

# ISF Advisory Workgroup Update

## Development of an Instream Flow Methodology for Oklahoma



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State of Oklahoma  
**OWRB**  
WATER RESOURCES BOARD  
the water agency

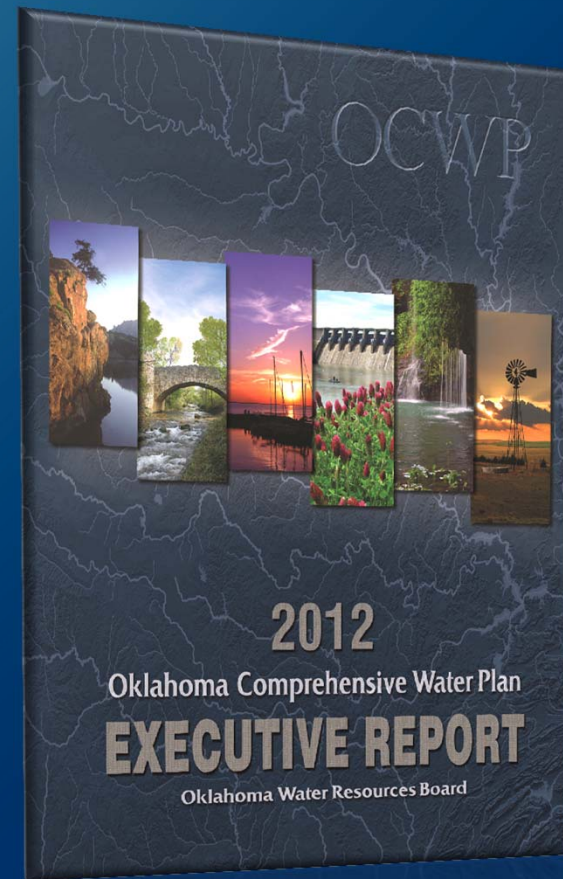
# Development of an Instream Flow Methodology for Oklahoma

- Determining the suitability of an ISF program for Oklahoma requires an understanding of potential benefits and effects, including considerations related to existing water rights and future appropriations for consumptive uses.
- Recognize nonconsumptive water needs and supporting recreational and local economic interests.

# Instream/Environmental Flows in Oklahoma

## Background

- Investigated as part of the 2012 Update of the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan.
- OWRB convened Instream Flow Advisory Group to discuss benefits and issues regarding a potential state instream flow program.



# ISF Background

## Advisory Group Members

- OK Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry
- OK Dept. of Environmental Quality
- OK Dept. of Wildlife Conservation
- OK Dept. of Tourism
- State Chamber
- OK Conservation Commission
- OK Secretary of Environment
- City of Oklahoma City
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- US Geological Survey
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Cherokee Nation
- OK Farm Bureau
- OK Rural Water Association
- OK Municipal League
- OK Independent Petroleum Association
- OK Cattlemen's Association
- Environmental Federation of OK
- Chesapeake Energy
- Nature Conservancy
- Devon Energy
- Public Service Company of OK
- Oklahomans for Responsible Water Policy
- OK Sierra Club

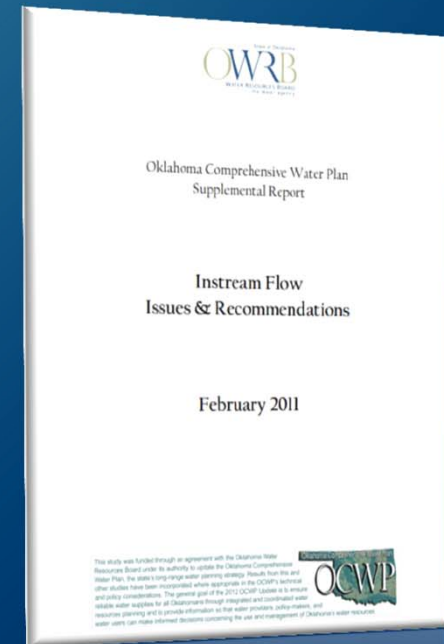


# ISF Background Advisory Group Recommendations

- Advisory Group's subsequent report (2011) outlined a potential process instream flow process for Oklahoma, which was further incorporated into one of eight OCWP Priority Recommendations



**Priority  
Recommendation**



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

# ISF Background Advisory Group

- Reconvened in March 2013:
  - Four meetings to date



# OCWP Instream Flow Workgroup Recommended Process

Address the legal and policy questions

Study other mechanisms for protecting instream flows

Develop a draft methodology for ISF studies in Oklahoma

Conduct a study on the economics of instream flows in Oklahoma

Conduct an instream flow pilot study in a scenic river

Preserve the Instream Flow Advisory Group

# Investigating an ISF Program for Oklahoma

## Pertinent Issues

1. Other state ISF programs vary but are generally focused on meeting a combination of downstream flow needs (primarily through regulatory mechanisms and permitting programs):
  - existing uses and agreements (existing permitted withdrawals, water rights, and/or compacts),
  - recreation,
  - navigation, and
  - maintenance of aquatic resources and wildlife.



# Investigating an ISF Program for Oklahoma

## Pertinent Issues

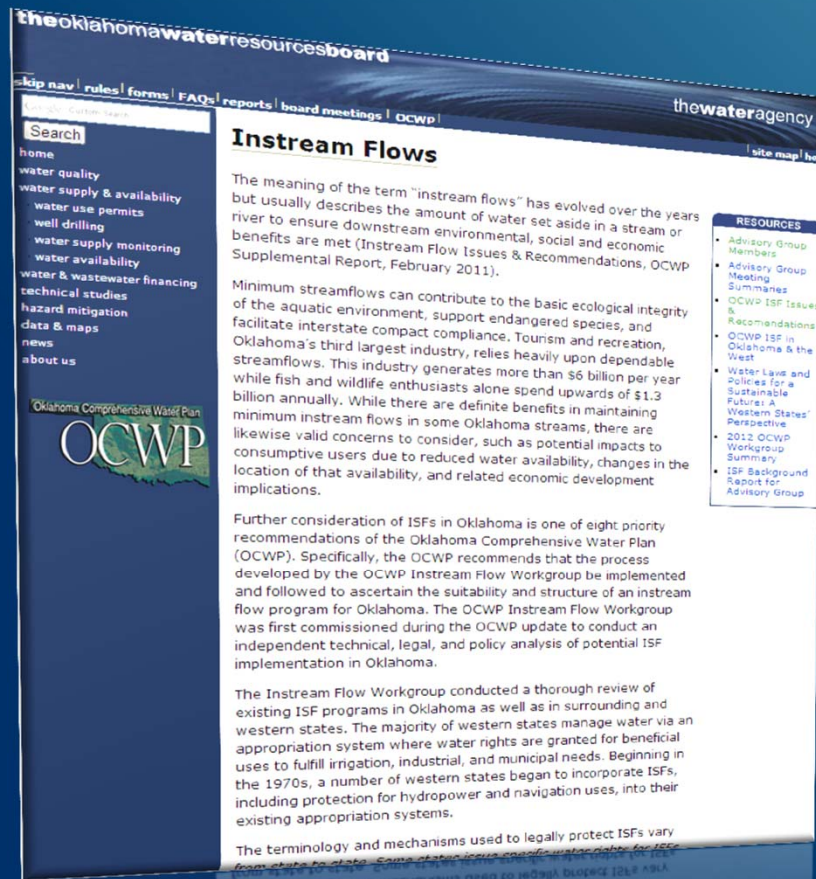
2. Oklahoma water law does not specifically identify “instream flows,” but elements of the water appropriations law provide protection of existing downstream domestic uses.
  - The Scenic Rivers Act also requires OWRB to consider flows for the protection of recreation and natural resources when reviewing potential withdrawals from designated streams:
    - OWRB rule establishes a minimum flow requirement on Barren Fork Creek.

# Investigating an ISF Program for Oklahoma

## Pertinent Issues

3. Potential mechanisms, based on current laws and requirements in Oklahoma that may provide a framework for implementation of ISF:
  - domestic use set asides
  - Scenic Rivers Act
  - interstate water compacts

# OCWP Instream Flow Advisory Group Website



[www.owrb.ok.gov/ISF](http://www.owrb.ok.gov/ISF)