



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

CITATION

**PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION AWARD**

**PROTECTION OF AQUIFER RESOURCES IN OKLAHOMA**

In recognition of Harold Wingard, landowner, as well as a group of Federal, State, and tribal governments for implementing a recharge demonstration project as part of Oklahoma's comprehensive water plan to protect valuable aquifer resources.

The Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer underlies about 500 square miles of south-central Oklahoma and is an important source of water for the cities of Ada and Sulphur. It is also the source of water for a number of important springs and streams in the region, including those associated with the Bureau of Reclamation's Arbuckle Project, Chickasaw National Recreation Area, and the Chickasaw Nation. Oklahoma's comprehensive water plan includes an artificial aquifer recharge strategy. The Chickasaw Nation encompasses a large portion of land over the Arbuckle-Simpson Aquifer. In light of stresses placed on the aquifer from the recent drought, the Chickasaw Nation is implementing an artificial recharge project that will assist in securing the future water supply of the city of Ada and conserve a sensitive ecosystem that is home to numerous sensitive aquatic species. Information obtained from this project will assist in a much larger cooperative effort to understand the overall quantity, quality, and spatial/temporal distribution of source water available for recharge across Oklahoma. Each entity in the cooperative project provides a unique set of technical and policy expertise. Using funds provided under Reclamation's Native American Assistance Program, partners are preparing an artificial recharge guide which outlines a step by step approach to evaluating, comparing, and selecting feasible recharge locations and methodologies that maximize success. The framework is currently being applied to the Chickasaw Nation's recharge demonstration project, located on (the late) Harold Wingard's property near Ada in Pontotoc County. A champion of water conservation, Mr. Wingard graciously cooperated with Federal, State, and tribal governments to help make the recharge demonstration project possible. For protecting valuable aquifer resources in Oklahoma, Harold Wingard is posthumously and the Federal, State and tribal governments are together granted the Department of the Interior's Partners in Conservation Award.