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, providing water supply for more than 3.7 million citizens as well as 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).
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 500 provisional temporary permits were issued for 2020 and 2021, which is a historic decrease resulting from the downward trend in oil and gas activity in Oklahoma. To support water rights administration, 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 $5.3 billion in financing to Oklahoma communities, rural water districts, schools, and other authorities at an estimated savings of $1.3 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 for safe drinking water supplies and wastewater treatment.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Surpassed $5.3 billion in financing for water and wastewater system improvements while maintaining AAA bond ratings. In FY2021, the Board approved 72 loans and grants totaling more than $620 million that will save Oklahoma communities an estimated $120 million.
- Improved the safety of Oklahoma’s dams by modernizing design and inspection standards, completing prioritized dam inspections, and digitizing all available breach maps to improve hazard identification.
- Completed interstate negotiations to reconfirm protection standards and drafted rules to determine phosphorus limit compliance for the Illinois River watershed through collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Oklahoma DEQ, and Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy and Environment.
- Contracted with the University of Oklahoma’s Center for Spatial Analysis to host the agency’s online map server and began negotiations to update OWRB mapping tools and services, which will streamline and secure support while reducing costs and staff time.
- Upgraded the agency’s electronic document imaging, data management, and workflow software and migrated data to cloud servers to allow secure connections via web browser and improve efficiency in processing applications for water permitting, loans and grants, and other agency programs.
- Utilized Microsoft Office 365 tools to cut costs and improve connectivity and became the first state agency to pilot and implement conversion to Microsoft Office 365 voice over IP.
- Deployed or improved the following online products and services:
  » Virtual opportunities for continuing education, testing, training, and public meetings;
  » Online submission of applications and payments; and
  » Online submission and automated tracking of inquiries and complaints.
- Expedited the deployment of mobile work stations and adopted a hybrid remote/office work policy to allow for pandemic-related health and safety protocols, flexible work schedules, and an opportunity to consider the viability of reducing office space for future cost savings.
- Earned The Oklahoman’s prestigious 2021 Top Workplace award based solely on an anonymous survey of OWRB employees that measures employee engagement and workplace culture.

OWRB Programs

Cumulative Investments in OWRB Infrastructure Financing
## OWRB Programs

### 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 interstate stream compact commissions regarding surface waters that flow into or out of Oklahoma. The compacts are written agreements with 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 federal Clean Water Act regulations and state pollution control and administrative procedure statutes. The OWRB also assists in the implementation of WQS in other state agencies.

### WATER MONITORING & LAKE RESTORATION

Oklahoma statutes direct the OWRB to implement a statewide beneficial use monitoring program for state waters, and the OWRB is designated as the lead agency for administering a statewide program for assessing, monitoring, studying, and restoring Oklahoma lakes. The OWRB is further directed to submit a biennial report to the state legislature on the status of water quality monitoring in Oklahoma. OWRB monitoring is currently conducted on 35 lakes, 67 stream sites, and more than 1,000 groundwater wells across the state. The OWRB partners with the US Geological Survey to manage Oklahoma’s Cooperative Stream Gaging program, which provides data to meet compliance for interstate stream compact agreements and critical information for public water systems, flood and drought planning, early warnings, and emergency operations.
Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan
Planning for Future Water Needs
State statutes direct the OWRB to forecast long-term water needs through decennial updates to the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP), providing local planners and lawmakers with the data critical to ensure safe and reliable water for all Oklahomans.

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 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 team has completed the Work Plan using focused input meetings to identify and prioritize efforts and is developing supply/demand models for upcoming discussions, planning tools, and ultimate OCWP recommendations.

The 2025 Plan 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 group data and 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.

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.