

# Instream/Environmental Flows

## Recognizing Nonconsumptive Water Needs and Supporting Recreational & Local Economic Interests

### FINAL RECOMMENDATION:

*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.*

# Instream/Environmental Flows

## 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-related recreationists spend \$1.3 billion/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/Environmental Flows

## “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.*

# Instream/Environmental Flows

## 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)

# Instream/Environmental Flows

## **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**

# Instream/Environmental Flows

## **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.

# Instream/Environmental Flows

Implementation Costs = \$ 1.5 million over 4 years

## Recommended Timeline

