



Stakeholder Engagement Report

April 2026 / FINAL



OKLAHOMA
Water Resources Board



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Contact Info: Carollo Engineers, Inc.
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Abbreviations

AMR	automated meter reading
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
Carollo	Carollo Engineers
CIP	capital improvement project
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPSCoR	Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research
FB	Focus Basin
LPP	Local Projects and Programs
OCWP	Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan
ODEQ	Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
ODWC	Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
ORWA	Oklahoma Rural Water Association
OWRB	Oklahoma Water Resources Board
PWP	Programmatic Work Plan
S3OK	Socially Sustainable Solutions for Water, Carbon, and Infrastructure Resilience in Oklahoma
SWC	Source Water Collaborative
SWP	source water protection
US	United States
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
WMS	water management strategy(ies)
WSIN	Water Supply and Infrastructure Needs

SECTION 1 GUIDE TO THIS REPORT

This report summarizes the stakeholder engagement completed as part of the 2025 Update to the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan (OCWP). Statewide public engagement was a critical element of the 2025 OCWP process. Meetings were held with a variety of stakeholders and water interest groups across all parts of the state. Attendees included local and state officials, tribal nations representatives, public water utilities, regulated industries, commercial agricultural producers, economic development entities, and other representative organizations. Matching the approach used for the 2012 OCWP, the 2025 OCWP conducted technical analyses in each of the 82 distinct watershed "basins" across the state, aggregated into 13 regions to summarize water resources conditions across the state as shown in Figure 1. These divisions helped facilitate how and where engagement was carried out.

This report describes the following engagement activities.

- Five rounds of Regional Meetings (Appendices A-E)
- Outcomes of the other stakeholder meeting conducted
- Surveys and a summary of their results (Appendix F)
- Focus basin assessments
- Workgroups (Appendices G and H)

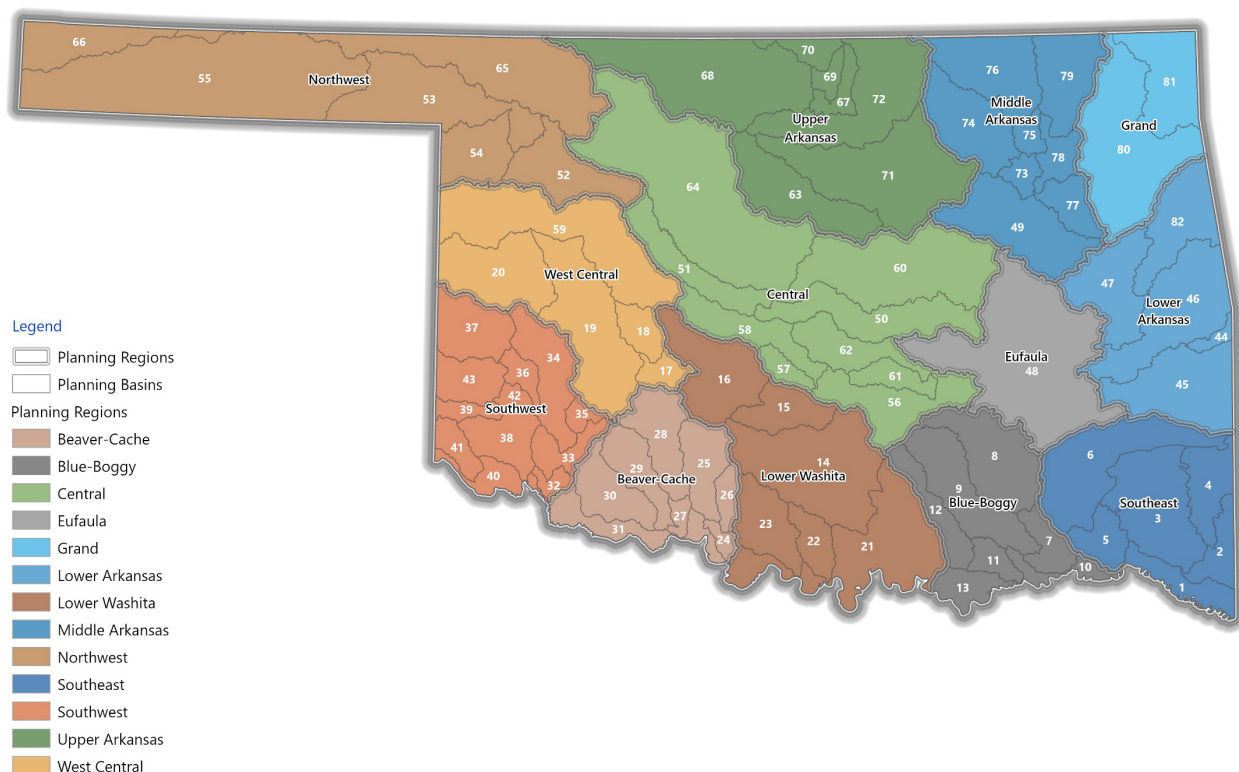


Figure 1 OCWP Planning Regions and Basins

Across these engagement channels, stakeholders provided input on the following items that informed the 2025 OCWP statewide and regional recommendations as shown in Figure 2.

- Identify the most pressing local water issues and policy needs
- Guide the identification and deployment of solutions to address those issues and needs
- Chart a course toward reliable, resilient water management locally and statewide

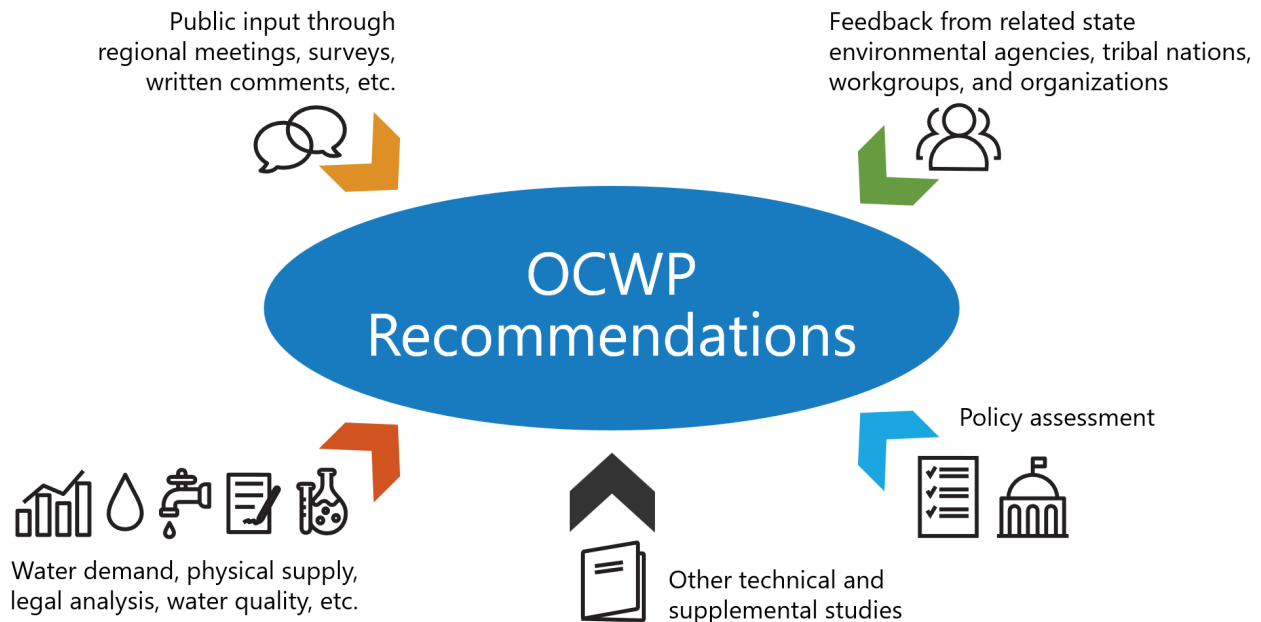


Figure 2 Sources of Input that Informed 2025 OCWP Statewide and Regional Recommendations

The 2025 OCWP recommendations are summarized in the *2025 OCWP Executive Summary*. The *2025 OCWP Executive Summary* and reports summarizing the technical analyses that supported the development of these recommendations are accessible through the Oklahoma Water Resources Board's (OWRB) Water Planning website (<https://oklahoma.gov/owrb/water-planning.html>). The following technical analyses include the following (listed in order of increasing detail).

- Technical dashboards that provide an interactive way to access data on water demand projections, water supply analyses, water shortages, water quality, water management strategies (WMS), and infrastructure costs. The dashboards allow users to view these data at the statewide, region, and basin levels for various planning years.
- Detailed technical reports that provide further information on data sources, methodology, and findings.

This report was prepared by Carollo Engineers (Carollo) in partnership with the OWRB. It incorporates input on certain elements of the work that was provided by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and their contractors Freese and Nichols and Michael Baker International.

SECTION 2 REGIONAL MEETINGS

The 2025 OCWP Team held five rounds of regional meetings during the 2025 OCWP engagement process, with each round consisting of meetings in multiple locations across the state as shown in Figure 3. These meetings were focused on how the 2025 OCWP can support efforts to address local water challenges. An in-person meeting was held in every 2025 OCWP meeting region (Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest) and a virtual option was provided during each round of meetings. Meeting details have been published as meeting summaries (Appendices A-E). Each meeting region encompassed one or more OCWP Planning Regions. Meeting locations were varied across each 2025 OCWP meeting region to improve accessibility for those wishing to participate in-person in addition to sessions held virtually.

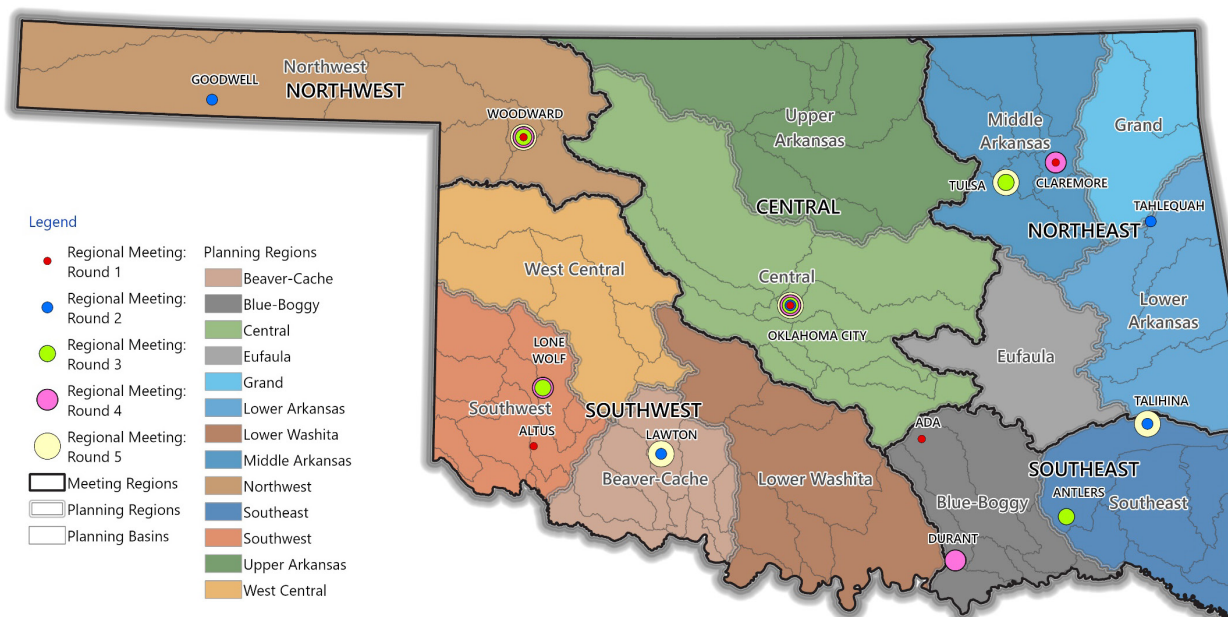


Figure 3 OCWP Meeting Regions and Locations

Content was presented on a variety of topics to support discussion among attendees. The identified goals could not have been achieved without participation from a variety of stakeholders, which included municipal water utilities, rural water districts, state legislators, agricultural producers, OWRB Board members, agencies (e.g., Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality [ODEQ], Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation [ODWC], etc.), nonprofit organizations, consulting engineers, engaged citizens, and more. With such a broad range of interests represented, a wide variety of perspectives from across the state were heard and documented for each meeting region. Each round of meetings was driven by a specific purpose, allowing for more focused stakeholder feedback. The purpose of each round of meetings and feedback highlights is outlined below.

2.1 Round 1: Listening Sessions

The purpose of the Round 1 Regional Meetings in August 2023 was to listen to stakeholders to better understand the priority topics that are concerning them on a regional and statewide basis. Review Appendix A for the presentation used during these meetings. Permitting / Policy / Regulations, Infrastructure Improvements & Funding / Financing, and Collaboration / Partnerships were identified as priority topic areas statewide as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4 Priority Topics Brought Up in Round 1 and Carried through OCWP Process

2.2 Round 2: Explore Topics from Round 1

Participants explored the prioritized topic areas from Round 1 through breakout discussions in Round 2, held in December 2023. Takeaways from these breakout discussions are outlined below, and further details are provided in Appendix B.

- **Permitting / Regulations / Policy:** Many participants expressed support for increasing timely enforcement of existing rules and use limits. Ideas for achieving this included establishing regional OWRB offices or representatives, local management authorities, or modifying enforcement rules. Many participants expressed support for increasing timely enforcement of existing rules and use limits. Ideas for achieving this included establishing regional OWRB offices or representatives, local management authorities, or modifying enforcement rules.
- **Infrastructure Improvements and Funding / Financing:** There was broad support regarding the development of a more robust education program for public water supply system management and board training, expanded planning and technical assistance programs, and providing significant and permanent support state funding for water and wastewater management. Most agreed that these could be accomplished within existing program authorities if they were provided additional funding and/or staff.
- **Collaboration / Partnership:** Many participants expressed support for developing regional water plans, and for the role coordination can play to leverage and improve individual plans within a region. Participants noted that regional water plans can be useful tools in identifying capital project needs for water supply, and that the state could help incentivize regional planning through financial programs to assist with funding regional plan development and by either requiring, or providing bonus points for, inclusion of a capital project in a regional water plan as a condition for approving or prioritizing state funding for that capital project.

2.3 Round 3: Regional Projections for Supply / Demand / Water Quality

Draft results of the technical analyses that characterize projected demand, physical supply availability, and water quality were shared in Round 3 in April 2024. Data illustrated the degree to which demands in each of the state's 82 planning basins were projected to change from 2020 to 2075. Physical water supply gaps and depletions are defined as conditions where, respectively, surface water and groundwater supplies are insufficient to satisfy projected demands. These gaps/depletions vary geographically across the state and over time. However, even when water is physically available, it may not be legally available for use.

To meet physical water supply gaps/depletions, WMS can be implemented throughout Oklahoma. Discussion of the effectiveness of strategies specific to each OCWP planning region was held in breakout groups. Participants were asked to provide input on the strategies that would be most effective in their area to address water supply challenges. Participants also suggested other strategies, expressed reasons for their positions, and listed potential methods of implementing the strategies. Among the five regional meetings, the following key takeaways were established.

- Effective WMS should align locally and focus on the region's and/or basin's predominant demand.
- Demand Management was identified by participants as the most applicable WMS in all regions.
- There is a lack of concurrence among Oklahomans regarding the future role of large-scale water transfers in the state. However, some meeting participants expressed support for intra-basin transfers between public supply water systems for the purpose of infrastructure cost-sharing and water supply redundancy/resilience.

Information was also presented regarding surface water quality. Key water quality trends were presented for total dissolved solids, water clarity, and nutrients. Because the state's groundwater quality monitoring program has a shorter period of record than surface water quality, groundwater quality trending analyses could not be prepared.

Note that the latest data are available on the OWRB Planning Page (<https://oklahoma.gov/owrb/water-planning.html>) and may not match the information presented at the time of the meetings (Appendix C).

2.4 Round 4: Policy Needs and Feasibility of Water Management Strategies

The focus of the fourth round (October 2024) was established as WMS feasibility and policy discussions. Seven categories of potential WMS were evaluated for their effectiveness in each of the 82 OCWP planning basins. Preliminary evaluation results were presented during this round of meetings. Note that the latest data are available on the OWRB Planning Page (<https://oklahoma.gov/owrb/water-planning.html>) and may not match the information presented at the time of the meetings (Appendix D).

Throughout the first three regional meetings, the OCWP team consistently heard feedback on two primary issues across the state: the value of regional planning and management and the need for new funding sources. Background information, existing examples, and discussion questions were used to facilitate discussion. The following outlines key feedback shared by participants in the meetings.

- Stakeholders across the state are interested in the implementation of regional planning groups. Organizing these groups by a shared water resource (i.e., watershed or aquifer, rather than counties or other political boundaries) received the most support statewide. Most agreed that demand/supply projections should be a responsibility of the regional planning groups and that they should receive

some degree of local authority to more effectively manage local resources, while staying within the constraints of existing state water law.

- Funding programs that would emulate aspects of example programs in Colorado and Kansas did not see consistent support throughout the state. Funding coordination with the tribal nations will be needed, particularly if sports betting is an avenue the legislature explores further. Support was generally voiced for eliminating or easing the current cap on OWRB funding via the gross production tax. Many supported the reappropriation and/or the addition of various fees/taxes for a water designated fund, with a general preference toward fees on activities that Oklahomans choose to participate in.

Each meeting for this round concluded with a discussion regarding bringing ideas together. Stakeholder issues are understood, and appropriate solutions have been discussed, but there is no existing forum or process for continuity and stakeholder collaboration to implement them. Most participants expressed support for developing a water management group between various organizations and agencies.

2.5 Round 5: Preliminary Draft Recommendations

Throughout Round 5 in March 2025, feedback was collected on preliminary draft policy recommendations and water infrastructure funding ideas (Appendix E). The following outlines key feedback shared on the policy recommendations by participants.

- The formation of regional planning groups in Oklahoma is a high priority for water users across the state. Organizing these groups by a shared water resource (i.e., watershed or aquifer, rather than counties or other political boundaries) received support from many participants.
- Oklahomans support OWRB and their role to enforce the statutory requirements of their water rights administration program. It is a shared belief among many participants that improving this program will make the permitting process more efficient while protecting existing and future water rights holders.
- It is widely recognized that more funding is needed to support water local projects and programs throughout Oklahoma with current and potential future programs.

During the 2024 Governor's Water Conference (November 2024) and the Round 5 Regional Meetings, participants were asked to provide feedback on proposed funding ideas for water infrastructure and planning across the state. The 2025 OCWP team sought feedback on ideas considered and/or implemented from other states, information that had been proposed in previous rounds of regional meetings, and any other funding ideas participants identified. Support for the following funding ideas garnered the greatest level of support from participants.

- Dedicate funds from gambling taxes/proceeds
- Implement new taxes and/or fees on the amount of water used or on water-impacting activities
- Raise or remove the cap on Gross Production Tax funding directed to OWRB
- New fees on water recreation activities, oil and gas production, water permit application, water use
- New taxes or fees on bottled water or all plastic bottles, tourism, medical marijuana, voluntary (water related) activities, large users, property, new developments

SECTION 3 OTHER STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

In addition to the regional meetings, the OCWP team members frequently met with individuals and entities to collect data, brainstorm solutions to water challenges, and/or request feedback.

- **Foundational Listening Sessions:** Representatives from OWRB, USACE, and its consultants met with water users in two different sessions in June 2021 to discuss the vision and goals of the 2025 OCWP update through a 2012 OCWP recap and presentation of the Programmatic Work Plan (PWP) for the 2025 OCWP. Attendees participated in breakout groups (organized by water use sector) to provide feedback on the PWP and express what information they want to receive/use from the 2025 OCWP update.
- **Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Meetings:** Representatives from OWRB, USACE, and its consultants met with BIA-invited water users in two different sessions in June 2021 to discuss the vision and goals of the 2025 OCWP update through a 2012 update recap and presentation of the PWP. Attendees met in water use sector breakout groups to provide feedback on the PWP and express what information they want to receive/use from the 2025 OCWP update.
- **Chickasaw Nation, Choctaw Nation, and Cherokee Nation Meetings:** Representatives from OWRB and its consultants met with the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations in June 2021 on the vision and goals for the 2025 OCWP update. Tribal representatives were asked to provide feedback on the PWP and share what types of information they want to see and eventually use from this 2025 OCWP update. Additionally, OWRB and its consultants met with representatives from the Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Cherokee Nations in May 2023 to discuss collaboration possibilities during the development of the 2025 OCWP. During the meeting, a brief status update of the 2025 OCWP was provided along with the concept of an Oklahoma Water Collaborative, collaboration discussions, and 2025 OCWP regional meetings. Numerous follow-up conversations were held with representatives from these tribal nations about infrastructure projects and successful water initiatives/programs.
- **Professional Organization Presentations:** Throughout the development of the 2025 OCWP, water users and industry professionals were given updates on the progress of the update at various professional organizations' conferences. The following list captures many of the settings where the 2025 OCWP team provided an update:
 - Oklahoma Governor's Water Conference: November 2023, November 2024, and December 2025.
 - American Public Works Association, Oklahoma Chapter and Oklahoma Water Environment Association Joint Technical Conference & Trade Show: May 2023, May 2024, and May 2025.
 - Oklahoma Municipal Utility Providers Water & Environmental Summit: May 2022 and April 2025.
 - Southwest Section, American Water Works Association Annual Conference: October 2024.
 - Oklahoma Rural Water Association (ORWA): August 2021, April 2024, and September 2024.
 - Interstate Council on Water Policy Annual Meeting: September 2023 and October 2024.
 - Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts State Meeting: February 2024.
 - Environmental Federation of Oklahoma Annual Meeting: October 2023.
- **Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR): Socially Sustainable Solutions for Water, Carbon, and Infrastructure Resilience in Oklahoma (S3OK) Meetings:** Researchers associated with this Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis at the University of Oklahoma project participated in numerous OCWP meetings. Members of the OCWP project team served on the S3OK's Opinion Leaders Advisory Network and several of their water related focus groups, as well as provided feedback on the Public Survey (<https://crcm.shinyapps.io/s3ok/#section-explore-survey>) questions when requested.

SECTION 4 SURVEYS

The development of the 2025 OCWP was informed and supported by the following survey vehicles.

- Public Survey
- Water Supply and Infrastructure Needs (WSIN) Survey
- Local Projects and Programs (LPP) Survey

4.1 Public Survey

A critical component of the 2025 OCWP was to engage the public and water stakeholders across the state to produce a plan that addresses the water-related challenges and needs that are most important to Oklahomans. The Public Survey aimed to gather comments on the 2025 update, regardless of how involved the respondent was with other elements of the OCWP engagement process. Altogether, 479 responses were collected. Complete survey results are provided in Appendix F. The following include key takeaways from these results.

- Most respondents suggested that they were very concerned or extremely concerned about water shortages, drinking water quality, and surface water quality in the short- (0 to 10 years) and long-term (20 to 50 years).
- Improving drinking water security, preparing for droughts, and improving water quality monitoring were ranked as the three most important activities in planning for the future of Oklahoma's water.
- High level summaries/fact sheets, geospatial/mapping data, and interactive online dashboards were ranked as the most useful types of data, respectively, when accessing OCWP information.
- Visiting a website, reading digital materials, and attending a local, in-person workshop were ranked as the best formats for data sharing.

4.2 Water Supply and Infrastructure Needs Survey

The WSIN Survey gathered information on historical population, water use information, water workforce, and infrastructure needs from communities across Oklahoma. There were approximately 54 responses to the WSIN Survey; not all respondents provided 2020 water use data. Results were used to support the water demand forecast, infrastructure needs evaluation, and the workforce workgroup. Infrastructure needs responses were primarily collected for inclusion in the OWRB Infrastructure Needs by Legislative District Dashboard (<https://oklahoma.gov/owrb/water-planning.html>). Additionally, some of the information contributed to the development of the drinking water infrastructure needs evaluation. The WSIN Survey was modeled after the Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey conducted by the United States (US) Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to complete their 7th Report to Congress (<https://www.epa.gov/dwsrf/epas-7th-drinking-water-infrastructure-needs-survey-and-assessment>).

The WSIN Survey was sent out in December 2022, and responses were collected through October 2023 as listed in Table 1. Survey responses received through October 2023 were used to develop demand projections for the Public Supply water use sector.

Table 1 Water Providers That Provided 2020 Water Use through WSIN Survey

Town of Alex	Alfalfa County RWD #1	City of Ames
Bernice Public Works Authority	Caddo Public Works Authority	Town of Carney
City of Checotah	Town of Cheyenne	Town of Cleo Springs
City of Cleveland	City of Clinton	Town of Davenport

City of Edmond	Town of Elgin	City of Fairview
Town of Goodwell	Jet Public Works Authority	Johnston Co Rural Water District #3
Marietta Public Works Authority	Town of Muldrow	City of Norman
Nowata Municipal Authority	Piedmont Municipal Authority	Porum Public Works Authority
Quinlan Community RWD #1	Town of Ralston	Rogers County RWD #4
City of Shidler	City of Stigler	Town of Taloga
Thomas Public Works Authority	Tulsa Metropolitan Water Authority	City of Waynoka
City of Welch		

Results from the workforce questions are summarized below. These key takeaways were used in the development of the Water Workforce Action Plan by the Water Workforce Workgroup, which is further discussed in Section 6.2.

- Most respondents had either less than five, or between five and ten total employee positions in their organization.
- Most respondents reported few or no vacant positions.
- Over the next 5 years, an overwhelming majority of respondents anticipate having to hire five people or less. They expect to see a similar number of retirements in the next 5 years among their staff.
- The primary reasons for employees leaving their organizations are a desire to leave the water industry, retirement, and find other positions.
- Lack of interest, lack of necessary technical skills, and knowledge of the water profession are the top three anticipated hurdles limiting organizational replacement and growth.

4.3 Local Projects and Programs Survey

The LPP Survey was developed to expand upon the WSIN Survey to further collect more infrastructure needs information from communities across Oklahoma. The LPP Survey asked entities to provide project information regarding current, planned, and needed construction projects for their system. Further data for the LPP Survey was collected from priority project lists from the ODEQ, the Intended Use Plan from OWRB, unfunded American Rescue Plan Act projects, responses to the USEPA Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Clean Watersheds Needs Survey, and others for the LPP Survey. Responses were primarily collected for inclusion in the OWRB Infrastructure Needs by Legislative District Dashboard (<https://oklahoma.gov/owrb/water-planning.html>). Additionally, some of the information contributed to the projected drinking water infrastructure needs evaluation. See the *2025 OCWP Technical Summary Report* (available at <https://oklahoma.gov/owrb/water-planning.html>) for further details on this evaluation.

Of the state's nearly 900 public water suppliers, nearly 400 provided input in the LPP Survey regarding water, wastewater, and stormwater projects. Near-term costs, summarized in Table 2, include drinking water and wastewater projects by public utilities (various system sizes) and other entities (such as conservancy districts, department of wildlife, regional councils, and tourism). All State Flood Plan projects in the database were identified by public water suppliers. All told, more than \$24 billion of water, wastewater, and stormwater/floodwater projects are necessary in the near term.

Table 2 Near-Term Infrastructure Needs⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾⁽³⁾

Region	Drinking Water Project Needs Survey Near-Term Cost (\$M)	Wastewater Project Needs Survey Near-Term Cost (\$M)	State Flood Plan Project Needs Survey Near-Term Cost (\$M)
Beaver-Cache	\$677	\$691	\$0
Blue-Boggy	\$436	\$392	\$0
Central	\$5,281	\$1,100	\$152
Eufaula	\$122	\$235	\$33
Grand	\$295	\$231	\$0
Lower Arkansas	\$410	\$419	\$5
Lower Washita	\$870	\$415	\$24
Middle Arkansas	\$4,070	\$1,400	\$463
Northwest	\$362	\$302	\$0
Southeast	\$388	\$383	\$0
Southwest	\$645	\$593	\$13
Upper Arkansas	\$2,637	\$386	\$19
West Central	\$393	\$273	\$0.4
TOTAL	\$16,585	\$6,819	\$709
GRAND TOTAL	\$24,113		

Notes:

- (1) Source: [OWRB Activities and Infrastructure Needs by Legislative District](#), accessed August 12, 2025.
- (2) Costs in millions of 2024 dollars.
- (3) Represents compiled responses received between 2020 and 2024.

SECTION 5 FOCUS BASIN ASSESSMENT

Focus Basins (FB) across Oklahoma were identified in areas that have significant water supply challenges under current and/or projected future conditions. A basin was selected from the Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, and Southeast meeting regions to represent challenges statewide and explore a range of potential local solutions.

A series of two meetings was held in each FB to better understand the area's challenges and solution feasibility from local stakeholders' point of view. Discussions informed of the preliminary regional recommendations that were presented in Regional Meeting Round 5. Table 3 shows the seven categories of WMS evaluated for each of the 82 basins, and the specific WMS in each category that were discussed in the FB conversations. The first round of FB meetings (July 2024) was held to understand the potential effectiveness of each category of WMS in the FB. Discussions in the second round (September 2024) focused on specific WMS feasibility. Figure 5 shows the locations of FBs and the reason for their selection.

Table 3 Water Management Strategies

WMS Assessed Statewide	WMS Assessed for FB (Sub-WMS)	Applicable Demand Sectors	Description / Example of Sub-WMS
Demand Management	Conservation Measures	Public Supply	Consistently employed activities that result in water savings every year, regardless of water supply conditions. Examples of conservation activities include more stringent plumbing codes for low water use fixtures, community education, accurate water metering, conservation-based water rates, permanent odd/even lawn watering schedules, and programs that offer rebates or incentives to replace turfgrass with lower water-use landscaping or to replace high water use appliances and fixtures.
	Industrial Conservation	Self-Supplied Industrial, Oil & Gas, and Thermoelectric Power	Consistently employed activities that result in water savings every year, regardless of water supply conditions. Effective practices vary by facility. Examples include evaluating more efficient cooling and process water practices, water audits, and submetering.
	Water Loss Control	Public Supply	Methodical auditing of water supplies and implementing controls to minimize system losses. Utilities incur real losses from pipeline leakage and apparent losses when customer water consumption is not properly measured or billed.
	Drought Management	Public Supply	Short-term measures that reduce water use to match available supplies during times of drought by temporarily restricting certain activities such as car washing and landscape irrigation.
Agricultural Options	High-Efficiency Irrigation Equipment	Crop Irrigation	Improving the efficiency of crop irrigation systems and equipment through measures such as implementing low-energy, precision application systems, real-time irrigation monitoring and control systems, soil moisture probes, water meters, and electrified pumps into a producer's irrigation practices.
	Operational Changes	Crop Irrigation	Implementing changes to crop irrigation operations that reduce the overall water usage. Examples include irrigation scheduling tools, growing lower water-use crops, and fallowing a parcel of land (permanently or through a rotating fallowing program or other alternative management strategies involving multiple producers).

WMS Assessed Statewide	WMS Assessed for FB (Sub-WMS)	Applicable Demand Sectors	Description / Example of Sub-WMS
	Agricultural Reuse	Crop Irrigation	Collecting and reusing irrigation tailwater or using municipal recycled water for agricultural purposes.
Water Transfers	Out-of-Basin Supplies	All	Transferring water through pipelines and/or natural conveyances from a source in one basin to another basin.
	Water Purchases / Interconnections / Regionalization	All	Purchasing supplies from another water provider (wholesale purchase agreements). Having interconnections available for emergency, temporary, or on-going use. Infrastructure sharing, operation and maintenance activity/staff sharing, regional infrastructure solutions, and/or interconnecting or combining water systems.
Increase Reliance on Surface Water	New Reservoir	All	Construction of a new surface water storage reservoir.
	Additional Supply from Existing Reservoir	All	Convey, treat, or allocate water from an existing surface water storage reservoir.
	Rehabilitate or Expand Existing Reservoir	All	Rehabilitate or expand the capacity of an existing surface water storage reservoir to provide additional water supply.
	Relocate Surface Water Reservoir Storage	All	Reallocation of storage in an existing reservoir, e.g., reallocating a portion of the flood control pool to municipal water supply, if determined feasible and appropriate upon detailed hydrologic and hydraulic studies.
	Brackish Surface Water	All	Advanced treatment of higher salinity water sources to standards suitable for the intended use.
	Surface Water Diversion	All	Surface water use through direct diversion or riverbank wells, without reservoir storage or releases upstream from storage.
Increase Reliance on Groundwater	Additional Wells	All	Development of additional single or multiple groundwater wells (including vertical wells or horizontal collector wells).
	Brackish Groundwater	All	Advanced treatment of higher salinity water sources to standards suitable for the intended use.
	Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery	All	Recharge groundwater using injection wells or spreading basins, where water is stored for later use.

WMS Assessed Statewide	WMS Assessed for FB (Sub-WMS)	Applicable Demand Sectors	Description / Example of Sub-WMS
Stormwater Capture and Use	Stormwater Capture and Use	All	Collection, storage, and/or treatment of urban stormwater runoff for non-potable or potable uses.
Reuse	Indirect Potable Reuse	All, except Crop Irrigation which is covered above	Discharge of treated wastewater effluent into a natural water body (stream, lake, or aquifer) and subsequent diversion of that water for treatment and use as a drinking water supply source.
	Non-potable Reuse	All, except Crop Irrigation which is covered above	Conveying treated wastewater effluent directly to non-potable uses such as landscape irrigation or industrial uses after treating it to standards suitable for the use.
	Direct Potable Reuse	All, except Crop Irrigation which is covered above	Advanced treatment of wastewater effluent that is then used to augment raw water supplies to a water treatment plant or piped directly into the water distribution system without first passing through an environmental buffer such as a surface water body or groundwater aquifer.

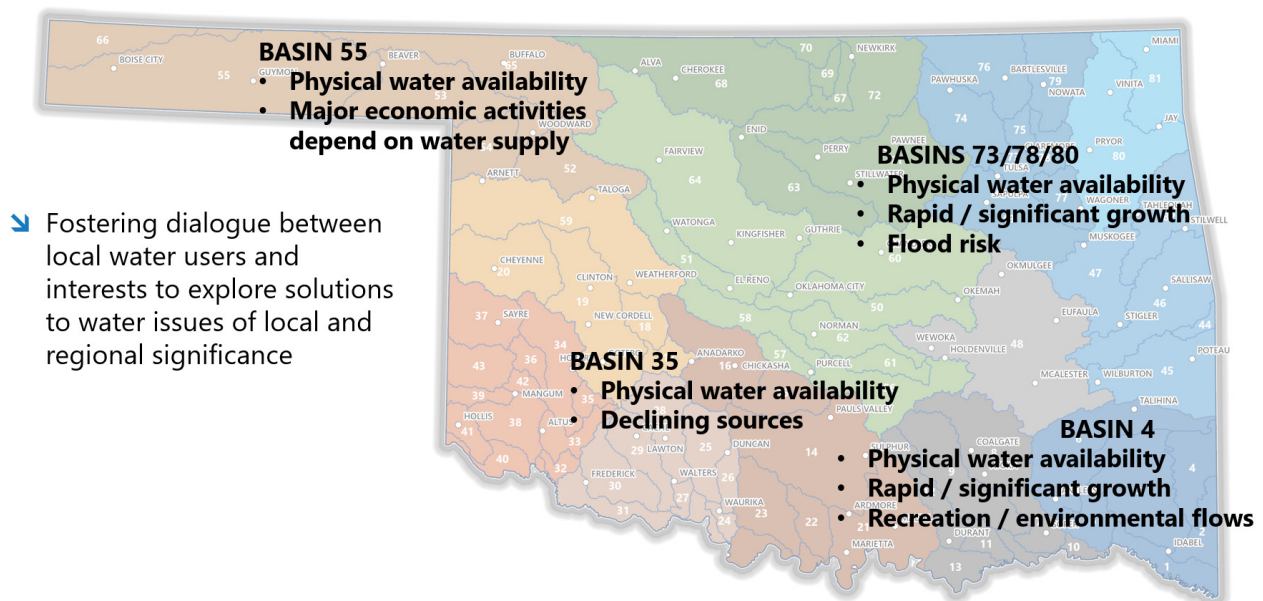


Figure 5 2025 OCWP Focus Basins

5.1 Northwest – Basin 55

Northwest – Basin 55 was selected due to its declining groundwater supply and corresponding physical water availability challenges. Many of this region's economic activities are heavily dependent upon a reliable water supply. The following outlines feedback from meeting participants on the specific WMS associated with the seven defined categories of WMS, or identified topics of concern for the FB, recognizing that there was not always consensus on the approaches discussed by the groups.

➤ Demand Management

- **Conservation Measures:** The integration of native grasses and plant species, the adoption of updated landscape ordinances, the implementation of tiered water rate structures, and reforms in educational programming were identified by FB meeting participants as viable methods for implementing this WMS. It was noted that adequate funding is required to support the staffing necessary to develop, administer, and enforce these initiatives.
- **Industrial Conservation:** Participants suggested that industries have the responsibility to continuously identify and implement measures to enhance water use efficiency.
- **Drought Management:** Participants noted that this FB and surrounding area operate under persistent drought conditions and an essentially exclusive reliance on bedrock groundwater; consequently, the implementation of additional drought mitigation measures may be limited in feasibility.
- **Water Loss Control:** Some systems have already implemented automated meter reading (AMR) technology. Participants noted that funding is needed to expand AMR and water loss control education initiatives in the area. One funding suggestion is to raise the cap on the Rural Economic Action Plan Grant program.

➤ Agricultural Options

- **High-Efficiency Irrigation Equipment:** Many producers in Basin 55 already utilize the most efficient equipment currently available; however, some producers are either unwilling to adopt new technologies or lack the financial resources necessary to transition to more efficient irrigation systems. As technology continues to evolve, this strategy area presents ongoing opportunities for future improvements and funding assistance.
- **Operational Changes:** Participation in educational initiatives, such as Oklahoma State University's Master Irrigator Program, was identified by FB participants as an effective means of preparing producers to implement these changes. Participants suggested that they would need funding assistance to support expanding educational offerings, establishing and operating irrigation districts and developing decision-support tools and equipment, including soil moisture probes, satellite-based analyses, and irrigation modeling technologies.
- **Agricultural Reuse:** Participants believed that there was a limited opportunity in the FB and surrounding area to pursue this on a large scale due to infrastructure required for implementation. Many individual operations have implemented onsite water reuse.

➤ Water Reuse

- **Non-Potable Reuse:** Participants believed that advancing this form of water reuse has encountered less public resistance than potable reuse.
- **Direct Potable Reuse:** Some FB participants noted that funding is required to support community engagement efforts aimed at enhancing public awareness and acceptance, and developing dedicated capital improvement projects (CIP). Funding for CIPs is frequently prioritized for water line replacement and other critical infrastructure needs.
- **Indirect Potable Reuse:** Participants noted limited location availability for water supply augmentation in the FB and surrounding areas. Similar to direct potable reuse, a funding need was identified to support community engagement efforts and CIPs.

5.2 Southwest – Basin 35

Southwest – Basin 35 was selected due to its physical water availability challenges and declining water supply sources. Comments on the following strategies were provided by meeting participants, with the understanding that there was not always consensus on the approaches discussed.

➤ Demand Management

- Conservation Measures: FB participants expressed a preference to expanding conservation education and volunteer conservation, rather enforcement of conservation measures. These participants suggested that implementation of regional planning groups could potentially facilitate the adoption of conservation practices.
- Water Loss Control: Participants suggested that some systems in the FB and surrounding area recognize that they are losing water; however, many are only able to address this upon an emergency and/or funding availability. Funding for leak detection studies was identified by FB participants as a need to support this sub-WMS.
- Drought Management: Drought action plans were suggested by FB participants as an incentive for project funding. Some participants noted regional coordination should be a component incorporated into such plans.

➤ Agricultural Options

- High-Efficiency Irrigation Equipment: Participants suggested potentially using voluntary groundwater use measurement (like flow meters) and participation in education programs as funding incentives.
- Operational Changes: Modifications to irrigation scheduling, the use of soil moisture probes, and the use of alternative crops were noted as feasible by FB participants, but an education and funding barrier currently limits implementation. Establishing self-governing groundwater irrigation management districts would help mitigate gaps in knowledge sharing regarding management practices and available funding opportunities.

➤ Water Transfers

- Out-of-Basin Supplies: Some FB participants noted that water transfers from other basins within the state represent the most direct alternative source of water. These participants noted barriers which include cost, elevation changes, distance, political considerations, and the treatment of water originating from an alternative source. The development of regional plans was recommended to facilitate knowledge exchange, funding opportunities, and resource sharing statewide. Participants noted that plans should prioritize the allocation of water for community needs over commercial interests.
- Regionalization: Expanding educational efforts was identified by participants as a method to encourage systems to adopt regionalization. Efforts would include highlighting success stories and providing step-by-step guidance. Further, participants suggested that quantifying community needs would support funding acquisition, although they recognized that interconnections among water systems, both raw and treated, strengthen community water resilience. Some participants noted regionalization barriers such as limited political momentum, historically independent small systems, and legal constraints.

5.3 Southeast – Basin 4

Southeast – Basin 4 was selected due to its physical water availability challenges, declining water supply sources, rapid/significant service area growth, and construction in the floodway. Suggested water solutions and actions are outlined below, recognizing that there was not always consensus on the approaches discussed.

➤ Demand Management

- **Conservation Measures:** Conserving water was often noted as the most cost-effective approach to saving water by FB participants, and it was suggested that utilities can easily modify their building codes and increase brush control measures to do so. Expansion of the soil conservation service program for fire and water was supported, but funding for additional staff is needed for implementation.
- **Water Loss Control:** Participants believed that water loss projects should be identified at the regional level and prioritized to more effectively facilitate funding. It was noted that projects should require enhanced oversight and technical support during construction, as improper pipe installation has been shown to contribute to water loss.

➤ Increase Reliance on In-Basin Groundwater

- **Managed Aquifer Recharge and Recovery:** It was suggested by FB participants for OWRB to identify a methodology that defines aquifer recharge areas and conduct feasibility studies and that incentives should be used to encourage recharge but limited by water use. Efforts would eventually need to involve coordination with Texas since the Antlers Aquifer crosses state lines.

➤ Stormwater Capture and Use

- Some participants suggested focusing on the use of captured stormwater for non-potable demands to limit treatment needs. Coordination with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation would be needed for the use of state highways as a supply source, especially in rural areas. Overall, participants thought capturing stormwater should help improve local surface water quality.

➤ Surface Water / Groundwater Interactions

- Participants believed that data should be collected to better characterize interactions between surface water and alluvial groundwater, supporting proactive water resource management. Current water law and funding limitations were identified as barriers to conducting these studies.
- Developing interstate compacts for groundwater (e.g., with Texas) was identified as a need by FB participants.
- Participants expressed that there is a need to establish a definition of non-consumptive flow for the state. It was suggested that this could be accomplished through a 2025 OCWP recommendation, or alternatively through a stakeholder action group.
- Participants believe that education programs should be developed for the FB on land management, soil health, best management practices, water sources, and the value of water to stress the importance of surface water and groundwater interactions.
- Potential measures to promote non-consumptive flows through non-legislative action was identified as a need by participants.

5.4 Northeast – Basins 73, 78, and 80

Northeast – Basins 73, 78, and 80 were selected due to their physical water availability challenges, high flood risk, and rapid/significant service area growth. Suggested water solutions and actions are outlined below, recognizing that there was not always consensus on the approaches discussed.

➤ Demand Management

- **Water Loss Control:** Improper pipe installation has been identified by FB participants as a significant contributor to water loss within the FB. Enhanced enforcement of pipe construction inspection requirements was said to reduce water loss. All systems should possess the knowledge necessary to implement stringent construction inspections, regardless of funding source. FB participants believed that widespread installation of AMR should be considered to efficiently identify leak locations and satellite-based leak detection surveys could be conducted individually or collaboratively with neighboring systems. Onsite leak detection evaluations were noted to be available in the FB, and demand for these services is high. These participants suggested sustained funding for leak detection equipment and water loss control measures are essential to support long-term water loss management.
- **Industrial Conservation:** Some participants suggested that OWRB should provide general guidelines and/or requirements for industrial conservation.

➤ Water Reuse

- **Indirect Potable Reuse:** It was suggested by participants that recycled municipal water sourced from water resource recovery facilities could be purified for purposes of augmenting potable supply sources
- **Non-Potable Reuse:** Continuing and expanding upon industrial onsite reuse was encouraged by FB participants. Coordination with private entities will be necessary to balance cost and process control.

➤ Stormwater Capture and Use

- Stormwater was noted by participants as potential supply for potable water augmentation or groundwater recharge if captured. They recognized that significant changes would need to be made to storage and conveyance infrastructure to make this feasible.

➤ Water Transfers

- **Regionalization:** Participants believed that regionalization must provide mutually beneficial outcomes for all participating water providers for execution to be feasible. It was said that larger providers assume most of the financial burden associated with system consolidation and require additional funding to support future feasibility. Further, expanded educational efforts that emphasize the shared benefits and collaborative nature of regionalization were supported by participants and noted to mitigate concerns among smaller providers. The development of decision-making tools was suggested to support small systems in determining if and when regionalization is appropriate. Treatment costs associated with emerging water contaminants were noted to potentially necessitate regionalization for many providers. Participants suggested that specific funding programs should be established to support utilities seeking consolidation and could be leveraged as an incentive for project funding across various programs.

SECTION 6 OCWP WORKGROUPS

As part of developing the 2025 OCWP Update, OWRB convened and facilitated a series of workgroups. Each workgroup was charged with investigating challenges and opportunities associated with a particular element of water management applicable to many or all parts of the state. Workgroup activities are summarized in the following sections and in workgroup fact sheets (Appendix G).

6.1 Source Water

Source water protection (SWP) is a proven strategy to reduce water treatment costs, improve water quality for communities and ecosystems, and protect water for recreational uses, aesthetics, and tourism. To better understand SWP efforts in the state, the Oklahoma Source Water Collaborative (SWC) was developed through a multi-agency collaborative effort in conjunction with the 2025 OCWP. As part of the 2025 OCWP Water Supplies and Storage recommendation, it is recommended that the Oklahoma SWC Workgroup continue and coordinate implementation of identified priority actions as funding is available. Priorities were identified as follows:

- Identify ongoing SWP efforts of all scales to optimize collaboration
- Gather and share applicable lessons learned
- Facilitate and provide opportunities for collaboration across stakeholders to optimize funding and reduce redundancy
- Combine agencies' mapping efforts to identify and prioritize source waters
- Support increased funding and public awareness to improve source water quality

Priorities were identified with the overarching goal of continuing to bring together multi-agency partners, each with SWP authority, to create synergy by leveraging shared resources and coordinating actions. The Oklahoma SWC was formed in 2021 and met 12 times through Spring 2025. This included in-person and virtual meetings with representatives from the following workgroup members.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ➤ City of Tulsa Department of Water and Sewer | ➤ ORWA |
| ➤ Groundwater Protection Council | ➤ OWRB |
| ➤ Oklahoma Conservation Commission | ➤ Source Water Collaborative (national) |
| ➤ Oklahoma Corporation Commission | ➤ Southwest Section of American Water Works Association |
| ➤ Oklahoma Department of Agriculture and Forestry | ➤ US Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency |
| ➤ ODEQ | ➤ US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| ➤ ODWC | |

Members developed a geographic information system web map (<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/>) to assist with SWP collaboration in the state (Figure 6). The assembled data comes from a variety of water quality and SWP data sets including: SWP priority areas, brownfields, hazardous waste permit sites, injection wells, land application sites, stormwater sensitive areas, abandoned oil and gas wells, nitrate maximum contaminant level violations, previous and ongoing SWP projects, drinking water source infrastructure, fish kill locations, concentrated animal feeding operation locations, and many other layers. Much of this data is linked to web-service data sources meaning it can update automatically, while other data will need to be updated periodically as new information is released (annually or semi-annually). Data sources include OWRB (<https://oklahoma.gov/owrb.html>), ODEQ (<https://www.deq.ok.gov/water-quality-division/public-water-supply/source-water-protection/>), Oklahoma Conservation Commission

(<https://conservation.ok.gov/water-quality-division/>), Oklahoma Corporation Commission (<https://oklahoma.gov/occ.html>), and ORWA (<https://orwa.org/source-water/>) datasets on the state level, and national data from the USEPA (<https://www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection>), US Geological Survey (<https://www.usgs.gov/>), Natural Resource Conservation Service (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>), and others.

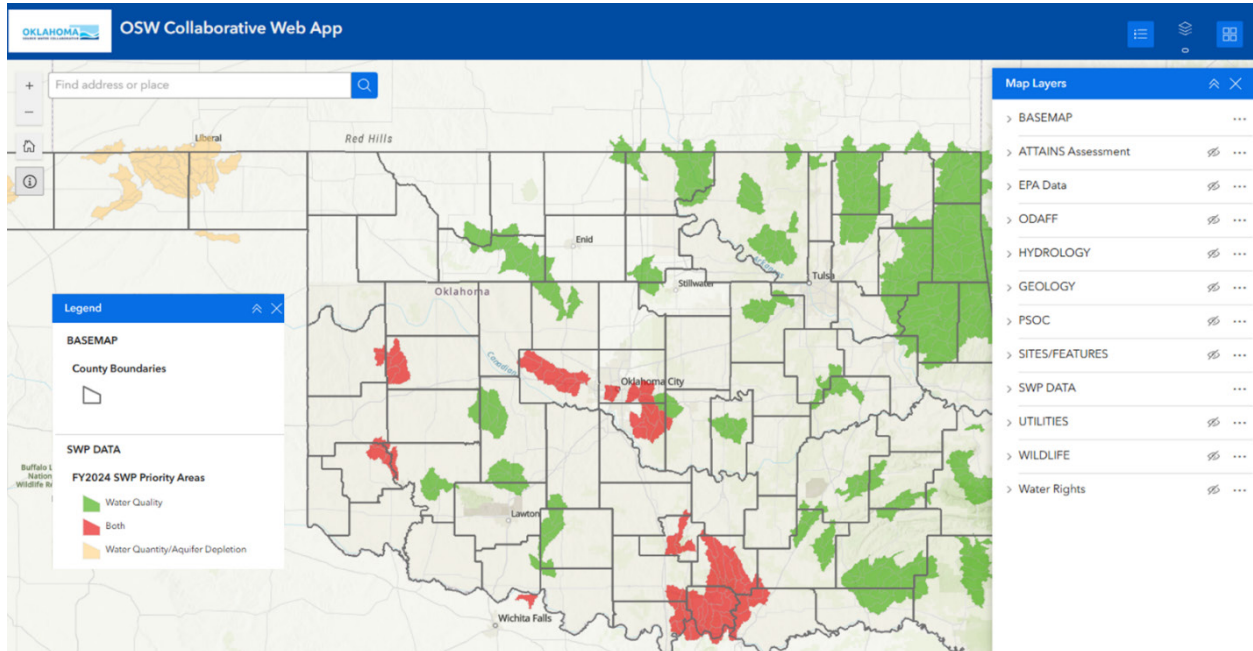


Figure 6 Oklahoma Source Water Collaborative Web Application

6.2 Water Workforce

Water professionals across Oklahoma operate, maintain, and improve the systems that deliver safe drinking water and manage wastewater, playing a key role in protecting public health. The water use sector is currently facing challenges regarding the recruitment, training, and retention of employees. One-third of water and wastewater operators in the US will be eligible to retire in the next 10 years (USEPA, 2020), and more specialized training is required for industry roles with the emergence of advanced treatment technologies. Recognizing the potential impacts of this transition, the Water Workforce Workgroup was established in 2022 and met five times through 2025 as a multi-agency collaborative effort in conjunction with the 2025 OCWP. As part of the 2025 OCWP Water Infrastructure and Workforce recommendation, it is recommended that the Water Workforce Workgroup continue and coordinate implementation of identified priority actions as funding is available. Action details and more have been detailed in the Water Workforce Action Plan.

The overarching goal of this workgroup was to identify and remove barriers that prolong the critical and unprecedented staff shortage in the water workforce. Representatives from the following workgroup members were included.

- City of Enid
- City of Tulsa Department of Water and Sewer
- Hughes Rural Water District #6
- Midwest City Public Works
- Norman Utilities Authority
- ODEQ
- Oklahoma Municipal League
- ORWA
- OWRB
- Oklahoma City Water Utilities Trust

Members identified three strategy areas as the fundamental basis for the successful growth of the water workforce in Oklahoma and developed a suite of recommended actions in each strategy area.

- Attracting New Workers (A)
- Retaining Existing Workers (R)
- Developing the Workforce (D)

The following eight actions were identified as implementation priorities.

- **A-01:** Develop Water Profession Fact Sheet(s)
- **A-10:** Participation in a local event or celebration
- **A-11:** Develop and Distribute K-12 Water Curriculum
- **D-01:** Gather and Compile Oklahoma Water Workforce Information
- **D-04:** Connect with the Oklahoma Workforce Commission
- **D-05:** Develop a Water Workforce Coalition
- **D-06:** Declare a "Water Sector Professional Career Day"
- **R-04:** Develop Operator Training Course

As part of priority Action A-01, the workgroup developed the "Working in Water" brochure designed for use by water stakeholders to attract new workers to the water industry. The brochure briefly describes a variety of water professions, typical qualifications, and average salary (Appendix H.1). Additionally, work was completed on Action A-11 with the development of the "Water is for Your Classroom, Too!" brochure as a quick start resource guide for integrating water curriculum into the K-12 classroom. This brochure includes brief descriptions and links to six classroom activities that allow students to explore the water cycle, treatment, and distribution aspects of the water industry (Appendix H.2).

6.3 Irrigated Agriculture

Crop irrigation is the largest consumptive water use sector in Oklahoma and water demands are projected to increase 14 percent by 2075. In 2024, Oklahoma's food and agriculture sector contributed to over 640,000 jobs and \$10 billion in business taxes ([Feeding the Economy](#)). In 2022, agriculture production and processing industries represented 2.5 percent of the total state gross domestic product (University of Arkansas, <https://economic-impact-of-ag.uada.edu/oklahoma/>). The Southwest and Northwest Irrigated Agriculture workgroups were formed to discuss water related concerns, challenges, and needs, and to explore mitigation options. These workgroups were formed in 2022 and met approximately five times through 2023. The overarching goal of both workgroups was to 1) define a path towards more sustainable groundwater reliance that maintains landowner rights and farm and ranch income; and 2) support data collection, education and outreach, and funding for implementation of projects that reduce water. Representatives from the following workgroup members were included.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ➤ Agricultural producers | ➤ Oklahoma Panhandle Agriculture and Irrigation Association |
| ➤ Lugert-Altus Irrigation District | ➤ Oklahoma State University |
| ➤ Oklahoma Conservation Commission | ➤ OWRB |
| ➤ Oklahoma Department of Agriculture and Forestry | ➤ US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| ➤ Oklahoma Farm Bureau | |

Discussions within these groups focused on long-term holistic planning to improve agriculture longevity and irrigation efficiency in Oklahoma. Some resources that the workgroups discussed include the Sustainable Southwest Beef Project (<https://southwestbeef.org/>), Water-Level Changes in the Ogallala Panhandle Aquifer report (<https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/owrb/documents/science-and-research/hydrologic-investigations/ogallala-panhandle-water-level-changes-1982-2022.pdf>), details on Texas and Nebraska local groundwater irrigation district formation, and the Master Irrigator Program (<https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/master-irrigator/>) at Oklahoma State University. Through their discussions, three key areas of success were identified.

- The need for local management structures and regionalized planning to identify locally preferred and locally tailored solutions
- Broader stakeholder inclusion of other water users, industries, and community leadership
- Education geared towards better management, more accurate data collection, and broader, real-time groundwater monitoring data

It is not recommended that the Southwest and Northwest Irrigated Agriculture workgroups continue, as many workgroup members joined the Northwest and Southwest FB groups. Rather, it is recommended that the Northwest and Southwest FB groups (or members of these groups) continue to provide input as the Southwest and Northwest regional recommendations are explored and implemented as funding is available.

6.4 Water Reuse

The Oklahoma Water Reuse Workgroup was developed through a multi-agency collaborative effort in conjunction with the 2025 OCWP to identify strategies to facilitate additional water reuse in Oklahoma. Water reuse is a proven strategy for efficiently using locally available supplies; its implementation necessarily reflects site specific needs, economics, values and priorities. Reuse was identified as a potentially viable water management strategy in 31 OCWP planning basins to help address projected local water shortages. It is recommended that this workgroup continue and coordinate implementation of identified priority actions as funding is available, as part of the 2025 OCWP Water Supplies and Storage recommendation.

The overarching goal of this group is to identify and address implementation challenges for water reuse, such that reuse of any type is a viable option for water users. There is no intent to mandate water reuse, but it should be a viable path for those that want to consider and/or implement it. The workgroup began meeting in 2022 and continued meeting generally quarterly through 2024. Representatives from the following workgroup members were included.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ➤ Chickasaw Nation | ➤ Oklahoma Conservation Commission |
| ➤ City of Bartlesville | ➤ Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry |
| ➤ City of Duncan | ➤ Oklahoma State University |
| ➤ City of Guymon | ➤ ORWA |
| ➤ EPA | ➤ OWRB |
| ➤ Norman Utilities Authority | ➤ University of Oklahoma |
| ➤ ODEQ | |
| ➤ Oklahoma City Water Utilities Trust | |

Members of the workgroup worked collaboratively to identify hurdles and develop actions that could help remove roadblocks for the facilitation of all water reuse types, including but not limited to municipal non-potable water reuse, municipal potable water reuse, agricultural water reuse, and industrial water reuse. The workgroup tackled current reuse challenges in five strategic areas. Subcommittees identified drivers, barriers, and goals for each area, and a suite of actions necessary to advance reuse in each. The five areas included: Economic (E), Organizational (O), Regulatory (R), Social (S), and Technical & Training (T). The following ten actions were identified as implementation priorities.

- **E-02:** Develop fact sheet on existing state and federal funding programs that are geared toward or suitable for funding reuse projects
- **E-05:** Develop information that illustrates economic benefits of providing water suitable for intended purpose
- **O-01:** Create a top level Inter-organizational Reuse Team; Identify persons within each supporting agency with expertise and capacity to advance water reuse in Oklahoma
- **R-01:** Prepare concise guidance document or fact sheet summarizing current legal ability to reuse municipal return flows and receive credit for augmenting supplies with recycled water
- **R-04:** Evaluate what-if scenarios to assess water availability implications of additional reuse, using Oklahoma's updated H2O Tool
- **S-01:** Organize an Interagency Water Reuse Education and Outreach Team
- **S-03a:** Compile existing education materials from across the nation and adapt them for use in Oklahoma
- **S-05:** Evaluate and track how the perception of reuse is changing over time (statewide and/or targeted communities)
- **T-04:** Identify indirect/direct potable reuse demonstrations and full-scale systems (Oklahoma/ adjoining states) that could host technical tours/training for operators and regulators
- **T-05:** Develop a Frequently Asked Questions/fact sheet highlighting examples of successful reuse across multiple types of reuse (e.g., municipal, agricultural, industrial)

Action fact sheets were developed for each implementation priority. Further details about the workgroup and its recommendations are documented in the Oklahoma Water Reuse Action Plan.