Recognizing Nonconsumptive Water Needs and Supporting Recreational & Local Economic Interests

The process developed by the OCWP Instream Flow Workgroup should be implemented and followed to ascertain the suitability and structure of such a program for Oklahoma, with such process commencing in 2012 and concluding by 2015, as outlined by the Workgroup.

# Why Address Instream Flows?:

- Significant interest in value of non-consumptive uses of water, especially related to recreation & tourism (Oklahoma's 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest industry):
  - Tourism industry generates more than \$6.1 billion/year.
  - Fish/wildlife-relatedrecreationists spend \$1.3billion/year

- Associated factors related to ecological integrity, endangered species, interstate compact compliance, etc.
  - Consistent with holistic water planning principles and in calculating excess/surplus water.

#### "Instream Flow" Definitions:

- OCWP/Workgroup:
  - The amount of water set aside in a stream or river to ensure downstream environmental, social and economic benefits are met.
- Senate Bill 2 (Texas):
  - Flow conditions necessary for supporting a sound ecological environment in the river basin.

#### **Existing Policy:**

- Current OWRB rule seeks to protect domestic uses through a set-aside of 6 acre-feet of water/year per 160 acres of land
- OWRB has established a 50 cfs minimum flow requirement in a portion of Barren Fork Creek (established through OSU study)

#### **OCWP Instream Flow Advisory Group:**

- 5 meetings between February-December 2010
- Technical analysis of various instream flow methods
- Analysis of regulation and potential implementation
- Review of successful and unsuccessful programs in other states/countries

#### **Members from variety of interests:**

**OK Water Resources Board** 

**OK Department of Environmental Quality** 

**OK Conservation Commission** 

**OK Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry** 

Office of the Secretary of Environment

**Bureau of Reclamation** 

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** 

**OK Department of Wildlife Conservation** 

**U.S. Geological Survey** 

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service** 

Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association

Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association

**Cherokee Nation** 

**Oklahoma Rural Water Association** 

Oklahoma Municipal League

**Environmental Federation of Oklahoma** 

Oklahoma Farm Bureau

The Nature Conservancy

**Chesapeake Energy Corporation** 

**State Chamber of Commerce** 

**Oklahoma State Parks** 

### Supported by OCWP Technical Analyses:

- Generally recognized the importance of nonconsumptive water uses (recreation, tourism, etc.) to state and local economies.
- Instream and environmental flows specifically investigated by OCWP workgroup.
- Developed water use models that can be used on the local level to incorporate nonconsumptive demands and adjust management schemes accordingly.

#### Implementation Costs = \$ 1.5 million over 4 years

#### Recommended Timeline

Rec 1: Legal and policy questions

Rec 2: Other flow protection methods

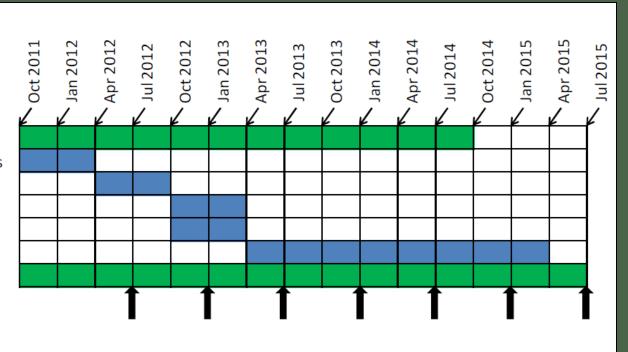
Rec 3: Draft methodology

Rec 4a: Cost of studies

Rec 4b: Economic impacts

Rec 5: Pilot study

Rec 6: Advisory Group activities



Policy investigation Technical investigation

Reporting requirement