THE MORNING NEWS
LOCAL NEWS FOR NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

Presidential Conversions Vans
2887-B N. College Ave. Fayetteville, AR • 888-521-7733 • accesspci.com

Compact Commission Sits While Poultry Suit Moves Forward

THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2006 10:16 PM CDT IN NEWS

By John L. Moore
THE MORNING NEWS

EMAIL THIS STORY PRINT THIS STORY COMMENT ON THIS STORY

GRAND LAKE O' THE CHEROKEES, Okla. -- A federal lawsuit involving Oklahoma and area poultry companies has had a chilling effect on the work of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission, said the commission's chairman.

"I thought we had had some excellent dialogue in the past couple of years between the two states developing a monitoring program," said Dick Seybolt, chairman of the commission.

"Unfortunately, legal aspects of our society have taken over, and we are at a standstill until we can get that suit resolved," Seybolt said.

Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson sued eight poultry companies and six of their subsidiaries in June 2005 for contributing to excessive nutrients and pollution in the Illinois River watershed.

Edmondson says that poultry litter is primarily responsible for the high level of phosphorus in the Illinois River and its tributaries.

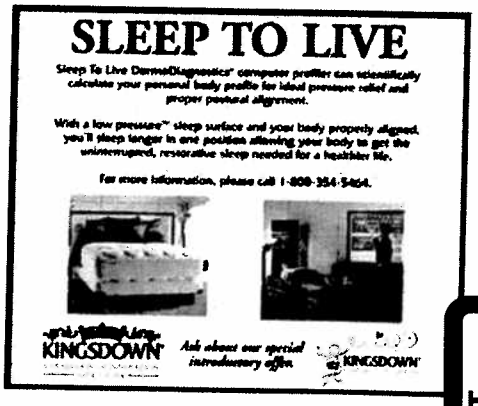
Phosphorus, a nutrient necessary for plant growth in water and on land, can cause rampant algae in streams and reservoirs if the level is too high. Too much algae can lead to poor water quality and kill off other aquatic life.

The statement from Seybolt to open up the 2006 annual meeting of the compact commission set the tone for a brief and somewhat strained meeting.

No action was taken other than to accept various state and federal agencies' reports on water quality and stream flows in the Arkansas River basin, particularly the Illinois River watershed.

The two states have been unable to secure additional money for an expanded monitoring program developed over the past two years by the commission.

The two states have also not met to discuss a joint watershed plan for the Illinois River, said Randy Young, executive director of the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission. Young is also one of three commissioners from Arkansas on the compact commission.


SLEEP TO LIVE
Sleep To Live DermoDiagnostics® computer profiler can scientifically calculate your personal body profile for ideal pressure relief and proper postural alignment.
With a low pressure™ sleep surface and your body properly aligned, you'll sleep longer in one position allowing your body to get the uninterrupted, restorative sleep needed for a healthier life.
For more information, please call 1-800-354-5464.
KINGSDOWN
Ask about our special introductory offer.
KINGSDOWN

The joint watershed plan is one of the main points in the two states' statement of joint principles that helped seal a deal on phosphorus emissions from wastewater treatment plants in the basin in 2003.

Young said a meeting to discuss the plan was canceled after Oklahoma officials said they would not attend.

The meeting was set up by the recently formed Illinois River Watershed Partnership, a nonprofit group. Oklahoma officials questioned why the partnership would call a meeting that dealt with items from the joint statement of principles.

EXHIBIT
8
tabbies

Derek Smithee, chief of the water quality program division of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, said last spring that Oklahoma officials would not attend.

Oklahoma Secretary of the Environment Miles Tolbert said he had not been informed there was a meeting scheduled but questioned whether any progress could be made with the poultry issues still hanging in the air.

"I don't believe anything has changed that would bring us to a resolution," Tolbert said.

Young said, "We are going to do a watershed plan on the Arkansas side whether Oklahoma joins us or not."

The two states met in Dallas soon after the joint agreement was signed, but issues with the poultry companies prevented real progress on a watershed plan, Tolbert said.

"I doubt Arkansas officials are going to make any agreement that the poultry companies wouldn't agree to," Tolbert said after the commission meeting.

At A Glance

Compact Commission

The Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission met Thursday at Shangri La Conference Center at Grand Lake O' The Cherokees in Oklahoma. The commission was formed in 1970 to regulate interstate concern over water in the Arkansas River basin near the border of the two states. The Illinois River is a tributary of the Arkansas River.

Source: Staff Report

Reader Comments (0)

The following comments are provided by readers and are the sole responsiblity of their authors. The Morning News does not review comments before their publication, nor do we guarantee their accuracy. By publishing a comment here you agree to abide by our comment policy. If you see a comment that violates our policy, please notify the web editor.

Leave Your Comment

Name:

Comments:

Current Word Count: 0

Image Verification:

jteas

Post Comment

EMAIL THE WEBMASTER | SEE JOB OPENINGS AT THE MORNING NEWS

UPLOAD A DISPLAY AD | REQUEST A SPEAKER FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION | SITE CREDITS

ALL CONTENT © THE MORNING NEWS. UNAUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTION PROHIBITED.