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# News Release

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## **RESEARCHERS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA'S NATIONAL WEATHER CENTER WIN DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AWARD**

NORMAN, Okla. – Oklahoma Climatological Survey director Ken Crawford and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Severe Storms Laboratory hydrometeorologist Suzanne Van Cooten are part of a multidisciplinary team that recently received the Department of the Interior Cooperative Conservation Award for the Protection of Aquifer Resources in Oklahoma.

The Protection of Aquifer Resources in Oklahoma project provides Oklahomans with the tools to create a “drought-proof” water supply through “artificial water recharge.”

In cooperation with the Oklahoma Climatological Survey, which administers the Oklahoma Mesonet system, the Chickasaw Nation is working with NOAA to calibrate NOAA radar systems (dual-polarimetric, phased array and the WSR-88D network) to nearby Oklahoma Mesonet stations to assess site-specific source-water hydrology and soil moisture conditions. Specifically, these data will reduce spatial and temporal variability and provide accurate, localized real-time precipitation estimates, helping to determine the availability of source water for recharge.

NSSL's multi-sensor quantitative precipitation estimation system, Q2, will leverage this collection of real-time data to increase the accuracy of rainfall estimates within the aquifer area. Real-time observations will be linked with high-resolution rainfall estimates and increase the accuracy of predicted surface water and groundwater levels produced by a suite of existing and emerging numerical weather and water models.

The Cooperative Conservation Award is a Department of the Interior Honor Award established to recognize outstanding cooperative conservation achievements that include collaborative activity among a diverse range of entities that may include federal, state, local and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities and individuals.

The award to the aquifer resources project was one of 26 national awards to individuals and organizations presented at a ceremony at Interior headquarters in Washington, D.C., to honor "those who achieve natural resource goals in collaboration and partnership with others."

The 26 Partners in Conservation Awards recognize conservation achievements resulting from the cooperation and participation of a total of 600 individuals and organizations including landowners; citizens' groups; private-sector and nongovernmental organizations; and federal, state, local and/or tribal governments.

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