

## 2019 CONSERVATION

As we move into what is going to be a challenging year for conservation, fisheries protection and water quality we've highlighted our primary areas of focus below. Trout Unlimited and Tulsa Fly fishers endeavors to work cooperatively with all stakeholders, other conservation groups and government agencies for the betterment of our invaluable fisheries.

-Water for the Lower Illinois river continues to be our main conservation issue. Scott Hood is working with state and national legislators and officials in the long and continuing effort to gain critical minimum flows for our home water, the LIR.

-Reducing sewage, poultry, hog farm and agricultural chemical waste discharge into our streams and lakes, particularly NE Oklahoma's Scenic rivers, continues to be a key focus and

challenge. Any improvements and enforcement action to reduce pollutants have yet again been stalled by lame duck legislators and Oklahoma elected officials calling for and signing yet another agreement to “study” the matter, which has been “studied” for over 15 years.

-Simmons poultry farms and new processing plant threatens NE Oklahoma waters, local wells, citizens health, safety and drastic drop in property values. Drinking water threatened, ammonia smells, airborne feces from aerial spray and one poultry truck every 6 minutes on rural roads spell trouble. State officials and policies admittedly unable to cope with huge increase with no oversight. Over 200 new poultry house permits approved at \$10 each adding some 156,000 tons of poultry feces per year to the watershed, 70% of which will wind up in our rivers and lakes, particularly popular fly fishing lake Spavinaw; Spavinaw is also Tulsa’s water supply. Simmons Poultry is also

attempting to transfer up to 40,000,000 gallons a month of water from the Oklahoma Spavinaw watershed to Arkansas to flush poultry processing waste. The so-called water treatment plant was built in 1958, has a very long track record of pollution, cannot handle any processing during heavy spring rains (all poultry processing waste will be dumped directly into a tributary stream of lake Spavinaw), is a private company with 1 full time and one part time employee. No OK or Arkansas environmental assessments were “required”. Governor Fallin formed the “Poultry Growth Council” to study the matter headed by the legislator who is a full time employee of Simmons Poultry in Arkansas, but resides in Oklahoma.

-Water Transfer and dams. Water is the new gold, our fish need it and Oklahoma City, western Oklahoma and Texas want it... mostly for free. There will be many, many bills introduced under the new administration to

“take” water from our already over allocated eastern Oklahoma river flows, piping it out of our rivers with potentially dire impact on our trout, smallmouth and other fisheries.

-Oklahoma rivers and lakes are at a tipping point and cannot handle more sewage, raw animal and chemical waste. OK TU/TFF will be working with legislators, elected officials and the new administration in the state capitol to educate them about the \$500 million Oklahoma outdoor economy, our fisheries and the importance of clean water.

-Efforts to defund or even eliminate the highly successful and self-supporting Oklahoma Department of Wildlife’s stream access and fisheries studies programs expected by small extreme elements of new OKC legislature; they want to move to a “European model” where wealthy landowners charge stiff fees for all hunting and fishing, taking away the public’s

right to fish and hunt on our public land. Our treasured WATS trout fishing access would not have been possible and would be “privatized” and a stiff daily “rod fee” would be imposed if we allow such legislation to hurt our way of life. We expect “riders” to be tagged onto bills in the house and senate, usually on Friday night with no oversight, to impact the ODWC, sell off our public lands and perhaps many state parks. OKTU/TFF stands strongly opposed to this. Our current programs are highly successful and a role model for other states and is self-funding.

## CALL TO ACTION

Get involved. We ask that all OK TU/TFF members get involved and take action when asked by contacting your legislators and elected officials. It's time to save our fisheries. New e-mail alerts, phone lists for you to call (most powerful), contact forms and Facebook alerts will be developed for you to make it easy for you to make your opinion heard.

