMS Custom Map Viewer under Groundwater Layers, Water Level Measurements—is primarily from observation wells included in the agency's Mass Measurement Program. Previously, only select online data of this type was available through the OWRB's website.

Green dots represent "active" wells, or those measured within the last year. Red dots represent "inactive" wells that are not currently part of the program. Data for other wells can also be viewed. By using the hotlink button, visitors can click on a well and/or the well ID to view a graph of annual water levels, some collected since 1945, and related information. The OWRB's Mass Measurement Program includes more than 27,000 annual measurements.

The OWRB's award-winning website (www.okwr.gov) was launched 10 years ago in the spring of 1998.

This graph was generated in WIMS (below) utilizing data collected from 1966 to 1987 from an inactive program well southwest of Guymon in Texas County.



Cunningham Named Division Chief

Julie Cunningham was appointed Chief of the OWRB's Planning and Management Division on July 1. Dave Dillon, former chief, is now OWRB Assistant Director.

Since 2001, Cunningham has served as Assistant Chief of the Board's Financial Assistance Division. In this role, she served as Chairman of the National State Revolving Fund Workgroup, working closely with state representatives and EPA to craft federal policy recommendations, develop national performance metrics, and explore potential areas of Fund expansion to better address national water resource and infrastructure needs.

"I am especially pleased to join the Planning and Management at such an important time for water planning in Oklahoma. I look forward to working with our talented staff and many others in the coming years to advance the water rights administration process, complete essential surface water and groundwater basin studies and implement appropriate recommendations resulting from the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan process."



Julie Cunningham, OWRB Planning & Management Division Chief

Cunningham obtained a B.S. in Geography from Oklahoma State University and completed graduate work at the University of Oklahoma College of Engineering and Environmental Science and University of Maryland School of Public Affairs with an emphasis on resource management, urban planning, and public administration.

Revised Annual Stream Water Right Administration Fee

2008 water use report invoices, which will be mailed out in early January 2009, will reflect the OWRB's new flat annual water right administration fee of \$50 for each stream water permit or stream water vested right. The maximum fee imposed on any one permit or vested right holder is \$500 per year. This change, as well as the revised fee schedule (below) results from passage of Enrolled House Joint Resolution 1105 (effective May 8, 2008).

| Revised Fee Schedule for New Surface Water or Groundwater Applications (filed as of May 8, 2008) | |
|--|-------|
| Amount Applied For | Fee |
| 0 - 320 acre-feet | \$190 |
| 321 - 640 acre-feet | \$300 |
| 641 - 1500 acre-feet | \$375 |
| Over 1500 acre-feet | \$375 |
| Plus \$150 for each 500 acre-feet (or any increment thereof) over 1500 acre-feet (maximum fee = \$3,000) | |

Cunningham joined the OWRB's Water Quality Division in 1994, where she conducted lake water quality assessments and oversaw the Oklahoma Water Watch and Water Quality Standards programs.

Drought Update

Reservoir Storage

As of September 24, seven reservoirs (of 31 selected major federal reservoirs across Oklahoma, see right) are operating at less than full capacity, according to information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Tulsa District); 14 reservoirs have experienced lake level decreases since August 26.

Palmer Drought Severity Index

According to the latest Palmer Drought Severity Index (September 20, bottom), state moisture conditions remain generally good. Recent drought conditions have improved greatly in the Northwest/Panhandle climate division.

Standardized Precipitation Index

The latest monthly Standardized Precipitation Index (through August, bottom) indicates no near long-term dryness in Oklahoma. Similarly, longer SPI time periods (longer than 12 months) indicate no dry conditions.



Storage in Selected Oklahoma Lakes & Reservoirs (September 24, 2008)

| LAKE | Change in Elevation (feet) 8/26/08-9/24/08 | Current Flood Control Storage (acre-feet) |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| North Central (2) | | |
| Fort Supply | 0.49 | 131 |
| Great Salt Plains | 2.53 | 23,624 |
| Kaw | 10.58 | 201,395 |
| Northeast (3) | | |
| Birch | 0.33 | 309 |
| Copan | -0.18 | 2,440 |
| Fort Gibson | 4.96 | 160,149 |
| Grand | 3.63 | 213,250 |
| Hudson | -0.81 | 15,150 |
| Hulah | -0.65 | 4,008 |
| Keystone | 7.57 | 212,523 |
| Oologah | 2.12 | 190,642 |
| Skiatook | -0.50 | -9,785 |
| West Central (4) | | |
| Canton | 1.45 | 7,244 |
| Foss | 0.10 | -1,536 |
| Central (5) | | |
| Arcadia | -0.34 | 223 |
| Heyburn | 0.39 | -555 |
| Thunderbird | -1.54 | 1,281 |
| East Central (6) | | |
| Eufaula | -0.21 | 11,588 |
| Tenkiller | 3.00 | 49,155 |
| Southwest (7) | | |
| Fort Cobb | -0.66 | 701 |
| Lugert-Altus | -0.94 | -79,839 |
| Tom Steed | -0.56 | -14,737 |
| South Central (8) | | |
| Arbuckle | 0.48 | -4,326 |
| McGee Creek | 0.09 | 3,823 |
| Texoma | 0.91 | -1,475 |
| Waurika | 0.35 | 2,129 |
| Southeast (9) | | |
| Broken Bow | 1.88 | 5,994 |
| Hugo | 3.88 | 63,819 |
| Pine Creek | 0.01 | 5,968 |
| Sardis | 0.69 | 9,017 |
| Wister | 3.76 | 48,654 |

| CLIMATE DIVISION | Standardized Precipitation Index (through August 2008) | | | | Palmer Drought Severity Index |
|-------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| | 3-month | 6-month | 9-month | 12-month | September 20, 2008 |
| Northwest (1) | Near Normal | Near Normal | Near Normal | Near Normal | Moist Spell |
| North Central (2) | Moderately Wet | Moderately Wet | Very Wet | Moderately Wet | Extreme Moist Spell |
| Northeast (3) | Very Wet | Extremely Wet | Extremely Wet | Extremely Wet | Extreme Moist Spell |
| West Central (4) | Moderately Wet | Moderately Wet | Very Wet | Moderately Wet | Very Moist Spell |
| Central (5) | Moderately Wet | Very Wet | Very Wet | Moderately Wet | Very Moist Spell |
| East Central (6) | Moderately Wet | Very Wet | Very Wet | Very Wet | Very Moist Spell |
| Southwest (7) | Near Normal | Near Normal | Near Normal | Near Normal | Moist Spell |
| South Central (8) | Near Normal | Moderately Wet | Near Normal | Near Normal | Moist Spell |
| Southeast (9) | Near Normal | Very Wet | Moderately Wet | Moderately Wet | Extreme Moist Spell |

For more drought information, and to obtain updated information on Oklahoma's drought and moisture conditions, go to www.owrb.ok.gov/supply/drought/drought_index.php.

www.owrb.ok.gov

*Mark Nichols, Chairman • Rudy Herrmann, Vice Chairman • Linda Lambert, Secretary
Ford Drummond • Lonnie Farmer • Ed Fite • Jack W. Keeley • Kenneth K. Knowles • Richard Sevenoaks*

The mission of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board is to manage and protect the water resources of the state and plan for Oklahoma's long-range water needs in a responsive, innovative, and professional manner to ensure that all Oklahomans have adequate quantities of good water.



3rd Quarter 2008

Brian Vance, Editor

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or call us at (405) 530-8800*

The Oklahoma Water News is published by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board as authorized by Duane A. Smith, Executive Director. Eighty-eight hundred copies have been printed by University Printing Services at an approximate cost of 38 cents each. Copies have been deposited at the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Loans & Grants Approved as of September 9, 2008

FAP Loans—321 totaling \$629,750,000

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 very competitive interest rates, averaging approximately 4.762 percent since 1986.

CWSRF Loans—186 totaling \$675,320,352

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—82 totaling \$429,826,042

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—506 totaling \$44,655,453

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—540 totaling \$31,783,529

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.

Drought Response Program Grants—3 totaling \$300,000

Through the OWRB's Drought Response Program, limited funding is available for communities in most dire need during state drought emergencies declared by the Governor. A maximum of \$300,000 is diverted from existing OWRB Emergency Grant funds to establish the Program.

Total Loans/Grants: 1,638 totaling \$1,811,635,376

Estimated Savings: \$570,407,202

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.

**For more information, call 405-530-8800
or go to www.owrb.ok.gov/financing.**