

OKLAHOMA Water News

3rd Quarter 2011

Inside

Water Conference to Focus on Water Plan Inauguration

What is the "Water Plan"?

OCWP Hot Spot Basins Identified

Arbuckle-Simpson Report Now Available Online

OCWP Priority Recommendations

Drought Update

Water Conference to Focus on Water Plan Inauguration

This year's Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference, to be held Tuesday and Wednesday, October 18-19, at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Norman, Oklahoma, will focus on the inauguration—the official roll-out—of the 2012 OCWP Update in advance of submittal to the Governor and State Legislature in February 2012.

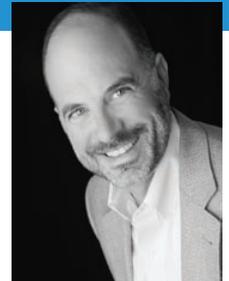
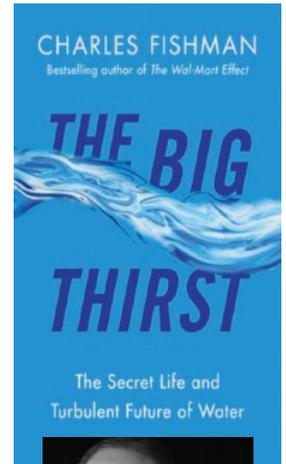
Tuesday morning's featured speaker is Charles Fishman, author of *The Big Thirst: The Secret Life and Turbulent Future of Water*. Fishman, a former reporter for the *Washington Post*, explores our relationship to water and failure to appreciate and respect it, suggesting ways to rethink how we use water to ensure that we'll always have plenty.

Six OCWP Panels will cover the following topics: the value of water; water supply limitations, options, and solutions; innovations in conservation, recycling, and reuse; regional planning in neighboring states; environmental/instream flows; and project and infrastructure funding. The program will conclude with a Joint Legislative Water Committee open meeting.

The OWRRRI will host its water research symposium during concurrent sessions. There will also be two sessions on hydrologic studies, as well as a meeting of the Oklahoma Association of Reclamation Projects.

Tuesday's luncheon will feature the Oklahoma Water Pioneer awards ceremony and a congressional water outlook featuring Congressman Lankford. Wednesday's luncheon will feature 4H speech contest winners and a talk on ancient Israeli water systems by Dr. Dan Warner.

Registration information and a more detailed agenda can be found on the OWRB's website at www.owrb.ok.gov. ♦



Charles Fishman,
GWC keynote speaker

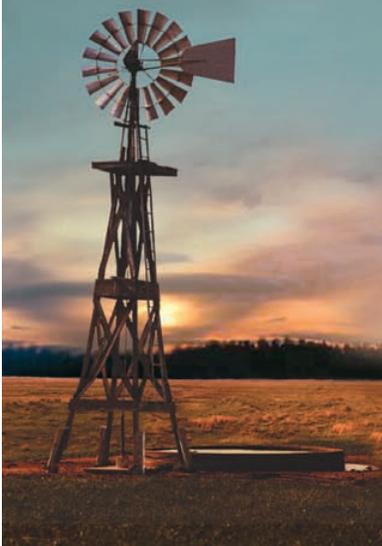
From the Director

Convened to examine the forthcoming Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP) and make policy decisions regarding the state's most pressing water issues, the Joint Legislative Water Committee (JLWC) has hosted four meetings to date. The initial meeting on August 17 focused on the most sensible starting point—the evolution and current status of Oklahoma's surface and groundwater law. The OWRB's General Counsel, Dean Couch, was joined by tribal water experts, including New Mexico attorney Charles DuMars, to provide the necessary context and a frank assessment of laws governing the use and protection of our water resources.

(continued on page 2)



J. D. Strong, Executive Director
Oklahoma Water Resources Board



From the Director (continued)

At their August 31 meeting, JLWC members participated in a day-long discussion of technical studies and findings related to the 2012 Update of the OCWP. OWRB staff outlined the extensive work and results accomplished over five years in assessing current and future water demand and availability for all major use sectors and options to address projected water deficits.

It required two JLWC meetings, held September 21 and October 5, to sufficiently delve into the OCWP's draft water policy recommendations, with special attention afforded to the eight considered priorities for implementation. OWRB staff joined with me in responding to several insightful questions from the members that demonstrate their sincere commitment to understanding the many water issues facing Oklahoma and strengthening the state's long-term ability to utilize and protect this precious resource. On that note, I commend Committee members—especially Senator Brian Crain and Representative Phil Richardson, who serve as co-chairmen—for their attention to detail and intense desire to learn more about our water resources. And I look forward to working more closely with the members and Legislature as a whole to develop sensible water legislation over the coming years. All JLWC meeting presentations and handouts are available on the OWRB's OCWP web page.

In the midst of JLWC meetings, and following receipt of more than 400 solicited written comments, at its September meeting the nine-member Water Resources Board listened to about two dozen citizens and representatives of special interest groups who personally addressed the Board concerning the OCWP's technical work and policy recommendations. In its subsequent discussion, it was clear that the Board took these comments and remarks to heart. This represents the final step in our extensive and unprecedented public input process.

In conclusion, this is a tremendously exciting time as staff puts the finishing touches on the final 2012 OCWP Update, including the *Executive Report* and 13 Watershed Planning Region reports. This second update of the OCWP is inspired by Oklahoma's water leaders of the past—W.C. Austin, Red Males, Lloyd Church, Doc Coker, Robert S. Kerr, Francis Borelli, Newt Graham, and many other recognized water pioneers—who left behind an impressive legacy of achievement. Often against great odds, they leveraged key support with fortuitous timing to establish multipurpose projects throughout Oklahoma that today provide millions of citizens with vital water supplies, protection against devastating flood events, and a fertile trading route to ports throughout the world. They were bold, decisive, and steadfast in their convictions. Their courage calls to mind the noted Greek historian Thucydides who stated, "The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, and yet notwithstanding, go out to meet it." ♦

What is the "Water Plan"?

The culminating publication of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan is the *OCWP Executive Report*, a summary of the state's water supply, projected water use, and pertinent issues and policy recommendations. This document will be printed, bound, and available for the public in early 2012.

Currently, the draft *Executive Report* is available for download on the OWRB website at www.owrb.ok.gov along with 13 Watershed Planning Region reports and 21 other supplemental and technical background reports, altogether totalling more than 3,500 pages of detailed information about Oklahoma water.

Additionally, the OCWP Communication Portal, created by the Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute (OWRRI) at <http://okwaterplan.info>, contains information from the public meetings held from 2007-2011, including a list of all public comments and meeting reports.

Unlike previous state water plans, the 2012 Update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan is more than just a single document, but rather a compilation of reports and other documents available to the public on the web.

OCWP Documents

OCWP Executive Report

Watershed Planning Region Reports:

Panhandle	Southwest	West Central
Upper Arkansas	Middle Arkansas	Grand
Lower Arkansas	Eufaula	Southeast
Blue-Boggy	Lower Washita	Beaver-Cache
Central		

OCWP Study Workgroup & Supplemental Reports:

- Water Policy & Related Recommendations for Oklahoma
- Climate Issues & Recommendations
- Agricultural Water Issues & Recommendations
- Water Quality Issues & Recommendations
- Instream Flow Issues & Recommendations
- Tribal Water Issues & Recommendations
- Marginal Quality Water Issues & Recommendations
- Artificial Aquifer Recharge Issues & Recommendations
- Infrastructure Financing Needs & Opportunities
- Water Conveyance Study

Technical Background Reports:

- Reservoir Viability Study
- Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Assessment by Region
- Water Supply Permit Availability Report
- Physical Water Supply Availability Report
- Provider Survey Summary Report
- Conjunctive Water Management in OK and Other States
- Water Demand Forecast Report
- Climate [Change] Impacts to Streamflow
- Conservation & Climate Change (Water Demand Addendum)
- Oklahoma Statewide Water Quality Trends Analysis
- Programmatic Workplan



Tuesday, Oct. 18

8:00 AM OKLAHOMA BALLROOM	Welcome: Linda Lambert, OWRB Chairman and OK Lieutenant Governor Todd Lamb Keynote: Charles Fishman, Author, <i>The Big Thirst</i> 2012 Update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan: J.D. Strong, OWRB Executive Director, and Kyle Arthur, OWRB Director of Planning		
9:30 Break			
10:00	UNIVERSITY BALLROOM	ROOM G-H	
	OCWP PANEL 1: The Value of Water	Water Research Symposium Session 1: Updates and New Developments	
11:30 OKLAHOMA BALLROOM	LUNCHEON Oklahoma Water Pioneer Awards Water Outlook from Washington DC: Congressman James Lankford		
1:30	UNIVERSITY BALLROOM	ROOM G-H	ROOM I-J
	OCWP PANEL 2: Water Supply Limitations, Options & Solutions	Water Research Symposium Session 2: Effects of Drought in Oklahoma	Hydrologic Studies & Tools I
3:00 Break			
3:30	UNIVERSITY BALLROOM	ROOM G-H	ROOM I-J
	OCWP PANEL 3: Innovations in Conservation, Recycling & Reuse	Water Research Symposium Session 3: Social and Economic Studies of Water Resources	Hydrologic Studies & Tools II
5:00 Reception			

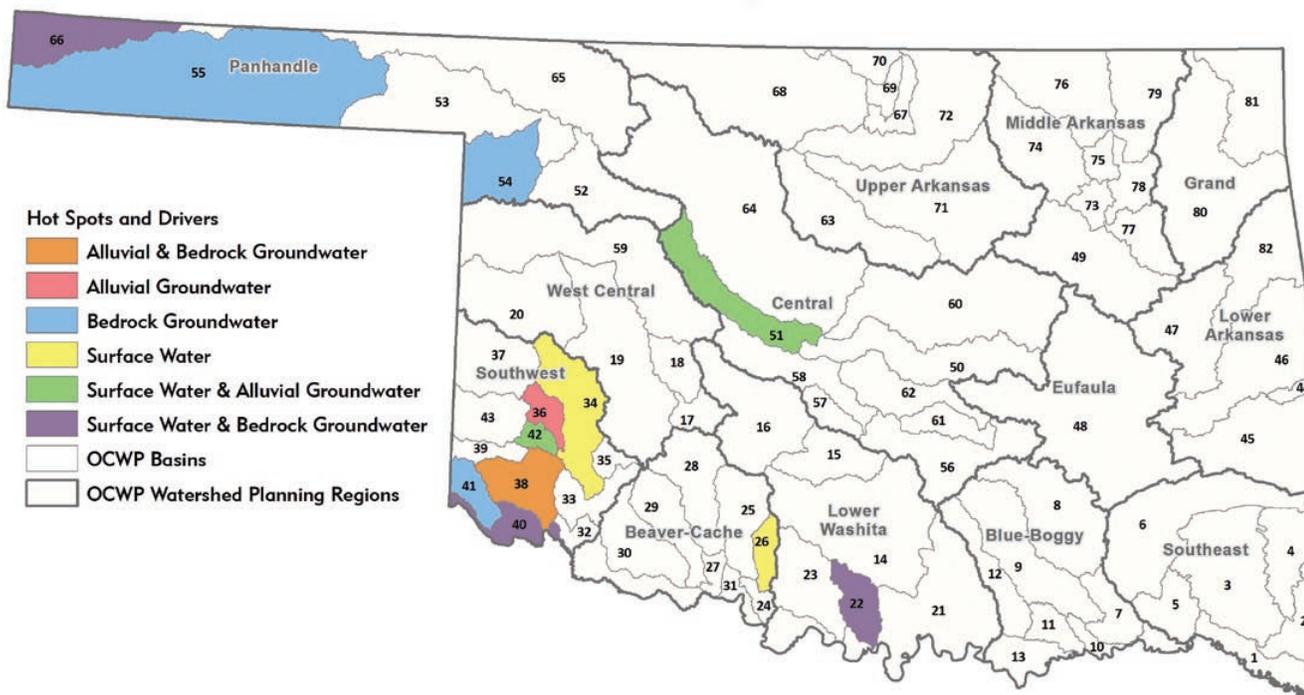
Wednesday, Oct. 19

8:00 AM OKLAHOMA BALLROOM	Welcome: Linda Lambert, OWRB Chairman, and Secretary of the Environment Gary Sherrer Joint Legislative Water Committee Update: House Speaker Kris Steele and Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman Federal Update: Col. Michael Teague, Tulsa District Engineer, USACE		
9:30 Break			
10:00	UNIVERSITY BALLROOM	ROOM G-H	Room A-B
	OCWP PANEL 4: Regional Planning Experiences in Other States	Water Research Symposium Session 4: Applications in Environmental Engineering	OBA Energy/ Natural Resources Law Session
11:30 OKLAHOMA BALLROOM	LUNCHEON Poster Contest Winners; 4-H Speech Contest Winners Ancient Israeli Water: Dr. Dan Warner		
1:30	UNIVERSITY BALLROOM	ROOM G-H	ROOM I-J
	OCWP PANEL 5: Instream/Environmental Flows	Water Research Symposium Session 5: Water Quality Management Success Stories	OCWP PANEL 6: Water Project & Infrastructure Funding OBA Environmental Law Session
3:00 Break			
3:30	UNIVERSITY BALLROOM	ROOM G-H	Room A-B
	Joint Legislative Water Committee Open Meeting: Sen. Brian Crain & Rep. Phil Richardson	Water Research Symposium Session 6: Stream Water-Groundwater Interaction	OBA Indian Law Session
5:00 Adjourn			

OCWP Hot Spot Basins Identified

Many of the 82 OCWP basins are projected to experience surface water gaps and/or groundwater depletions. Some of these water supply shortages are relatively minor as indicated by the magnitude of the shortages and the probability of occurrences. Others are much more severe and may require

more immediate attention in order to mitigate large and recurring water deficiencies. The 12 basins with the most significant water supply challenges have been labeled OCWP “Hot Spots.” Details of the identification and analysis of Hot Spots can be found on the OWRB website in the *OCWP Executive Report* and the *OCWP Water Supply Hot Spot Report*. ♦



Arbuckle-Simpson Report Now Available Online

Simulated effects of withdrawing water from the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer in south-central Oklahoma are now available online in a USGS report at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2011/5029/>.

Results from the USGS groundwater-flow model simulations can help water managers make informed decisions about balancing human and environmental water needs across the region. This tool evaluates how aquifer withdrawals resulting from increased water demands and development could affect nearby springs and streams.

The simulations demonstrate to maintain flows to springs and streams, long-term groundwater withdrawals cannot exceed the amount of water that recharges the aquifer. The report describes this recharge rate and how it varies over time. This is the first time an aquifer has been studied this way in Oklahoma.

“This much-anticipated report not only presents the results from six years of extensive research, but it provides a vitally important guide for decision-makers in balancing local use of Arbuckle-Simpson waters with the unique needs of the region’s springs and streams,” says J.D. Strong, OWRB Executive Director. “Staff from both the OWRB and USGS should be commended for their dedicated work on what is

likely the most complex and high-profile groundwater study ever conducted in Oklahoma.”

“With Oklahoma experiencing a severe drought, it’s important to study our water resources so that managers can make educated choices about this precious resource,” says USGS scientist Noel Osborn. “You can’t manage what you don’t measure.”

The Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer provides water to public supply utilities, farms, mining facilities, wildlife conservation areas, recreational activities, and springs, streams and waterfalls. Groundwater discharge from the aquifer maintains flow to Blue River, Honey Creek, Mill Creek, Pennington Creek, Travertine Creek, and other streams. Many springs also discharge water from the aquifer, including the primary water supply for the City of Ada, Byrds Mill Spring, and the springs in Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

Results of several simulations of groundwater withdrawals and their effects on Blue River, Pennington Creek, and other streams in the eastern Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer are included in the report. This study also characterizes the geology, climate, streamflow, and groundwater use of the aquifer. USGS scientists developed a digital three-dimensional geologic model, which provides the framework for the groundwater flow model.

The Arbuckle-Simpson Hydrology Study was funded by the State of Oklahoma and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. More information about this study is available online. ♦

OCWP Priority Recommendations

OCWP "Priority Recommendations," identified by the OWRB as priorities for implementation, include the incorporation of recommendations frequently received from the public, water management agencies, and OCWP workgroups. Broadly, these recommendations received a higher degree of public support throughout the input process, including feedback resulting from a final round of public meetings. They were augmented by input from OWRB staff with long-standing experience in water management. More specifically, they were selected because of the urgency of the recommendation in solving Oklahoma's most pressing near- and long-term water issues, necessity in ensuring a reliable future water supply, recognition of the need to prioritize funding requests, findings of technical analyses, and input from OWRB members and staff.

Draft Priority Recommendations, scheduled for approval at the Board's October meeting, are detailed in the *OCWP Executive Report* and summarized below:

Water Project & Infrastructure Funding

To address Oklahoma's considerable drinking water and wastewater infrastructure need and the inability of current programs to meet that need, the OWRB should coordinate with a team of infrastructure financing professionals to investigate development of a more robust state funding program to meet the state's projected water and wastewater infrastructure need between now and 2060. Any potential program(s) should include a specific mechanism to address the significant financing requirement of small communities in the state, as well as encourage regionalization of water/wastewater systems, where appropriate.

Regional Planning Groups

The OWRB should work with the State Legislature to develop and authorize the creation of at least thirteen Regional Planning Groups to assist in planning and implementing OCWP initiatives at the regional level. These regional groups should be non-regulatory and consist of local stakeholders, as well as appropriate agency representatives, charged with developing regional water plans in a manner consistent with the OCWP and its implementation priorities. Such plans would include the identification of specific projects, studies, programs, research and other evaluations designed to address the unique needs and issues identified by Regional Planning Group participants. The State Legislature should establish regular appropriations to the OWRB to coordinate the activities of these groups.

Excess & Surplus Water

Pursuant to its statutory mandate found at 82 O.S. 1086.2(1), the OWRB adopts the following definition and procedure for determining excess and surplus water for inclusion in the OCWP update:

'Excess and surplus water' means the projected surface water available for new permits in 2060, less an in-

basin reserve amount, for each of the 80 basins as set forth in the 2012 OCWP Watershed Planning Region Reports whose surface water is under OWRB jurisdiction (excepting the Grand Region); provided that nothing in this definition is intended to affect ownership rights to groundwater and that groundwater is not considered excess and surplus water.

The following procedure should be utilized to calculate excess and surplus water available for appropriation:

1. Each of the 80 OCWP watershed planning basins shall be considered an individual stream system wherein water originates (i.e., area of origin) for purposes of appropriation and permitting.
2. The total annual amount of available stream water for new permits in 2060 is equal to the total Surface Water Permit Availability amount as set forth in the OCWP Watershed Planning Region Reports minus the amount of the annual Anticipated Surface Water Permits in 2060 also set forth in those reports. The in-basin reserve amount is equal to 10% of the total Surface Water Permit Availability amount plus 10% of the annual Anticipated Surface Water Permits in 2060.
3. In considering applications for permits to transport and use more than 500 acre-feet of stream water per year outside the stream system wherein the water originates, the Board shall determine whether there is "unappropriated water available in the amount applied for" by considering only the remaining amount of excess and surplus water calculated for the stream system where the point of diversion is proposed, and for stream systems located downstream from this proposed point of diversion, provided this procedure shall not be used to reduce the amount currently authorized under existing permits and water rights.
4. The Board will also exclude from consideration for any permit for out-of-basin use:
 - a. the quantity of water adjudicated or agreed by cooperative agreement or compact to be reserved for Federal or Tribal rights, and
 - b. the quantity of water reserved for instream or recreational flow needs established pursuant to law.

Instream/Environmental Flows

An instream flow program should be established to preserve water quality, protect ecological diversity, and sustain and promote economic development, including benefits associated with tourism, recreation, fishing, and spiritual and cultural heritage. The process developed by the OCWP Instream Flow Workgroup should be implemented and followed to ascertain the suitability and structure of such a program for Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Act—as codified in Title 82, Section 1452, of Oklahoma Statutes—already provides for protection of the free-flowing conditions of designated state scenic rivers. The OWRB should seek express authority from the State Legislature prior to promulgating rules to accommodate and protect instream flows elsewhere in the state.

State/Tribal Water Consultation and Resolution

To address uncertainties relating to the possible validity of water rights claims by the Tribal Nations of Oklahoma and to effectively apply the prior appropriation doctrine in the fair apportionment of state waters, the Oklahoma Governor and State Legislature should establish a formal consultation process as outlined in the OCWP Report on Tribal Issues and Concerns.

Water Conservation, Efficiency, Recycling & Reuse

To address water shortages forecasted in the *2012 Update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan*, as well as avoid the costly development of new supplies and infrastructure, the OWRB and other relevant agencies should collaborate with various representatives of the state's water use sectors—with particular emphasis on crop irrigation, municipal/industrial, and thermoelectric power—to incentivize voluntary initiatives that would collectively achieve an aggressive goal of maintaining statewide water use at current levels through 2060. In its associated evaluation of appropriate programs and policies, the State should identify the optimum financial incentives, as well as recognize the potential for lost water provider revenues resulting from improved conservation. In particular, the following should be considered:

- Implementation of incentives (tax credits, zero-interest loans, cost-sharing initiatives, increasing block rate/tiered water pricing mechanisms, etc.) to encourage improved irrigation and farming techniques, efficient (green) infrastructure, retrofitting of water-efficient infrastructure, use of water recycling/reuse systems in new buildings, promotion of “smart” irrigation techniques, control of invasive species, artificial recharge of aquifers, and use of marginal quality waters (including treated gray and wastewater).
- Expanded support for education programs that modify and improve consumer water use habits.
- The applicability of existing or new financial assistance programs that encourage Oklahoma water systems to implement leak detection and repair programs that result in reduced loss and waste of water.

Water Supply Reliability

To address projected increases in water demands and related decreases in availability, as well as to ensure the fair, reliable, and sustainable allocation of Oklahoma's water supplies, the State Legislature should provide stable funding to the OWRB to implement the following recommendations:

- Address by 2022 the growing backlog of statutorily-required maximum annual yield studies and overdue 20-year updates on groundwater basins within the state—including validation of any interactions between surface and groundwater sources—to accurately determine water available for use.
- Develop stream water allocation models on all stream systems within the state to assess water availability at specific locations, manage junior/senior surface water

rights under various drought scenarios, anticipate potential interference between users, and evaluate impacts of potential water transfers.

- Utilize water use stakeholders (including input from the recommended Regional Planning Groups), researchers, and other professionals to develop regionally appropriate recommendations, including:
 - a. consideration of a seasonal (rather than annual) stream water allocation program to address seasonal surface water shortages and water rights interference;
 - b. consideration of a conjunctive management water allocation system to address the potential decline in surface water flows and reservoir yields resulting from forecasts of increased groundwater use in areas where these sources are hydrologically connected;
 - c. conditioning junior water use permit holders to discontinue their diversion of water during predetermined periods of shortage (i.e., “trigger” points) to enhance the availability of dependable yields in appropriate reservoirs and minimize interference between riparian users and users of reservoir storage; and
 - d. transitioning to a more conservation-oriented approach—such as metering, irrigation practice improvements, adoption of new technology, and banking of allocations—in the calculation of groundwater basin yields and allocation of groundwater use permits, including the consideration of more sustainable use and development of state groundwater supplies.

Water Quality & Quantity Monitoring

The State Legislature should provide a dedicated source of funding to enable the State of Oklahoma to accurately assess the quality and quantity of its water resources, thereby ensuring improved water quality protection, accurate appropriation and allocation, and long-term collection of data to inform water management decisions. Such funding should be directed toward development and maintenance of a permanent statewide water quality and quantity monitoring program(s), specifically allowing for:

- Integration of all state surface and groundwater quality monitoring programs into one holistic, coordinated effort.
- Stable and dedicated appropriations for critical statewide monitoring programs, such as Oklahoma's Cooperative Stream Gaging Program, Beneficial Use Monitoring Program and Nonpoint Source Monitoring Program, as well as other agency efforts to monitor point source, agriculture, mining, and oil and gas impacts.
- Creation of an ambient groundwater quality monitoring program.
- Full implementation of a statewide program for the collection of biological data to provide a better indication of long-term water quality trends in Oklahoma. 💧

Drought Update

Reservoir Storage

As of September 26, twenty-eight reservoirs (of thirty-one selected major federal reservoirs across Oklahoma, listed at right) are operating at less than full capacity, according to information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Tulsa District); thirty reservoirs have experienced lake level decreases since August 29.

Palmer Drought Severity Index

According to the latest Palmer Drought Severity Index (see table below), all nine climate divisions in Oklahoma are currently experiencing drought conditions. Seven regions (all but the Northeast and East Central) are in the extreme, or worst, drought category.

Standardized Precipitation Index

The latest monthly Standardized Precipitation Index (see table below) indicates near long-term dryness in all but the Northeast climate division. The West Central and Southwest regions are in the exceptionally dry category over the past three to nine months.



Storage in Selected Oklahoma Lakes & Reservoirs (September 26, 2011)

LAKE	Change in Elevation (feet) 8/29/11-9/26/11	Current Flood Control Storage (acre-feet)
North Central		
Fort Supply	-0.67	-4,176
Great Salt Plains	-4.56	-26,078
Kaw	-0.35	-10,687
Northeast		
Birch	-1.24	-5,461
Copan	-0.53	-3,470
Fort Gibson	0.35	1,544
Grand	-0.21	861
Hudson	-0.92	6,630
Hulah	-0.82	-3,863
Keystone	-0.39	-50,223
Oologah	-0.58	-54,670
Skiatook	-1.33	-101,031
West Central		
Canton	-0.51	-42,491
Foss	-0.76	-33,398
Central		
Arcadia	-0.45	-4,330
Heyburn	-0.17	-1,023
Thunderbird	-0.83	-27,648
East Central		
Eufaula	-0.80	-328,378
Tenkiller	-0.39	-57,995
Southwest		
Fort Cobb	-0.90	-13,707
Lugert-Altus	-0.58	-111,125
Tom Steed	-0.84	-39,152
South Central		
Arbuckle	-1.30	-13,291
McGee Creek	-0.60	-15,292
Texoma	-1.21	-432,493
Waurika	-0.63	-42,321
Southeast		
Broken Bow	-1.97	-142,008
Hugo	-1.24	-30,185
Pine Creek	-2.05	-16,626
Sardis	-0.55	-27,460
Wister	-0.67	-10,421

CLIMATE DIVISION	Standardized Precipitation Index (through August 2011)				Palmer Drought Severity Index
	3-month	6-month	9-month	12-month	September 24, 2011
Northwest (1)	Very Dry	Extremely Dry	Extremely Dry	Extremely Dry	Extreme Drought
North Central (2)	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry	Extreme Drought
Northeast (3)	Near Normal	Near Normal	Near Normal	Near Normal	Mild Drought
West Central (4)	Extremely Dry	Exceptionally Dry	Exceptionally Dry	Extremely Dry	Extreme Drought
Central (5)	Very Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry	Extreme Drought
East Central (6)	Very Dry	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry	Moderate Drought
Southwest (7)	Exceptionally Dry	Exceptionally Dry	Exceptionally Dry	Extremely Dry	Extreme Drought
South Central (8)	Extremely Dry	Extremely Dry	Extremely Dry	Very Dry	Extreme Drought
Southeast (9)	Extremely Dry	Moderately Dry	Very Dry	Very Dry	Extreme Drought

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.

*Linda Lambert, Chairman • Ford Drummond, Vice Chairman • Joe Taron, Secretary
Tom Buchanan • Ed Fite • Marilyn Feaver • Rudy Herrmann • Kenneth K. Knowles • Richard Sevenoaks*

Enhancing the quality of life for Oklahomans by managing, protecting and improving the state's water resources to ensure clean, safe, and reliable water supplies, a strong economy, and a healthy environment.



3rd Quarter 2011

Darla Whitley, Editor

Staff Writers:

Brian Vance & Darla Whitley

Photography:

Barry Fogerty

*E-mail comments, questions,
or article submissions to
pubinfo@owrb.ok.gov
or call us at (405) 530-8800.*

The Oklahoma Water News is published by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board as authorized by J.D. Strong, Executive Director. Eighty-eight hundred copies have been printed by University Printing Services at an approximate cost of 32 cents each. Copies have been deposited at the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

Loans & Grants Approved as of September 13, 2011

FAP Loans—328 for \$743,840,000

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—247 for \$1,028,812,629

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan program was created in 1988 to provide a renewable financing source for communities to use 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—132 for \$731,874,642

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—562 for \$49,878,723

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—562 for \$33,482,977

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—2 totaling \$200,000

Through the OWRB's Drought Response Program, 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.

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act Funding—\$60,617,376

Through the OWRB's conventional CWSRF and DWSRF loan programs, ARRA funds are utilized to provide additional subsidization to Oklahoma communities for water and wastewater infrastructure improvements as well as to provide benefits to the state's environment and create jobs for Oklahoma workers.

Total Loans/Grants: 1,833 for \$2,588,088,971
Estimated Savings: \$897,018,520

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.ok.gov/financing.**