

OKLAHOMA Water News

Bimonthly Newsletter of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board

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From the Director



Duane A. Smith
OWRB Executive Director

In addition to providing assistance to the many Oklahomans who continue to suffer from this prolonged drought episode, Water Board staff are consumed with work related to updating the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan. As many of you know, during the past legislative session, funding was appropriated to take state water planning to another level, from assessment of our current water resources to implementation of the projects and policies that are necessary to a secure a bright water future for Oklahoma.

While the current Water Plan, published in 1997, provides a useful inventory of the state's water supplies, projects future needs, and offers recommendations to deal with impending water

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Water Board Responds to Drought

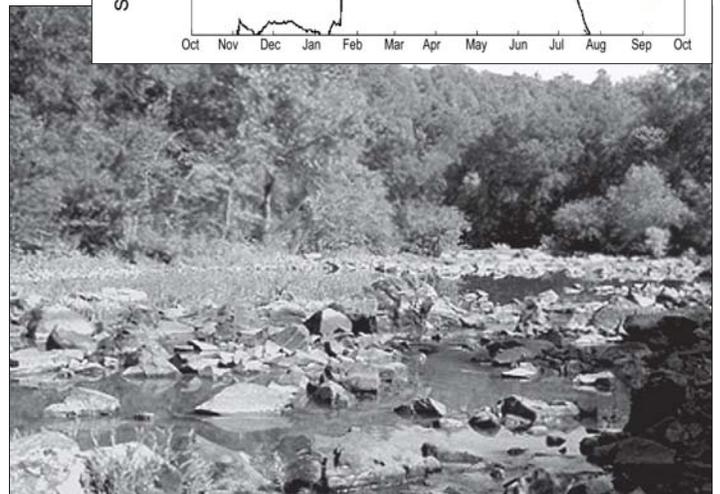
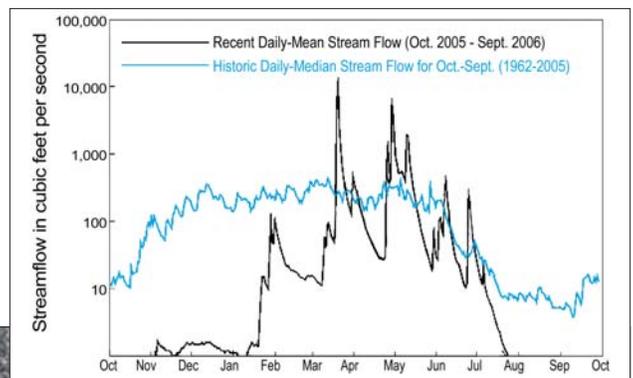
In response to the ongoing drought impacting virtually every region in the state, the OWRB is working with citizens and the state's water use community to alleviate water supply problems.

According to Executive Director Duane Smith, the Water Board was receiving up to 50 inquiries each day during the height of the hot and dry weather either reporting drought-related water problems or requesting some type of technical or financial assistance. "We've been somewhat inundated with calls and requests for help," Smith points out. "From that aspect, I'd say this is definitely the worst drought we've experienced since at least 1980."

The statewide drought has drastically reduced river flows and lake and aquifer levels, causing severe impacts to domestic and municipal water supplies and significantly reducing the amount of water available for other purposes. Ten to 20

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At right, the Glover River near Glover in Southeast Oklahoma (late August). Data from the USGS stream measurement gage on the Glover shows flow less than 1 cubic foot per second. The graph compares stream flow from 1962-2005 and stream flow during the 2006 Water Year (Oct-Sep).



From the Director . . . Continued from page 1

policy questions, Oklahoma requires a more detailed strategy to meet new and varied water supply challenges. Of course, we must address population growth and the impacts it will have on our supplies, but we must also discover strategies that satisfy the many competing interests for our finite water supplies. We must balance economic development and environmental needs. Our water and wastewater systems face a multi-billion dollar hurdle just to maintain existing services and keep up with growing demand for water. We must continue to improve the drought resistance capabilities of our water systems. Furthermore, in rural areas, it is simply unthinkable that as Oklahoma approaches its centennial anniversary we have citizens that can afford water supply but lack a nearby water source or system to provide them service.

It is a goal of our new Water Plan to identify strategies that will rectify this situation. Already, we've completed initial work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation to inventory Oklahoma's water supplies and update water demand projections for all major uses through forecast year 2060. But the core of this water planning effort will involve a statewide appraisal of public water supply systems, including their facilities and management procedures. Working with Oklahoma's substate planning districts (i.e., Councils of Governments), the Department of Environmental Quality, universities, government agencies, engineering consultants, and others, we intend to collect existing data, survey and map all of the state's 1,240 community water systems and appurtenant facilities, inventory sources of supply, and even review individual water rate structures. Armed with this system-level information, water providers, policy-makers, and citizens can better develop plans to meet future water supply needs, especially for those systems facing monumental growth or in most dire need of infrastructure improvements. Every system in Oklahoma

should have confidence in their existing water supply for at least the next 50 years or have a viable plan to obtain that supply for their customers.

Even the best plans fail without support from the people. To obtain a truly effective plan that best utilizes the substantial resources of the state that will be committed over the next five years, public input is crucial. OWRB staff are currently working to develop a strategy that not only makes the water planning process as transparent and open as possible, but one that truly reflects the views and opinions of Oklahoma citizens.

We already know that Oklahoma is anticipating \$5.4 billion in water and wastewater infrastructure needs, and that's just through 2025. Certainly, even more will be required to implement required projects recommended in the final updated Water Plan, anticipated for completion in 2011. Bolstered by the estimated \$2 million recently dedicated by the Legislature each year over the next five years for the Revolving Fund and OCWP update, the OWRB's loan and grant programs will provide a much-needed springboard for widespread project construction. In the meantime, the OWRB and our planning partners will work to assemble the information necessary for water providers, policy-makers, and citizens to make informed decisions concerning the use of Oklahoma's water resources.

As the official commencement of this historic effort, this year's Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference will focus on water planning and the many issues involved in forecasting and preparing for the state's future water use and needs. Speakers will address past, present and future water planning initiatives in Oklahoma. The Conference will be held on November 13-14 at the Cox Business Services Convention Center in Oklahoma City. To register for the Water Conference, visit the OWRB's Web site (www.owrb.state.ok.us) or call us at 405-530-8800. I hope to see you there.

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inches of rain is required to bring most regions up to normal precipitation for the past year.

Smith says that the phone calls, e-mails, and personal visits by impacted citizens have generally involved dwindling groundwater levels and reduced yields from domestic wells. "Those individuals who don't have access to a municipal or rural water system are particularly vulnerable to drought and dry periods."

Declines in groundwater levels are common during times of drought. "These declines often impact domestic well users first, because their wells are typically not drilled to the total saturated thickness depth of the aquifer. As the density of domestic wells increases in a particular area, and those wells become stressed trying to meet peak demands, declining aquifer levels become more prevalent," says Smith. Rectifying those situations often requires deepening the well or constructing an entirely

new well, although the Water Board encourages individuals to tie onto public water supply systems wherever available.

Under Oklahoma Law, the OWRB administers water rights for all purposes other than domestic. While the OWRB routinely assists both domestic water users and permit holders in locating sources of available water supply, during times of water use emergencies the OWRB can expedite the process normally required to put water to use. The agency may grant short-term (90-day) permits to use water as long as the proposed use will not interfere with existing permitted or domestic users.

Often, the OWRB can help water users, including those who manage water systems, find alternative sources, locate a licensed water well driller, or secure emergency water from a stream, lake, or aquifer. "If we

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(OWRB Responds to Drought, continued from page 2)

can't provide direct assistance," says Smith, "we can put them in touch with someone who may be able to help with their problem, such as the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management, Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, Grand River Dam Authority, Rural Development, Rural Water Association, Municipal League, or others."

While the OWRB grants permits for the use of water from federal reservoirs, the Corps of Engineers also requires that individual users obtain water storage contracts. In drought situations, the Corps can issue emergency water withdrawal permits from Corps-managed lakes for use of less than one acre-foot (325,850 gallons) for domestic or industrial use.

During drought, many water systems fall apart under the strain of greatly increased customer demand for water. Older facilities are especially vulnerable. However, in recent years, funding programs have been revitalized, thereby increasing the drought resistance of water treatment and distribution systems. In Oklahoma, the OWRB's Financial Assistance Program (FAP) has provided \$1.6 billion for improvements to community water and wastewater facilities.

Since its creation in 1983, the program has served as an especially effective tool in fighting Oklahoma's recurring drought episodes. The FAP funding process can be accelerated for eligible systems experiencing drought-related problems. Statewide drought episodes also trigger an agency rule that allows the use of \$300,000 in FAP funds to provide drought-related aid for rural and municipal water systems.

"Where during the early 1980s we saw hundreds of communities and rural water districts rationing water or experiencing system failure due to old age and record water demands, today only about 30 water systems statewide have instituted mandatory water rationing. That is largely attributable to the FAP and the help it has provided to struggling water and sewer facilities," Smith says.

"Oklahomans are tremendously resilient people. There are many who still remember the Dust Bowl days and suffered tremendous hardships during that awful period. Since then, Oklahoma has experienced tremendous water resource development, implementing pivotal conservation measures as well as infrastructure improvements. We turned liability to asset in just a few decades."

The OWRB continues to look to the future in making Oklahoma truly a drought-resistant state. "Through the update of the state's comprehensive water plan, which the OWRB has just begun, we will not only help Oklahomans cope with drought episodes, but we will find long-term solutions to the state's water supply problems, whether it be system upgrades or construction of new reservoirs," Smith adds.

A wealth of drought, climate and water information is available on the agency's Drought and Water Resources Monitoring Web page. (Go to www.owrb.state.ok.us and click on "Drought Conditions.")

Water Symposium to Be Held at History Center

The Oklahoma Water Symposium, an annual event hosted by the Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute and Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, Oklahoma State University, will be held on October 5-6, 2006, at the Oklahoma History Center. The event will bring together professionals involved in Oklahoma water resources to present research and discuss current activities and future needs. The intended audience includes academic, federal, state, and private professionals interested in recent technical developments and research. Two days of meetings have been organized into six oral sessions.

Register online at <http://environ.okstate.edu/okwater>. For hotel reservations, please contact Whitten Inn, 5405 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73105, (405)528-7563. Mention that you are with *Oklahoma Water 2006* for the group rate of \$62/night on Oct. 4th or 5th.

Applicants Sought for \$19 Million in Grants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to award up to \$19 million in grants to help clean up and restore the nation's waterways. Proposals must reach EPA by Oct. 16, 2006, for capacity-building grants and Nov. 15, 2006, for project-implementation grants. Capacity-building grants provide for education and training, whereas implementation grants involve actions such as protection and preservation.

President Bush understands that citizen-centered programs foster innovation while accelerating restoration of watersheds through Cooperative Conservation and grass-roots partnerships," says Assistant Administrator for Water Benjamin H. Grumbles.

State governors and tribal leaders nominate potential recipients for implementation grants. EPA will evaluate and rank submissions based on criteria outlined in each notice. Watershed organizations receive the awards based on how likely they are to achieve environmental results in a relatively short time. Selection of the grantees will be announced in the fall.

Under the Targeted Watersheds Grant Program, EPA has awarded nearly \$40 million to 46 watershed organizations since 2003. In excess of \$2 million has gone to five watershed capacity-building organizations to further the activities of more than 3,000 local watershed groups. For this grant cycle, the focus will be on supporting community-based approaches and strengthening local capacity to protect and clean up water resources.

Watersheds currently in the program cover more than 142,000 square miles of the nation's landscape draining into lakes, rivers, and streams.

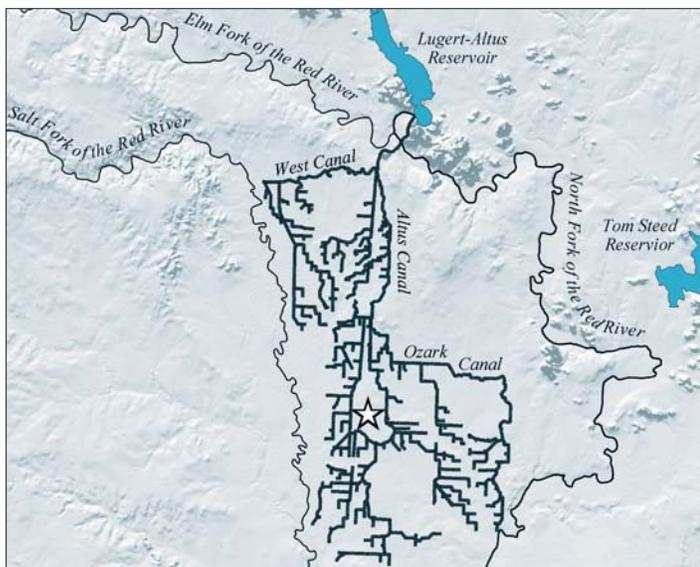
For more information on Targeted Watershed Grants, go to www.epa.gov/twg. For information on the government grant process, go to www.grants.gov.

Water Supply Woes at Lugert-Altus

The Lugert-Altus Irrigation District usually supplies water to cotton growers from July 4 to about September 15, but not this year. According to Tom Buchanan, District Manager, water was shut off on August 25, with farmers receiving only 8.5 inches per acre (about half of the supplemental water recommended during the growing season for maximum yield). Rainfall in August was simply not sufficient to make up for extremely low lake levels at the beginning of the growing season. While last year was an exceptionally good year for the district, which produced about 120,000 bales of cotton, worth about \$48 million, this year's crop will likely yield about 60 percent of that total, a sharp decline yet still respectable amount. Buchanan estimates that growers will still get an average size crop of about 2.5 bales per acre, which may well be attributed to improved farming methods that emphasize more efficient use of water, primarily by recirculating run-off and using drip irrigation to eliminate evaporation.

Lugert-Altus Reservoir and its accompanying irrigation district have provided water for cotton growers every year since 1946. The lake is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation, but operation and maintenance of the lake is paid for by the irrigation district. The lake was specifically designed for irrigation, municipal use, and flood control uses. However, the lake has also become a popular spot for recreation and tourism, and it is especially important to the adjacent Quartz Mountain Resort.

The reservoir's capacity is 135,000 acre-feet, but it contained less than half this amount early this summer when it came time to begin releasing water to growers for irrigation. This meant that allocations for each of the 46,000 acres in the district were decreased significantly. In late August, when the lake level dipped to 10,000 acre



The Lugert-Altus Irrigation District, south of Lugert-Altus Reservoir, includes 46,000 irrigated acres.

feet, the district gave up its remaining allotment of 8,000 acre feet of additional water in order to avoid a major fish kill.

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and concerned area residents hope to negotiate with the irrigation district before the situation gets any worse, but with the cotton crop and their livelihoods at stake, district members are quick to remind everyone of the reservoir's original intended purpose.

At \$12.8 million, construction of the lake was primarily financed through federal tax dollars, but irrigation farmers made a huge contribution at the time, \$2 million, and continue to finance its upkeep through irrigation district fees.

**27th ANNUAL
Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference**

*Oklahoma's
Water Plan*

**Charting the Course for
Sustainable Growth**

**November 13-14, 2006
Cox Convention Center
Oklahoma City, OK**

Mark your calendars! The 27th Annual Governor's Water Conference will be held on November 13-14, 2006. To register, go to www.owrb.state.ok.us or call (405) 530-8800. Reservations for overnight accommodations at the Renaissance Hotel (10 North Broadway, Oklahoma City) can be made by calling 1-405-228-8000 or 1-800-627-7468. A block of rooms and special Water Conference room rate of \$89 per night (single or double) has been reserved for conferees until October 10th.

Drought Means Business for State's Well Drillers

By Kent Wilkins

Oklahoma Well Drillers Program Coordinator

The lives and livelihoods of many Oklahomans have been impacted by the drought of 2006, and Oklahoma's water well drillers have seen an unprecedented surge in activity. Groundwater supplies from water wells across the state have been severely depleted, which means drillers have been extraordinarily busy replacing wells and establishing new and more dependable sources of supply.

Oklahoma's Drillers take great pride in completing safe, productive water wells. Many of these professionals operate second or even third generation family businesses. Whether drilling a well for domestic, municipal, irrigation, commercial, or livestock watering purposes, drillers are dedicated to finding the best source of supply to meet their customers' needs.

Because of the drought, many drillers are working 12 hours or more each day, often in extreme weather condi-

I fully expect that the number of wells drilled in 2006 will increase by more than 30 percent from the number drilled in 2004 or 2005.

tions. Drilling wells under these conditions and at this pace is a demanding task. Several firms must place new customers on a waiting list, which ranges anywhere from six weeks to three months. The drillers work all day and come home at night to an answering machine full of new requests or a page-long list of new prospective clients.

With this flurry of activity, I fully expect that the number of wells drilled in 2006 will increase by more than 30 percent from the number drilled in 2004 or 2005. I recently visited with Clark Giles, owner and primary driller for Giles Environmental Services in Inola. Clark told me that he has never been busier. His clients from all over Oklahoma range from individuals to businesses to municipalities. He takes great pride in his work and gets tremendous personal satisfaction from drilling and completing wells for his fellow Oklahomans, many of whom are in desperate need of water. As is typical of most Oklahoma water well drillers, in spite of the demand, he has not raised his drilling prices and he vows to continue responsible well construction at a reasonable cost.

Providing water for Oklahoman's in need, especially during a drought, is a gratifying career for Oklahoma drillers like Mr. Giles, and we are grateful to have such dedicated professionals in our program.

For more information on Oklahoma's water well drilling industry, visit the Oklahoma Ground Water Association (OGWA) Web site at www.ogwa.biz.

Volunteers Needed for Lake Eufaula Monitoring

Oklahoma Water Watch (OWW), a community-based statewide volunteer water quality monitoring program at the OWRB, and Save Our Water, Inc., (SOW) are actively recruiting citizens to collect and analyze water quality samples from sites extending from Lake Eufaula dam to the upper end of the reservoir.

Although all the sites are regularly sampled by the OWRB's water quality monitoring staff, additional sampling is required to satisfy objectives of a detailed, upcoming cooperative study of the lake by the OWRB and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The mission of SOW is to preserve and protect Lake Eufaula and all Oklahoma's water resources. Karen Weldin, President of SOW, says the organization is excited to become a part of the OWRB's Water Watch Program. "Water is our most precious natural resource. Certifying volunteer monitors will launch the water quality segment of our organization, which we value greatly. We encourage all interested persons to be trained and certified."

Those interested in volunteering should contact Karen Weldin at (918) 452-3184 or e-mail kweldin@crosstel.net. At the minimum, participants in the study will measure water clarity, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and pH and ammonia nitrogen, nitrate nitrogen, and orthophosphate levels. Samples should be collected each month. All sampling equipment will be provided by the OWRB. It is preferred, but not necessary, that all volunteers have access to a boat or similar watercraft.

The OWRB's Oklahoma Water Watch program, created in 1992, is a statewide volunteer water quality monitoring program that encourages local involvement in protecting and maintaining the quality of Oklahoma's water resources. The program serves as a valuable educational tool by providing participants with first-hand involvement in water quality monitoring and protection.

For more information on the Water Watch Program, please call (405) 530-8800 or visit the OWRB's Web site at www.owrb.state.ok.us.



Lake Eufaula Water Watch volunteers at an initial training session on September 14. Sarah Davis (OWRB) explains how to operate a Hydrolab multiprobe water sampling unit.

Reflections

By J. Leland Gourley, Editor
Oklahoma City FRIDAY

What do you think your water is worth?

What do you think your water is worth? If you bought enough bottled water to use for watering your lawn, that amount of water would cost you \$35,000 a month. That's what Duane Smith, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, told us in his speech at our Rotary club recently.

The average cost for water supplied to a home in the U.S. is \$2 per 1,000 gallons. Comparable cost for that much bottled water is \$6,400. Your water bill too high? Think what your water COULD cost.

Smith told us that years ago when Oklahoma City's Council voted for the project to bring water to the City from Southeastern Oklahoma, it caused every one of those Councilmen to be defeated at their next election. "They should be our heroes," the state's top water Czar exclaimed. "Oklahoma City could not exist without that water today."

Smith is opposed to the grant program that gives aid to communities to maintain their water system. He thinks they ought to price their water a little higher and build up a kitty to keep their water system infrastructure up to date, safe and dependable.

Oklahoma can thank its lucky stars that our former U.S. Senator, the late Robert S. Kerr, had the vision and the stroke and the tenacity to get our state's system of dams and lakes to make water adequate for our growth. But city and town water infrastructures are failing all the time because cities are not pricing their water high enough for sustained maintenance. Too many municipal candidates are running on the platform of: "I won't raise your water rates."

Because of Bob Kerr, Oklahoma has more miles of lake shoreline than the combined U.S. Atlantic and Gulf Coast shorelines. An Oklahoma tourist was in Minnesota. He kept driving around and around a lake. He pulled into a filling station and asked, "Where's the dam?" The attendant said, "Our lakes in Minnesota are built by God." The Oklahoma tourist replied, "Our lakes in Oklahoma are built by Kerr, by God."

I am the proud owner of two autographed copies of *Land, Wood and Water* by Bob Kerr.

Reasons to Test Your Well Water

Conditions or Nearby Activities:	Test for:
Recurring gastrointestinal illness	Coliform bacteria
Household plumbing contains lead	pH, lead, copper
Corrosion of pipes, plumbing	Corrosion, pH, lead
Nearby areas of intensive agriculture	Nitrate, pesticides, coliform bacteria
Coal or other mining operations nearby	Metals, pH, corrosion
Gas drilling operations nearby	Chloride, sodium, barium, strontium
Dump, junk yard, landfill, factory, gas station, or dry cleaning operation nearby	Volatile organic compounds, total dissolved solids, pH, sulfate, chloride, metals
Objectionable taste or smell	Hydrogen sulfide, corrosion, metals
Stained plumbing fixtures, laundry	Iron, copper, manganese
Salty taste or a heavily salted roadway nearby	Chloride, total dissolved solids, sodium
Scaly residues, soaps don't lather	Hardness
Rapid wear of water treatment equipment	pH, corrosion
Water softener needed to treat hardness	Manganese, iron
Water appears cloudy, frothy, or colored	Color, detergents

Adapted from Drinking Water From Household Wells, USEPA publication EPA 816-K-02-003. For a full copy of this 19-page brochure, go to www.epa.gov/safewater/privatewells/booklet/index.html.

How to Test Your Well Water

The State Environmental Laboratory, operated by the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), will test your well water for most of the substances listed on the table at the left. Below are some testing prices. For a complete list of prices, see *Laboratory Services Rules (Chapter 305)* at www.deq.state.ok.us/rules/305.pdf.

Routine Chemical Analysis	\$137
--includes alkalinity, chloride, nitrate/nitrite, specific conductance, pH, sulfate, total dissolved solids, & total hardness	
Coliform bacteria (total and e. coli)	\$20
pH	\$10
Lead	\$20
Copper	\$20
Nitrate/Nitrite	\$23
Chloride	\$20
Sodium	\$20
Barium	\$20
Strontium (Gross Alpha/Beta)	\$60
Volatile Organic Compounds	\$150
Total Dissolved Solids	\$29
Sulfate	\$15
Iron	\$20
Manganese	\$20
Hardness (total)	\$15
Color (apparent)	\$10

For more information about testing your water or interpreting test results, contact the State Environmental Laboratory at (405) 702-1000 or go to www.deq.state.ok.us/CSDnew/sel.htm.

Oklahoma Drought Monitor

Reservoir Storage

As of September 5, the combined normal conservation pools of 31 selected major federal reservoirs across Oklahoma (see below) are approximately 87.8 percent full, according to information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Tulsa District). Twenty-six reservoirs are currently operating at less than full capacity. Seven reservoirs are now below 80 percent capacity.

Storage in Selected Oklahoma Lakes & Reservoirs

As of September 5, 2006

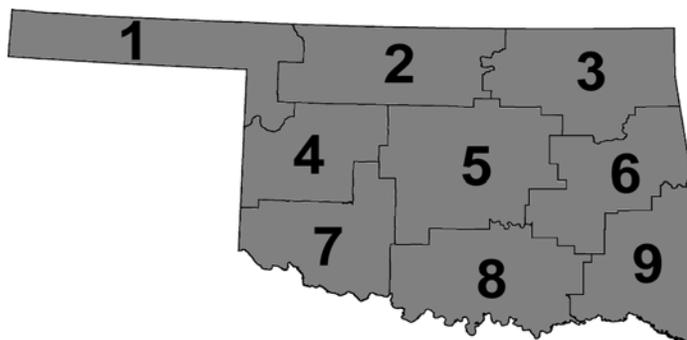
CLIMATE DIVISION	Conservation Storage (acre-feet)	Present Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Storage (acre-feet)
North Central (2)	420,480	416,497	99.1
Northeast (3)	3,701,150	3,401,327	91.9
West Central (4)	276,790	218,052	78.8
Central (5)	154,225	114,867	74.5
East Central (6)	2,968,683	2,574,096	86.7
Southwest (7)	301,810	127,819	42.4
South Central (8)	2,924,564	2,556,286	87.4
Southeast (9)	1,512,859	1,355,619	89.6
State Totals	12,260,561	10,764,563	87.8

Drought Indices

According to the latest Palmer Drought Severity Index (September 2, below), state drought conditions continue to worsen as eight regions report various stages of drought. In particular, the East Central, South Central, Central, Northeast, and Southeast climate divisions are in "extreme drought." However, all of Oklahoma's nine climate divisions have undergone PDSI moisture increases since August 19.

The latest monthly Standardized Precipitation Index (through July, below) reflects increasingly dry conditions throughout Oklahoma. Among the selected time periods (3-, 6-, 9- and 12-month SPIs), "extremely" dry conditions are present in South Central and Southwest Oklahoma during the past 3 to 9 months, respectively. Eight climate divisions are experiencing at least "very" dry conditions during the last 3-, 6-, 9-, and/or 12-month periods.

Oklahoma Climate Divisions



Palmer Drought Severity Index

CLIMATE DIVISION	Current Status 9/2/2006
Northwest (1)	Near Normal
North Central (2)	Severe Drought
Northeast (3)	Extreme Drought
West Central (4)	Moderate Drought
Central (5)	Extreme Drought
East Central (6)	Extreme Drought
Southwest (7)	Severe Drought
South Central (8)	Extreme Drought
Southeast (9)	Extreme Drought

Standardized Precipitation Index

Through July 2006

CLIMATE DIVISION	3-month	6-month	9-month	12-month
Northwest (1)	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry	Moderately Dry
North Central (2)	Moderately Dry	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Near Normal
Northeast (3)	Near Normal	Near Normal	Moderately Dry	Moderately Dry
West Central (4)	Near Normal	Near Normal	Very Dry	Near Normal
Central (5)	Moderately Dry	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Moderately Dry
East Central (6)	Moderately Dry	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry
Southwest (7)	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Extremely Dry	Moderately Dry
South Central (8)	Extremely Dry	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry
Southeast (9)	Very Dry	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry

Financial Assistance Program Update

Loans/Grants Approved as of August 8, 2006

FAP Loans—318 totaling \$620,765,000

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 interest rates, averaging approximately 4.762 percent since 1986.

CWSRF Loans—174 totaling \$600,159,915

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—61 totaling \$287,406,785

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—451 totaling \$39,445,213

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—523 totaling \$30,692,882

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.

Total Loans/Grants—1,527 totaling \$1,578,469,795

Estimated Savings—\$492,082,399

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.

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

Rudy Herrmann, *Chairman*; Mark Nichols, *Vice Chairman*; Bill Secrest, *Secretary*

F. Ford Drummond, Lonnie L. Farmer, Ed Fite, Jack Keeley, Kenneth K. Knowles, Richard C. Sevenoaks

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