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# Save Our Water Lake Eufaula

## Position Paper



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**SAVE OUR WATER LAKE EUFAULA**  
**POSITION PAPER**

**We the people of Save Our Water, Lake Eufaula, a non-partisan organization, placed our faith to protect Lake Eufaula and the people of the surrounding counties in the Government of the United States of America (The Army Corps of Engineers), the State of Oklahoma (The Oklahoma Water Resources Board) and our federal, state, and locally ELECTED officials. Our faith was misplaced.**

**Use of Water for the Generation of Electric Power**

The continued use of Lake Eufaula water for the generation of electrical power has rendered lake levels unsafe for recreational use, permanently damaged the Lake's fisheries and wildlife, and placed surrounding communities in danger of running out of water. Any use of Lake Eufaula water that endangers the health, safety, and happiness of the citizens living on or around the Lake constitutes **MISMANAGEMENT OF OUR WATER RESOURCES.**

**We are calling for:**

- **Annual public reallocation meetings with proper notice for all interested parties who wish to participate.**
- **Increasing the water allocations for cities, rural water districts, and property owners would increase the water levels that should be**

**Supply and Demand – Prudent Management**

We would conclude that there exist layers of water in the Lake whose values would vary according to the existing supply. Economists would refer to this as supply and demand economics. Operating the Lake with sound business practices should be within the capabilities of the Corps of Engineers, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, the Southwest Power Authority, other state and federal agencies, and the Native American tribes and would constitute a **PRUDENT MANAGEMENT OF OUR WATER RESOURCES.**

**We are calling for:**

- **Authorization for the establishment of a citizens advisory committee of people living or working on Lake Eufaula and a representative on the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.**
- **A change in the operating strategies for all federal lakes and reservoirs including Lake Eufaula that would protect water supplies needed for drinking water, recreational activities, hydro-power generation and the Kerr-McClellan navigational system at all times, even during times of drought.**
- **The support and election of political candidates who recognize the need for the prudent management of our water resources and oppose those candidates who fail to champion the preservation of our state's most precious natural resource, our water.**

### Value of Water Resources

Finally, the generation of electricity does produce some revenue for the government and should be continued with the understanding that the water used does have a value and the use of that water or the water's by-product should have a positive impact for the taxpayers. The value of water most certainly increases with the lack of availability. Water above the 585 level has less value than water below 585 and water below 580 has an increasing value as the water pool level decreases. Water has value and the failure to recognize that fact constitutes **MISMANAGEMENT OF OUR WATER RESOURCES.**

Since the state of Oklahoma controls the water in the lakes, compensation for the water used would represent considerable revenue for the State of Oklahoma.

#### **We are calling for:**

- **The value of water to be based on fair market prices.**
- **Existing contracts to be renegotiated to recognize the need to reduce the release of water from all federal lakes and reservoirs, including Lake Eufaula, during times of droughts.**
- **Commercial use of water to be prohibited from lake levels below 580.**

As the farmers of Oklahoma learned from their mistakes during the drought of the 1930's, so should the US government learn from the drought of 2005.

**maintained in the lake at all times, even in periods of a drought.**

- **An allocation of water for recreational activities appears to be consistent with the Public Law 85-500 and would improve the livelihoods of Oklahomans who use the Lake. Increased recreational opportunity would increase tourism and provide tax revenues to further develop Lake Eufaula.**
- **Increasing the normal lake level to 587 which would provide a recreational water allocation without reducing existing allocations.**
- **All commercial entities that take large amounts of water from the lake to purchase that water. The water should be valued on a sliding scale that reflects an increased cost as the supply decreases.**

### Protection of Our Cities and Municipalities

The use of water or the by-products of the water, i.e. electricity, should be limited by the availability of water in the lake. State and federal law should strictly prohibit any use of water that places the local population at peril. Failure to adequately protect our cities and municipalities from unnecessary upgrades required for the continued provision of water to their residents constitutes **MISMANAGEMENT OF OUR WATER RESOURCES.**

**We are calling for:**

- **Water used in the generation of electricity to be considered as fuel similar to natural gas or coal. Water has value and the State and US governments to negotiate contracts that reflect that value.**
- **If a sliding scale for pricing water were used, as previously suggested, electrical generation would occur when the demand for electricity and the availability of water were the greatest.**
- **The generation of electricity by water to be regulated by the availability of water.**

**Economic Impact**

The Lake has a significant impact on the state and local economy. The Lake will always have an important role in the operation of the Kerr-McClellan navigational system. We recognize the importance of the navigational system to the state's economy, but equally important is the Lake and the Lake's activities on the local economy. State and national leaders can't be allowed to ignore the needs of our local communities. What level of water in the Lake is needed to accomplish both missions? Failure to recognize these competing but equally important issues would constitute **MISMANAGEMENT OF OUR WATER RESOURCES.**

**We are calling for:**

- **The State and US government to consider the impact of their actions upon the local citizens and the rural economies. The US government (FEMA) should reimburse local governmental entities for the loss of sales tax revenue, property owners for the cost of structural damages, and water districts that have to build additional water induct systems as a result of the low water levels.**
- **The US government to appropriate sufficient funds to reimburse local government entities such as schools for the lost tax dollars resulting from the construction of Lake Eufaula (Section 8002 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, formerly Public Law 874). The lands held by the US government should be assessed by the county assessor at the current market values using the same taxing methodology as used for all other taxpayers and Congress should ensure that an in lieu of tax payment is made to all local governmental entities in the exact amount as calculated by the county assessor using the same valuations that they use for other tax payers.**