

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many years Oklahoma has met the constantly increasing demand for water through the development of new sources of supply. From the drilling of new wells to the vast system of lakes and reservoirs, new sources of water have been developed to sustain the thriving Oklahoma economy and to maintain the comfort and well being of a growing population.

The future development of surface and ground water resources will certainly remain important policy considerations in the Oklahoma water picture. However, with a growing concern for preservation of the native values of rivers, fisheries and recreation opportunities on the one hand, and for the continually escalating costs of water development on the other, the emphasis is moving toward alternative methods to satisfy increasing water demands. These include, among others, better integration of surface and ground water supplies, reclamation of waste water and water conservation.

Recurring drought periods emphasize the need for conservation. Erratic annual and monthly precipitation patterns cause streamflows to cease and storage reservoirs to become so low that their waters may be rendered unsuitable for some purposes. Water levels in shallow aquifers drop, causing water wells to dry up.