

Verdigris Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Verdigris Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

1:00 pm

Thursday, May 12, 2022

Fall River Lake Office and GoToMeeting

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
John Ditmore (Chair)	Coffeyville, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2023	YES
Bob Culbertson (Vice Chair)	New Strawn, KS	Conservation/Environment	2023	YES
Doug Blex	Independence, KS	WRAPS	2023	YES
Ken McNickle	Mound Valley, KS	Public Water Supply	2025	NO
Harold Engle	Madison, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2023	YES
Brian Graff	Neodesha, KS	At Large Public 2	2025	YES
Gary Kelley	Sedan, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2025	YES
John Black	Howard, KS	Agriculture	2023	NO
Ron Smith	Fredonia, KS	Industry/Commerce	2025	YES
Pamela Walker	Altoona, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2025	YES
VACANT		Public Water Supply (cc)	2023	

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Nate Westrup	KWO
Lauren Campbell	KWO
Bob Brink	Otter Creek Watershed
Gary Kepley	USACE
Ron Rader	Otter Creek Watershed
Terry Medley	KDA-DWR
Katie Tietz	KDA-DWR
Angela Anderson	KWO

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, John Ditmore (Industry/Commerce) at 1:05 pm. John took roll call.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Gary Kelley (Conservation/Environment) moved to approve the agenda. Bob Culbertson (Conservation/Environment) seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

- III. **Review of the January 2022 RAC Meeting Notes:** The meeting notes from the January 2022 meeting were reviewed. There were no additions or corrections. The meeting notes were accepted as submitted.
- IV. **Update on House Bill 2686:** Lauren Campbell (KWO) gave an overview of House Bill 2686. This bill was later altered to a substitute bill that passed in the committee but did not go further in the legislative process. Doug Blex (WRAPS) provided his thoughts on the house bill process and the amount of success or lack thereof it faced. He stated that it is important for water to have a cabinet level agency. Doug stated he is not aware of an interim water committee with Representative Ron Highland retiring from the legislature, but the groundwork and awareness has been made.
- V. **Introduction and overview of the State Water Plan Fund (SWPF) insights webpage:** Lauren introduced the State Water Plan Fund insights tool that is on the KWO website and went through some of its features and details. John commented that some of the graphs that utilize overlapping colors are mind-boggling for anyone that is colorblind. Lauren pointed out the timeline of State Water Plan Fund transfers from the State General Fund and the Economic Development Initiatives Fund and where full statutory transfer from 2008-2021 lacked. Questions were raised in regards to line items of the SWPF that suffered due to a lack of full funding. Doug highlighted the process that state funding has undergone in recent history with the state budget surplus. Nate Westrup (KWO) highlighted that the SWPF insights webpage is meant to be a tool for the public to investigate line items in the fund of interest to them. The biggest benefit of the site can be found in exploring and experimenting with the tool. The needs tab within the tool demonstrates that full funding of the SWFP (the full \$8 million transfer) is only a portion of what's needed for water related projects in the state. Lauren demonstrated how to get to this webpage through the KWO website.
- VI. **Update on the Kansas Water Plan (KWP) process:** Angela Anderson (KWO) provided an update on the KWP process and explained that the KWO is still going through the public comments and gathering data that can be used with those comments. The next step in the process is for the KWP to go in front of the Kansas Water Authority for review and approval. There were no comments or questions.
- VII. **Review of regional goals and action plans:** Lauren reviewed the Region's first goal and action plans as the KWP exits development phase and the enters implementation phase. The other goals will be reviewed at a later meeting.
- a. **Increase drought tolerance in the Verdigris basin by optimizing reservoir releases and maintaining storage capacity.** Nate provided the key points of releases, flows, maintenance, and water supply in the basin. In 1989 the state was given control over the conservation pool in Fall River and Toronto by the Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) which differs from Elk City and Big Hill reservoirs which storage was purchased from the USACE by contract. With modeling, it is evident that in Fall River and Toronto conservation pool storage is not sufficient for a 1950s type drought in the basin. This prompted the update of the Drought Contingency Plan with the USACE. This update allows the KWO to utilize the inactive storage within the reservoirs for releases to operate and maintain target flows for municipal and industrial use, which added 6,000-7,000-acre feet in Fall River and around 4,000-acre feet in Toronto. Nate highlighted that changes in reservoir operations in the basin have been optimized for low flow conditions.

The most beneficial next step for drought resiliency in the basin is to operate at a lower target flow in the lower system. Nate then discussed the state of sedimentation within the reservoirs in the Verdigris basin and explained the difference between the different categories of storage pools within the reservoirs, water quality, water supply, and flood pool. This then led into a discussion on projected water supply in the Verdigris basin.

- b. **Protect watershed dams – statewide goal.** To be discussed at a later meeting.
- c. **Continually work to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species (ANS), including Zebra and Quagga mussels, into Kansas lakes that are not currently infested by working with the agencies focused on ANS.** To be discussed at a later meeting.
- d. **Improve water conservation through a public education campaign, with priority given to youth, to increase awareness and protect water supply for future generations.** To be discussed at a later meeting.

VIII. Drought update:

While there is drought in Kansas, all three of the reservoirs in the Verdigris basin were at just short of 20 feet into flood pool prior to the meeting which negated the need for the drought update. Nate provided a review of the state of Kansas with drought in March 2022 and the process the state goes through during times of drought.

IX. Discussion on Coffeyville Resource low-head dam:

Chairman, John Ditmore (Industry/Commerce) provided the history of the dam at the refinery and water flow for the refinery. There is a certain quantity of water required at the intake for Coffeyville Resources to avoid pump issues and send water to Oklahoma. Conversation was held regarding the need for a potential dam-raise, the likelihood of accomplishing that raise, and the steps that would be needed to achieve an approval. Conversation on raising the height of the dam has been happening for over 20 years at Coffeyville Resources, but there have been many barriers and some permit rejections. Nathan Westrup (KWO) suggested a meeting with USACE regulatory at the Coffeyville Resources dam site to make a step forward. The topic of a temporary bladder on top of the dam for low flow times was discussed but with problems.

- X. **Introduction to reservoir operations and sedimentation issues in the Verdigris region:** Nate brought up the active sediment management projects in reservoirs, such as the Water Injection Dredging (WID) pilot project that will begin on Tuttle Creek Reservoir as a way of gaging interest of the committee to potentially doing something similar in their reservoirs. Harold Engle (Agriculture) discussed the need for Best Management Practices (BMPs) and streambank stabilization in the watershed in addition to in-reservoir sediment management. He expressed the need to raise awareness of the streambank issues in the basin. Nate added that concurrent streambank stabilization with active sediment management is needed to mitigate the inevitable sedimentation that is happening in our reservoirs. Working with mother nature to pass sediment down the system needs to happen to extend the lifetime of our water infrastructure. Nate briefly explained the concept of WID and other in-reservoir sediment technologies for this process such as hydro suction and air injection.

- XI. Agency Input:** Bob Brink from Otter Creek Watershed gave an update of the recently built water storage tanks. The tanks for are intended for use during wildfire as the rural water districts would not allow fire hydrants to be installed for that purpose. They are looking into installing more tanks in the future.

Gary Kepley -- USACE said that they working through state-identified streambank hotspots to potentially find funding to fix them.

Katie Tietzort – Division of Water Resources said that they filled the Parsons field office position by Sheila Dyke.

- XII. Public Input:** Bob Culbertson (Conservation/Environment) asked about the John Redmond Reservoir Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) sites and when the CDF on private property would be ready to be farmed. Bob Brink (Otter Creek Watershed) mentioned that in the Netherlands, they add black soil to jumpstart the microorganisms in the dredge material site. Nate Westrup (KWO) mentioned that the soil samples taken from the CDF sites are nutrient rich and for farming purposes, the soil will not need fertilizer for years. Bob Culbertson also stated, that it is his job to increase infiltration rates. When he witnessed a 3” rain resulted in flooding, it further reinforced his job.

Doug Blex is thankful for the extra funds available to go towards needed projects and funding programs such as the SWPF. Need to be thinking of the needs for water at all times, not just at times of drought. Doug stated the committee is thinking of things in a good, common-sense approach as evident of the one goal that went to a statewide action.

Harold Engle wanted to support Bob’s work with WRAPS with increasing infiltration.

- XIII. Adjournment:** Bob Culbertson (Conservation/Environment) moved to adjourn the meeting. Ron Smith (Industry/Commerce) seconded the motion. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 2:46 pm.

- XIV. Fall River Lake Tour**

Future Meetings

- a. Future Meetings:** KWA – Wednesday June 22, 2022, Pittsburg