

Great Bend Prairie Regional Advisory Committee Meeting 1:00 p.m., February 24, 2020 Great Bend, KS

Members Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Keith Miller (Chair)	Barton Co., KS	Agriculture 3	2023	Yes
Jeff Holste (Vice-Chair)	Burdett, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2021	No
Berry Bortz	Preston, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2023	Yes
Kendal Francis	Great Bend, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2023	Yes
Orrin Feril	Stafford, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	Yes
Tom Turner	St. John, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2021	Yes
Jay Dill	Kinsley, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2021	Yes
Craig Crosse	Sterling, KS	Public Water Supply 3	2023	Yes
Daniel Filbert	Macksville, KS	Agriculture 2	2021	Yes
Mark Fincham	Pratt, KS	Groundwater Irrigation	2023	Yes
Stephanie Royer	La Crosse, KS	At Large Public 2	2023	Yes
Isaac Aberson	Jetmore, KS	Watershed Protection	2023	Yes
Cammie Vaupel	St. John, KS	Commerce/Industry 2	2021	Yes

Others in attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Wade Kleven	KDHE
Veronica Coons	Great Bend Tribune
Diane Knowles	KWO

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Keith Miller welcomed new members of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) and all those in attendance. Self-introductions were made by all.

Kansas Water Authority Update

Chairman, Keith Miller provided comments on the December and January KWA meeting noting that the Goodland meeting in December included budget related discussion and that he had requested funds for the region so things could be done. He described the successful visits with local legislators in conjunction with the January KWA meeting in Topeka. Discussion included the timing of appointments to KWA including the chairperson, RACs and of the Executive Director of KWO.

Keith described the need for a study of the Arbuckle formation as its use for wastewater and produced water disposal could contaminate fresh water supplies. Diane Knowles then described the scoping efforts and group formed to do define the Arbuckle Study that is being considered. The intent of the study is to characterize the Arbuckle and understand the effects of disposal through underground injection wells in order to determine how to manage and operate the process to sustain use of the Arbuckle into the future. It was noted that injection of municipal and industrial wastewaters (class1) and produced water (class 2) are regulated by KDHE and KCC respectively. Initial work is probably going to focus on a specific area of south central Kansas which includes Reno-Harvey-Butler, Kingman-Sedgwick, Harper-Sumner-Cowley counties, one of 4 areas originally proposed by KGS.

For the benefit of new members, contract approvals by KWA and informational presentations were described. It was also noted that ex-officio KWA members, Chief Engineer David Barfield is retiring end of month, as is Rob Reschke State Conservation Commission Executive Director. Last week Chris Beightel was appointed as acting chief engineer and Scott Carlson as acting executive director for DOC while the search process is proceeding.

Budget

Information was included in the mailing materials developed to inform the RACs on the budget process so that when asked in June to supply RAC budget recommendations they will be well informed decisions. Diane explained the sources of funding for the State Water Plan (SWP) Fund (fees/taxes), and shortfalls from State General Funds (SGF) and Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF) of about \$78 million since 2009. For 2020 there was \$4.5 million from SGF and EDIF that were added to the SWP.

Diane noted budget guidelines have been developed by KWA with some priorities identified such as long term contractual or multiyear obligations and allocations based on source of funds with geographical balance and include urban and rural interests.

A suggestion was made that the two maps of SWP fund distribution be combined by using sized pies rather than one with pies and a second with the total dollars.

Budget Process 2020: The budget process and recommendations includes the opportunity for the RAC process to make recommendations, hopefully relating those to their regional goals. A webinar will be provided prior to the April 14 KWA meeting to review the specific programs with agencies. This will be recorded and posted on the website. It is anticipated that a spring RAC meeting will provide for a review of the budget, including revenue, expenditures, and definition of line items. The June RAC meeting would be the time for RAC budget recommendations. Anticipate spring meeting (late March or April) to review process and RAC role with agencies explaining programs, summer meeting for budget priorities from RACs.

Hopefully this will lead to the RAC being able to see how the budget and the regional goals fit and in turn contribute to refinement of regional goals and actions plans

RAC Business

Past meeting notes had no comments.

Water Vision and Regional Activities

Chairman Miller reviewed the regional goals and factors contributing to less progress than had been anticipated. He continued to highlight consensus from past discussions on goal and action plan revisions, noting the need to adjust to what does occur to resolve the impairment complaint related to Quivira in the Rattlesnake basin.

Back ground and update on the Rattlesnake Creek/Quivira issue was provided by Orrin Feril - No administration will occur in 2020 since no request for water was filed by US Fish & Wildlife Service for 2020. Remedy discussions continue among the parties involved with the goal of common sense solutions.

Additional discussion of partners in the effort and the need to stress conservation of water for all uses then occurred. This included discussion of the conservation reserve enhancement program (CREP). Diane provided a synopsis of last week's call with FSA national and regional people. Although the 2018 Farm Bill provides the Secretary the discretion to permit dryland agricultural uses, USDA has determined to not allow dryland agricultural uses of

land enrolled in CRP under a CREP agreement regardless of whether the agreement involves the significant long-term reduction of consumptive water use. However Kansas and other states will be pursuing this for the future. The current plan is for the state of Kansas to proceed with three things:

- 1) KDA will be sending a proposal to FSA that outlines what Kansas wants to do with the existing CREP program—amend the area to include the Rattlesnake, increase the project acreage limits and add practices that allow farming opportunities but still conserve (such as field borders, strip tillage or other options) – looking for a list of practices from FSA to be sent to DOC. The hope is to keep simple so not to trigger requirements or changes required in the 2018 Farm Bill which could complicate the existing CREP in Kansas and possibly cause the new lower rental rates to apply.

Discussion of practices that have offered improved efficiencies in the past, but often penalized those that had or were trying to conserve.

- 2) KDA will develop and submit a Proposal for Dryland Practice – this will define things like crops allowed, why it should be allowed, benefits to habitat and other CRP goals
- 3) Seek to send a joint letter with State of Colorado on dryland practice.

RAC Goals and Action Plan discussion

Chairman Miller provided a brief recap of preliminary goal revision discussions of the past indicating most or all the goals need at least some revision.

It was also noted that flooding in 2019 affected some areas including reports of groundwater rises causing flooding in buildings/homes. DWR has addressed the need to pump groundwater with temporary permits to dewater.

Priority Goal #1: Achieve water use sustainability within the Great Bend Prairie Regional Planning Area by 2025 with a starting point being no new net depletions that includes a reasonable raising or lowering of the water table based on average weather conditions.

Suggest this be redone after agreement among parties for resolution for Quivira and Rattlesnake Creek issue.

Priority Goal #3: Enhance the monitoring of poor quality water in areas which have salt water disposal lines, disposal wells and areas with high salt sources to ensure that contamination of fresh water sources does not occur as well as to stop and reverse further contamination of fresh water sources. Establish a self-reporting program under penalty of law if a problem is observed to ensure the problem does not get worse. Start using mapping techniques and disposal line maintenance and replacement to ensure this goal is met. Set up a review program by 2020.

Suggestions mentioned include simplifying goal, an emphasis on reducing contamination potential, and/or location of new salt water lines

Priority Goal #4: Initiate research and development of feed wheat as an alternative feed source within the Great Bend Prairie Planning Region. Technology transfer from this research would have benefits in areas of Kansas where water is not available for production of water-intensive crops. Dual research program: plant breeding and livestock feeding. Achieve large scale feeding trials by 2025.

Previous discussion centered on looking at alternatives crops rather than a focus on feed wheat.

Priority Goal #5: Work towards sustainability of watersheds so that flood control capacity is maintained while maintaining streamflow to meet downstream water needs. Progress towards sustainability would be to have 50% of the drainage area within watershed districts controlled by watershed structures by 2065. Best available information/data will be evaluated every 10 years to track progress towards meeting this goal.

Discussion suggested a focus on funding for new structures within the action plan might be appropriate.

Chairman Miller requested all RAC members study these goals and action plans and write up their thoughts to share at the next meeting.

Dan Filbert made a motion to table the goal revision discussion until next meeting. The motion was seconded by Orrin Feril. Motion carried.

Agency Comments

GMD5- Orrin Feril noted water quality, specifically nitrates may be a new subject that needs to be addressed. Increasing nitrates as well as private water well monitoring and information were discussed.

KDHE- no report

Public Comments - none

Chairman Miller noted that he has volunteered the RAC as a sponsor for public information dissemination when the Quivira issue is resolved.

Discussion suggested late April or early May for the next RAC meeting.

Meeting Adjourn at about 3:15 PM