

# ORWP TIMES

A PUBLICATION OF OKLAHOMANS FOR RESPONSIBLE WATER POLICY

## A letter to the Attorney General

*Editor's note: The following is a letter addressed to Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, dated May 19, 2011.*

Dear Attorney General Pruitt:

I am writing in conjunction with Representative Ed Cannaday and Senators Jerry Ellis and Richard Lerblance to request an Attorney General opinion to determine whether the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan's enabling act has been honored.

The Comprehensive Water Plan's Enabling Act: 82 O.S. § 1086.2(1) Part B: "The primary purpose governing all exercise of powers hereunder shall be to maximize and not to minimize the alternatives available to all citizens, municipalities and other water-user entities in acquiring water for beneficial use." Representative Cannaday was told at the Stigler Area Water Plan Meeting that non-consumptive water use (i.e., recreation) was not studied.

Secondly, does a conflict of interest exist? CDM Engineering did not report or disclose to the Comprehensive Water Plan's public participants or to the general public that, simultaneously, while under water plan contract(s) to OWRB and USACE, CDM worked for the Oklahoma City Water Trust Authority on a \$800,000+ engineering contract to bring Sardis Lake water to the Oklahoma City area. This seems to be an ethical conflict of interest. CDM's contract required 'Certificates of No Lobbying Activities, No Conflicts of Interest & No Gratuities Allowed.'

We respectfully request an Attorney General opinion as expeditiously as possible on this most important issue to all Oklahomans. Please contact my Capitol office if I can provide further information.

Sincerely,  
Brian Renegar, DVM  
State Representative, District 17

Richard Lerblance  
State Senator, District 7

Ed Cannaday  
State Representative, District 15

Jerry Ellis  
State Senator, District 5

## SE Okla. to get regional water plan

By Pennie Embry

A new water plan seeking to balance all water needs and uses — economic, environmental and social — is underway, and that plan will be specific to Southeast Oklahoma.

"The Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations are developing a regional water plan for the 22 counties in Southeastern Oklahoma that, among other things, will assess current and future water needs. This plan will take into account needs not limited to consumptive use, but also recreational, environmental and economic development needs," said Choctaw Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

This regional water plan is being set into motion even as draft portions of

the 2012 Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan are made public. That state plan is already meeting with criticism, especially from citizens, legislators and Tribes from Southeast Oklahoma.

"We feel like the OCWP is not a complete study," said Brian McClain, executive director of the Choctaw Nation.

Water activists, legislators, journalists and others have also voiced the concern that the OCWP is at its very core "not a complete study" upon which major water decisions should be based. Long before a draft of the 2012 OCWP was posted online this spring, many Oklahomans (more than a few from the southeast part of the state) argued that the state's plan focuses on only the consumptive uses of water.

Charts available on the Oklahoma Water Resources Board Web site clearly illustrate that the OCWP definition of water demand was limited to consumptive use sectors only: municipal and industrial, oil and gas, crop irrigation, livestock, thermoelectric power, self-supplied industrial and self-supplied residential.

Nowhere in the state's pictorial definition of water demand was there consideration for equally important non-consumptive water uses, such as water-based recreation needs and economic development.

Tourism is the third largest industry in Oklahoma. In 2008, Oklahoma tourism generated \$6.1 billion in direct

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STATE SENATOR JERRY ELLIS

## An Oklahoman for Responsible Water Policy

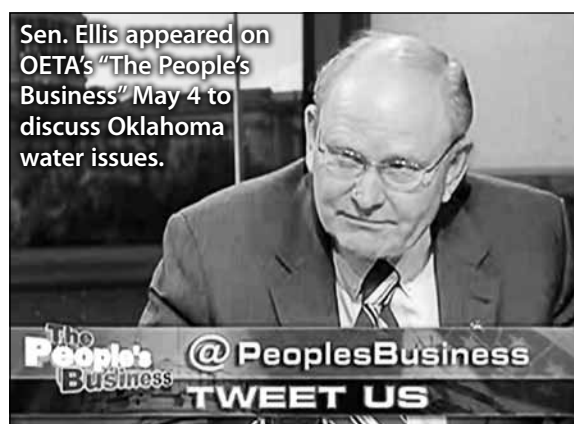
He's impossible to miss, whether he's walking the halls of the rotunda at the Oklahoma State Capitol, talking water to reporters, or driving his truck along the winding roads of McCurtain County. Tall, soft-spoken, with old-fashioned manners and never-out-of-fashion integrity and iron will, Jerry Ellis is many things to South-eastern Oklahomans.

He's a legislator, rancher, newspaper man, veteran, community leader and water warrior. He is an Oklahoman for Responsible Water Policy.

"I've always placed a high value on water," Ellis said. "I can't remember not knowing how important it is in

this world, how people need water to survive."

Some of Ellis's earliest memories are of a multi-year drought that hit the Great Plains and the Southwest in the



1950s. Excessively high temperatures paired with low rainfall brought severe hardship to Oklahoma, and to the farm where Ellis was raised.

"That drought stretched across a long piece of my childhood," Ellis said. "I was 8-, 9- and 10-years-old in '54, '55 and '56. We had extremely dry years, dry like some people have never seen. I was living south of Valiant on a farm then."

The heat was so intense, and those years were so dry, that Ellis still remembers baby chicks falling into the deep, wide cracks in the ground if they happened to escape their pen.

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# WATER 101

## The Kiamichi River Basin

By Debbie Leo

The Kiamichi River basin is one of two watershed basins of Southeastern Oklahoma. A tributary of the Red River, its waters drain 1,830 square miles of land. The headwaters of the Kiamichi begin at Pine Mountain in the Ouachita Mountains of Le Flore County near the Arkansas border and flow in a south-westerly direction through the Kiamichi Mountains of Pushmataha County, past the towns of Talihina, Tuskahoma, Clayton, Moyers and on to Antlers. The river continues from Antlers southeast across the alluvial plains of Choctaw County to Hugo and flows south to converge with the Red River, which defines the Oklahoma-Texas border. The larger creeks that supply run-off waters to the Kiamichi River are Anderson, Big Cedar, Buck, Buffalo, Gates, Jack's Fork and Waterhole Creek.

The Kiamichi's journey from Pine Mountain in Ouachita National Forest (at 2600 ft.), the highest mountain along its course, is approximately 112 miles long and meanders through Le Flore, Pushmataha and Choctaw counties. The scenic valleys through Le Flore and Pushmataha counties are highly defined, picturesque and filled with historical sites. The beauty and natural setting helps enhance the economy and add beauty that is unique to Southeastern Oklahoma. This unique ecosystem provides scientists, archeologists, tourists, fishers and hunters an excellent place to study the pre-history of early America and a perfect place to recreate for people from around the world.

As the Kiamichi flows from Pine Mountain, through the Ouachita and Kiamichi Mountain valleys, down to the alluvial plain at Hugo and on to the Red River, it is strongly influenced by the Sardis Lake reservoir and impounded by Hugo Lake. Sardis and Hugo lakes were built to control flood waters in heavy run-off years. Both were built by the Army Corps of Engineers and are maintained by them today. Water is held back or released from Sardis Lake according to the Corps and others, such as Southwestern Power Administration, who hold sway over water flows to the Kiamichi and Red Rivers.

In 1988, Congress created the Upper Kiamichi River Wilderness. The wilderness begins at the headwaters of the Kiamichi River at Pine and Rich Mountain and encompasses 9,745 acres. The river is part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. A private organization called "American Whitewater" has defined seven miles of the river near Big Cedar as a "Class II-III rapid". Great fishing, hunting, birding, canoeing, kayaking along the river, boating, water skiing, bass fishing on the reservoirs all draw in many tourists every year and helps the local economy.

This river valley of the Ouachita and Kiamichi Mountains is home to a diverse wildlife population. The waters hold life in bountiful supply. In some of the tributary creeks, unusual species of fresh water mussels are found. Some, such as the Ouachita rock pocketbook mussel, are under protection by the Endangered Species Act. In studies dating from the late 1800s, 36 different fish species were counted in the Kiamichi River. Since then, studies from the 70s and 80s show that the Kiamichi River has suffered some loss of environmental quality since the construction of the Sardis Reservoir, completed in 1982 and Hugo Reservoir, completed in 1974. The state recently listed Sardis as a lake with water quality problems. Still, today, scientists have counted 101 species of fish that still survive and/or thrive in the waters of the Kiamichi River basin waters.

This watershed of Southeastern Oklahoma is the "life blood" of the region and helps support the ecosystem that makes up the Kiamichi River basin. For more information about the watershed and waters that make up the Kiamichi River basin, you can explore watersheds, drainage basins, and tributaries, basin of origins and / or rivers of Southeastern Oklahoma, Kiamichi River, Sardis Lake and Hugo Lake.

Reference: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

## ELLIS

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"Lots of places didn't survive," Ellis recalled. "You couldn't make corn, you couldn't make hay, you couldn't do anything. People had to give up their cattle; you could only keep a few, try to hang on and stay in business. It was unbelievable."

Those memories of the drought of the '50s, memories of what happens to a land without water, of what happens to people when the water goes away, have followed Ellis throughout his life. Over the last 50 plus years, the little boy from Southeast Oklahoma grew up, graduated from OSU, served in the military, ranched with his brothers, married, raised a son and spent 30 years working for Weyerhaeuser. During that time, he also went into the newspaper business.

In 1988, Ellis and his wife Cynthia, along with a partner, founded the Southeast Times, a weekly newspaper the covers all of McCurtain County. "We started that paper from absolutely zero," Ellis said. "But we did it for the community. We wanted the people to have another voice."

In 2001, that sense of dedication to community and commitment to protecting water paired Ellis with the Southern Oklahoma Water Alliance. SOWA was a grassroots citizens group organized to stop the out-of-state sale of Oklahoma's water. A year later, Ellis was serving in the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

"I had no idea I was going to run for the legislature. We came up here to support former Rep. Debbie Blackburn when she ran the first moratorium to stop the sale of water outside the state. The next thing I knew, Rep. Matlock announced he wasn't going to seek re-election, and so I got involved."

Ellis served six years in the Oklahoma House and has served three years in the Senate. He is known as a champion of water, one who will fight to preserve and protect water, not only for his region, but for the entire state. He continues to fight to protect Sardis Lake from being taken over by Oklahoma City. He remains vigilant in guarding Oklahoma's waters from those who would see it sold out of state.

On May 4, Sen. Ellis joined Sen. Eddie Fields and host Bob Sands on OETA's "The People's Business" to discuss Oklahoma water issues. Ellis dominated the discussion during the live call-in show, where challenging the soundness of the state water plan and decrying the idea of selling water out of state were the topics of the evening. Ellis even gave Fields, who had authored a bill tied to the out-of-state sale of water, a "Don't Sell Oklahoma's Water" bumper sticker, and challenged Fields to put it on his vehicle.

"Last I looked, it wasn't on his truck," Ellis said. "I'm still waiting for Eddie Fields to put that sticker on."

Most recently, Ellis joined

Sen. Richard Lerblance and Reps. Brian Renegar and Ed Cannaday to request an official Attorney General's opinion to determine if the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan's enabling act has been honored. (*See related story on page 4.*)

"Jobs go where the water goes, and I can't see how that plan protects our water-related jobs down here," Ellis said. "We need to make sure that not only the present but future generations have the opportunity to build the American dream, to be all that they can be. But they cannot do that without water. It's the birth-right of our children and our grandchildren. To sell our water out from under future generations, or to move it away from people who depend on it for jobs, for what little they have, for their way of life, that's wrong. It's not only politically wrong, it's morally wrong."

"When you look at water, you're either taking up for people, looking out for future generations or you're looking at it from the standpoint of money. It pretty much all comes down to that."

### Will Rogers on Interbasin Transfers



"10 years ago this was a wonderful valley with one-quarter of a million acres of fruit and alfalfa.

But Los Angeles had to have more water for its Chamber of Commerce to drink more toasts to its growth, more water to dilute its orange juice and more water for its geraniums to delight the tourists, while the giant cottonwoods here died. So, now this is a valley of desolation."

Will Rogers 1930 As he looked upon Owens Valley after the water was taken.



# Leaders announce water committee

OKLAHOMA CITY – House Speaker Kris Steele and Senate President Pro Tem Brian Bingman have ordered the formation of a joint legislative committee to review the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan and develop a long-range state water policy.

The committee will begin working over the legislative interim and continue to work during next year's legislative session. While the committee's immediate goal is to review the water plan, its ultimate purpose is to facilitate the development of long-range water policy for Oklahoma.

"Responsible allocation of water – our most precious natural resource – is among the greatest responsibilities we have today to the citizens of tomorrow," said Steele, R-Shawnee. "The state's last 50-year water plan is about to expire. We need a new

one, and we need it now. With the updated comprehensive water plan nearly complete, we must no longer defer action on this vital issue."

The committee's co-chairmen will be Rep. Phil Richardson, R-Minco, and Sen. Brian Crain, R-Tulsa. Its membership will be bipartisan and geographically diverse. Committee members and additional details will be announced later this month.

"To develop a plan that works for all of Oklahoma, we must include all of Oklahoma," said Bingman, R-Sapulpa. "The committee will take all interests into account, whether they are rural, urban, tribal, or anywhere in between."

Drafts of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan have been publicly available since April. The Oklahoma Water Resources Board will approve a final ver-

sion of the plan in October.

"The water board has labored for years to put together a fair, unbiased, evidence-based report on water in Oklahoma. We must allow them to continue their work without the appearance of any premature political influence, so the committee will not be taking any official actions until after the water plan has been finalized," Steele said. "In the meantime, it is prudent for the Legislature to begin at least reviewing the parts of the plan that are publicly available. The plan is lengthy and complex, so we need to make sure we're doing our due diligence in preparing ourselves to act upon it next year."

Steele and Bingman said water policy will be a top priority in the Legislature next year and urged legislators to approach the issue with open minds.

"We simply cannot afford to waste time or play political games with our water policy. It is too important to the future of our state," Steele said.

"Water policy is a complex and sometimes emotional issue, but I am confident that the leadership and will power exists within this Legislature to meet this challenge," Bingman said

**"WHAT LIES BEHIND US,  
AND WHAT LIES  
BEFORE US ARE SMALL MATTERS  
COMPARED TO WHAT LIES WITHIN US."**

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## Changes coming to Lake Eufaula

By Pennie Embry

An updated shoreline management plan is in the works for Lake Eufaula. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tulsa District office recently announced they are preparing an Environmental Impact Statement to assess any impacts associated with changing shoreline management policies around the lake.

"Basically, a shoreline management plan has to do with zoning," said Stephen Nolen, the Environmental Analysis Chief, USACE Tulsa District Office. "The Environmental Impact Statement is required by NEPA. It's a document that looks at any federal action, in this case zoning."

Updates to the shoreline management plan may lead to development in areas of the lake that are yet to be developed, or to more boat docks in some areas and restrictions from development and docks in others. The plan will also look at possible recreational opportunities around the lake.

When people hear "EIS" and "NEPA" they think water quality and wildlife, No-

len said. "But the EIS will also look at the economic and social impact, things that may be affected positively or negatively by shoreline changes."

The last time the Lake Eufaula SMP was updated was 1998, and the master plan was updated in 1977. Once the EIS happens, then the SMP update can happen. And any update to the Lake Eufaula SMP paves the way for a possible water reallocation study.

Two key issues Lake Eufaula area residents hope will come out of all these changes are the actual allocation of and protection for water in the conservation pool for recreational use, and the establishment of a Lake Eufaula Federal Advisory Committee.

Section 3133 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 authorized the creation of a federal lake advisory committee, one that would allow Lake Eufaula stakeholders to advise the Corps about Lake Eufaula's operations. That section of federal law also authorized a reallocation study for future water use in Lake Eufaula.

A charter for the lake advisory commit-

tee was drawn up, but currently funding for all federal advisory committees that operate under the Department of Defense are on hold.

Within days of announcing the EIS, the Corps imposed a two-year temporary moratorium on new shoreline use permits at Lake Eufaula. The moratorium only pertains to new applications submitted after May 16; it doesn't impact work currently approved by an existing shoreline use permit.

On May 31, the Corps held a public meeting at Eufaula High School to discuss the upcoming EIS and SMP update for the lake. One of the biggest surprises of the evening involved funding for the project.

According to Col. Mike Teague, Tulsa District commander, the EIS and update to the shoreline management plan will take 24 months and cost \$3.5 million. The Corps has \$1.8 million available for the project in its FY11 budget, and another \$1 million total requested for the project in its FY12 and FY13 budgets. That leaves the Corp approximately \$700,000 short of funds to complete the project on time.

"We are a federal agency; we are prohibited from lobbying or soliciting funds," Col. Teague said. "I cannot ask you for money. But somebody else can."

Without help from the public, Teague said, the process could stretch out past the anticipated 24 months into 2014. That would also cause the moratorium on shoreline use permits to also be extended, further hindering development around the lake.

Deby Snodgrass, Oklahoma Tourism director, announced that private donations to help fund the federal project would be collected by and funneled through the state's tourism department.

A public scoping workshop for the project was held in Eufaula on June 2. The purpose of that meeting was to gain input from the public for use in the preparation of the EIS and to accept specific proposals for recreational development facilities on federal lands at Lake Eufaula. June 2 marked the beginning of a 60-day period where the public can provide comments and input on the update to the Lake Eufaula shoreline management plan.



**Published quarterly by Oklahomans for Responsible Water Policy  
Distributed FREE throughout the state of Oklahoma**

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## WATER PLAN

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travel expenditures. This resulted in \$953 million in federal, state and local taxes, and contributed to 76,000 jobs. Water-based recreation is a large part of these travel expenditures. In Southeastern Oklahoma's McCurtain County, \$11.6 million is spent annually on lodging alone, and that is outside any city limits in the county. That translates into \$350,000 in lodging tax that comes back to the county. Not measured in these state or county figures are the indirect dollars and jobs tied to the countless local gas stations, tackle shops, restaurants, gift shops, grocery stores, tour guide facilities, and more that dot the shores of Oklahoma's rivers and lakes. Small businesses like these make up the backbone of the economy in much of Southeast Oklahoma. But their water needs are by definition "non-consumptive use," and not considered in the OCWP. That is something the Tribal Regional Water Plan will address.

### Looking at water needs through a wide lens

"I think we have to maintain a careful balance when we value the water in our lakes and streams versus the value we place on the water in a pipeline or on a field," McClain said. "The state water plan looks at water only through the lens of economic impact and consumptive use. We want to look at water and water data through the lens of all water uses—economic, social, and environmental. And inside that, we are going to look at what is bearable, what is sustainable and what is equitable. It all has to mesh together so needs are met but no one sector gets hurt.

"This complete, responsible research is essential in planning for future generations. In the 22-county regional water plan, 'Surplus' is in the process of being defined, but the tribes, as governments, are glad to see the OWRB begin a conversation with their definition," said McClain, who is chairman of the Choctaw Nation Natural Resources Committee.

In addition, McClain said, their study will look at water infrastructure, quality and conservation in the 22 counties that make up the shared treaty area of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations.

"We are going to know, when this study is completed, the condition of water infrastructure in all these towns and communities. And if that infrastructure is not up to

# IN CONTRAST

## between state and tribal water planning



### State Comprehensive Water Plan

*Focus: consumptive use*

code, we will know what it takes to bring them up to code."

### Setting the plan in motion

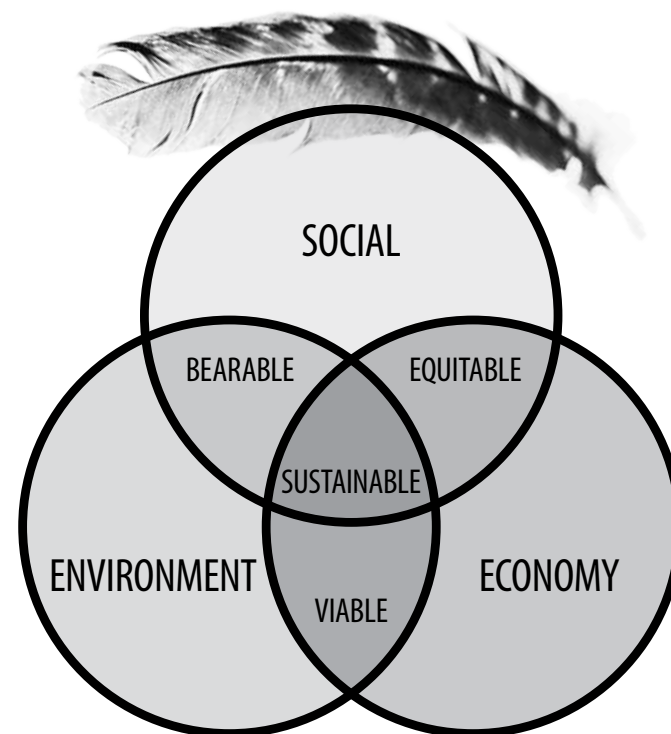
Currently, the tribes' regional water plan — one McClain says will take 5 to 7 years to complete — is itself in the planning stages. A key player in that process is Dr. Barney Austin, the director of Hydrologic Services for INTERA, Inc., a geosciences and engineering company. Austin holds a degree in agricultural engineering and a civil engineering PhD in water resources. He worked for the Institute of Hydrology in England and for the Texas Water Development Board. At INTERA, Austin is involved in hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, water resources planning and instream flow studies. He recently worked with the OCWP instream flow issues work group and wrote the group's supplemental report.

Austin and the tribes' Natural Resources Committee are developing a pro-

grammatic work plan, which is basically a roadmap for the development of a water plan for Southeast Oklahoma.

"It's the steps we plan to take, it describes goals, objectives and special studies we need to conduct to determine for ourselves what the gap is between future water supply and demand," Austin said. "It looks at the potential for conservation, not only in the region, but also in other parts of the state that may be targeting Southeast Oklahoma for its water resources."

Austin reiterated the tribes' commitment to the region's water infrastructure. The OCWP really didn't look at infrastructure needs on a local basis, Austin said. "We propose to talk to a number of these smaller communities in Southeast Oklahoma and find out what their infrastructure issues are, what their financing needs are and how the tribes, state and federal governments can help them meet their future needs. Maybe that means help with financing a new wastewater treat-



### Tribal Regional Water Plan

*Addresses: consumptive use, non-consumptive use and sustainability*

ment plant or water distribution system. Maybe it means looking for opportunities for regionalization, where water treatment and distribution for two or more smaller Wcommunities might be combined into one to gain those efficiencies of scale."

### Water Quality a concern

Water Quality is another issue the Tribal Regional Water Plan will address. Only 16% of rivers and streams in Oklahoma have been assessed from a water quality perspective, "which is a pretty small number if you ask me," Austin said.

Of those rivers and streams that have been assessed, 84% have been deemed impaired, which means the water quality does not meet the standards for the water's designated use. "So if that stream or river is typically used for recreational purposes and people are swimming in there, and the water quality is not sufficient to allow that to happen, or it shouldn't happen, then that water is considered impaired," Austin explained.

Impairment is a broad category, Austin acknowledged and impairment could mean a number of things, not all of them serious. "But one task the programmatic work plan describes is a program whereby more of the streams in Southeast Oklahoma are assessed, and in a parallel process, initiatives are taken to reduce the number of impaired streams and rivers out there. What can we do to improve the quality of our water?"

#### Turning water planning upside down

While working for the Texas water board, Dr. Austin helped that state develop a regional water plan. "It's a reversal from what the state had previously done where they developed a plan and asked residents and water providers in Texas to go implement it," Austin said. "That was never a very successful approach.

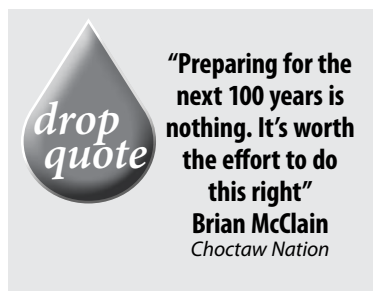
"So in 1997 that whole process was turned on its head and regional water planning groups were created, funding was provided for them to hire their own consultants and do their own studies to determine how to meet future water needs and deal with issues in their region."

The tribes' water plan is a regional plan, one that will be developed by water users in that region, Austin said. "And that to me is a recipe for success. You want the water management strategy of a particular region to be developed by the folks in that

region."

That end user process is very well defined in the tribes' programmatic work plan, Austin said. "User involvement in our day and age is crucial. The tribes have a strong desire to do this plan in a very open and transparent way, and want both independent scientific review and input from the water users."

Basin-by-basin, the tribes are trying to determine how to take care of all water supply needs, Austin said.



"And you're not going to know that without talking to the water users in the basin. And the people in each basin need to determine for themselves what that balance will be. In some basins the economic emphasis will be on ecotourism, for example, like hiking, fishing and canoeing. In water studies you need to know what those needs are; you find a balance between water for water supply systems, industry, recreation, the ecosystem and everything else. And you need the people who live in that ba-

sin, the people who use the water in that basin to determine that balance. You absolutely cannot develop a plan without their input."

#### Rounding it out with partnerships

Parallel to the end user process in the tribes' regional plan will be the scientific process. The Tribal Natural Resources Committee wants to work very closely with scientists from the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University and even Oregon State, McClain said. "This is where we will get our scientists for the scientific peer review of our plan. The users will keep us focused on the needs of the entire region, the scientists will make sure our data and studies are done right."

Developing partnerships is very important to the tribes, McClain said. "Whether it is the public, government agencies, universities, or non-profits, we want to hear every voice, we want all questions brought to us, even if someone is disagreeing with us. What we want is dialogue, and partnerships, and user participation and science. We want the best water plan possible for Southeast Oklahoma.

"The Choctaws and Chickasaws have been here over 100 years already. So preparing for the next 100 years is nothing. It's worth the effort to do this right."

## UPDATE FROM THE CAPITOL

### Lawmakers seek AG's opinion on water study

Reps. Brian Renegar, DVM, D-Blanco, and Ed Cannaday, D-Porum, along with Sens. Jerry Ellis, D-Valliant, and Richard Lerblance, D-Hartshorne, have requested an official Attorney General Opinion on two points.

The first point is that the Comprehensive Water Plan's Enabling Act has not been honored. The enabling act specifically states what is to be covered by the statute. The law creating the Comprehensive Water

Study "shall be to maximize and not minimize the alternatives available to all citizens, municipalities and other water user entities in acquiring water for beneficial use."

Rep. Cannaday was told at the Stigler Water Plan meeting that non-consumptive water use (i.e., recreation) was not studied.

"That statement alone violates the enabling act," said Rep. Cannaday.

Rep. Renegar went on to support Rep. Cannaday's

comment by adding, "The incomplete study of aquifers also violates the enabling act, as those people in areas of the state whose sole source of water has not been addressed, as relates to the language of 'all citizens, municipalities, and other water user entities.'"

The second point of the Attorney General request pertains to conflict of interest on the part of CDM Engineering.

Sen. Ellis pointed out, "CDM engineering had

contracts with the Comprehensive Water Plan and simultaneously worked for the Oklahoma City Water Trust authority in a contract to bring Sardis Lake water to Oklahoma City."

Sen. Lerblance stated, "The validity of either of these two issues in the opinion request casts a dim shadow on the Comprehensive Water Study, which is a shame, considering the large amount of money spent on this Plan."

## Can't Drink the Money

By Debbie Leo

Here is my story, it's sad but it's true  
The waters of the Kiamichi River watershed  
Might be going "dry for dollars"  
The waters of Sardis Lake will stop being blue.

The Kiamichi River might be small and unknown  
In the over all theme of American rivers,  
But it's wildness and beauty can send shivers  
Through those who visit and each who live here.

The people who come here to fish and to boat  
Will have to find solace in some other place.  
The critters that live here,  
Well, they'll have to move on  
But finding new waterways won't happen  
because...

If Oklahoma City or Northeast Texas have their way  
The Kiamichi River waters  
Will dry up and... go away.

The wildlife  
The flora  
The frogs and the otters  
Will disappear  
As if never were here.

You see,  
It's all about the money in America  
Everywhere you go.  
But here in Oklahoma  
We're at a "crossroad"...

Our tribal nations have been promised the water  
From "Dancing Rabbit", things to be honored,  
And the people of Southeastern Oklahoma  
Have yet to be asked  
How a future without water  
Will be able to keep them on their lands  
And out of the hands of the greedy.

What makes this area so incredible you ask?  
Well, so many things of beauty and wildness.  
Look it up and explore it,  
I think you'll agree  
That the lives of so many in the hands of so few...  
Well, how will the "little people" and critters  
All get through?

If the corporate interests "rule the day"  
Our wildlife, our river, our towns  
Will all go away...

We can't drink the money and the "bucks won't  
stop here"  
And so our way of life will soon disappear.  
How very sad.



# *Responsible water policy starts with **you***



All across the state, from March 1 through May 31, Oklahomans participated in the 2011 Great American Clean-up. Much of that work took place along Oklahoma's thousands of miles of shorelines. From tiny ponds and streams, to city lakes like Lake John Wells, to the shores of the Canadian River and Lake Eufaula, young and old joined together to beautify the land surrounding our precious waters and become Oklahomans for Responsible Water Policy.





## Summer water tips

Oklahoma City, the City of Lawton, and other municipalities post outdoor water conservation tips on their Web sites to encourage citizens to use water wisely, especially during summer months. Here are a few of their tips (courtesy of [www.wateruseitwisely.com](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com)) to conserve water when watering your lawn and garden.

- ◆ Water the lawn only when it needs it and in the early morning or late afternoon. Watering in the middle of the day allows most of the water to evaporate.
- ◆ Make sure the sprinkler is aimed at the lawn, not the street or sidewalk.
- ◆ If you water when it's windy, water will go everywhere but on the grass.
- ◆ When cleaning a fish tank, water hanging baskets and window box plants with the dirty water. It's rich in nitrogen and phosphorous
- ◆ Use compost when planting to add water-holding organic matter to the soil. Layer organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and save hundreds of gallons of water a year.
- ◆ Direct downspouts and other runoff toward shrubs and trees, or collect and use for your garden.
- ◆ Next time you add or replace a plant, choose a low-water-use plant for year-round landscape color and save up to 550 gallons each year
- ◆ Choose a water-efficient drip-irrigation system for landscaping and avoid planting turf in areas that are hard to water, such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.
- ◆ Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. Longer grass shades root systems and holds soil moisture better than a closely clipped lawn.
- ◆ Reduce the amount of grass in your yard by planting shrubs, and cover ground with rock and granite mulching.
- ◆ Avoid installing ornamental water features and fountains that spray water into the air. Trickling or cascading fountains lose less water to evaporation.
- ◆ Buy a rain gauge to track how much rain or irrigation your yard receives. Check with your local water agency to see how much rain is needed to skip an irrigation cycle.
- ◆ Don't water your lawn if it doesn't need it. Proper lawn watering can save thousands of gallons of water annually.
- ◆ Aerate your lawn. Punch holes in your lawn about 6 inches apart so water will reach the roots rather than running off the surface.

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## Oklahomans for Responsible Water Policy (ORWP)

*Please sign me up as a member of ORWP*

**Yes, I support - Oklahomans For Responsible Water Policy**

Name

Address

☐ **Yes, You may use my name publicly**

Email  Phone#

Occupation

Additional family members in support Oklahomans For Responsible Water Policy

please mail to : Oklahomans For Responsible Water Policy P.O. 1607, Durant OK, 74702-9917

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