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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:

Derek Smithee, Chief
Water Quality Division
Oklahoma Water Resources Board
(405) 530-8800

***State Officials to Announce
Wister Lake Remediation Effort***

On June 28, state legislators and officials from the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) will formally announce that a \$100,000 cooperative state/local study will be initiated this year to improve the quality of Lake Wister in LeFlore County.

The announcement and subsequent press conference will begin at 10:30 a.m. at Wister State Park, Quarry Island Pavilion. Representatives Kenneth Corn and Randall Erwin will be on hand to discuss the intent behind the Oklahoma Legislature's \$50,000 appropriation for the Wister Lake water quality improvement project. OWRB staff and representatives of the Poteau Valley Improvement Authority (PVIA), who will contribute one-half of project funds, will also be present to disclose detailed information on the plan.

Water quality in Wister Lake and its watershed has concerned both area residents and state officials for many years. Not only has Wister's poor water quality adversely impacted the efficiency of PVIA's water treatment facility, it has proved detrimental to aquatic life and Wister's long-term value as a popular recreational resource in eastern Oklahoma, says Derek Smithee, OWRB Water Quality Division Chief. "It is these long-term economic, social, and aesthetic impacts that have piqued the interest of state and local officials in slowing and eventually reversing the deterioration of Wister's water."

The Wister remediation effort will be greatly enhanced by information and data obtained through previous research. In 2001, the Water Board completed an EPA-funded demonstration project at Wister to reduce suspended solids and control erosion around the lake. This trial venture involved the introduction of native, non-invasive aquatic plants to improve the water's clarity. More recently, the OWRB has worked with the Corps of Engineers to develop strategies for improving water quality, including a more accurate determination of the lake's storage capacity. This new project will draw upon data from the OWRB/Corps study as well as monitoring information gathered by federal, state, and local agencies. The cooperative remediation effort will commence this summer.

For more information on the press conference or Wister Lake project, please contact Derek Smithee or Allyson Childress of the OWRB at 405-530-8800.

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