OKLAHOMA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE AND QUALITY OF LIFE DEPEND ON ITS WATER.

The mission of the OWRB is to protect and enhance the quality of life for Oklahomans by managing and improving the state's water resources to ensure clean and reliable water supplies, a strong economy, and a safe and healthy environment. Since 1957, the OWRB has focused on fair water appropriation, water infrastructure financing, long-range water planning, and robust technical data collection to inform state and local policy and planning.

Water Means Business

The OWRB permits water and provides essential services to support the following industries in every corner of the state.*

Agriculture Production
2.9 billion gallons of water per day are permitted to grow nearly $7.5 billion worth of products each year.

Oil and Gas Production
356 million gallons of water per day are permitted for the production of an estimated $15.4 billion in products each year, employing nearly 150,000 Oklahomans.

Tourism and Recreation
1,400 square miles of surface water provide the foundation for Oklahoma’s $8.6 billion per year tourism and recreation industry.

Navigation
10 million tons of products valuing over $3.65 billion per year are shipped on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System.

Municipal Development
2.3 billion gallons of water per day are permitted to fuel and sustain local population and economic growth, and provide water supply for more than 3.7 million Oklahomans, manufacturing, and industry.

Hydropower
584 megawatts of hydropower produced by Oklahoma dams provides electricity for more than 2 million end users in Oklahoma and surrounding states.

*Sources include the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry (2019); Oklahoma State Chamber (2016); Oklahoma Department of Transportation Waterways Branch (2015); US Army Corps of Engineers; and Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation (2015).
Modernization and Technology Updates to Improve Customer Service and Efficiency

The OWRB prioritizes its efforts to update technology, streamline application processes, increase customer outreach, and build partnerships.

Online and remote access to OWRB products and services have been expanded to protect public health and improve customer service.

Online Permitting and Licensing Applications

An online application system allows staff to expedite temporary water use permits for energy production and other short-term uses. Web-based applications are under development to simplify licensing application and renewal processes for well drillers and pump installers.

Remote Data Collection and Management

Web-based GIS applications allow staff to collect, store, and analyze data, increasing efficiency and reducing the need to duplicate work in multiple systems. Data can easily be shared with staff, the public, and other environmental agencies through mobile friendly maps and download tools.

Online Customer Service

New customized online forms allow inquiries from the public to be submitted directly to staff. Citizen complaints can be submitted and logged online utilizing GIS-based technology.

Public Outreach

Information on water and wastewater system funding is distributed regularly through the state’s GovDelivery system to state utility systems, consulting engineers, financial advisors, and bond counsel.

Document Processing

Digital document imaging software allows staff to process mail, utilize streamlined workflows, and access the agency’s document libraries remotely.

Online Training

Free and low-cost online training and continuing education is available for the public, adding convenience and saving space rental fees.

Leveraging Funds through Partnerships

Funds are leveraged through federal and local partnerships to implement Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan recommendations. Funding partners include EPA, USGS, USDA NRCS, Bureau of Reclamation, Corps of Engineers, FEMA, Groundwater Protection Council, ODEQ, Conservation Commission, Grand River Dam Authority, multiple Tribal partners, and many others.

OWRB Programs

Water Rights Administration

Appropriation of Oklahoma’s fresh water resources is administered by the OWRB as directed by Oklahoma statutes. Currently, there are more than 13,000 active permits for over 6,100 million gallons per day. Approximately 1,500 provisional temporary permits are also issued each year for oil and gas producers and others in need of a temporary source of water. Additionally, the agency conducts surface water allocation modeling and availability analyses, coordinates statewide water use reporting, and responds to public complaints.

Water & Wastewater System Financing

As the State’s primary water and wastewater infrastructure financing agency, the OWRB has provided over $5 billion in financing to Oklahoma communities, rural water districts, schools, and other authorities at an estimated savings of $1.6 billion over conventional bond financing. This is due, in part, to the continued achievement of AAA bond ratings, an extremely strong loss coverage score, management and oversight of the program, and a long history of borrower repayment. The programs protect the health and safety of Oklahomans by providing funding to meet the critical need for safe drinking water supplies and adequate wastewater treatment.

Cumulative Investments in OWRB Infrastructure Financing

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Cumulative State Appropriated Funds</th>
<th>Cumulative OWRB Funds</th>
<th>Cumulative Federal Funds</th>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>$117.3 million in state funds</td>
<td>$737.2 million in federal funds with $2.8 billion in bonds to expand available financing for infrastructure projects in Oklahoma communities.</td>
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HYDROLOGIC INVESTIGATIONS

Oklahoma statutes direct the OWRB to conduct hydrologic investigations to determine the amount of fresh groundwater available for appropriation. Staff hydrogeologists, modelers, engineering consultants, and federal agencies assist in characterizing hydrologic properties of aquifers such as recharge, effects of pumping, and water demand.

DAM SAFETY

The Oklahoma Dam Safety Act directs the OWRB to ensure the safety of more than 4,700 dams across the state. OWRB staff maintain Oklahoma’s portion of the National Inventory of Dams, oversee approval for construction or modification of structures, coordinate breach inundation mapping, inspect low hazard-potential dams, and provide public outreach and training.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT

Through the Oklahoma Floodplain Management Act, the OWRB is directed to act as the State Floodplain Board and the National Flood Insurance Program coordinating agency. The agency assists communities in reducing costly flooding risks to life and property by updating flood maps through FEMA programs and providing opportunities for training and accreditation of local floodplain administrators.

WELL DRILLER & PUMP INSTALLER LICENSING

Oklahoma statutes direct the OWRB to protect Oklahoma’s groundwater from contamination by ensuring the integrity of water well construction through the licensing of well drillers and pump installers. The OWRB also assists drillers with required well log reporting. More than 200,000 well logs are available to the public on the OWRB’s website.

INTERSTATE STREAM COMPACT COMMISSIONS

The OWRB represents Oklahoma’s interests on four separate interstate stream compact commissions regarding all surface waters that flow into or out of the state. The compacts are written agreements among or between neighboring states that have been approved by the US Congress, enacted in Federal statutes, and enacted in the statutes of each state.

WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

The OWRB is designated by Oklahoma statute as the agency responsible for promulgating Oklahoma’s Water Quality Standards (WQS), which have been developed in accordance with the federal Clean Water Act. The OWRB is also charged with assisting in the implementation of the WQS in other state agencies.

WATER MONITORING & LAKE RESTORATION

Oklahoma statutes direct the OWRB to implement a statewide beneficial use monitoring program and administer a statewide program for assessing, monitoring, studying, and restoring Oklahoma lakes. The OWRB is directed to submit a biennial report to the state legislature on the status of water quality monitoring in Oklahoma. Monitoring is currently conducted on 35 Oklahoma lakes, 67 stream sites, and more than 1,000 groundwater wells. The OWRB partners with the USGS to manage the Oklahoma Cooperative Stream Gaging program; these data are used to meet compliance with four federal interstate stream compacts and to guide the management of local and public water suppliers, including flood and drought planning, early warnings, and emergency operations.
Fiscal Year 2021 Operational Sources and Uses of Funds

The OWRB obtains funding from a variety of sources to meet statutory requirements and accomplish its mission of managing and monitoring the state’s water resources and planning for water infrastructure needs for long-term water resiliency. Federal and local funding partnerships for state programs are leveraged to continue implementation of Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan recommendations.

2012 OCWP Update

In addition to extensive supply/demand studies across 82 basins, the 2012 update employed an unprecedented multi-year citizen engagement effort to identify diverse issues and solutions. Twenty-one water policy and funding recommendations emerged from 83 public meetings across the state resulting in over 2,300 public comments. These recommendations are now being implemented through numerous legislative actions.

2025 OCWP Update

The 2025 OCWP Update, now underway, will focus on water infrastructure and emphasize the need for water investment mechanisms, including a 50-year Inventory of projects and cost estimates for expanding reclaimed water use, reservoir storage, stormwater management, and flood control projects. Focus groups and statewide online surveys will inform the workplan for technical studies and policy recommendations.

The State Flood Plan (SB1269), authored by Senator Dave Rader and Representative Lonnie Sims, received overwhelming support by the 2020 Legislature. The legislation directs the OWRB to develop the first ever statewide flood resiliency plan, which will integrate into the OCWP for a more holistic approach to water resources management.

The OWRB is scoping work and pursuing FEMA hazard mitigation funding through its partnership with OEM.

With passage of the Water for 2060 Act in 2012, Oklahoma established a statewide goal of consuming no more fresh water in 2060 than was consumed in 2010. An Advisory Council was created in 2013 by the Governor, Speaker of the House, and Senate President Pro Tempore to make recommendations for meeting the Water for 2060 goal. The Advisory Council’s final report was published in 2015. Learn more at www.owrb.ok.gov/2060.