

OKLAHOMA Water News

2nd Quarter 2007



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OCWP Local Meetings Give Voice to Public

In April, the first of 42 Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP) local input meetings took place in Beaver, facilitated by the Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute (OWRRI), with 14 additional meetings held throughout April, May, and June in Goodwell, Woodward, Alva, Sayre, Lawton, Hobart, Weatherford, Altus, Tonkawa, Chickasha, Duncan, Enid, El Reno, and Kingfisher. The meetings, which have been well-attended in every city, will continue through the end of the year, providing citizens across the state with the opportunity to identify issues they believe should be considered in the OCWP update. As was envisioned, citizens are utilizing this forum to voice concerns about existing and potential water problems and contribute possible solutions. Already, the comments of these citizens have helped state water planners better understand what issues are important to the public.

According to Mike Langston, Assistant Director of the OWRRI and facilitator of the OCWP public meetings, which have so far primarily been held in western Oklahoma, citizens have raised a variety of issues, some general and others specific to their respective regions. Some of the more common topics for western Oklahomans have included water conservation and education, support for building more reservoirs and flood control structures, and sediment removal from existing structures to increase storage. Current water law and the protection of water rights have frequently been the focus of discussion as citizens consider whether or not Oklahoma's groundwater and surface water laws require review.

"Many participants have told us how much they appreciate that we are making the effort to listen to the rural parts of the state, which are too often forgotten," says Langston. "Several people have also said they were glad to see that the legislature appropriated funds for water planning and think it should be continued indefinitely."

(continued on page 2)



Local input meeting in Beaver on April 12 with 103 local citizens in attendance.

From the Director

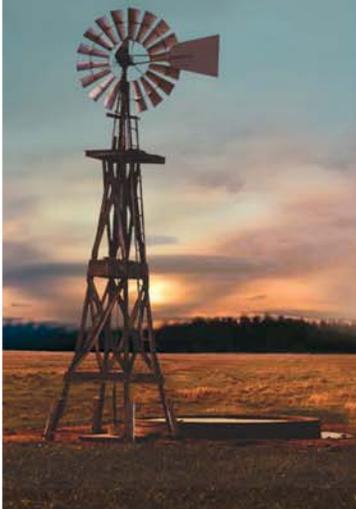
Water Plan public input meetings, designed to gather citizen viewpoints on Oklahoma's most pressing water issues, are well underway. The meetings have been extremely well attended and the comments to OWRB representatives and Water Research Institute staff, who are facilitating this phase of the OCWP update, have been both honest and insightful. To read reports on the meetings, including a comprehensive and categorized list of comments for each, visit OWRRI's Web site at www.okwaterplan.info.

While the recent long-term drought and the even more recent flood problems in Oklahoma have been popular topics at these meetings, one particular area of public concern surrounds climate change and its impacts on water resource

(continued on page 2)



**Duane A. Smith, Executive Director
Oklahoma Water Resources Board**



From the Director (continued from page 1)

availability and management. To learn more about this subject, we asked Dr. Ken Crawford, State Climatologist for Oklahoma and Director of the Oklahoma Climatological Survey (OCS), to address agency managers at our strategic planning session in June. As one of the persons principally responsible for creation of the Oklahoma Mesonet, the state's unparalleled network of environmental monitoring stations, Dr. Crawford presented an extremely interesting—as well as somewhat alarming—view on the future of state water management in light of our warming climate system evident from observed increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising average sea level. According to Dr. Crawford, paleoclimate information indicates that the warmth of the last half-century or so is unusual compared to the previous 1300 years. Looking forward, climate models project decreased annual precipitation throughout at least the southwestern United States, especially during the summer. While winters will become shorter and milder, spring will start earlier, and growing seasons will be longer. Furthermore, since warmer temperatures lead to increased evapotranspiration (i.e., “wetter air”) and less soil moisture, we can expect more frequent and severe droughts. In Oklahoma, “ordinary” droughts could be comparable to those experienced in the 30s and 50s, Dr. Crawford warned. The risk and intensity of wildfires will also increase.

In short, Dr. Crawford emphasized that in the near future Oklahomans will likely be faced with enormous water-related stress. Less rainfall but more severe rainfall events mean reduced aquifer recharge and more runoff and flash flooding, which will result in more sedimentation of our water bodies and a subsequent reduction in usable supply. Longer growing seasons will lead to increased water requirements for our crops. Shrinking water supplies will lead to more water quality problems. Also, if the market for biofuels takes off, and the fuel of choice is a derivative of corn, our groundwater supplies could be mined at an unprecedented rate.

So how will we cope with this increasing stress, especially small water districts that provide supply to individual handfuls of rural residents across the state? While the answer to that question remains largely unclear at this time, our changing climate will unquestionably have a significant impact on water management in Oklahoma.

Regardless of whether these changing precipitation and temperature patterns are human-induced or part of a natural cycle, we must now find more creative ways to manage our water resources. Certainly, through studies conducted to supplement our revised Water Plan, due in 2012, we will seek aggressive measures to mitigate the problem. In the interim, the OWRB plans to partner with the OCS and other agencies that are part of our incomparable weather community in Oklahoma to begin planning for climate change by reviewing the wealth of available water and weather data. This is the necessary first step in identifying trends that can better prepare us for future water problems and provide decision makers with feasible options to fight this impending water crisis.

While Oklahoma celebrates its centennial, the OWRB is celebrating its 50th year as Oklahoma's water agency. To mark the occasion, as well as to promote the Water Plan update, we have joined with the Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute to organize the 2007 Governor's Water Conference and Symposium, the state's most prominent annual gathering of state and national water officials to be held October 23-25 at the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City. To recognize the agency's birthday, on Wednesday evening, October 24, the OWRB will host a very special banquet highlighting Water Board accomplishments throughout the past half-century. We have invited former state governors, OWRB directors, legislators, and others who laid the groundwork for Oklahoma's robust water development and protection programs. It should be a grand event and an appropriate one as we prepare a new water plan for Oklahoma's next century.

OCWP Meetings (continued from page 1)

Comments can be made in person at the meetings or online at www.okwaterplan.info, where the OWRRI has provided reports from each meeting and a searchable database of all the issues that have been raised. The Web site also includes information on meeting dates and locations.

“We've been so impressed with the thoughtfulness and diversity of the comments,” adds Langston. “Clearly, many citizens are very engaged in the water planning process. We believe that this is just the beginning of a long-term discussion about how we can better manage our water resources.”

After the local meetings are completed, there will be a series of regional meetings to provide area citizens the opportunity to consolidate and prioritize the comments in each region. For more information, contact the OWRRI at (405) 744-9994 or by e-mail at waterplan@okstate.edu. Information packets,

Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan Update UPCOMING LOCAL INPUT MEETINGS

July 12—Okla. City; County Extension Auditorium

July 17—Sulphur; Murray County Expo Center

July 19—Norman; Cleveland County Fairgrounds

July 24—Chandler; Lincoln County Fairgrounds

July 30—Stillwater; Payne County Expo Center

July 31—Ardmore; Ardmore Convention Center

August 7—Shawnee; Gordon Cooper Vo Tech

August 23—Kellyville; Creek County Fairgrounds

comment cards, and nomination forms are also available at Oklahoma County Extension Offices.

Bill Secrest Honored

After completing his final term as OWRB Secretary during his 24th year on the Board, Bill Secrest retired in May. At the June 12 meeting, members of the State Legislature, Office of the Governor, Oklahoma Rural Water Association (ORWA), and many other friends and colleagues appeared to honor Secrest, who has been involved in community and rural water projects and planning for many years. Sen. Mary Easley (Tulsa) and Rep. Wade Rousselot (Wagoner) presented Secrest with a copy of SCR 35, which honors Bill Secrest and designated May 8, 2007, "Bill Secrest Day" at the Capitol.



Left to right: Rep. Rousselot, Governor's Liaison Jeannette Nance, Bill Secrest, Duane Smith, Sen. Easley, ORWA Executive Director Gene Whatley

WRDA Bill Advocates State Water Projects

On May 18, Senator James Inhofe announced Senate passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which includes several critical provisions for Oklahoma. Following the bill's passage, by a vote of 91-4, a press release by Senator Inhofe pointed out that water resources are "one of Oklahoma's greatest assets." The last WRDA legislation was passed in 2000.

According to Duane Smith, Senator Inhofe's tremendous leadership has been instrumental in obtaining WRDA consideration for Oklahoma projects. Specifically for Oklahoma, the bill provides funds for the statewide Comprehensive Water Plan as well as several vital water projects that have been on hold for some time. The bill provides \$6.5 million to update the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP), administered by the OWRB. While the funds appropriated for the OCWP by the Oklahoma State Legislature go a long way toward the overall planning effort, according to Smith, federal matching dollars will be particularly valuable in underwriting technical studies and accessing related engineering resources available through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Federal funding will enable planners to focus on the enormous tasks of establishing long-term plans for Oklahoma's water systems, providing the necessary infrastructure and water supply for future growth, and

through various studies, discovering potential solutions to the state's most imminent water problems and issues.

The WRDA bill also specifically includes funding for water and wastewater projects across the state that are within the scope of the OCWP for the communities of Ada, Norman, Bethany, Woodward, Durant, Ardmore, Midwest City, Guymon, Bartlesville, Mustang, and several others. Some of the other provisions include the creation of a lake advisory committee at Lake Eufaula, removing restrictions on local development plans at Lake Texoma, and encouraging recreational development on all of Oklahoma's Corps lakes through public-private partnerships. For southwest Oklahoma, in particular, the legislation includes \$5 million for improving water management and conservation plans at Lugert-Altus Irrigation District.

Additionally, the bill clarifies that operation and maintenance of chloride control projects on the Red River in Oklahoma will be at full federal expense, which is consistent with the operation and maintenance of similar projects in Texas. The goal of these ongoing projects is to reduce chlorides contributed through upstream tributaries to improve water quality for drinking and agricultural irrigation uses in the area.

Until September 21, a limited number of hotel rooms are available at a special group rate of \$179 per night (single or double) at the Renaissance Hotel, 10 N. Broadway, 1-800-559-6877. A limited number of additional tickets for guests wishing only to attend the OWRB Banquet on Oct. 24 will be available after Oct. 1. Please call the OWRB at 405-530-8800 for more information or check the OWRB Web site at www.owrb.ok.gov for an updated event schedule and information.



WATER for LIFE

28th Annual Governor's Water Conference &
5th Annual OWRRI Water Research Symposium

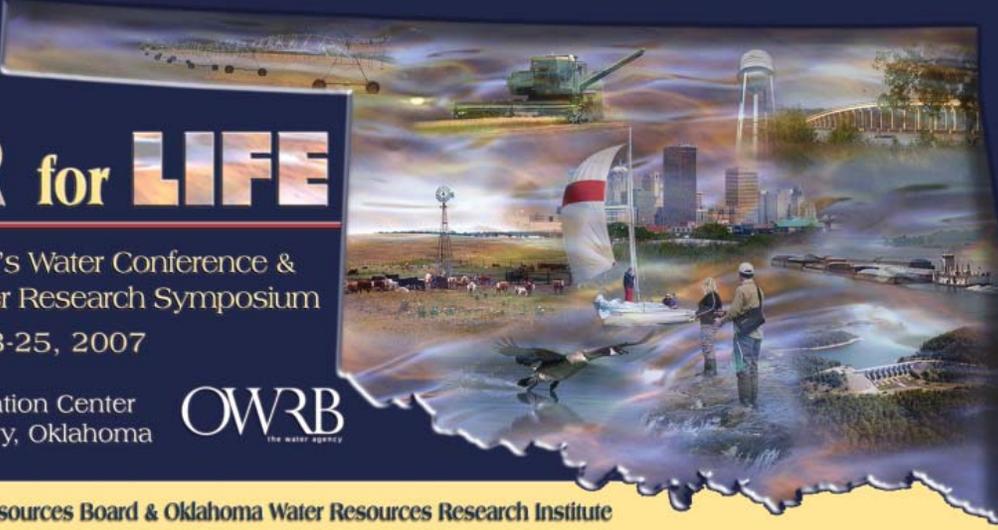
October 23-25, 2007



Cox Convention Center
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



the water agency



Hosted by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board & Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute

Linda Lambert Joins Board

The OWRB's newest member is Linda Lambert of Oklahoma City, President of LASSO Corp., a diversified investment corporation with concentration in the field of oil and gas development. Lambert is also the President of ENERTREE, L.L.C., oil and gas investments, Director of OGE Energy Corp., and Director of InvesTrust. Lambert is the Vice Chairman of the Oklahoma City Public Schools Trust, Chairman of the Board of Mercy Health Center, and serves on the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board and Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation. She is a member of the Oklahoma Academy and a Board member of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence. Lambert will serve as an At Large member representing industrial water use interests.



OWRB and GRDA Partner in Grand River Basin

In May, a multiple-species aquatic plant nursery was established in cooling ponds at the Grand River Dam Authority's (GRDA) complex in Chouteau. The GRDA and OWRB will relocate plants at Hudson and Grand Lakes, where they are expected to grow and spread to enhance aquatic habitat and reduce erosion. The new plants will supplement an existing 15-acre pilot colony at Grand Lake. This partnership between the OWRB and GRDA is one of three recently-developed water quality initiatives in the Grand River Basin.



Pilot site for aquatic plants at Grand Lake

In March, the two agencies partnered to address decreased levels of dissolved oxygen (D.O.) in the areas just below the Pensacola (Grand) and Robert S Kerr (Hudson) dams. The data collected by the OWRB will assist GRDA in quantifying the relationship between flow releases and D.O. concentrations.

The third initiative, now underway, entails a water quality education and outreach program with the Grand Lake Water Watch (GLWW) Chapter and the newly formed Lake Hudson Association Chapter. The OWRB and GRDA will use volunteer-collected data in the resource management process to establish baseline water quality parameters. The OWRB will also foster educational sessions for all area stakeholders regarding water quality data collection.

OWRB Names Nichols Chairman

At its monthly meeting in June, the OWRB elected Jess Mark Nichols (Altus) as the new Chairman, current Board Chairman Rudy Herrmann (Tulsa) as Vice Chairman, and Ford Drummond (Bartlesville) as Secretary.

Representing irrigation interests, Nichols is a cotton farmer and a member of the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District. He has served on the Board since May 2004 and has been the Vice Chairman



Mark Nichols
OWRB Chairman

for the last two years. Nichols replaces Rudy Herrmann, whose term as Chairman ended in June after a two-year rotation period.

According to Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director, during the past two years the leadership and support of Rudy Herrmann, as Chairman, and Mark Nichols, as Vice Chairman, have been instrumental in obtaining funding for the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP), and the two have worked vigorously to promote and support the plan throughout the past year in Oklahoma and in Washington D.C.

Incoming Secretary, Ford Drummond, represents agricultural water use interests and is currently the owner and operator of a large family ranch in Osage county. Drummond joined the Board in 2006.



5th Annual OWRRRI Water Research Symposium

Registration Form

28th Annual Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference

OWRRRI Research Symposium

Oct. 23, 8:00-5:00 (including lunch)
Oct. 24, 8:00-12:00

Governor's Water Conference

Oct. 24, 12:00-5:00 (including lunch)
Oct. 25, 8:00-12:00

OWRB 50th Anniversary Banquet

Oct. 24, 6:30-9:00

Please enclose check, money order, or purchase order payable to the OWRRRI and mail to
OWRRRI

003 Life Sciences East

Stillwater, OK 74078

or pay online with VISA/MasterCard at

<http://environ.okstate.edu/OKWATER/2007>

Early Registration (on or before Sept. 30)

_____ \$175 OWRRRI Research Symposium,
Governor's Water Conference, & OWRB Banquet
_____ \$100 OWRRRI Research Symposium & OWRB Banquet
_____ \$100 Governor's Water Conference & OWRB Banquet

I will attend Oct. 23 luncheon Oct. 24 luncheon Oct. 24 banquet
 Oct. 23 reception (5:30-7:00 pm) Oct. 24 reception (5:30-6:30 pm)

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

OCS Notes End to Drought

From "Our Cup Runneth Over"

(OK Climatological Survey (OCS) Press Release on May 30)

After two years of severe drought, Mother Nature turned the spigots on in relief but seems to have forgotten to shut them off. Consequently, flooding has become the hazard of choice during the past three months. Oklahoma's statewide average precipitation total for the year thus far ranks as the 19th wettest since 1921, 1.40 inches above normal. Much of that bounty is buoyed by the northwestern half of the state. The north central, central and west central regions are all experiencing year-to-date totals ranked within the top-ten wettest. The last 90 days have been particularly wet, with the state enjoying its 13th wettest such period. West central, central, and north central totals are all ranked in the top-six wettest during that same time frame.



Flooded road in Walters on June 25

2007 Legislative Wrap-Up

Following last year's success in obtaining dedicated funds to update the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP) and recapitalize the Financial Assistance Program, the OWRB had hoped to make additional progress by removing the cap and other limitations on the REAP Gross Production Tax Water Projects Fund, the source of that funding. Unfortunately, proposed legislation to deal with that issue was not heard in the House of Representatives. In addition, no additional funding was allocated to the OWRB to continue priority water studies, including the completion of the Arbuckle-Simpson Hydrology Study.

The General Appropriations Bill, Senate Bill 334, appropriates \$6.8 million from FY'08 General Revenues to the OWRB and includes some funding to assist with last year's employee pay raise, but it does not provide the necessary money to complete the Arbuckle-Simpson Study, continue the Red River chloride control study, or other important studies. This funding was also not provided in House Bill 1105, the \$140 million Rainy Day Spillover bill.

No Records Broken Yet!

According to the Oklahoma Climatological Survey (OCS), as of mid-June, 2007 is the only 17th wettest year on record statewide, with an average total rainfall of 20.09 inches. However, North Central Oklahoma is experiencing the 3rd wettest year on record, averaging 20.98 inches. Go to <http://climate.ocs.ou.edu/drought/> for the latest regional rainfall statistics.

Not all areas of the state are sharing in the moisture surplus, however. The eastern third of the state has continued to dry out over similar periods. The southeast and east central sections of the state are nearly three inches below normal since the beginning of the year to rank as the 26th- and 29th-driest on record, respectively. The two-year precipitation

statistics reflect the just-broken drought with virtually the entire state, save for the west central section, showing precipitation deficits. May 2005-May 2007 for southeastern Oklahoma is the driest such period on record.

It's somewhat standard for Oklahoma's severe drought episodes to end with a deluge instead of a trickle. The state's most notable droughts, the 1930s Dust Bowl and the 1950s, were both broken in a spectacularly wet fashion. The Dust Bowl episode was whittled away in early 1941 before being blasted from existence by a statewide average rainfall of 11.32 inches in October, the wettest Oklahoma month on record. The 1952-57 drought, considered the state's worst statistically, ended rather abruptly in May 1957 with heavy rains and major flooding on the state's largest river systems. That year still stands as the wettest in Oklahoma history at 48.21 inches.

The OWRB appropriation bill, SB 296, directs how the \$6.8 million is to be budgeted. It specifies \$2.2 million for use by the REAP Grant Program and \$301,000 for contractual services with the Oklahoma Rural Water Association to provide technical assistance and training to rural water and wastewater system operators or board members. The remainder of the funding is to be used for agency operations.

Water programs received only a small percentage of the state budget. Education received 53.1 percent of total appropriations, followed by health and social services with 16.1 percent, public safety with 10.9 percent, human services with 9.9 percent, and government and transportation with 5.5 percent. Natural Resources received only 2.2 percent, and includes agencies such as the Department of Commerce, Historical Society, Department of Labor, Department of Tourism and Recreation, Corporation Commission, and Department of Agriculture, which devote very little of their resources to water-related activities.

Second Water Appreciation Day Draws Crowd

Heavy rainfall in Oklahoma City made for a wet second annual Water Appreciation Day on May 8 at the State Capitol. Hosted by the OWRB, the day presented a unique opportunity for agencies and organizations to demonstrate the importance of Oklahoma's water resources to state legislators and other government officials.

To mark the occasion, the Water Board held a press conference, which featured remarks from OWRB Executive Director Duane Smith, OWRB Chairman Rudy Herrmann, Secretary of the Environment Miles Tolbert, House Speaker Lance Cargill, Representative Guy Liebmann, and Senator Charlie Laster.

Herrmann noted that Water Appreciation Day in 2007 coincides with the 50th Anniversary of the OWRB, which was created in 1957 with the original charge of identifying water problems and proposing policies for fair and equitable water laws. The OWRB now directs staff in many areas, including the administration of permits for the beneficial use of stream and groundwater, studies of the quality and quantity of surface and groundwaters, oversight of state dam safety and floodplain management programs, administration of loans and grants to communities to assist in the construction of water and wastewater facilities, development of Oklahoma Water Quality Standards, and many other programs. Late last year, the OWRB also initiated the update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP), which will be completed in 2011.

Herrmann also noted that last year at this time, the OWRB was responding to drought and severe water shortages. Even though it looks like drought has been at least temporarily alleviated in many areas by all the heavy rainfall, Herrmann urged state planners not to lose the sense of urgency to continue the water planning and even accelerate the OCWP's timeline. Herrmann then recounted how the recent relocations of a Google data center and a Gatorade facility to Pryor can be attributed to the presence of solid water infrastructure.



Exhibitors in the rotunda



Duane Smith at the press conference



The Board approved a \$70,000 emergency grant to Harrah for wastewater treatment plant repairs. Above (left to right): Bill Lisbey, Council Member; Alice Davis, City Clerk; District 96 Representative Lance Cargill; Earl Burson, City Manager; Jeannette Nance, Office of the Governor; Duane Smith, OWRB Executive Director.

OWRB member Ford Drummond (right) congratulates Rep. Scott BigHorse (Pawhuska) on helping secure a \$2.95 million DWSRF loan to Osage Co. Rural Water District #15 for water treatment facility improvements.



Sen. Charles Laster, D-Shawnee, added that he too hopes the Legislature will not sit back and be complacent about water planning just because it is raining.

The OWRB would like to thank all who participated in making the second Annual Water Appreciation Day such a success. Exhibitors included the following:

- Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute
- Oklahoma Floodplain Managers Association
- OSU Extension
- Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission
- Oklahoma Rural Water Association
- United States Geological Survey
- Sierra Club
- Oklahoma Waterways Advisory Board
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Oklahoma Department of Mines
- Oklahoma Department of Commerce
- Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts
- Conservation Commission
- Oklahoma Corporation Commission
- Nature Conservancy
- Oklahoma Climatological Survey
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Oklahoma Ground Water Association
- USDA Rural Development
- Oklahoma Geological Survey
- Oklahoma Municipal League

Drought Update



Reservoir Storage

As of June 12, the combined normal conservation pools of 31 selected major federal reservoirs across Oklahoma (see right) are approximately 99.9 percent full, a 0.2 percent increase from that recorded on May 14, according to information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Tulsa District). Twenty-two reservoirs have experienced lake level decreases since that time; only 1 reservoir is currently operating at less than full capacity. No reservoirs are below 80 percent capacity.

Palmer Drought Severity Index

According to the latest Palmer Drought Severity Index (June 9, right), state drought conditions have improved significantly. No climate divisions are currently experiencing drought conditions although the East Central and Southeast regions are in "incipient drought." Eight of Oklahoma's nine climate divisions have undergone PDSI moisture decreases since May 12.

Standardized Precipitation Index

The latest monthly Standardized Precipitation Index (through May, right) reflects vastly improved moisture conditions throughout Oklahoma. Among the selected time periods (3-, 6-, 9- and 12-month SPIs), no regions report dry conditions.

For more drought information, and to obtain updated information on Oklahoma's drought and moisture conditions, go to www.owrb.ok.gov/supply/drought/drought_index.php.

Storage in Selected Oklahoma Lakes & Reservoirs
(as of June 12, 2007)

CLIMATE DIVISION	Conservation Storage (acre-feet)	Present Storage (acre-feet)	Percent of Storage (acre-feet)
North Central (2)	505,170	505,170	100.0
Northeast (3)	3,698,902	3,698,902	100.0
West Central (4)	276,790	276,790	100.0
Central (5)	154,225	154,225	100.0
East Central (6)	3,183,243	3,183,243	100.0
Southwest (7)	301,810	299,490	99.9
South Central (8)	3,118,676	3,118,676	100.0
Southeast (9)	1,561,859	1,561,859	100.0
State Totals	12,800,675	12,798,355	99.9

Palmer Drought Severity Index

CLIMATE DIVISION	Current Status 6/9/2007
Northwest (1)	Very Moist Spell
North Central (2)	Unusual Moist Spell
Northeast (3)	Moist Spell
West Central (4)	Extreme Moist Spell
Central (5)	Unusual Moist Spell
East Central (6)	Incipient Drought
Southwest (7)	Very Moist Spell
South Central (8)	Moist Spell
Southeast (9)	Incipient Drought

Standardized Precipitation Index
Through May 2007

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

Mark Nichols, Chairman • Rudy Herrmann, Vice Chairman • Ford Drummond, Secretary
Lonnie Farmer • Ed Fite • Jack W. Keeley • Kenneth K. Knowles • Linda Lambert • Richard Sevenoaks

The mission of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board is to manage and protect the water resources of the state and plan for Oklahoma's long-range water needs in a responsive, innovative, and professional manner to ensure that all Oklahomans have adequate quantities of good water.



2nd Quarter 2007

Brian Vance, Editor

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FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Loans & Grants Approved as of June 12, 2007

FAP Loans—320 totaling \$628,085,000

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 very competitive interest rates, averaging approximately 4.762 percent since 1986.

CWSRF Loans—182 totaling \$644,440,922

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—69 totaling \$312,140,542

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—471 totaling \$42,469,026

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—530 totaling \$31,089,692

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.

Drought Response Program Grants—3 totaling \$300,000

Through the OWRB's Drought Response Program, limited funding is available for communities in most dire need during state drought emergencies declared by the Governor. A maximum of \$300,000 is diverted from existing OWRB Emergency Grant funds to establish the Program.

Total Loans/Grants: 1,575 totaling \$1,658,525,181

Estimated Savings: \$521,094,101

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.

**For more information, call 405-530-8800
or go to www.owrb.state.ok.us/financing.**