

# STATE NEWS WEEKLY SUMMARY CONTINUED



Other projects proposed are designed to remove 45 percent of the chlorides going into Lake Kemp and Lake Texhoma.

Lake Kemp is the major water source for Wichita Falls, Texas. Kemp does not meet EPA standards for municipal water use Adkins said, and Lake Texhoma meets municipal EPA standards only three percent of the time, a figure that would change to 94 percent acceptable if the project is completed.

Opponents to the project cite the EIS estimate of a nine percent average impact on the fish harvest at Texhoma, with a 14 percent impact in some areas of the lake. Cloudiness of the water will increase opponents say, if the chlorides are removed. Other concerns, Adkins said, are for the fish, wildlife and plants along the stretch of the Red River where chloride removal takes place.

"Of course," Adkins said, "the primary benefit right now is for Texas. By the year 2000, Texas is going to have a problem finding drinking water."

Directors received the financial statement for the first quarter of fiscal 1997, presented by Robert Taylor. Sales of fishing and hunting licenses totaled \$1,368,383 in the first quarter, compared to \$1,521,593 for the first fiscal quarter of 1995. Agricultural and oil lease income was almost double last years, from \$129,080 in Sept. 1995 to \$249,570 in Sept. 1996. Sales of lifetime hunting and fishing licenses were up \$100,000 over last year, from \$137,800 to \$237,625, Taylor noted, in part due to seasonal buying.

Assistant Attorney General Jeanine Hale reported to directors on the status of Wildlife Department legal issues. There are approximately 85 items on the list, Hale said, but not all are active. Hale reminded directors that March 1997, is the last opportunity to adopt permanent rules, and rulemaking intent must be filed in the Oklahoma Register within the next few months.

When asked if any of the 85 cases posed any financial risk for the department, Hale mentioned the Offutt case in Sequoyah County. More than a year ago, Kelly Hunter of the Attorney General's office said, Billie Offutt filed a civil suit in district court in Sequoyah County against the Department of Wildlife Conservation. In her suit, Offutt alleges the Oklahoma hunting regulations prevent her from protecting her property from wildlife damage, and the effect of the

hunting regulations is a "regulatory taking" of her property by the State of Oklahoma without compensation. She is requesting compensation for crop damage by wildlife. Hunter said there is no precedent in Oklahoma for a claim of this type. After several hearings, the case is still pending.

In other business, directors heard a report on the 35 houses owned by the Wildlife Conservation Department on wildlife management areas and fish hatcheries. Security of equipment on the WMAs and at fish hatcheries is an important reason to have someone living there directors agreed.

The houses, from 800 square feet to 2100 square feet, were built between the 1930s and the 1950s, and some need major repairs. The board voted to replace the 800 square foot house at the Durant State Fish Hatchery with budgeted funds for the job.

A request by Ken Ryel to solicit bids on a metal storage building to be erected southwest of the existing department facility at 1801 N. Lincoln was tabled for 30 days, so directors can look at the proposed facility.

After executive session, directors voted to authorize an exchange of a 95 acre tract of land in the Deep Fork WMA with an adjacent landowner, on an acre-for-acre basis. The board also voted to try to purchase a 160 acre in-holding in the Packsaddle WMA at the school land auction.

—GERRY CHERRY  
11/04/96

## NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES ACT COULD HELP OKLAHOMA

■(GIT) When President Clinton signed HR4283, last week, he signed into law the National Invasive Species Act of 1996, aimed at "controlling the unintentional introduction and spread of invasive species, such as the zebra mussel, throughout the waters of our nation." Clinton added, "HR4283 will establish a national voluntary ballast water management program to reduce the threat of additional pest species entering our waters." The bill includes provisions to support research and demonstrate new technologies for combating aquatic nuisance species.

The zebra mussel has made its way into Oklahoma from its introduction into the Great Lakes. Ballast water dumped from freighters introduced the tiny mussel into an alien environment with no natural predators.

Zebra mussels have been found inside the

locks at both Robert S. Kerr and Webbers Falls along the McClellan-Kerr Navigation System, and may already occur in other Oklahoma waters.

The mussel is thumbnail-size, with elongated, D-shaped, thin shells striped in a zebra-like pattern. They live up to five years. Thread-like filaments attach the mussel to boat hulls, reefs, navigational buoys and other submerged objects. Females produce from 30,000 to 100,000 eggs per season. Due to their high reproductive rate and the limited number of natural predators, zebra mussels can populate a body of water in two or three years, clustering together with hundreds of thousands per square meter.

More than 70 percent of U.S. power plants are expected to be affected by the year 2000. High water flow rates inside pipes provide a constant source of food for the mussels, which cluster in mats on top of each other, lining the inside of intake structures and clogging pipes.

The mussels attach themselves to, and grow within, water intakes of both inboard and outboard motors, and attach themselves to boat hulls.

As prevention, boats should not be left in the water for extended periods of time. Mussels can be transported inside bilges, engine cooling systems, minnow buckets, live wells and anywhere water is trapped.

A task force has been formed in Oklahoma to address the problem. The task force includes representatives from the Wildlife Department, Oklahoma Water Resources Board, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Oklahoma Biological Survey, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

—GERRY CHERRY  
11/04/96

*"The circumstances of the world are continually changing, and the opinions of men change also; and as Government is for the living, and not for the dead, it is the living only that have any right in it."*

Thomas Paine  
*The Rights of Man*  
1791