

Joint Legislative Water Committee

Oklahoma Conservation Commission

Mike Thralls, Executive Director



Bottom Line —

Districts & Commission need Legislative support and Funding to:

- Maintain and develop the state's flood control infrastructure.
- Conserve, protect and restore land and water resources.
- Monitor nonpoint source water quality (previously 100% federally funded)

Oklahoma Land Use

- 97% Privately Owned
- 80% in Agriculture
- 17% in Forests

Total area of the state: 43,954,560 acres.

State or federally owned: 1,006,000 acres or 2.29%

35,100,000 acres in agriculture

Almost 10,000,000 acres in forest, 6% of which is public land



Small Watershed Upstream Flood Control Dams

- Oklahoma leads the nation with 2,107 upstream flood control dams constructed under the USDA Watershed Program.
- Oklahoma's conservation districts are primary watershed project sponsors.
- There are 129 watershed projects in 64 counties with dams in 121 watersheds in 61 counties.
- The dams provide \$81 million in annual estimated benefits from reduced flood damages and other benefits.



Sallisaw 18M Lake

Sugar Creek L-44 August 2007



Sugar Creek L-44 August 2007



Sugar Creek L-43 August 2007



Sugar Creek L-43 August 2007



Water Plan Recommendations

Dam Safety & Floodplain Management

- “State-mandated requirements demand approximately \$457 million to upgrade flood control dams to meet high-hazard criteria due to unregulated downstream development.”

Water Plan Recommendations

Dam Safety & Floodplain Management

- “Flood control dams are in need of maintenance estimated at \$22 million to be in compliance with legally binding federal operation and maintenance requirements.”

Water Plan Recommendations

Dam Safety & Floodplain Management

- “Provide \$12 million in funding and support to the OCC to perform dam breach inundation mapping, emergency action planning, and education and outreach efforts that supports dam safety for NRCS flood control dams.”

Water Plan Recommendations

Dam Safety & Floodplain Management

- “Identify a mechanism to remove liability for dam owners for downstream development occurring after an NRCS flood control dam was constructed.”

Multi-Purpose Lakes

Of the 2,107 Small Watershed Upstream Flood Control lakes in Oklahoma, 42 are multipurpose lakes. In addition to flood control and wildlife habitat benefits, they serve as municipal or rural water supply or recreational areas.



Wes Watkins Lake

298 of the dams yet to be rehabilitated could be developed into viable water supply sources.

Multi-Purpose Lakes

Sallisaw 18 (Stilwell Reservoir - Stilwell)
Spring Creek 1 (Lake Chickasha – Chickasha)
Cherokee Sandy 17M (R.C. Longmire Lake – Pauls Valley)
Caddo 13 (Lake Jean Neustadt - Ardmore)
Caddo 18 (Lake Scott King - Ardmore)
Fourche Maline 7(Lake Church - Wilburton)
Kickapoo Nations 1M (Bell Cow Lake - Chandler)
Quapaw 15 (Meeker Lake - Meeker)
Quapaw 1 (Sparks Reservoir - Sparks)
Robinson 4M (Prague City Lake - Prague)
Stillwater 40 (Lake McMurry - Perry)
Wildhorse 22 (Lake Humpreys - Duncan)
Okfuskee Tribs S-1 (Dripping Springs Lake - Okmulgee)
Finn 34 (Wiley Post Lake - Maysville)
Deep Red Run (Frederick City Lake - Frederick)
Lower Black Bear 19M (Lake Lone Chimney – Primary for
Glencoe, Morrison, Yale, Blackburn, Skedee, Maramac and
Terlton. 40% of water for Cleveland and Pawnee.)



Sallisaw 18M Lake

Oklahoma Conservation Efforts Address Water Quality and Water Quantity Through Efforts...

- Locally-Led
- Cooperative
- Voluntary



Water Plan Recommendations

Nonpoint Source Pollution

“Voluntary best management practices should be encouraged to curtail runoff from agricultural lands, urban storm water, and suburban developments. These voluntary management practices should include cost sharing or incentives funded through the appropriate state agency(s). Specifically, **the Oklahoma Conservation Commission** (OCC) and other appropriate agencies should create or enhance programs that promote water quality improvements through land use management and the protection of wetlands and riparian zones.”



Water Plan Recommendations

Nonpoint Source Pollution

“The OCC, working with the USDA, EPA and other state, federal and local partners, implements Farm Bill conservation programs, the CWA Section 319 program, a State-funded, locally-led cost share program, and a roadside erosion program to promote and demonstrate voluntary best management practices to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, minimize pollution and protect surface and groundwater resources. With all of these programs and promotion of best management practices in both rural and urban environments, Oklahoma is working to maintain and protect water quality. These highly successful programs have documented success; however, funding limits widespread implementation.”



Water Plan Recommendations

Source Water Protection

“Avoiding pollution to sources of water is much more cost-effective than mitigating resulting impacts. The OCC develops watershed protection and restoration plans to identify potential pollution sources in the watershed of water supply reservoirs and works with local landowners to minimize associated impacts.”



Oklahoma Conservation Efforts Address Water Quality and Water Quantity Through...

- Locally-Led Conservation Cost-Share Program
- Priority Watershed Cost-Share Program
- Roadside Erosion Projects



Budget Requests



Roadside Erosion

Conservation districts include funding for roadside erosion in budget requests every year even though the program has not been funded for almost 20 years.

Water Plan Recommendations

Nonpoint Source Pollution

“Additionally, the OCC should emphasize **roadside erosion** and resulting sediment as a major contributor to water quality degradation. The OCC or other appropriate agencies should work with county commissioners to improve or fund proper construction and maintenance of roads to reduce sediment contribution. Finally, the OCC should continue **to support nonpoint source water quality monitoring programs** that can evaluate the effectiveness of these conservation practices and ensure maximum efficiency of available funding.”



Rotating Basin Monitoring Program

- OCC's Water Quality Division monitors small feeder streams on a rotational basis to determine the impacts of nonpoint source pollution on the state's waters.
- Chemical, physical, and biological sampling is done on 300 priority streams in 11 watershed basins across the state.

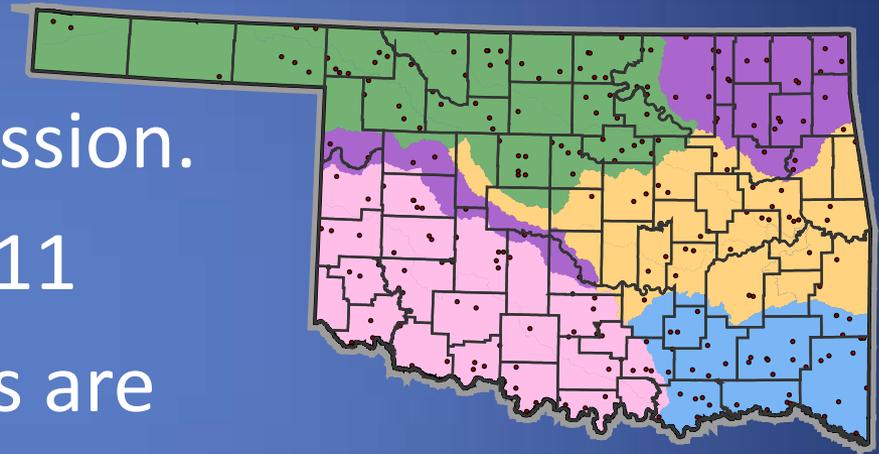
Water Plan Recommendations

- “Over the next 50 years the need for both drinking water and wastewater infrastructure **(including nonpoint source pollution projects)** in Oklahoma will be significant,
- projected to be \$37.9 billion for drinking water and \$42.9 billion for wastewater projects based on 2007 and 2010 dollars, respectively.”



Rotating Basin Monitoring Program

- Each year two or three basins are monitored, adding one and dropping one in succession.
- Using this rotation, all 11 basins and 250 streams are monitored every five years, and then the rotation begins again.
- OCC has completed two five-year cycles.



Water Plan Recommendations

Water Supply Augmentation

- “A statewide process should be developed and implemented to evaluate the augmentation of water supplies through programs to manage invasive plant species, increase water filtration and reduce runoff.
- Current programs to eliminate eastern red cedar, salt cedar and other invasive species may positively impact the water balance.”

Water Quality Success Stories

- Oklahoma is a National Leader in Documented Water Quality Success Stories
- Numbers for 2010 rank Oklahoma among the top five states in controlling nonpoint source water pollutants nitrogen and phosphorus for the second year in a row.
- Oklahoma ranks in the top ten for the third year in a row while receiving less than one percent of federal EPA nonpoint source funds.
- The EPA website lists water quality success stories from Oklahoma. (www.epa.gov/owow/NPS/success)
- Only two states in the nation have more water quality success stories.

Oklahoma's Nonpoint Source Success Stories



Rotating Basin Monitoring Program

- This program has been able to document success stories of proven improvement with reductions of nutrients as high as 60 to 70 percent and in certain areas led to the de-listing of several Oklahoma stream segments from the state's impaired waters or 303(d) list.

Water Plan Recommendations

“Water Quality & Quantity Monitoring

- Better Data for Improved Decision-Making

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:

- 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.”



Water Plan Recommendations

Nonpoint Source Pollution

“To adequately supplement USDA Farm Bill conservation programs and the CWA Section 319 program, the state should fund the Oklahoma Conservation Commission water quality cost share programs at a **minimum level of \$15 million annually.**”



Proposed Budget Request FY2013

- Upstream Flood Control Infrastructure
 - Operation & Maintenance \$4,000,000
 - Rehabilitation \$4,000,000
 - Breach Inundation Mapping \$2,400,000
- Conservation Cost Share
 - Locally-Led \$5,600,000
 - Priority Watershed \$2,600,000
 - Roadside Erosion \$6,800,000
- Water Quality Monitoring \$400,000



Water Plan Recommendations

“To ensure that publicly owned water and wastewater systems have the financing opportunities necessary to secure clean and reliable water supplies for current and future generations, Oklahoma must consider at least the following options for addressing this mounting infrastructure need:

5. Maintain Gross Production Tax revenue for water and wastewater infrastructure.”



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Water Plan Recommendations

Dam Safety & Floodplain Management

- “Provide \$250,000 per year for ten years to the OWRB to perform dam breach inundation mapping and emergency action planning, and education and outreach efforts that support the State Dam Safety Program for non-NRCS flood control dams, with a priority on high hazard-potential dams.”



Budget Requests



Small Watershed Upstream Flood Control Infrastructure

The Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan states that there is a need for \$22 million for Operation and Maintenance of the aging dams of the state's Small Watershed Upstream Flood Control infrastructure.

