

Groundwater in Oklahoma

These excerpts from Oklahoma newspapers help illustrate how important ground water resources are to a community. Metropolitan communities in central Oklahoma are growing very rapidly and need dependable sources of good water. Local communities want to keep resources for the potential growth they expect and want. The lease and sale of water rights means income for the landowners, who by Oklahoma law own the ground water. These various groups share a common interest, appropriate use of Oklahoma's ground water, although they have differing opinions on how to best use this valuable resource.

Aquifer hearing postponed until June

By Marsha Miller
News Editor

TISHOMINGO -- A May 21 hearing on a use permit involving the sale of ground-water from the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer has been postponed while Judge Stewart Hunter gathers more evidence.

Protesters allege the water may be sold for use in Canadian County. A pre-hearing conference was conducted April 10. About 100 people were recognized at the hearing as "official parties," in the case.

A year ago area residents and officials from Ada, Ardmore, Davis Sulphur, Wynnewood, Tishomingo, Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Turner Falls Park, Blue River and Pennington Creek began voicing concerns over a Canadian County firm's efforts to acquire water from the aquifer. PWSA LLC, was attempting to purchase ground-water rights from area property owners. The firm proposed to draw between 20 million and 100 million gallons of water daily from the aquifer, pump it through a 54-inch pipeline to Canadian County and sell it to a variety of central Oklahoma communities.

Those opposing the sale of water from the Arbuckle Simpson say they are fearful such a huge, daily dip into the aquifer could endanger the area's water supply or even destroy it.

Bill blocks proposed sale of aquifer's water

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The Oklahoman

State senators passed a bill Tuesday placing a moratorium on permits to transfer water outside the Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer in south central Oklahoma.

Senate Bill 288 is aimed in part at blocking a proposal to pump 10 million to 12 million gallons of water a day from the Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer to west central communities, mainly in Canadian County.

Ardmore City commissioners vote to join aquifer fight

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Ardmore City commissioners agreed to join the Arbuckle Master Conservancy District Group in intervening in a lawsuit concerning the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer during their meeting Monday night.

"I think it's very important we intervene in the lawsuit to make sure our interests are properly represented up there," Ardmore City Attorney Ted Pasley told commissioners.

Court date set to hear aquifer case

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) -- A judge will hear arguments next month about whether a state law barring the sale of water from a southern Oklahoma aquifer is constitutional.

Oklahoma County District Judge Carolyn Ricks set a Sept. 4 hearing to consider a motion by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to dismiss the lawsuit against Senate Bill 288.

The law prohibits water sales until an in-depth study of the Arbuckle-Simpson aquifer can be conducted.

The study is to identify how much water recharges the aquifer annually, and whether the amounts of water sought by a Canadian County consortium would harm the water rights of other property owners and towns that need the water.

This is the future of ground water in Oklahoma. As resources become less abundant, citizens will try to use and protect their interest in the ground water resources available in Oklahoma. Present law in Oklahoma permits the "mining" of ground water. The law looks at water like any mineral resource. The owner has the right to use it all.

In other words, to dry up the aquifer, pump water till all the water is used. Our water rights include the ownership of water under the surface of property we own. Citizens raised their concerns causing the legislature to enact the contested law covered in the last newspaper article above.

As the ground water resource becomes more important to all the citizens there will be more need to protect the resource. The replacement of depleted ground water resources is very difficult. It has far reaching impacts such as surface subsidence and income loss. In order to keep the resource "healthy" we must pay more attention to its protection. This includes its protection from contamination and from depletion. Ground water is not easily cleaned after it has been contaminated and reclamation from depletion is virtually impossible.

In Oklahoma we have a plentiful supply of good ground water. We need assistance from the public, federal government and state government to help in the protection of this resource. Properly managed this good quality ground water can ensure a good quality future for our state. The Safe Drinking Water Act provided for a ground water funding under Section 1429. Congress failed to fund the program after passing the Act. There is no point in building a milking shed if you never have cows.

Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer

