

## OWRB Attends to 'All Things Water' in 2002

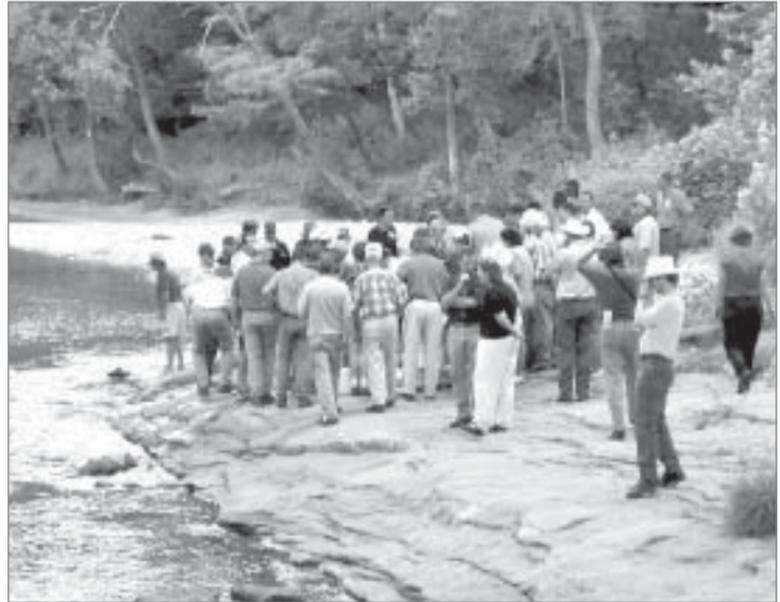
Consistent with mounting public interest in Oklahoma's water resources, the OWRB dealt with numerous difficult issues related to water management and protection during 2002, appropriately designated as the Year of Clean Water by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The agency's high-water mark for the year occurred at the State Capitol in November as the OWRB hosted a very special event to mark the billion-dollar milestone and 20-year anniversary of the Board's Financial Assistance Program. Attending the "Billion Dollar Celebration" were numerous dignitaries, including past agency directors, Board members, Governors, and other officials responsible for the program, which has generated an eightfold return on investment.

Phosphorus was on everyone's mind as the Water Board developed, and then approved in March, a controversial new rule to combat nutrient pollution in the Illinois River and other legislatively protected Scenic Rivers. For months, municipalities, poultry producers, recreational interests, legislators, the media, and countless others debated the merits and feasibility of the Board's 0.037 milligram per liter water quality standard for phosphorus. Officials from

Oklahoma were dispatched to Arkansas, which makes up almost one-half of the Illinois River's watershed, to formally discuss implementation of the standard and the Board hosted a well-attended, day-long tour of the basin to educate interested parties on all aspects of the issue. The phosphorus rule survived scrutiny by the Oklahoma State Legisla-

***See All Things Water, Page 2***



*Tour of Illinois River basin at the Flint Creek BUMP site*

ture and Governor, and then was forwarded to EPA for approval.

Also generating a lot of controversy during 2002 was a potential water transfer project that would move some 60,000 acre-feet per year of water from the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer to communities in central Oklahoma. A private development company, PESA LLC, approached landowners overlying the prolific water source in south central and southeast Oklahoma to secure contracts for land/water rights sufficient to meet the future needs of several Canadian County communities and surrounding areas. After receiving several groundwater permit applications from the Arbuckle-Simpson stating commercial water sale as the intended use, the Board initiated the development of a strategy to address those out-of-basin uses and concerns related to protection of the aquifer. Staff also began working with members of Oklahoma's Congressional delegation to secure funding that would allow comprehensive study of the prolific groundwater supply.

On the heels of the release of a monumental draft water compact that would have paved the way for future administration of water rights and related economic development goals in southeast Oklahoma's tribal regions, state officials terminated water transfer talks with north Texas water suppliers in January. Texas representatives failed to ad-

equately recognize Oklahoma demands for specific drought protection measures and assurances for future supply.

Reacting to a localized drought event in northern Oklahoma, the conservation storage at Hulah Lake on the Caney River in Osage County dwindled to a meager 18 percent. As Bartlesville citizens struggled to cope with drastic restrictions on water use, extraordinary downpours filled the lake. However, the incident awoke local officials to the inadequacies of their water system and they continue to pursue plans to secure additional supply.

Residents in the Sardis Lake area, many of whom have been forced to haul water for years, viewed light at the end of their tunnel with the commencement of a local water system. Soon, almost 1,300 homes will be served through the \$9.6 million project. In addition, the Sardis Lake Water Authority system has been designed to accommodate future customers in Clayton, Talihina, and other surrounding areas.

The Governor's Water Conference, held last year in Tulsa, was another smashing success as state and national water experts wrestled with current and impending water issues. The Water Board also gained a new member, Glenn Sharp, a marketing specialist from Grove, to represent recreational water interests. Sharp replaced longtime member Dick Seybolt.

## ***FY 2002 EXPENDITURES***

### ***Oklahoma Water Resources Board***

<b>Fund Description</b>	<b>FY-99 Actual</b>	<b>FY-00 Actual</b>	<b>FY-01 Actual</b>	<b>FY-02 Actual</b>
<b>Constitutional Reserve</b>	731,381	1,232,460	49,809	
<b>State Appropriations</b>	3,631,241	3,993,762	3,818,700	3,655,872
205 Weather Modification	263,819	1,139,977	1,087,787	0
210 Drillers & Pump Installers	818	34,374	23,711	8,282
225 Rural Economic Action Plan		24,022	1,055,503	1,177,606
240 OWR Revolving Fund	352,704	272,120	282,896	278,353
245 Drillers & Installers Regulation Fund				8,799
420 USGS Cooperators	293,575	187,850	129,680	118,435
443 Reimbursement	1,111,483	1,273,621	1,141,932	1,289,555
444 Drinking Water Loan Administration Fund		58	353	12,369
445 Wastewater Facility Construction Fund		446,834	490,343	464,641
472 State Revolving Fund - Operations	20,008	2,403	220,546	141,035
<b>Total Revolving Funds</b>	2,042,407	3,381,258	4,432,751	3,499,075
<b>400 Federal Funds</b>	569,374	895,722	476,126	1,064,723
<b>410 Federal Water Quality Management</b>	3,465,128	4,768,211	3,756,478	3,343,020
<b>Expenditure Totals</b>	10,439,532	14,271,414	12,533,864	11,562,690
<b>Activity</b>				
Administration	1,802,566	2,167,943	1,991,875	2,398,540
Water Quality	863,659	2,030,039	1,827,910	2,027,235
Financial Assistance	871,784	1,153,636	1,358,849	1,298,484
Planning & Management	3,121,054	2,698,435	2,136,693	2,328,164
Weather Modification		1,100,327	1,087,787	0
Secretary of Environment	3,780,469	5,121,035	4,130,750	3,510,267
<b>TOTAL</b>	10,439,532	14,271,414	12,533,864	11,562,690