

## In This Issue

**Annual Conference Salutes State's  
Water**

**2002 Oklahoma Water Pioneers**

**Clean Water Festival**

**OWRB Staff Pitch In for Day of Caring**

**Legislator Lauded for Floodplain  
Efforts**

**House Reporter Honored by Board**

**Oklahoma Drought Monitor**

**Financial Assistance Program Update**

# OKLAHOMA Water News

*Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board*

## From the Director



*Duane A. Smith  
OWRB Executive Director*

Once again, the Governor's Water Conference was an enormous success, due primarily to support from our Conference sponsors and the many speakers who graciously participated in the day's events. The meeting provided a great opportunity to reflect on the tremendous strides we have made throughout the past 30 years since passage of the Clean Water Act in cleaning up Oklahoma's rivers and lakes. Several Conference speakers also pointed out the numerous water quality issues that have yet to be addressed, including those related to nonpoint pollution and groundwater protection.

Another popular topic of discussion at the Water Conference was the common struggle between states over shared water resources. Of the four interstate stream water compacts to which Oklahoma is party, three are now

*See From the Director, Page 2*

## Annual Conference Salutes State's Water

More than 400 attendees gathered on October 9th to "celebrate water" at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Governor's Water Conference in Tulsa. The Conference again provided an invaluable forum for those concerned about water issues facing Oklahoma and the nation.

Following a short video commemorating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the federal Clean Water Act, Karen Keith, Director of Communication for Mayor Bill LaFortune, welcomed conferees to Tulsa. OWRB Chairman Grady Grandstaff, who also served as Conference Chair, introduced Brian Griffin, Oklahoma's Secretary of Environment, who confronted interstate water quality issues. Expounding on the Conference theme, "Celebrating Water," Allan Stokes, Chief Operations Officer for America's Clean Water Foundation, recounted successes of the Clean Water Act. Also commemorated was the centennial anniversary of the Bureau of Reclamation in an address by Larry Walkoviak, Manager for the Oklahoma-Texas Area Office.

Three speakers addressed issues surrounding tribal water rights and water quality administration: Michael Brophy, an attorney with Ryley, Carlock, and Applewhite and special counsel for evaluating tribal water rights claims in southeastern Oklahoma; Professor Taiawagi Helton, OU

College of Law; and Professor Lindsay Robertson, OU College of Law. College Law Professors Drew Kershen of OU and Gary Allison of the University of Tulsa spoke about the legal ramifications of water transfer. Kim Winton, Oklahoma District Chief for the U.S. Geological Survey,

*See Annual Conference, Page 2*



*OWRB and Conference Chairman Grady Grandstaff listens while Allan Stoke of America's Clean Water Foundation cites successes of the federal Clean Water Act.*

**From the Director . . . Continued from page 1**

subject to ongoing or potential disputes. We continue to work with our Arkansas counterparts to come to terms with implementation of the new water quality standard for phosphorus in Oklahoma's Scenic Rivers. The State of Oklahoma will not yield in this effort, but we will strive to avoid court action while working closely with the poultry industry and municipal dischargers in both states. Should we secure the necessary funding, a cooperative Illinois River Basin water quality monitoring study by the OWRB and U.S. Geological Survey will be crucial to this effort by establishing a methodical and unbiased monitoring approach that both states can readily accept.

Our Texas neighbors have constructed a dam on Palo Duro Creek in the Texas panhandle that patently violates terms of the 52-year-old Canadian River Compact. Although Oklahoma has been very patient in efforts to work out a solution to this problem since the reservoir's construction in 1991, we are now forced to seek relief through the U.S. Supreme Court. Palo Duro Reservoir unlawfully inhibits a substantial amount of flow from the North Canadian River from entering Oklahoma and eventually replenishing supply in Canton Reservoir, a major water source for Oklahoma City. In addition, Palo Duro Reservoir was not built for municipal and domestic purposes, but instead for recreation, which is disallowed under the Compact.



*Palo Duro Reservoir in the Texas Panhandle unlawfully prevents a considerable amount of the Canadian River's flow from entering the State of Oklahoma.*

A third potential interstate conflict, violating conditions of the Red River Compact, also involves Texas. Sweetwater Creek Reservoir, proposed on the North Fork of the Red River (again in the Texas panhandle), would result in poorer quality water flowing into Oklahoma. In its water allowance to Oklahoma under requirements spelled out in the Compact, Texas proposes to replace water impounded on Sweetwater Creek with that of the highly saline North Fork. That's not a good trade-off, according to Oklahoma officials.

The bottom line: We must protect Oklahoma's interests while utilizing good faith negotiation and avoiding court action, if at all possible, in cases of interstate disputes over our shared water resources.

On a final note, the OWRB made history at its October 8 meeting. With approval of a loan to the Lexington Public Works Authority, the Board has now authorized more than \$1 billion in grants and low-interest loans to Oklahoma communities and rural water systems. To observe this monumental occasion and to reflect upon the 20-year anniversary of the State Financial Assistance Program and its historical importance to water and wastewater system funding in Oklahoma, we have invited the Program's creators and many supporters through the years to a special ceremony at the State Capitol on November 12. It should be an inspiring event.

**Annual Conference . . . Continued from page 1**

gave attendees an overview of her agency's programs and stressed the value of accurate water quality data to environmental decision-making.

During the luncheon program, Senators Rick Littlefield and James Dunlap and Representatives M.C. Leist and Mark Liotta reported on current and future water issues in the State Legislature. Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director, provided an overview of Oklahoma's major water issues. Smith and Grandstaff then presented the prestigious Oklahoma Water Pioneer Award to Frank Condon

(Valliant, deceased), Mae Cooper (Bartlesville), and Murray Williams (Altus).

The conference concluded with remarks by Republican gubernatorial candidate Steve Largent. (Democratic candidate Brad Henry and Independent candidate Gary Richardson were unable to attend due to conflicting schedules.)

The OWRB would like to thank the sponsors of the 23rd Annual Governor's Water Conference as well as guest speakers and legislators who helped make the meeting a success.



*Larry Walkoviak discusses the Bureau of Reclamation's changing role in national water resource development.*

## 2002 Oklahoma Water Pioneers

At the 23rd Annual Governor's Water Conference on October 9, three individuals were recognized by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board as Oklahoma Water Pioneers for 2002.

Frank Condon (Valliant, deceased), Mae Cooper (Bartlesville), and Murray Williams (Altus) were honored with the Water Pioneer Award for their lifetime contributions to the planning, development, management, and conservation of Oklahoma's water resources. The honor was bestowed by OWRB Executive Director Duane Smith.

Frank Condon served on the Oklahoma Water Resources Board from 1989 to 1993, and then was appointed as an original member of the Environmental Quality Board by Governor David Walters to represent manufacturing. He served as Chairman of the Environmental Quality Board from 1995-96. Condon was actively involved in environmental issues in Oklahoma for over 30 years, including membership in the Environmental Federation of Oklahoma, which renamed their annual Award for Environmental Excellence as the "Frank Condon Award for Environmental Excellence." Condon's wife, Julie (pictured on right at top with Duane Smith), accepted the award on his behalf. Condon passed away in March 2001.

Mae Cooper (middle) has been a longtime advocate of rural water systems and has assisted in the development and organization of area water districts. She was an incorporator of Strike Axe Water Company in Osage County and served for a number of years on the board of directors. Elected to the Oklahoma Rural Water Association Board in 1977, Cooper served on the ORWA Executive Board from 1982 to 1998 and was Secretary of the Association from 1982 to 1988. Cooper was the ORWA's Woman of the Year Award in 1988.

Murray Williams (bottom) served on the Board of Directors of the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District for 30 years (1959-1989). A lifelong cotton farmer with a Master's degree in Agronomy from Oklahoma State University, Williams was the first farmer on the south end of the District to receive irrigation water from Lugert-Altus Reservoir, constructed in 1948. In 1958, he was named the Jackson County Outstanding Young Farmer of Oklahoma, and he received the National Cotton Farmer of the Year award in 1980. He was one of the first district farmers to install underground drainage pipe as a soil and water conservation measure in the 1970s.

Oklahoma Water Pioneers are selected by the 30 sponsors of the Annual Governor's Water Conference. Ninety-four Oklahomans have been honored with the award since its inception in 1985.



## Clean Water Festival

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, the OWRB, Office of the Secretary of Environment, City of Oklahoma City, State Department of Environmental Quality, U.S. Geological Survey, and other organizations hosted the Clean Water Festival at Lake Hefner. The event commemorated the Year of Clean Water and the 30th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act.

Brian Griffin, Secretary of Environment; Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director; and Kim Winton, USGS District Chief, joined citizens in collecting water samples during the Festival for National Water Monitoring Day. Data from these and other water samples collected during October from across the country will be used to gather a "snapshot" of the nation's water quality.

In addition to the Festival, the Oklahoma Clean Lakes Association held its first ever Hefner Lake Sweep. In spite of rain and strong winds, more than 100 volunteers picked up trash along the shore.



Using a Secchi disk, Derek Smithee, Chief of the Board's Water Quality Division, and Secretary of Environment Brian Griffin prepare to estimate water clarity at Lake Hefner.



OWRB staff members Mary Nell Brueggen and Mary Schooley at the registration desk



The Conference meeting room at Tulsa's Adams Mark Hotel



Brian Griffin, Oklahoma Secretary of Environment



Steve Largent, Oklahoma Governor



Rep. Lloyd Fields with Mike Melton



Allan Stokes, America's Clean Water Foundation



Michael Brophy, Attorney



Professor Taiawagi Helton, OU College of Law



Professor Lim, OU College of Law



Mike Melton with Water Pioneer Murray Williams and Larry Walkoviak of the Bureau of Reclamation



Water Board member Glenn Sharp with Derek Smithee



Nathan Ellis and Joe Freeman with Davis City Manager Donald Brittin



Richard Smith of INCOG with Julie Cunningham



Floodplain model at the Corps of Engineers display



Ed Fite, Scenic Rivers Commission, with Mike Thralls, Conservation Commission

# Annual Water Conference



...t, Republican  
...l candidate



Sen. Rick Littlefield,  
Oklahoma State Senate



Rep. M. C. Leist, Oklahoma  
House of Representatives



Rep. Mark Liotta, Oklahoma  
House of Representatives



Sen. James Dunlap,  
Oklahoma State Senate



...dsay Robertson,  
...f Law



Professor Gary Allison, Univ.  
of Tulsa College of Law

## Port of Catoosa Navigation Tour



More than 100 conferees and guests joined the Corps and navigation interest groups during the October 8 barge tour of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System near Catoosa.



Col. Robert L. Suthard, District  
Commander, explaining how  
navigation benefits Oklahoma



USGS District Chief Kim Winton checks in with Bob Sandbo



Phil Lorenz, 2001 Oklahoma Water Pioneer,  
with Duane Smith



2002 Oklahoma Water Pioneer Mae Cooper  
with Brian Vance of the OWRB



Mike Mathis with Bill Porter of the Natural  
Resource Conservation Service

Welcome

OKLAHOMA WATER RESOURCES BOARD

Visit the OWRB web site at  
[www.owrb.state.ok.us](http://www.owrb.state.ok.us)

## OWRB Staff Pitch in for Day of Caring

On October 4, as part of the 2002 United Way State Employee Campaign, OWRB staff members participated in the Day of Caring. Participants cleaned floors and furniture, painted walls and shelves, assembled light fixtures, and planted flowers for the volunteers at the CONTACT Crisis Helpline office in Oklahoma City. CONTACT provides 24-hour emotional support, suicide prevention, crisis intervention, community information, and referral, and all calls to CONTACT are anonymous, confidential, and free.



Representing the OWRB during the Day of Caring were (kneeling, from left) Laura Oak, Angela Thompson, Leslie Nance, Katera Whitaker, (standing) Wilma Beagle, Lynda Williamson, Anita Ray, Karen Milford, Rick Wicker, Alex Vera, Crystal McLaren, Mark Stafford, and Jim Schuelein.

## Legislator Lauded for Floodplain Efforts

Representative Thad Balkman of Norman was honored at the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association (OFMA) as the Public Official of the Year. This year's event was held September 21-24 at Quartz Mountain State Resort.



Rep. Thad Balkman

"Rep. Balkman is a great friend and supporter of OFMA," says Ken Morris, State Floodplain Manager. "He understands the importance of floodplain management and the many benefits it provides to Oklahomans."

Specifically, according to Morris, Balkman was recognized for coauthoring House Bill 2228, which broadened the scope of the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Act and encouraged regular training for Oklahoma's floodplain management officials. Balkman is a member of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

The OFMA also cited Balkman for his support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's "No Adverse Impact" initiative and pursuit of funding for flood mitigation in the State Legislature.

The Public Official of the Year award is given to those officials who implement public policy initiatives that demonstrate excellence in floodplain management. Flooding is the single most costly disaster affecting Oklahomans each year.

"I am honored to be chosen for this award, but the real winner is OFMA," said Balkman, who is completing his first term in the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

## House Reporter Honored by Board

At its September meeting, the nine-member Water Board presented a certificate of appreciation to Mike Ray, Director of the Media Division for the State House of Representatives, for his reliable support of agency programs and activities.

"Mike, assisted by his staff in the Media Division, has been a tremendous supporter of water issues in Oklahoma," said Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director. "His press releases and news items related to water stories of interest to Oklahomans are timely, accurate, and well-researched. That's really saying a lot when you consider that the issues we deal with are often complicated and sometimes very controversial."

Ray, a native of Yale, Oklahoma, has been with the House staff since January 1990.



Mike Ray accepts the Board's recognition award from OWRB Chairman Grady Grandstaff and Executive Director Duane Smith.

# Oklahoma Drought Monitor

## Reservoir Storage

Reservoir storage levels in Oklahoma remain generally good, although they continue to drop in most areas. As of October 15, the combined normal conservation pools of 31 selected major federal reservoirs across Oklahoma (see below) are approximately 90.2 percent full, a 1.6 percent decrease from that recorded on September 16, according to information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Tulsa District). Twenty-three reservoirs have experienced lake level decreases since that time. Twenty-five reservoirs are currently operating at less than full capacity (compared to 25 one month ago). Three reservoirs (Lugert-Altus, only 10.1 percent; Tom Steed, 54.7 percent; and Wister, 79 percent) are below 80 percent capacity.

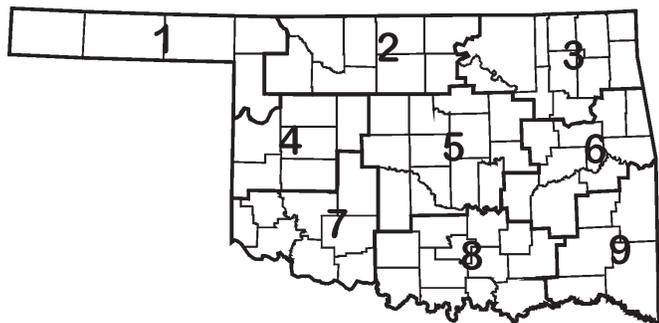
### Storage in Selected Oklahoma Lakes & Reservoirs

As of October 15, 2002

Climate Division	Conservation Storage (acre-feet)	Present Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Storage	
			Conservation	Flood
North Central	420,480	419,985	99.9	2.12
Northeast	3,710,194	3,425,621	92.3	0.21
West Central	276,790	253,843	91.7	0.00
Central	154,225	143,832	93.3	0.25
East Central	2,915,043	2,553,678	87.6	0.00
Southwest	301,810	138,218	45.8	0.00
South Central	2,989,268	2,813,829	94.1	0.41
Southeast	1,486,349	1,301,309	87.6	0.00
<b>State Totals</b>	<b>12,254,159</b>	<b>11,050,315</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>0.34</b>

## Drought Indices

According to the latest Palmer Drought Severity Index (November 2, below), drought conditions have improved dramatically throughout Oklahoma. No climate divisions are currently classified in a drought category, although the East Central and Northeast regions are considered in "incipient" drought. None of Oklahoma's nine climate divisions has undergone a PDSI moisture decrease since October 12.



The latest monthly Standardized Precipitation Index (through September, below) indicates that recent long-term dryness has been alleviated somewhat in northwest Oklahoma. Among the *selected* time periods (3-, 6-, 9- and 12-month SPIs), the Northwest/Panhandle climate division reports only "moderately dry" conditions throughout the last 12-month period. Short-term dryness is now impacting eastern Oklahoma as the East Central region reports "moderately dry" conditions during the last 3 months. Considering longer periods, conditions remain dry throughout the past 24 to 30 months in northern and western Oklahoma.

### Palmer Drought Severity Index

### Standardized Precipitation Index

Through September 2002

Climate Division (#)	Current Status 11/4/2002	Value			Standardized Precipitation Index			
		11/4	10/12	Change In Value	3-Month	6-Month	9-Month	12-Month
NORTHWEST (1)	UNUSUAL MOIST SPELL	2.02	-1.10	3.12	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	MODERATELY DRY
NORTH CENTRAL (2)	VERY MOIST SPELL	3.01	1.85	1.16	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
NORTHEAST (3)	INCIPIENT DROUGHT	-0.73	-1.53	0.80	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
WEST CENTRAL (4)	UNUSUAL MOIST SPELL	2.23	-0.75	2.98	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
CENTRAL (5)	MOIST SPELL	1.59	0.87	0.72	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
EAST CENTRAL (6)	INCIPIENT DROUGHT	-0.63	-1.73	1.10	MODERATELY DRY	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
SOUTHWEST (7)	MOIST SPELL	1.62	0.47	1.15	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
SOUTH CENTRAL (8)	MOIST SPELL	1.86	0.48	1.38	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL
SOUTHEAST (9)	INCIPIENT MOIST SPELL	0.61	-1.02	1.63	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL	NEAR NORMAL

# Financial Assistance Program Update

*Loans/Grants Approved as of October 8, 2002*

## **FAP Loans—268 totaling \$418,580,000**

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 low-interest rates, averaging approximately 4.762 percent since 1986.

## **CWSRF Loans—132 totaling \$449,578,443**

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—25 totaling \$77,696,582**

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.

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

## **REAP Grants—340 totaling \$28,904,595**

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—490 totaling \$28,746,370**

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

*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.*

Grady Grandstaff, *Chairman*; Richard C. Sevenoaks, *Vice Chairman*; Ervin Mitchell, *Secretary*  
Lonnie L. Farmer, Richard McDonald, Bill Secrest, Wendell Thomasson, Harry Currie, Glenn A. Sharp

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

This bimonthly newsletter, printed by Oklahoma University Printing Services, Norman, Oklahoma, is published by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board as authorized by Duane A. Smith, Executive Director. Eighty-eight hundred copies have been printed and mailed bimonthly at an approximate cost of 29 cents each. Copies have been deposited at the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

**OKLAHOMA WATER RESOURCES BOARD**  
3800 N. Classen Boulevard  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118  
[www.owrb.state.ok.us](http://www.owrb.state.ok.us)  
*Bimonthly Newsletter of the*  
**Water News**  
OKLAHOMA

STANDARD PRESORTED  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Oklahoma City, OK  
Permit No. 310