

Oklahoma

Water
News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA WATER RESOURCES BOARD

Wetlands: 320 Conferees Agree Trouble Lies in the Definition

Nearly all of the 320 conferees at the 10th Annual Oklahoma Water Conference December 13 agree that President Bush's goal declaring "no net loss of wetlands" is a worthy one. However, the rub comes in the definition of wetlands and the lengths to which EPA and other federal regulators would go to protect them.

The definition set out by Russell Rhoades, EPA Region VI Director of Environmental Services, is considerably more complex than the one offered by Michael Luzier, who directs the environmental regulations program of the National Association of Homebuilders.

Rhoades' definition of wetlands includes swamps, bogs, coastal waters and marshes. He said Oklahoma has 330,000 acres of hardwood bottomlands and 5,000 inland freshwater wetlands that need protection. "Wetlands act as biological filters for our water supplies," he said. "They protect shorelines, give breeding habitat to wildlife and provide us recreational opportunities," Rhoades pointed out.

Rhoades faulted the construction of houses and shopping centers for the loss of wetlands. Conservationists estimate 11 million acres of wetlands have been lost between 1950 and 1980.

At the opposite pole, Luzier said the definition of wetlands has been pushed to ludicrous proportions. "I've heard wetlands described as any land you can't walk across in high heels in the spring."

He said wetlands are not worth the cost of protection, pointing out that all wetlands are presumed equal and valuable. "But a drainage ditch doesn't equal coastal marshes. Somebody needs to stand up and say this is crazy." According to Luzier, urbanization is responsible for only six percent of the wetlands loss.

Donald McCrory, Memphis/Shelby County Port director, said business people have a hard time dealing with EPA regulations, further complicated by state regulations concerning building near waterways.

"People need jobs, and port jobs are important to this country," McCrory said. He faults lawsuits filed by EPA concerning construction in wetlands areas for the U.S. falling behind other nations in industrial development.

On behalf of Oklahoma's agricultural sector, Ken McFall, president of the Farm Bureau, told conferees that "there is no end to the feds' appetite for land (set aside for protection). Farmers lose land when the federal government puts the 'wetland' label

on anything from a small farm pond to a drainage ditch."

Conferees agreed that the answer to the nation's wetland dilemma lies in cooperation between business leaders and government agencies. Water resources leaders were urged to push for changes in social behavior, recycling and better technology in waste treatment instead of more stringent wetland regulation.

Conferees had an opportunity to hear more on wetlands and water development financing problems from Washington and the State Capitol perspective. Sen. Don Nickles and Congressmen Wes Watkins and Glenn English spoke during the final morning segment.

First up to the luncheon podium were Sen. Ben Brown and Rep. Cal Hobson of the Oklahoma House and Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, who projected lean prospects for appropriations to the State-wide Water Development Revolving Fund in the upcoming session.

Although Brown and Hobson are staunch advocates of legislation to infuse the Water Development Fund, both called attention to the funding burdens of education, medical and mental health care, corrections and highways. The original appropriation of \$25 million to the Fund in 1982 has provided more than \$11 million in emergency grants and funded 48 loans for more than \$48 million for vital water and sewer improvements.

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Conference, continued from page 1

The answer, Brown and Hobson concurred, is a dedicated source of funding to secure the future of the successful OWRB Financial Assistance Program.

Gov. Bellmon and Ross Swimmer, coordinator of the Governor's Environmental Concerns Council, shared the luncheon podium and a discussion of the Council's findings. Swimmer emphasized the importance of good quality water and urged better protection of surface and groundwater sources.

Glenn Sullivan, State Secretary of Natural Resources, assisted Gov. Bellmon in presenting Water Pioneer Awards, a tradition of the Water Conference. The four men recognized as 1989 Water Pioneers were George Nigh, former governor; Robert H. Anderson, counsel to the McGee Creek Authority and a specialist in water law; M. G. Barclay, retired chief of the Bureau of Reclamation's Oklahoma City office; and E. F. "Doc" Coker, Pittsburg County conservationist instrumental in the development of 50 watershed projects.



Changes in Water Use Forms

Two changes have been made in this year's water use reports according to Jann Hook, OWRB Data Processing Manager. Both changes involve irrigation use.

First, if relying on a method other than irrigation frequency and inches per application to measure water use, Hook asks that irrigators specify the method and the amount of water used in either acre-feet or gallons. The number of irrigated acres for each crop must also be noted.

"This new reporting method should not only simplify the procedure for metered and drip irrigators, but it will supply us with more accurate data on water use in Oklahoma," she said. The second change requires water users to provide the number of acres double-cropped during 1989.

Oklahoma permit holders are required to accurately complete water use reports stating the amount of stream and groundwater used in 1989. Hook pointed out that the forms will be mailed in mid-January. They should be completed and returned within 30 days of receipt.

OWRB Geologist Honored



John S. Roles was recognized by the Board with a certificate of appreciation on December 12 on the occasion of Roles' retirement. Board Chairman Robert S. Kerr, Jr., commended the OWRB geologist for a distinguished 15-year career and credited Roles' efforts in protecting sensitive water supplies in Oklahoma. Kerr and the Board recognized Roles' outstanding performance, professionalism and dedicated service.

EPA Sets Fine, Prison Term

A former superintendent of utilities for the City of Big Spring, Texas, has been sentenced to five months in prison for falsifying the city's discharge monitoring reports.

William Windham was responsible for the operation and maintenance of Big Spring's water and wastewater treatment facilities from August 1983 to September 1984. An evaluation by EPA criminal investigation officials of monthly discharge monitoring reports revealed that wastewater discharges reported to be within acceptable permit limits were, in fact, exceeding those limits.

"Falsification of these vital documents threatens water quality and

possibly human health and undermines our clean water program," said Robert E. Layton, EPA Region VI Administrator. He added that the federal offense is punishable by a sentence of up to six months in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both, for each conviction.

NWS Director Joins OU

Kenneth C. Crawford, meteorologist-in-charge of the National Weather Service (NWS) Forecast Office in Oklahoma City, is the new head of OU's Oklahoma Climatological Survey. Crawford, a 27-year veteran of the NWS, will also teach undergraduate and graduate courses and guide graduate students in pursuing ad-

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A. OWRB Board Member and Stillwater Mayor Mike Henson, husband Ray Henson and Board Member Ervin Mitchell relax during registration.

B. The OWRB's Julie Stuvetraa registers another conferee.

C. A highlight of the luncheon was a thoughtful discussion of "Prospects for the Statewide Water Development Revolving Fund" by Rep. Cal Hobson.

D. Sen. Don Nickles pointed out several important water issues facing Oklahomans as part of the "Washington Perspective."

E. Board Member Gerald Borelli, of Kingfisher, raises water concerns with James Barnett, OWRB Executive Director.

F. OWRB employees Jerry Barnett, Nancy Cain and Rob Simms enjoy coffee and conversation at the break.

G. M. G. Barclay, retired from the Bureau of Reclamation, is honored by Governor Bellmon as an Oklahoma Water Pioneer.

H. Conference Coordinator Mary Whitlow checks last minute details with OWRB Chairman Robert S. Kerr, Jr.

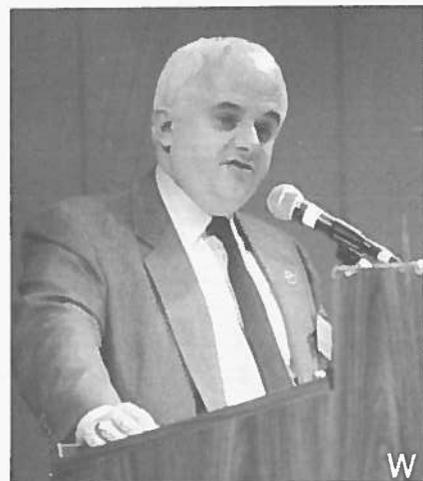
I. Glenn Sullivan entertains the luncheon crowd.

J. Tim Baker, with the Corporation Commission, and OWRB McAlester Branch Manager Andrew Husky discuss mutual interests of their state agencies.

K. Senator Ben Brown discusses the future of the State Financial Assistance Program.

L. Oklahoma City attorney Bob Anderson, shown here with his two sons Kyle and Mark, was on hand to accept the Oklahoma Water Pioneer Award.





Mainstream, continued from page 2

vanced degrees in climatology and meteorology on the faculty of OU's School of Meteorology, one of the most respected weather programs in the U.S.

Crawford was instrumental in developing the Tulsa Flash Flood Warning System, one of the country's few radar-based flood warning systems, and worked with the National Severe Storms Lab in pioneering Doppler radar technology and the Next Gen-

M. Mike Luzier, Director of Environmental Regulations for the National Association of Homebuilders, raises concerns over the "no net loss" of wetlands policy.

N. OWRB Water Quality Division Chief Dave Dillon, Robert Layton and Joe Drummond, of the Board's McAlester Branch, confer during break.

O. Duane Smith, chief of the OWRB's Groundwater Division, points out an item of interest on the Conference program to Judy Duncan and Kim Everett, of the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

P. OWRB Enforcement & Compliance Section Head Tom Blachly, General Counsel Dean Couch and Woodward Branch Manager Greg Scheffe take an opportunity to discuss legal questions facing the Board.

Q. Speakers on the morning agenda shared information concerning federal water agencies.

R. More than 300 attended the Tenth Annual Oklahoma Water Conference.

S. Robert E. Layton, Jr., updates the crowd on EPA activities.

T. The OWRB's highly successful Financial Assistance Program is the subject of a conversation between Newcastle's Tom Sherrill and Walid Maher, chief of the OWRB's Planning and Development Division.

U. Conferees await registration prior to opening remarks by Conference Chairman Robert S. Kerr, Jr.

V. E. F. "Doc" Coker, southeast Oklahoma conservationist, was one of four Water Pioneers honored at the Water Conference.

W. Keynoter Dennis Underwood, newly confirmed Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, kicks off the morning program.

X. James Leewright, of the OWRB, discusses the morning agenda with John R. George, Assistant Regional Hydrologist for the U.S. Geological Survey.

Y. Gov. Bellmon addresses the luncheon crowd prior to presenting Water Pioneer Awards.

eration Weather Radar (NEXRAD). The first of 175 NEXRAD network installations in the country will be established next summer at Draper Lake, in Oklahoma City.

As OCS director, Crawford said he hopes to transform Oklahoma into a huge weather and climate laboratory in which automated agricultural, hydrological and meteorological instruments would be placed at 107 sites across the state. The proposed network, to be called Oklahoma Meso-Net, would be developed between OU's College of Geosciences (which

includes the School of Meteorology) and the College of Agriculture at Oklahoma State University.

An engineering science graduate at the University of Texas, Crawford received his master's degree in meteorology from Florida State University and his doctoral degree in that field from OU. He is the author of some 20 articles concerning weather sciences and a recipient of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Administrator's Award. Crawford assumed his new post December 1.

EPA, Water Resources Board Sign Permitting Agreement

The signing of an agreement by state and federal governmental officials last month innovated a more efficient system for regulating wastewater discharges of Oklahoma industries.

Following adjournment of the December 13 Water Conference, Robert S. Kerr, Jr., OWRB chairman, and Robert E. Layton, Jr., EPA Region VI administrator, signed a memorandum of understanding projecting milestones for achieving state administration of the National Pollutant Dis-

charge Elimination System (NPDES) program.

According to OWRB Executive Director James R. Barnett, delegation of the NPDES program to the OWRB will allow for more comprehensive and efficient permitting, regulation and enforcement.

"Currently, the OWRB and EPA conduct similar duties in drafting and enforcing permits required of major Oklahoma industries which discharge their wastes into state waters," he pointed out. "Assumption of authority

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Those present at the NPDES memorandum of understanding signing ceremony were (standing) Wayne Plummer, Weyerhaeuser; Bill Bridwell, Conoco, Inc.; Frank H. Condon, Weyerhaeuser and member, Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB); Gil Luton, Fort Howard Paper Co.; Dr. Tom Hurst, member, Pollution Control Coordinating Board; Rupert Spivey, Fansteel Metal Co.; James R. Barnett, OWRB executive director; and David Dillon, OWRB Water Quality Division chief. Signing the document are (left) Robert E. Layton, Jr., EPA Region VI administrator; and Robert S. Kerr, Jr., Water Board chairman.

Agreement, continued from page 5

by the state will save time and money by requiring industries to have a single discharge permit instead of two." Most states have received NPDES delegation, but Arkansas is the only one in EPA Region VI (Arkansas,

Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico and Louisiana) to be given such authority by EPA.

Barnett emphasized that NPDES delegation may enhance economic development in Oklahoma. "Our current permitting system is some-

what cumbersome and may discourage industries considering sites in our state. The signing is an important first step toward Oklahoma being largely self-reliant in the field of industrial permit compliance and enforcement," he said.

**ACTIVE CONSERVATION STORAGE IN SELECTED OKLAHOMA LAKES AND RESERVOIRS
AS OF DECEMBER 22, 1989**

PLANNING REGION LAKE/RESERVOIR	CONSERVATION STORAGE (AF)	PERCENT OF CAPACITY	PLANNING REGION LAKE/RESERVOIR	CONSERVATION STORAGE (AF)	PERCENT OF CAPACITY
SOUTHEAST			Wister	48,834	77.0 ²
Atoka	101,781	82.5	Sardis	290,048	96.0
Broken Bow	874,635	95.0	NORTHEAST		
Pine Creek	66,765	86.0 ²	Eucha	63,500	80.0
Hugo	117,892	75.0 ²	Grand	1,323,260	89.0
McGee Creek	104,223	95.0	Oologah	544,240	100.0
CENTRAL			Hulah	30,594	100.0
Thunderbird	105,925	100.0	Fort Gibson	357,720	98.0
Hefner	58,350	77.5	Heyburn	6,451	98.0
Overholser	15,782	99.2	Birch	19,020	99.0
Draper	73,651	74.0	Hudson	200,300	100.0
Arcadia	27,390	100.0	Spavinaw	29,000	97.0
SOUTH CENTRAL			Copan	43,400	100.0
Arbuckle	60,391	96.5	Skiatook	306,388	96.0
Texoma	2,484,800	94.0	NORTH CENTRAL		
Waurika	197,068	97.0	Kaw	412,512	96.0 ²
SOUTHWEST			Keystone	616,000	100.0
Altus	100,938	76.0	NORTHWEST		
Fort Cobb	78,423	100.0	Canton	97,500	100.0
Foss	164,130	67.3 ¹	Fort Supply	13,900	100.0
Tom Steed	73,751	83.0	Great Salt Plains	31,400	100.0
EAST CENTRAL			STATE TOTALS	12,085,201	94.44
Eufaula	2,320,359	99.0			
Tenkiller	624,880	99.0			

1. Conservation storage lowered for project modification
2. Seasonal pool operation

Data courtesy of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, Oklahoma City Water Resources Department, and City of Tulsa Water Superintendent's Office.

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OKLAHOMA WATER NEWS

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Oklahoma Water Resources Board
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- Bill Secrest
- R. G. Johnson
- Gerald Borelli
- Ralph G. McPherson
- Ervin Mitchell
- Dick Seybolt
- Frank H. Condon
- Mike Henson

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... a year to rekindle pride, celebrate excellence in education and our communities and invite all former Oklahomans back for a visit.