

# CONSERVATION COALITION OF OKLAHOMA

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&

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Interim Study Presentation Prepared for  
Senator Bullard



# Who We Are:

- **The Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma — a 501(c)4 non-profit — brings together conservation organizations and Oklahoma's leadership for a relationship that focuses on wise conservation policymaking**
- **What the CCO does:**
- Fosters a bipartisan approach for sound conservation policies
- Convenes a broad outdoors community voice for common-sense conservation policies
- Raises awareness of critically important conservation issues for lawmakers and citizens alike



Kim Winton, Ph.D.

- Vice-Chair Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma (CCO)
- Retired U.S. Geological Survey Director
  - Oklahoma Water Science Center 10 years
  - South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center 5 years
- Agricultural Industry 15 years
  - eco-chemistry,
  - field studies,
  - groundwater group



# Our Goals for the Interim Study

- We do not want to affect any current water right. We want to make a change so that we protect Basin Integrity moving forward.
- Generate clear basin management plans
  - Take into account **economics, social equity, ecological health**
  - Long-term sustainability
- Flow for basin integrity should not be part of the appropriation in areas that are not fully permitted.



# Our Goals for the Interim Study

- **Work toward a bill focusing and incorporating sustainability in permitting.**
- **Go back to conservation standard...not depletion standards**
  - **Need scientific information to determine sustainability measures ...adapt as more information becomes available.**
- **Specific Language: To protect holistically and preserve and support river recreation economy (i.e. whitewater, boating, swimming, wading), fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, riparian areas, and scenic beauty, for the long term.**



Considerations for  
Maintaining Basin Integrity  
**ECONOMIC**, SOCIAL EQUITY,  
ENVIRONMENTAL

- Hunting, fishing recreation, business, tourism, etc.
- Irrigation/Agriculture
- Wetlands Maintain Flood Control
- Navigation



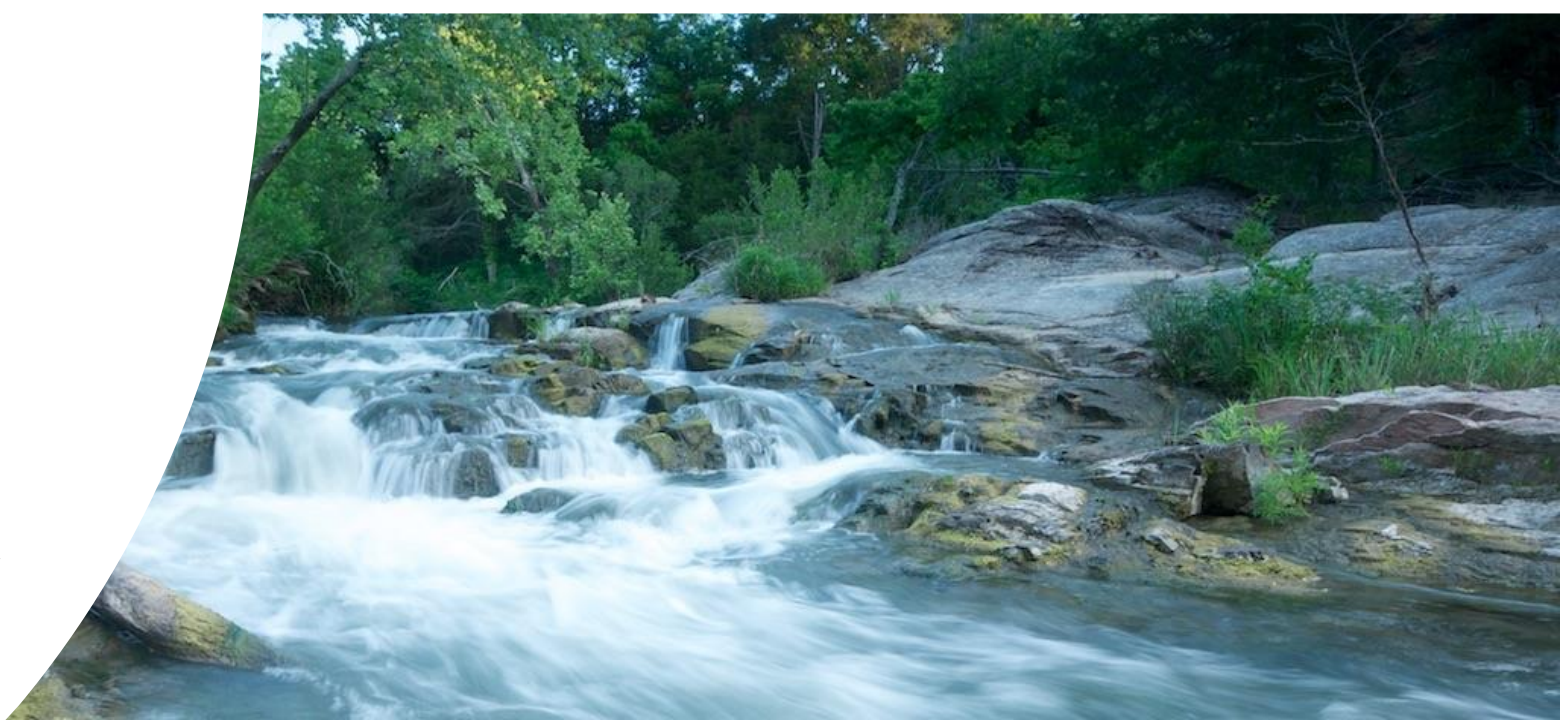
# Considerations for Maintaining Basin Integrity ECONOMIC, ***SOCIAL EQUITY***, ENVIRONMENTAL

- Water Quality
- Tribal Cultural Resource
- Wetlands Maintain Flood Control
- Municipal – Household Water Supply
- Public Safety – (groundwater and surface water needs)
- Quality of Life - hunt, fish, hike, swim, kayak, boat, etc.
- RELIABILITY! And SUSTAINABILITY!
  - Everyone wants it!
  - Reliable for Recreation (economy)
  - Municipalities, and Ecological Health



Considerations for  
Maintaining Basin Integrity  
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL EQUITY,  
***ENVIRONMENTAL***

- Ecological health and stability
- Water Quality
- Wetland as a carbon sink
- Basins/Aquifer Health
- Flows during certain times are critical for aquatic life proliferation
- Ecosystem Services (i.e. Blue River)
- Aesthetics





# Basin Integrity is Crucial – Economic Examples

- The [University of Oregon](#) found that:
  - For every \$1 million spent...get \$2.5 million back
- In 2017, the Outdoor Industry Association, [National Recreation Economy Report](#)
  - Watersports and fishing generates over \$175 billion in retail spending annually
  - Over 1.5 million jobs nationwide
- Colorado: [Business for Water Stewardship](#)
  - \$19 billion in economic output annually from people recreating on CO waterways



# Basin Integrity is Crucial – Economics, Jobs

## Oklahoma - Outdoor Industry Association

- \$3.6 Billion Total Recreation Value Added
- \$1.8 Billion In Wages and Salaries
- \$613 Million Share of GDP
- 42,871 Direct Jobs

## Statewide Contribution of Anglers in Oklahoma 2021

- \$2.3 Billion Economic Output
- 1.4 M anglers spent \$1.9 Billion while fishing in OK
- 16,240 jobs supported



## Economic Evaluation of Blue River B. Austin & F Schalla & G. Van Houtven 2021

- Annual Economic impact of more than \$1.5 billion (\$144 million to OK)
- Value of the River depends on flow reliability and water quality



# Things to Consider

- Propose something that is “voluntary” and/or “incentivized”
- The most successful state programs have a budget
  - \$ for Study,
  - \$ to purchase water rights,
  - \$ to demonstrate cost savings for including river flow
- Develop a voluntary mechanism to donate unused water
  - Currently a 7 yr “use it or lose it” clause .
- Riparian rights need to be protected
  - Adjust statutes so that riparian rights may be purchased by the state (perhaps lottery?)



# Things to Consider

- Budget Incentives (like in Oregon):
  - Create budget incentives for senior water rights holders to give back to the river
  - Legacy fund from someone that has passed away (Trust Fund)
  - To be able to donate extra water with out losing the water right (w/ Senior Water Right)
- Willingness to Pay for Ecosystem Services among Stakeholder Groups... A. Castro 2016
  - \$270 per household for Ecosystem Services such as: freshwater, regulation habitat, air quality, water quality, recreation, cultural heritage, local identity.
  - Payment into trust fund was preferred method



# Moving Forward

The Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma would like to thank Senator Bullard for this opportunity to be part of this new legislation.

We would like to continue to be of service throughout the iterations of the bill.

**Thank You!**

