

Cimarron Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
9:00 am, Thursday, May 3, 2018
Conestoga Energy Offices, 1701 N. Kansas Ave., Liberal, KS

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Nick Hatcher (Chair)	Liberal, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2019	Yes
Bret Rooney (Vice-Chair)	Satanta, KS	Groundwater Management	2021	No
Trista Brown	Satanta, KS	At Large Public 2	2021	Yes
Michael Bryant	Copeland, KS	Agriculture 2	2019	No
Calvin Burke	Liberal, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2019	No
Luke Grubbs	Hugoton, KS	Irrigation	2021	No
Brian Hemman	Hugoton, KS	Agricultural Industry	2019	Yes
Matt Higgins	Elkhart, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2021	Yes
Danny Law	Ulysses, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2019	No
Gary Boldt	Ulysses, KS	At Large Public 3	2019	Yes
Jim Sipes	Manter, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2021	Yes
Alan Olson	Ulysses, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	No
Jason Norquest	Garden City, KS	At Large Public 4	2019	Yes

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Jonathon Aguilar	K-State SWREC
Mike Meyer	KDA-DWR
Richard Rockel	KWO
Alexandra Davis	KWO

Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Nick Hatcher began the meeting at 9am. A quorum was present; seven of the thirteen committee members were present.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Review and Approval of November & February Meeting Notes

Trista Brown motioned to approve the minutes. Matt Higgins seconded. The minutes were approved.

State of the Resource Report & Outreach Opportunities

The final draft has been submitted and is going through in house revisions at the Kansas Water Office before release. The Kansas RAC put together a presentation addressing SOTR materials as well as funding shortages which was shown to the members. Nick Hatcher said he would like to see more information regarding what works and doesn't on the Technology Farms. In the east it is high dollar isolated issues, out here in the west we have 1000's of problems with individual wells,

meaning outreach and education is key. Richard will send out the presentation for everyone to look over and make comments.

Southwest Kansas Oklahoma Panhandle Coordination – Jim Sipes

Jim Sipes reported that he has not been able to make any progress with Oklahoma coordination. The farm bureau gave him the name of a guy from the irrigation association. He made initial contact but nothing came of it. He noted it would be helpful to have someone else to ask. Richard Rockel brought up the Ogallala Summit and agreed to pull and send Jim the list of individuals from Oklahoma that were in attendance.

With this discussion turned to the Ogallala Summit.

Mike overviewed the highlights from the Ogallala Summit. It was a great coordination among the states, with the goal to see what each state is doing and build off of that. It was a way to bring everyone together and get everyone on the same page and working towards a common goal. It included lots of great information and there was a fantastic turnout. It was the first meeting of its kind, and was funded by a large grant that covers 8 states – 2 representatives from each state. The original plan was to have a summit of invited individuals but it was the decision was made to open it up. There could possibly be more in the future but the grant is only a five year grant. Depending on feedback they may or may not have it on a yearly basis.

Go to Ogallalawater.org to see information and presentations from the summit. The committee wanted to know more about the Master Irrigator information used in Texas. The basic idea is that you go and learn about better management of water including the agronomic part of it and then upon completion you get a certificate. With that you could probably get higher ranking for federal funds, WCAs, etc. There appears to be a need to get information out there, and a desire to know what does and doesn't work. Many producers want to know about the Tech Farms

Jason Norquest said that GMD No. 3 sent staff and 3 board members to the Summit. At a meeting for the Ogallala CAP producers from Nebraska and Texas both agreed that the good farmers are already doing that – you have to catch up with us. What benefits can we get or what recognition for the farmers that are already doing something? Richard Rockel pointed out that in SD6 we are looking at the total economic outcome. Trista added that probes are cheap; and that she looked into it after being a part of this group and learning about technology farms. Mike continued saying that we can't have a tech farm in every county but you could have a Master Irrigator in every county. The benefit is from the management, anyone can buy a probe but how do you successfully use it.

Nick explained that looking back at records his water use is down several thousand acre/feet from the previous year but where did the savings come from; cotton, rainfall? Wherever it came from the amount not used was significant; but as producers do we get credit for that? We are getting data and have great discussions, but because of lack of training and trust it is easy to revert back to old ways and not save to the full extent. Did I make the right decision? What is the goal? Technology and data are great and what you do with it is really great but there is a struggle to trust and implement. As we go forward we need to accept that technology and data are a good start. How do I analyze my data? What do I do with that? Farmers want to know if it is better off to use probes, dragon line, etc. What is the best option? The funds can be obtained to get the technology into the field, but how do you make sure that farmers are actually using it? Master Irrigators could address these issues, tying everything together. There is fear and pressure among producers. Other priorities effect decisions on whether to listen to the probe and recommendations. We don't have a systematic approach to these decisions, and are making emotional choices.

Richard responded by stating that we need to look at what the reasons are that keep producers from turning off. What is driving their decisions? They are using the same excuses even once probes are in. Mike suggested looking at the report

from the technology farm for what was learned, and what wasn't expected. Report everything that was learned, not just about how the probe worked. Jason asked if we can extend some of the technology farms that we have. Maybe instead of expanding would it be worth looking at current farms through the dry season? In response said he doesn't have a problem with that but how do we reach the most people and encourage other producers to come on board? How do we engage more people?

On that subject how do we get people to show up to meetings and events? We have the information, how do we get NEW faces. The response is always if I want to find it I can find it. You could actually recognize Master Irrigators, and get a certificate. Go back to the data and have a step by step process. Maybe even consider farmhand training; they are just trying to work and get their job done, they don't understand. Just because the farmer knows doesn't mean they know.

Could it be as simple as putting a list together that includes what everyone is doing, and sending that out with the water report? What is the government role vs. academic role vs. third party role? Would farmers be up for a centralized data form, or be worried about others getting their data? Without data collection you don't get a lot of adoption, and you need someone with expertise to put together data. The easiest place to start is to have the GMD offer something. It could act almost like a voluntary audit, where you receive feedback on what you can change and do better. It could work like a training program, there are a lot of things farmers aren't doing and how else would they know? It would need to be documented so they can get credit. When you are forced to track something you start to pay more attention to things you wouldn't have before. This could get people thinking and also get them credit. Document what you have done because you are a great farmer. Why start with a reduction cap? Just start conserving water and document. In several years you could show what they have conserved. WCA is a way to track this already.

Water Technology Farm Update – Jonathan Aguilar

Jonathan Aguilar gave an update on the water technology farms and findings so far. He explained that when discussing which application method is best that it is similar to talking about iPhone vs. Samsung; it is more about the management differences, both methods save water. The biggest goals are to get education out there and find out the many challenges and what else needs to be looked at. Nick Hatcher briefly discussed the wheel issues he has had with his center pivots. He has been having the tracks filled with sand, but is having issues on the more condensed areas. Radial tires are better at going through the track if there is a problem. He said it is still inconclusive and needs to be looked at longer. How to get people at field days was brought up as a question. Ideas to increase attendance included advertising more widely and trying to approach the press, however many times the press does not have available space.

Drought Update

Richard Rockel gave a presentation with updates on the current drought. Right now it is looking worse than it did this time in 2011. The Governor did sign an official drought declaration in March, and the USDA approved 28 counties for haying and grazing.

Legislation and Funding Update

The House and Senate are still debating several items in the budget, but both are looking at putting over \$3,000,000 in the Water Plan. Be on the lookout for an email from the Water Office that will be sent out with information once the budget is passed by both the House and Senate and signed by the Governor.

Social Media Presence

Membership: Nick Hatcher (Chair), Liberal, KS; Brett Rooney (Vice-Chair), Satanta, KS; Trista Brown, Satanta, KS; Michael Bryant, Copeland, KS; Calvin Burke, Liberal, KS; Luke Grubbs, Hugoton, KS; Brian Hemann, Hugoton, KS; Matt Higgins, Elkhart, KS; Danny Law, Ulysses, KS; Gary Boldt, Ulysses, KS; Jim Sipes, Manter, KS; Alan Olson, Ulysses, KS; Jason Norquest, Garden City, KS
KWO Planner: Richard Rockel, 785-296-3185; richard.rockel@kwo.ks.gov

Trista Brown has not put much up on the Facebook page yet and the page itself right now only has 2 followers. She is struggling to find things to post that are more easily consumable information. Ideas included putting links to things and seeing what other groups the RAC can share with. Richard and Alexandra can try to send more items to post, and the Water Office can share items that the RAC posts. Meetings that need to be advertised are a good item to include. GMD No. 3 has a Facebook, and K-state research also has a Facebook but it isn't updated regularly.

Other Business

Water Office Changes – In the process of still looking for more applicants for the Garden City position, no changes yet.

Blogger – Gary Boldt said that he follows a blogger from Colorado that keeps up with everything that is going on in the water world, and asked if anyone knows if there is someone from Kansas who does that. There was no one from Kansas that anyone was aware of.

GMD No. 3 Request to RAC – Nick Hatcher asked that if members have not looked through the document brought to the RAC from GMD No. 3 at the November meeting that they do so, because the RAC will address it at the next meeting. There are six items that the GMD is requesting for the RAC to add as goals. Jason please send a copy to Alexandra so she can get it out to the entire committee.

Federal Programs – Alex sent Nick information on federal programs, and requested that she send that same information out to everyone else on the RAC, noting that it would be good to get programs opened up to the masses.

Agency Reports –

Mike Meyer KDA-DWR: Unless there are questions it has just been ordinary stuff. There are still some WCA's in the works, and we have been approving at least one a month for the last few months. This time of year it slows down with producers, but with the drought a WCA can be your drought plan. Right now there are 15-20 some WCAs across the state. As a reminder you can apply for a MYFA if this continues to be a drought year. We are looking to update the WCA page to show the totals, averages, rolling numbers and facts.

Jason Norquest GMD No. 3: The one big thing is that the monthly board meeting is next Wednesday, and everyone is encouraged to go online to look at the current management program. The GMD is looking to send it to the Chief Engineer in the near future and many of the subjects that were talked about today are addressed in the plan. It is a long plan but it would be great to have input from RAC members on it.

There is a new proposed development in Colorado about 2 miles from the state line for 39 wells and a 6,000 acre/foot allocation. The proposal is wanted to develop the wells for irrigation, where there is currently not irrigation. Most of it is alluvial flows. Cimarron is a subsidiary to the Ark River Compact downstream with Oklahoma and Kansas. The question was asked as to whether any other states have joined in opposition. Oklahoma and New Mexico know and support the GMD but haven't done anything. The company wanting to develop is from Georgia and there is talk about alfalfa fields. The GMD has to oppose each permit they are trying to get, each of the 39 individually. The GMD was able to find an attorney while in DC to represent them. The GMD along with four other individuals are opposing the development. It would have an effect on Cimarron on our side, mostly on the grasslands. While in DC they also met with the Forestry Service to get a permit to put in a monitoring well along the state line in the Cimarron region.



Cimarron Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Public Comments – None

Messages to Kansas Water Authority – None

Future Meetings –

GMD3 Monthly: next Wednesday

Water Authority: Next meeting is August 22nd and is now in Manhattan (was originally in Dodge City)

RAC: Doodle Poll – try to have it sometime before Nick's field day

Adjourn

11:40am

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