Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference & Research Symposium

December 2-3, 2026

Embassy Suites, Norman, OK

The Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference and Research Symposium is held annually to bring together experts in Oklahoma water policy and science from local, state, and federal agencies and organizations, as well as industry leaders, students, and researchers.

Draft Agenda

December 2

8:30a Opening Session

Welcome
- Thomas Gorman, Chairman, Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB)

Keynote
- Nathaniel Gee, Author of *Faith & Fortitude: How Faith, Politics and Power Shaped the Teton Dam Disaster*

Perspectives from Legislative Leaders

10:00 Break

10:30 Concurrent Sessions

Oklahoma's Water Infrastructure Financing Strategy
- Lori Johnson, Chief, Financial Assistance Division, OWRB
- Chris Colclasure, Director, Natural Resources Division, Arkansas Department of Agriculture
- Zack Robinson, Senior Vice President, BOK Financial Securities, Inc.

Research Symposium Lightning Sessions

12:00 Lunch

Congressional Messages

Oklahoma Water Pioneer Awards

1:30 Concurrent Sessions

Insights from 2026 Legislative Interim Studies
- Infrastructure: Senator Bill Coleman
- Rural Water Districts: Senator Warren Hamilton (invited)
- Data Centers: Representative Mark Chapman
- Water Rights: Representative Carl Newton

Oklahoma's Water Future: Needs, Availability, and Opportunities
- Andrew Fleet, Oklahoma State University (OSU)
- K. J. Jafarzadegan, OSU
- Zachary Tomlinson, OWRB
- Di Liu, University of Oklahoma (OU)
- Zhenghong Tang, OU
- Khaled Sallam, OSU

3:00 Break

3:30 Plenary Session: The Future of Data Centers

Angela Yuan, Senior Manager, Environmental Policy, Data Center Coalition
Jeremiah Bihl, Assistant Director, Water Utilities, City of Abilene
Daniel Harrison, Principal and Vice President, Freese & Nichols
Eric Lee, Director of Water and Sewer, City of Tulsa

5:00 Reception

Student Poster Contest

December 3

8:30a Opening Session

Welcome & Poster Winners
- Kevin Wagner, Director of the Oklahoma Water Resources Center

Keynote
- Dr. Sharon Megdal, Director, University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center

Emergency Drought Commission Update
- Blayne Arthur, Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture

Water for 2060 Excellence Awards

Perspectives from the Western States Water Council (WSWC)
- J. D. Strong, Executive Director, WSWC

10:15 Break

10:30 Concurrent Sessions

Economic Returns on Flood Preparedness
- Chad Berginnis, Executive Director and CEO, Association of State Floodplain Managers
- Jill Stewart, Director, Office of Permitting Support, South Carolina Department of Environmental Services
- Cynthia Rolli, Resilience Planning Leader, Black and Veatch

Innovations in Water Quality Science, Monitoring, and Management
- Lauren Haygood, The Oka' Institute at East Central University
- Cheryl Cheadle, Oklahoma Conservation Commission
- Mark Nanny, OU
- Kristen Shelton, OU
- Navdeep Saasan, OSU

12:00 Adjourn