



Choctaw Nation Water Resource Management Office



**Governor's Water Conference
December 4, 2025**



Water Resource Management – Director Ahndria Ablett

Water Policy and Planning

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Sustainable Communities

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Implement the Water Settlement Agreement

- Common Interest in Sustainability
- Protection of Basin Hydrology
- Promote Technical Studies for Informed Decision Making
- Protect and Promote Choctaw Nation Sovereignty through professional partnerships with Local, State, and Federal Agencies/Organizations



SLWA – Pre-Sustainable Communities Program

- Notices of Violation
- Consent Orders
- Penalties
- Facility Conditions
- Financial Issues
- Operational Issues
- Maintenance Issues
- Multiple Boil Orders
- Poor Understanding of State and Federal Regulations
- No Segregation of Duties
- Extreme Water Loss
- Poor Rate Structure
- Poor Recordkeeping



Financial Assistance and O&M

In 2014-15, the District was awarded two additional loans from Rural Development in the total amount of \$299,000, all of which was received in the 2014-15 fiscal year. In addition, the District obtained two grants from Rural Development in the total amount of \$1,377,700, which were received in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 fiscal years, and additional grants from the Choctaw Nation in the amount of \$222,640. These funds were used for system improvements and expansion, and the construction of a water clarifier for the District. This major construction program was started in the 2014-15 fiscal year, and was substantially completed in 2015-16, with an additional \$1,589,883 being added to capital assets for these projects. In 2016-17, the District received an additional \$99,999 ORWB REAP Grant, which was used to replace pumps. In 2017-18, the District received \$15,000 from the Choctaw Nation to fund the purchase of an intake pump. In 2018-19, the District received a \$45,000 OWRB Emergency Grant for a filter system addition. In 2019-20, the District received \$10,692 from the Choctaw Nation for a new pump and motor, and a \$9,325 grant from KEDDO for a pump motor. In 2020-21, the District received \$14,000 from the Choctaw Nation for a high service pump.

\$3,749,272 total received from 2014 to 2022



Sustainable Communities





Memorandum of Agreement

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SARDIS LAKE WATER AUTHORITY AND THE CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA

III. TERM

The term of this Agreement shall be effective from the Effective Date and shall continue for a term of two (2) years.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

No later than six (6) months from the Effective Date, SLWA shall come into full compliance/implement all Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) requirements, recommendations, and suggestions outlined in the 2019 ODEQ Comprehensive Performance Evaluation (CPE), attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference, and annual Oklahoma State Financial Audits ("Compliance Timeline"). Near the end of the Compliance Timeline, the Parties shall meet to evaluate the SLWA's compliance status. Upon a showing of good faith by SLWA to become compliant, the Parties may extend the Compliance Timeline as necessary ("Compliance Extension").

V. TRUST ACCOUNT

SLWA shall create a trust account, which will be separate from any operating account, solely for capital improvement funding/budgeting and based on a regulatory agency approved capital improvement plan. The removal of funds from the trust account shall only be by a majority SLWA board ("Board") resolution.

Funding for the trust account will be deposited monthly as a percentage (to be determined by a vote of the Board members and reviewed monthly at each Board meeting, but no less than 1% of gross monthly revenue) of the monthly billing of each residential, industrial, commercial, and wholesale purchaser of Sardis Lake Water Authority water.

VI. INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

SLWA shall create, develop, implement, and abide by an Asset Management Plan, a Capital Improvement Plan, and an Impact Response Plan/Emergency Plan (collectively the

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (hereinafter referred to as "Agreement") into effective as of the last date signed below (the "Effective Date"). The Sardis Lake Water Authority, an Oklahoma public trust (hereinafter "SLWA"), with a mailing address of P.O. Box 160, Clayton, Oklahoma 74536 and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, a federally recognized and sovereign Indian tribe (hereinafter "Choctaw Nation"), with a mailing address of P.O. Box 1210 Durant, Oklahoma 74621, on may be hereafter singularly referred to as "Party" or collectively as the "Parties".

"Plans") for facility upgrades and maintenance on or before January 31, 2023. SLWA must complete a facility wide condition review and utilize those findings to assist in the development of the Plans.

VII. FINANCES

SLWA shall segregate office duties for the benefit of unit record and bank reconciliation, which shall occur monthly. This shall include an objective and unbiased member of the Board to reconcile all financial documents and ensure proper accounting practices and procedures are adhered to (based on previous and/or current state of Oklahoma financial audit recommendations).

VIII. RECORD KEEPING

SLWA shall digitally record and account for all financial, accounting, operation logging, record keeping, and any related information (collectively, the "Records"). As part of maintaining the Records, SLWA shall, prior to October 1, 2022, obtain, maintain, and update, as necessary, the following: Microsoft Office Suite package for creating logs, files, and writing public notices; a subscription to QuickBooks for proper accounting and bookkeeping practices. Additionally, SLWA agrees to calculate water loss monthly and document this information in electronic form with the Records and shared it with the Choctaw Nation immediately upon request.

Funding provided by the Choctaw Nation shall only be utilized for earmarked items, as defined by the Choctaw Nation, and must be documented with invoices and a copy of any such invoices shall be provided to the Choctaw Nation prior to expenditure of the funds. Additionally, SLWA agrees to provide the Choctaw Nation with monthly financial and operational reports, such reports to be in a format requested by the Choctaw Nation and no later than the fifth day of the following month.

IX. NONCOMPLIANCE

If SLWA fails to reach full compliance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement, then they shall be in default of the Loan ("Default"). In the event of Default, the SLWA shall payback one half of the Loan within thirty (30) from notice of Default, unless such other payback terms are specifically agreed to in writing by the Parties.



Comprehensive Checklist

Sardis Lake Water Authority Memorandum of Agreement Checklist

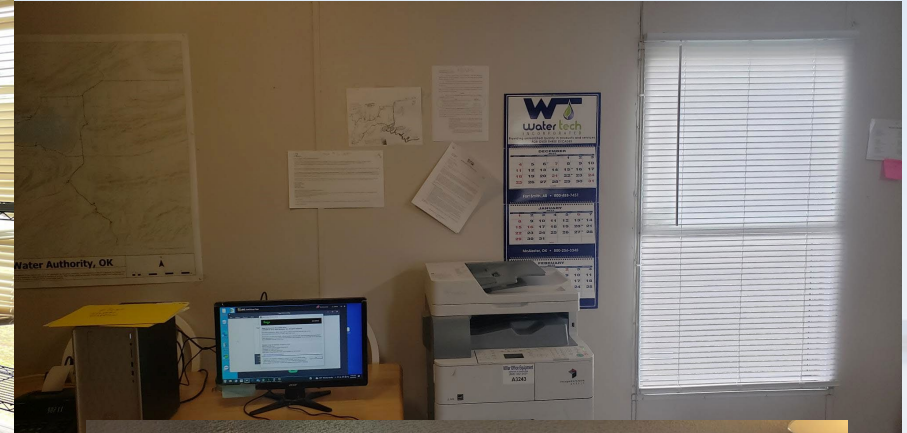
Choctaw Nation Office of Water Resource Staff offer technical assistance to SLWA staff and Board to complete. All actions, duties, and responsibilities are facilitated by SLWA staff. All actions within this document are the responsibility of the staff and Board of SLWA to complete, CNO staff monitors completion of these tasks by SLWA staff.

<u>MOA Section</u>	<u>Items to be Completed¹</u>	<u>Level of Completion</u>
IV. Environmental Compliance	Segregation of Duties – Oklahoma State Financial Audits (Board)	Completed – 6/14/2023 Board hired an additional office staff member. Further, Board increased the pay of the current office manager.
	Plant flow rate regulation for accurate control of chemical dosing – DEQ CPE (A1) (Plant)	Completed – installed new flowmeter and everything seems to be going correctly
	Removal of discrepancy between what SCADA reports and what chemical feed pumps are outputting – DEQ CPE (A1) (Plant)	Completed – timing pumps every week and are accurate
	Positions and job descriptions clearly stated and understood by each employee and all Board members – DEQ CPE (A2) (Board, Plant, Office)	Completed – Job descriptions have been approved by the Board 10/12/2022

- Weekly Site Visits
- Monthly Board Meeting Visits
- Multitude of Phone Calls
- Resources/Tools
- Training
- Advisory and Consulting



Successes at SLWA – Office and Board





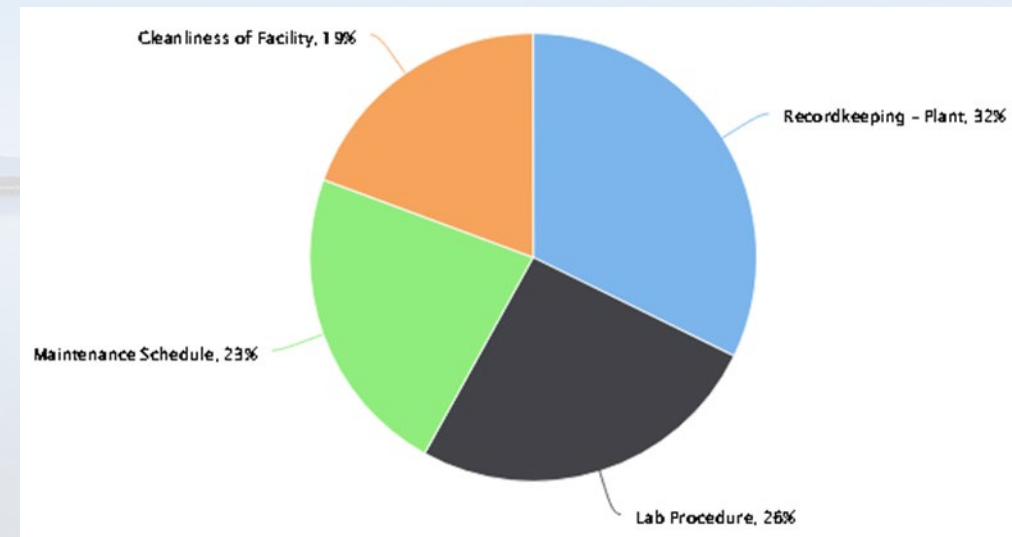
Successes at Sardis - Plant

- Meticulous Recordkeeping
- Detailed Maintenance Program
- Strategic Long-Term Planning
- Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality Operational Compliance
- Segregation of Duties
- Financial Independence
- Marked Reduction of Notices of Violations and Closing of Consent Orders
- Website Development
- Online Payments
- Improved system mapping on a GIS format
- Improved Water Loss Percentages



What we've learned

- Each water system we visit has its own unique problems
- Every water system that has issues has similar problems
 - Lack of managerial oversight
 - No/Limited board interaction
 - No true long-term planning
 - Poor recordkeeping
 - Poor maintenance of the plant
 - Poor rate structure for revenue
 - No strategic planning
 - No true emergency plan – management by crisis
 - No budgeting for the facility
 - No backup generator
 - No additional storage or emergency connections
 - Aged paper maps of the system





EPA SDWA Compliance Checklist

- Maps
 - Water system schematic
 - Treatment description schematic (if applicable)
- Water Usage Information (gpd pumped)
- Operator Certification Certificates
- Record Keeping
 - Pumping system
 - Treatment system
 - Distribution system
 - Cross connection control
 - Tank cleaning and inspection
- SOPs and Plans
 - Source water protection plans
 - O&M SOPs
 - Preventative maintenance plans
 - Emergency response plans
- SDWA Compliance
 - Revised Total Coliform Rule sampling plan
 - Stage 2 Disinfection Byproducts Rule plan
 - Lead and Copper Rule plan
 - Monitoring schedule for current year
 - Public Notices (issued within the past year)
- EPA/DEQ evaluations include an on-site evaluation of:
 - Water Sources
 - Pumps and pumping facilities
 - Water treatment
 - Distribution
 - Monitoring
 - Management and Operations
 - Operator certification
 - Water storage facilities



EPA CWA National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) *New*

- Municipal Wastewater
 - Treatment Facilities
 - Collection Systems
- Disinfection
- Permitting
- Document Review/Recordkeeping
- Operations & Maintenance
- Sanitary Sewer Overflow Evaluation and Planning
 - Blockages, Line Breaks, Vandalism, Sewer Defects
- Influent to Effluent Assessments
 - Upsets
 - Bypasses, Overflows, Leaks
 - Operational Equipment Assessment
 - Conditions of the Grounds and Access Roads
 - Laboratory
 - Discharge Points
 - Floating solids, foam, abnormal colors, or odors



Sustainable Communities

- Pre-visit data gathering
 - Open Records Act
- On site assessments for the plant, office, and field operations
- No cost technical support for the plant, office, and field operations
- Long-term planning
 - Asset Management, Capital Improvement, Impact and Emergency Response, Water Rate Studies, GIS mapping, etc.
- Assistance in identifying funding opportunities
- Bridge the gap between public water systems and the state regulatory agencies to address compliance issues
- Assistance in proper recordkeeping practices
- Succession planning





Accomplishments in Sustainable Communities

- Quarterly FACT Meetings
- Operator Training Kick-off at Oka Con 2025
 - Next trainings to start late Winter 2026 including Operator CEU Training, Office Personnel Training, Board Training
- Two of our Sustainable Communities earned Water for 2060 Excellence Awards in 2024





- “In relation to water treatment systems, we have 19th century policies, 20th century facilities, and 21st century problems.” – *“Flint”* Documentary
- Water is in every medical facility, business, school, restaurant, and home across the United States. It is imperative that each water system provides the highest quality water it possibly can.
- We have the responsibility to provide the best water quality at the most reasonable cost to all residents.



Questions?

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