

1 A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Spring
2 Creek Watershed Study Act".

3 B. The Legislature finds that:

4 1. Increasing pressure from agriculture and residential
5 development as well as stream bank erosion and other activities have
6 led to declining water quality levels in the Northeast Oklahoma
7 Watershed known as Spring Creek located in Cherokee, Delaware, and
8 Mayes counties near Kansas, Oklahoma, resulting in increased concern
9 by the residents of the Spring Creek area and citizens of Oklahoma
10 as a whole as to the continued health of the watershed. The once
11 pristine stream is a prime example of how many similar high quality
12 Ozark waterbodies that draw millions of visitors to the area each
13 year, support water supplies for growing urban centers in Oklahoma,
14 and provide habitat for important wildlife and fisheries resources
15 are threatened without cooperative, voluntary protective action by
16 local communities and other stakeholders;

17 2. Improved voluntary land management practices including soil
18 conservation practices, riparian restoration and protection,
19 reforestation, streambank livestock exclusion, and other methods of
20 stewardship have great potential to improve and protect the quality
21 of water in the Spring Creek watershed while improving the
22 ecological health of the area; and

23 3. It is in the interest of the citizens of this state as a
24 whole and the residents of the Spring Creek watershed that the

1 Oklahoma Conservation Commission, in partnership with other local,
2 state, and federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations
3 undertake a comprehensive water quality study of Spring Creek to
4 determine the best course of action to protect and improve the
5 health of the aquatic habitat in the watershed.

6 C. It is the intent of the Legislature that the findings of
7 this study will be used to direct implementation of voluntary,
8 incentive-based conservation practices by the Commission in
9 partnership with other local, state, and federal agencies and
10 subject to availability of resources, in the Spring Creek watershed
11 to protect and improve the aquatic habitat and water quality in the
12 area.

13 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
14 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-7-113 of Title 27A, unless
15 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

16 A. 1. The Oklahoma Conservation Commission shall undertake a
17 comprehensive watershed-based water quality plan designed to improve
18 and protect the water quality and aquatic habitat in the Spring
19 Creek watershed through the utilization of voluntary, incentive-
20 based programs.

21 2. On or before June 1, 2026, the Commission shall publish an
22 electronic report of the findings. The Commission may, from time to
23 time, update such findings as conditions change and pertinent
24 information becomes available.

1 B. The Commission may contract and cooperate with the Natural
2 Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of
3 Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conduct
4 activities provided for in this section.

5 C. The Commission may apply for and accept grants, gifts, or
6 other sources of public and private funds to carry out the purposes
7 of the Spring Creek Watershed Study Act.

8 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
9 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 3-7-114 of Title 27A, unless
10 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

11 There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund
12 for the Oklahoma Conservation Commission to be designated the
13 "Spring Creek Watershed Study Cash Fund Revolving Fund". The fund
14 shall be a continuing fund, not subject to fiscal year limitations,
15 and shall consist of all monies received by the Commission from
16 appropriations by the Legislature to the fund, and any money
17 received as gifts, grants, or other contributions from public or
18 private sources provided for the purpose of implementing the Spring
19 Creek Watershed Study Act. All monies accruing to the credit of the
20 fund are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted and expended by the
21 Commission for the purpose provided for in this act. Expenditures
22 from the fund shall be made upon warrants issued by the State
23 Treasurer against claims filed as prescribed by law with the
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1 Director of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services for
2 approval and payment.

3 SECTION 4. This act shall become effective November 1, 2025.
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5 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND BUDGET, dated
6 02/27/2025 - DO PASS, As Coauthored.
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