



Cimarron Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Cimarron Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
10:00am, Thursday, September 13th, 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	No
Michael Bryant	Copeland, KS	Agriculture 2	2019	No
Calvin Burke	Liberal, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2019	Yes
Luke Grubbs	Hugoton, KS	Irrigation	2021	Yes
Brian Hemman	Hugoton, KS	Agricultural Industry	2019	No
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	No
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
Greg Graff	KWA
Kenny Sullivan	KCC
Mike Meyer	KDA-DWR
Alexandra Geisler	KWO
Armando Zarco	KWO

Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Nick Hatcher began the meeting at 10:04am and welcomed everyone, giving those in attendance that are not on the committee a chance to introduce themselves. A quorum was present; six of the thirteen committee members were present.

Approval of Agenda

Matt Higgins motioned to approve the agenda. Calvin Burke seconded. The agenda was approved as presented.

Review & Approval of May Meeting Minutes

Gary Boldt motioned to approve the May meeting minutes. Calvin Burke seconded. The May minutes were approved.

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 Planners: Alexandra Geisler, 785-296-0865; alexandra.geisler@kwo.ks.gov
Armando Zarco, 620-276-2901; armando.zarco@kwo.ks.gov

RAC Operations & Planner Changes

Alexandra Geisler from the Kansas Water Office announced that the planner changes within the office discussed at previous meetings have officially taken effect. Richard Rockel has transitioned to a different position and will no longer be a planner for the region. Armando Zarco was hired on as the new KWO position stationed out in Garden City. Armando and Alexandra moving forward will be co-planners for all four of the western Regional Advisory Committees.

Armando Zarco then took time to introduce himself and give an overview of his new role within KWO.

Alexandra Geisler then reviewed the IPM document with committee members, pointing out specifically the attendance policy. Moving forward attendance will be tracked and IPM enforced. If a member cannot attend a meeting, even last minute, they need to inform either of the planners or the chairman ahead of time. If there is a meeting or agenda item and a member wants to participate in the conversation but can't be in attendance, it is possible to set up a conference call but this must be done in advance of the meeting. When it comes to communicating and setting meeting dates, the members agreed that doodle polls are the best option. To ensure KWO has the most up to date contact information Alexandra will be passing around a sheet later in the meeting for members to mark their preferred method of contact and fix any mistakes in their personal contact information.

KWA Meeting Report

Chairman Nick Hatcher was in attendance at the Water Authority meeting in Manhattan. He said that water issues across the state are becoming more heightened, and that this region is lucky because there are bigger issues being faced throughout the state in comparison.

Water Authority Member Greg Graff was in attendance and explained for the committee that the chairman of the Great Bend Prairie (GBP) gave a report from the RAC requesting a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the agencies and standard operation procedures (SOP) on how to implement Vision goals. That particular committee he said had tried to work on identifying/mapping salt water disposal lines as stated in their goals. They had trouble coordinating and getting help from state agencies. This is what led to their request for a MOU between agencies and the SOP. Tracy has agreed to work on an MOU and right now at least until more funding is received there they are not looking at using or developing any SOP. Greg thinks that the Water Office does a great job now and that until much more money is received there isn't an issue with how it is currently handled. He pointed out that there was good discussion following the presentation on the role of the RAC's. As advisory committees there has been the chance to have input on the budget including the recommendations to the Blue Ribbon Funding Taskforce, but right now we don't have the money to get the goals finished.

The discussion then moved to the KWA Budget recommendations. The committee reviewed the memo from the RACs budget webinar back at the end of July. There were only two members who participated in the webinar and two funding items were brought up. Those included the funding of the model maintenance program, which was not included in the recommendation, and funding for technology and crop varieties which was included. Items of relevance to the region that were in the recommendations are Crop & Livestock Research, Irrigation Technology, and Water Technology Farms.

The State of the Resource (SOTR) Reports were officially released at the KWA meeting and will be discussed in further detail later. Drought documents from the KWA meeting are in the meeting materials, and if anyone has questions on it they can direct those to either of the planners.

Southwest Kansas Oklahoma Panhandle Coordination – Jim Sipes

Jim Sipes was not able to be at the meeting but he did send an email ahead of time saying that he is working on setting up a meeting with Oklahoma farmers to discuss water as soon after harvest as possible. He will keep us informed and asked for input as we begin to set a date.

Jason Norquest said that GMD3 has thrown out some potential dates to him in early to late November. The meeting itself could be geared for state agencies or producers. Nick thinks it would be better for it to be educational to share what we know and fit with the committee's goals to educate producers. Mike Meyer added that the state can set it up or help put a meeting together, and that if Jim wants he can put him in contact with the Kansas Oklahoma Compact contact. Alexandra Geisler has already sent Jim contact information for those from Oklahoma in attendance at the Ogallala Summit. She will follow up with Jim to let him know what was discussed and see what additional assistance he needs.

Water Technology Farm Field Days Review – Armando Zarco

Armando Zarco from KWO provided an overview of the Water Technology Farms and recently held field days, starting by showing a video of Nick Hatcher's speech at his Water Technology Farm Field Day. There are currently ten Water Technology Farms and each is different. The Northwest Technical College Precision Agriculture Program in the Upper Republican is focused more on workforce development and has several participating producers and covers ten fields. The two new farms in the Equus-Walnut Region are more water quality focused and are looking at reducing water usage to aid in slowing the destruction of their soil from chloride in the water. Field days just finished up and there was a lot of variability in the attendance at different field days some having less than 20 and others with over 100 attendees. Some of the farms are just on year one while other are on year three. The cost for each is variable depending on what each producer wants to do. Funding comes from KWO and a large number of other various sponsors. He is working on getting a few more started by the end of this year, and if anyone knows of someone who is interested in trying to establish a technology farm put them in contact with Armando. Jason Norquest asked if we can push to have a farm similar to the ones in the Equus-Walnut out here in this region. Armando responded saying to send him information for anyone in the area that would be interested.

Greg Graff asked how many actual farmers were in attendance at Nick Hatcher's Field Day, the answer being ten to twelve which is more than last year. Nick continued saying moisture probes on his farm are critical as they are a management tool that tells you what you need to do. This year they learned that when they thought they needed to turn on they could wait another five to ten days because of what the technology was telling them. Alexandra said that this is similar to what we are hearing from other producers; that the probes are good in a wet year because you can see how the rainfall events fill your profile up so you don't have to turn on. Armando added that you don't just need the technology/probes but you need to know how to actually use it. Jason Norquest asked Nick if he is going to switch to one sprinkler package to which he responded that he wasn't because what worked best changed throughout the year and KSU is going to verify that the same amount of water is being applied by each. Nick added that the cost is less to keep it going once the initial cost is covered through the technology farm.

Master Irrigators

Alexandra Geisler from KWO informed the committee that a group from the state is going down to Texas within the next month to learn about the Master Irrigators program and whether or not something similar could be used in Kansas. She will keep the committee updated and if something is developed for Kansas make sure the committee gets a chance to provide comments and input on it.

Grant County Fair Booth – Gary Boldt

Gary Boldt spoke about the booth he had at the Grant county Fair. Being as Grant County is split in two by the RACs he made sure to have material and information about both the Cimarron and the Upper Arkansas. The booths are open three days and are supposed to be supervised from 11am – 9pm which by himself he was not able to adhere to. He received a lot of the material and information from KWO curtesy of Alexandra Geisler. He had no trouble getting material and before long he had more material than booth space.

He had several questions to tempt people into looking at the booth. It did bring in some people and even though fair attendance was down a fair number of people at least stopped to take a glance, some asking questions or making comments. Overall interest could have been better but he is fairly satisfied with how things went. He passed around some pictures of the booth and said if he does it again he will try and get a double booth to keep from getting his information confused with other booths/programs. Nick thanked Gary for putting the booth together, and stated that it is a great first step in trying to put the message out in the public's eye.

SOTR, Kansas RAC Presentation & Outreach Efforts

Referencing the earlier conversation Alexandra from KWO added that the released reports can be found on the Water Office Website, and a hard copy has been provided for each member. There are two additional items to discuss in relation to the reports; the first is the presentation put together the Kansas RAC, and the second is the infographic that goes along with the report. The presentation was given to the chairs at a chair meeting in which Nick was in attendance. The Committee has seen an older version of the presentation where Richard Rockel had adapted the content for the region. Alexandra noted that she is working on adapting the new version with additional information from the SOTR Reports for each of the Western RACs; and that it will take some time to complete as the dialog provided in the Kansas version is not applicable to the West and will have to be written from scratch. When she gets the presentation put together she will send it out to the committee for input and comments as it is meant to be used as a tool for them to conduct outreach in the region.

Discussion turned to the infographic. The committee would like to see an economic piece to it or an additional sheet with economic information to go with it. Other than that the conversation was focused on potential ways to use the infographic and get it out to the public. Nick brought up the idea of inserting it into the high school fall or winter sports program. It could also go into the newspaper but what is the price on that? Calvin said that he could get them to do a press release at no charge, and that it may be a possibility to do a Facebook live video with the editor who regularly brings on guests. Other ideas included getting it out to the Farm Bureau, County Conservation Districts, the GMD and courthouses.

Calvin Burke asked what percentage of water is wasted vs. productive for use in different categories such as municipal, industry and agriculture. It may be better to look into what the efficiency is instead. Armando will look into it although it may be difficult and unfeasible to find such data.

Luke Grubbs asked where the community college stands, and whether or not they can teach farmers. Nick said that the Ag program is new and upcoming. Some discussions have been had with Tracy Streeter but nothing has come of it. Calvin said that the current focus is to get medical and education degrees offered in SW Kansas in Liberal, Garden City, and Dodge City. Nick and others can get with Dr. Ken Trzaska and the board to try and get something going.

RAC Focus & Open Discussion

Alexandra from KWO passed the contact sheet around for members to look over, make any changes to their personal information, and if they want choose a preferred method of contact. When asked if there were any changes they would like to see in communication from KWO or meeting location the committee members had no comments. Alexandra gave details on some of the work she is doing internally at KWO to assist with tracking progress on projects, the Vision, and RAC Action Plans. The committee was able to look at what has been put together for the Cimarron on action plan progress. Alexandra will send out the information for members to look over.

Joint Meeting

The idea was brought to the committee to have a joint meeting with the Upper Arkansas RAC at the beginning of next year. The planners need input on date, timeline, and agenda items from the members. The Upper Arkansas RAC would like to have it in Garden City if possible. The committee was ok with that but suggested if we have one every year to change the locations to Liberal, Ulysses, or Sublette. Timing would need to be before the start of the legislative session if possible. As far as agenda items the two ideas brought up were having Jonathan Aguilar come to talk about Water Technology Farms and someone to talk about Master Irrigators. Nick asked Jason to look into finding somebody to talk about Master Irrigators.

The question was posed to the committee as to whether or not they wanted to have another meeting before the end of the year. The answer being yes if there are any action items that need to be addressed before the end of the year. Jason Norquest brought up the issue in the Cimarron Grasslands between Kansas and Colorado that the GMD3 has been working on. He would like the RAC to put in a request for cost-share funding to put in the monitoring well in the grasslands. A motion was made and is written in detail below under Messages to the Kansas Water Authority.

Following the vote the group decided to have a conference call on Thursday November 1st at 11:30am to vote on the letter and discuss the agenda for the joint meeting and any progress or changes on the infographic and presentation. On that call they will also decide whether or not to have a 30 minute break out session before the joint meeting to go over action plan progress which Alexandra will send out for everyone to look over before the call on November 1st.

Agency Reports

Mike Meyer KDA-DWR: The chief engineer and Lane Letourneau were at the GMD3 meeting yesterday. The chief engineer told Mike that he is impressed with the Cimarron RAC Goals and think that they would make great goals for the GMD to build on. Right now there are 17 WCA's across the state covering 35,000 acres and about 4,000 acre/ft. of savings. There are 6 pending in the state, 5 of those are in GMD3 covering 6,000 acres and about 800 acre/ft. of savings and they should be completed soon. It would be nice to have more WCA's and technology farms in this area. He told Gary Boldt great job on the outreach efforts and told Nick great job on his speech at the field day and performance on his WCA. They are wrapping up irrigation water use, so it is a good time to look at meters. You can sign up for MYFA's up to December 31st which works if you over-pump but also as a tool to save water. Take advantage of those programs, and be aware that there are stiff penalties if you go over.

Jason Norquest GMD No. 3: The GMD was kicked out of Colorado/Cimarron issue but didn't appeal it. They have already spent a bunch of money on that issue and the study to show the impacts the wells will have on the Cimarron Grasslands in Kansas. They are going to be putting in a monitoring well in the Cimarron Basin along the Colorado border to act more like stream gauge well. On the Cimarron River they did go ahead and finish up the study on the effects of the Colorado development, and are working on finalizing a report.

Kenny Sullivan KCC: Kenny is on KCC's oil and gas conservation division and he is tasked with protecting fresh and usable water from gas and oil exploration. His district office is located in Dodge City and he covers these 27 counties. They oversee permitting from installation to plugging, and perform routine lease inspections during pumping. If there are any spills they ensure they get reported and cleaned up properly, and notify operators how to plug their wells and oversee the entire process. They have funds for plugging orphan wells and for remediation sites without a responsible party which is what he mostly deals with. There are two sites he reports on annually to the legislature in this area. One site was caused by leaking disposal wells where the recovery system was pumping down contaminated water. Too much good water was being pumped away, several wells are still being monitored and are slowly cleaning up naturally (injection wells is a hot topic right now). Now there is an underground injection control division that witnesses a mechanical integrity test to make sure it is exposing into the proper location. Since the program was started there haven't been any large events. Everything he has happened prior to that. The other site was caused by a leaking disposal well that got into the Ogallala. That site is still active in recovery. Nick asked if the leaks were caused during disposal, Kenny said yes they were casing leaks and there was not oversight at the time. The design wasn't efficient as it is now, and today they are tested more often. He mentioned that in Stafford County there are around 13 sinkholes that they monitor where freshwater dissolved out all of the salts causing the subsidence. In his opinion Kansas has taken a proactive approach and Oklahoma more reactive. They do not map flow lines but it is not regulated or in the law that you have to, however it is beneficial for an operator to know where all of their lines are. There is an advisory committee similar to this one that meets monthly to talk about these topics.

Other Business

Public Comments – None

Messages to Kansas Water Authority – Luke Grubbs motioned for a letter to be sent to KWA requesting support for additional funding to cost-share on the installation of an observation well in the Cimarron Grasslands along the Kansas Colorado border being put in by GMD3. Calvin Burke seconded, the motion was passed and Alexandra will work with Nick to draft a letter to be approved by the committee via conference call before the December KWA meeting.

Future Meetings –

Next RAC meeting – Conference call on Thursday November 1st @ 11:30am

Joint meeting with Upper Arkansas RAC – beginning of next year

Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas – November 13th & 14th in Manhattan

Adjourn

12:35pm