

Oklahoma

Water
News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OKLAHOMA WATER RESOURCES BOARD

EPA Asks Fines, Imprisonment for Illegal Waste Discharges

In March, an Oklahoma City federal jury found a former Enid sewage superintendent guilty on two misdemeanor counts of discharging raw sewage into Boggy Creek and 18 felony counts of falsifying discharge monitoring reports required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Raymond T. Brittain, the former superintendent of Public Utilities, and Robert C. Coble, a former Water Pollution Control Plant Supervisor, were indicted by a federal grand jury in December for violations of the federal Clean Water Act. Each count carried a possible prison sentence of up to one year and/or a fine of up to \$25,000 for each day of violation. Sentencing for Brittain is scheduled May 7. Coble, who testified against Brittain, pleaded guilty in January to one count each of illegal discharging and falsifying EPA reports.

The case is just one of several in recent months involving pollution law violations in EPA's Region VI. Earlier, a former superintendent of utilities for Big Spring, Texas, was sentenced to a five-month prison sentence for falsifying discharge monitoring reports in an effort to deceive EPA regulators about the amount of waste released into Texas waters. In addition, Control Disposal Company Inc., a waste collection and disposal firm based in Garland, Texas, and two of its employees were charged with 20

counts related to the illegal dumping of untreated industrial contaminants into the Dallas sewer system. Federal law requires pretreatment of such waste prior to discharge.

EPA officials said the Garland case represents the first criminal prosecution for alleged violations of a city's federally approved pretreatment program and a Clean Water Act provision that forbids the "knowing discharge" of dangerous pollutants into a sewer system.

"Such violations, at the very least, threaten everyone and have the potential for great harm to human health and the environment," according to Robert E. Layton, EPA Region VI administrator.

In related events, EPA has fined the Cities of Tahlequah and Miami, Oklahoma, \$25,000 each for similar violations of pollution laws. Miami officials failed to properly report industrial waste disposal methods, but its fine was later reduced to \$15,000 following a meeting with EPA. Tahlequah failed to properly notify EPA of overflows at its sewage treatment facility. The excess wastewaters infiltrated Tahlequah Creek and the Illinois River. EPA policy requires that such overflows be reported to them within five days of the incident. Tahlequah's fine was reduced to \$20,000.

In addition, the Tulsa division of

McDonnell Douglas, the nation's largest defense contractor, has agreed to pay a \$22,000 fine for exceeding its discharge permit limits. The 1987-88 violations involved discharges of chromium and other heavy metals, human waste, oil and grease, and various chemicals into tributaries of Mingo Creek.

Who, Me? Pollute?

Nonpoint Source Water Pollution—it's a term you will hear much more about in the coming months. This type of pollution is not one of those good-guy versus bad-guy issues. So what does it mean and what does it have to do with you?

Continued on page 2



Always follow directions printed on the labels of products that could be harmful to the environment. Do not "overdose."

Pollute, continued from page 1

Simply put, it describes all of the pollution that water picks up as it flows across the surface of the land. We all know how clean and fresh everything looks and smells after a rainfall. It's like Mother Nature has given our environment a shower and cleaned it up. But what happens to all the "stuff" that has washed off our lawns, streets, construction sites, and agricultural and industrial areas? It runs off into drainage ditches and streams where it eventually finds its way to the rivers, lakes and aquifers from which we draw drinking water. All of that "stuff" becomes nonpoint source water pollution!

Have you ever said to yourself, "Sure, I believe in cleaning up the environment, but I'm only one person: What can I do?" Reducing nonpoint source water pollution is one of the best ways that you, personally, can do something about protecting and preserving the environment that sustains our lives. Your personal activities at home and work can have a substantial impact on the quality of water with which you and your family cook, drink and wash. You can make a difference!

The key to much of the current water pollution problem involves how chemicals are used by society—by you, your family, friends and neighbors. Think about the gasoline and oil you use in your car, boat and lawnmower; the herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers you use on your lawn; and the cleansers and solvents you use at home and work. The residues from these chemicals migrate toward our water supply each time it rains. Litter, yard clippings, animal droppings and soil from construction sites, yards, streets and farms also contribute to the problem. Your environmental housekeeping habits have a tremendous effect on the amount and type of pollutants which end up in our waterways.

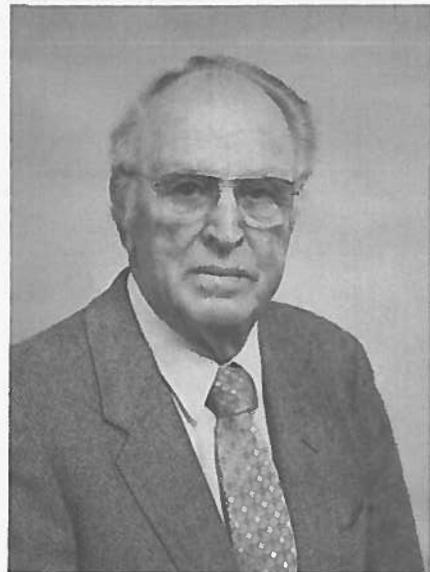
What can you do about preventing such pollution? All that it takes is for you to think about your personal activities and how you manage the property you own. Household cleansers, pesticides, poisons, paint, motor

fuel and lubricants are all potential water pollutants. Use these products carefully and look for alternatives that keep our water clean. For example, take used motor oil to a local service station for recycling instead of pouring it down the storm drain. Talk to your neighbor about sharing excess pesticides, paint and paint thinner, rather than discarding them in the trash or washing them down the drain. When possible, use only those products that contain little or no toxic chemicals. And always read and follow label directions, especially when using fertilizers, weed killers, insecticides or anything flammable. The old adage "if one pound is good, two pounds must be great" does not apply when using most chemical products. That extra "dose" often ends up as a nonpoint source of pollution and can result in a dangerous "overdose" to our environment.

Editor's Note: This item was provided by the Texas Water Commission in its effort to educate the public about nonpoint source water pollution. Establishing controls for such pollution has become a priority of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the States of Oklahoma and Texas, and various other government agencies and special interest groups.



Careful application of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers can prevent pollutants from invading surface waters and groundwaters.

**"Red" Males Died March 30**

L. L. Males, Cheyenne banker and upstream flood control advocate who served on the Oklahoma Water Resources Board 27 years, died March 30 in Oklahoma City. He was 83.

Males was appointed to the Water Resources Board at the agency's creation in 1957 and served continuously until his retirement in 1984. Subsequently, Gov. George Nigh appointed Males commissioner to the Red River Compact, a position he held until his death.

Males gained fame for his leadership in the Sandstone Creek Upstream Flood Control Project, the first of its kind in the nation. He was the first Watershed Man of the Year named by the National Watershed Congress in 1959. Thousands of friends from Cheyenne, Roger Mills County and the state gathered in Cheyenne to pay tribute to Males and his wife, Lorena, on July 7, 1984 with "Red Males Appreciation Day." Males was honored as an Oklahoma Water Pioneer at the 1985 Oklahoma Water Conference.

NFIP Offers Reduced Rates

The Federal Insurance Administration is offering a new system aimed at lowering flood insurance rates for residents and property owners in com-

munities which exceed minimum standards of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary plan which offers lower premiums for eligible communities who implement any or all of 18 specified flood reduction measures. Each completed activity awards credit points which, in turn, cumulatively reduces rates up to 45 percent. In order to qualify, an entity must be in full compliance with at least minimum floodplain management requirements, according to Ken Morris, NFIP state representative.

"Until now, the NFIP has done little to encourage communities to proceed beyond minimum requirements," he said. "Implementation of activities under the CRS not only saves money for participants, but can significantly reduce flood damages, insurance claims and federal disaster outlays."

Morris added that attendance at a CRS workshop is required for communities to be eligible. Oklahoma's workshop will be held April 17 in Tulsa at the Center Office Building, 707 South Houston, Suite 500. Registration will begin at 8 a.m.

1989 Year of Near Records

January was the tenth warmest January in 98 years and the warmest one in the last 36 years, with temperatures averaging 4 to 7 degrees above normal.

Record cold weather February 2-5, combined with 25 mph winds, contributed to wind chills of -20 to -40. It was the sixth coldest and the eleventh wettest February in the state

since 1898.

Snow and cold were responsible for seven weather-related deaths in March. Pauls Valley reported 16 inches of snow and heavy snows collapsed roofs of 150 northeastern poultry houses, killing some three million chickens and causing \$20 million in damages. An unusual dust-storm was reported across the northwest on March 12.

April was the driest April in 98 years. A jetstream track far north of Oklahoma prevented frontal systems from entering the state, while allowing warmer air to flow in, producing temperatures slightly above normal.

May thunderstorms produced more than 10 days of precipitation at many stations. On the 22nd, Ponca City had hail accumulations of six inches.

Oklahoma recorded its fourth wettest and third coolest June in history. More than 12 rainy days and 24-hour accumulations in excess of three inches produced records at several sites. Frequent cloud cover and rain-cooled air produced low mean monthly temperatures. Scattered thunderstorms June 9-14 were responsible for 9.19 inches of rain in 24 hours at Medford.

The state experienced its thirteenth coolest July since 1892 and its third consecutive month of below normal temperatures. Fewer than 50 percent of the reporting stations recorded any 100-degree days. July temperatures typically ranged from five 100-degree days in the northeast to more than 15 in the southwest.

In August, nearly all areas recorded an unusual run of 10 consecutive days with maximum temperatures be-

low 90. According to the Climatological Survey, such conditions occur about once per decade.

In September, Oklahoma City and some other stations reported their first 100-degree readings of 1989. Oklahoma City also recorded a record low temperature as an unseasonably cool Arctic air mass dominated the last three weeks of the month. The cool spell produced the earliest fall freeze ever recorded at several sites. State-wide, it was the fourth coolest September on record.

October temperatures averaged above normal for the first time since April. Precipitation varied greatly, but was below normal.

November's dry weather depleted moisture supplies, threatening crops and pastures and supporting wildfires. It was the third driest November on record, with some stations reporting no precipitation during the entire month.

December 1989 was the third coldest and tenth driest on record. Many stations set records for low temperatures during two days of sub-zero weather.

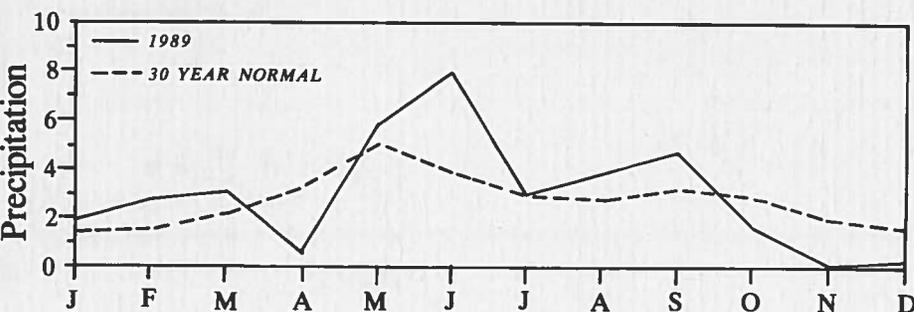
In retrospect, Oklahomans can look at 1989 as a year of rapid and extreme changes. Temperatures climbed then plummeted suddenly, and long droughts and tedious rainy/snowy spells alternately set upon the state. The summer (June, July, August) was the third coolest and sixth wettest on record.

How to Reduce Flood Losses

As the state agency responsible for administering the National Flood Insurance Program in Oklahoma, the OWRB reminds state citizens and communities of the following flood safety rules:

- * Keep emergency materials on hand, such as sandbags, plywood, plastic sheeting and lumber.
- * Set up auxiliary electrical supplies in hospitals and other operations which may be critically affected by power failure.
- * Install check valves in building sewer traps to prevent floodwaters

State-averaged Total Monthly Precipitation for 1989



Continued on page 4

- from backing up in sewer drains.
- * Keep first aid supplies close by.
- * Keep your automobile fueled; if electricity is cut off, gas stations may not be open.
- * Keep a stock of food which requires little cooking and no refrigeration;

- electricity may be interrupted.
- * Keep a portable radio, emergency cooking equipment, lights and flashlights in working order.
- * Store drinking water in a clean bathtub and other containers; water service may be interrupted.

- * Do not use fresh food that has come in contact with floodwaters.
- * Test drinking water for potability. Wells should be pumped out and the water tested before drinking.
- * Move to a safe area before access is cut off by floodwaters.

**ACTIVE CONSERVATION STORAGE IN SELECTED OKLAHOMA LAKES AND RESERVOIRS
AS OF MARCH 22, 1990**

PLANNING REGION LAKE/RESERVOIR	CONSERVATION STORAGE (AF)	PERCENT OF CAPACITY	PLANNING REGION LAKE/RESERVOIR	CONSERVATION STORAGE (AF)	PERCENT OF CAPACITY
SOUTHEAST			Wister	63,250	100.0 ²
Atoka	123,475	100.0	Sardis	302,500	100.0
Broken Bow	918,100	100.0	NORTHEAST		
Pine Creek	77,700	100.0 ²	Eucha	79,567	100.0
Hugo	157,600	100.0 ²	Grand	1,491,800	100.0
McGee Creek	109,800	100.0	Oologah	544,240	100.0
CENTRAL			Hulah	30,594	100.0
Thunderbird	105,925	100.0	Fort Gibson	365,200	100.0
Hefner	56,063	74.4	Heyburn	6,600	100.0
Overholser	15,935	100.0	Birch	19,200	100.0
Draper	83,308	83.3	Hudson	200,300	100.0
Arcadia	27,390	100.0	Spavinaw	30,000	100.0
SOUTH CENTRAL			Copan	43,400	100.0
Arbuckle	62,571	100.0	Skiatook	319,400	100.0
Texoma	2,637,700	100.0	NORTH CENTRAL		
Waurika	203,100	100.0	Kaw	428,600	100.0 ²
SOUTHWEST			Keystone	616,000	100.0
Altus	132,886	100.0	NORTHWEST		
Fort Cobb	78,423	100.0	Canton	97,421	99.0
Foss	164,305	67.3 ¹	Fort Supply	13,900	100.0
Tom Steed	85,049	95.6	Great Salt Plains	31,400	100.0
EAST CENTRAL			STATE TOTALS	12,679,902	99.1
Eufaula	2,329,700	100.0			
Tenkiller	627,500	100.0			

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.

This monthly newsletter, printed by the Central Printing Division of the Office of Public Affairs, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is published by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board as authorized by James R. Barnett, executive director. Ten thousand copies are printed and distributed monthly at an approximate cost of 20 cents each.

MARY E. WHITLOW, Editor

BRIAN VANCE, Writer

BARRY FOGERTY, Photographer

BRAD NESOM, Layout Artist

OKLAHOMA WATER NEWS

Monthly Newsletter of the
Oklahoma Water Resources Board
1000 N.E. Tenth, P.O. Box 53585
Oklahoma City, Okla. 73152

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Oklahoma City, Okla.
Permit No. 310

Robert S. Kerr Jr., Chairman

Bill Secrest

R. G. Johnson

Gerald Borelli

Ralph G. McPherson

Ervin Mitchell

Dick Seybolt

Frank H. Condon

Mike Henson

EARTH DAY

*Visit the OWRB Earth Day Exhibit
in the State Capitol Rotunda*

April 23