

Brocksmith: In the State of Limbo

By: Contributing Author March 12, 2018 0



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In the State of Limbo, you just do it and follow the rules later. You ignore the science about water pollution because it might hurt corporate campaign contributions.

Progress for water quality in the Illinois River watershed is stalled on all fronts. In this State of Limbo, you can ignore the rules for scenic river protection, tear up a stream and then ask for permission.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation has damaged a tributary of Barren Fork Creek in Adair County where a new bridge on Highway 62 is being built. Work like this requires a plan to control stormwater before it pollutes streams and lakes. Not so in the State of Limbo, where federal and state water protection is stalled by bureaucrats, politicians and all-out enemies of clean water rules.

Asked where stormwater controls were on the two-week-old Highway 62 project, a worker on the Glover Construction Co. job, said, "They are on the way." While we wait, one of the most beautiful rivers in northeastern Oklahoma is in jeopardy of pollution. Sedimentation from road projects and streambank erosion are major contributors to degradation of scenic rivers and Lake Tenkiller. Damaging phosphorus attached to soil further clouds Lake Tenkiller with algae.

In our State of Limbo, a federal pollution study, Total Maximum Daily Load, promised five years ago by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is stalled. A scientific study of scenic rivers has vanished at the governor's office and accumulates dust on a shelf. The Oklahoma Water Resources Board is ignoring recommendations in that report. Sewage treatment plant permits have been on hold for 10 years because the federally mandated study is stalled, possibly by interference from our own congressmen.

A 2010 federal court lawsuit Oklahoma filed against Tyson and other chicken companies that polluted the Illinois River has never been ruled on.

Is the State of Limbo a great state or what?

Ed Brocksmith is co-founder of [Save the Illinois River](#).