

**10:00 am, Wednesday, May 26, 2021
GoTo Meeting and Conference Call**

Members Attendance:

| Name | City | Category | Term | Present |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|------|---------|
| Heath Horyna, V-Chair | Topeka, KS | Industry/Commerce (cc) | 2021 | Yes |
| Adam Bauer | Milford, KS | WRAPs | 2023 | Yes |
| Rick Bean | Topeka, KS | At Large Public (cc) | 2023 | Yes |
| Marlene Bosworth | Sabetha, KS | Conservation/Environment (cc) | 2023 | Yes |
| Brad Bradley | Overland Park, KS | Fish and Wildlife | 2021 | Yes |
| Glenn Brunkow | Westmoreland, KS | Agriculture (cc) | 2021 | Yes |
| Sarah Hill-Nelson | Lawrence, KS | Industry/Commerce | 2023 | Yes |
| Leslie Holthaus | Beattie, KS | Conservation/Environment | 2023 | Yes |
| Daniel Howell | Frankfort, KS | Agriculture | 2021 | Yes |
| Darci Meese | Lenexa, KS | Public Water Supply (cc) | 2023 | Yes |
| William Ramsey | Leawood, KS | Planning, Restoration and Protection | 2021 | Yes |
| Greg Wilson | Olathe, KS | Water Assurance District | 2021 | No |

Others in attendance:

| Name | Representing | Name | Representing |
|------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Josh Olson | KWO | Dustin Mengarelli | KDWPT |
| Andrew Lyon | KDA-DOC | John Reinke | KDWPT |
| Jaide Allenbrand | KDHE | Mirit Shamir | KSU |
| Amanda Reed | KDHE | Allyn Lockner | Public |

- I) **Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Vice-Chair, Heath Horyna, and the meeting agenda was reviewed. Self-introductions were given with RAC roll call completed on the conference call line.
- II) **Review of March 19th meeting notes:** The meeting notes were reviewed. Will moved, Darci seconded, and the notes were unanimously approved as written.
- III) **RAC Business:**
 - a. **Conservation Practices and Issues:** Dustin Mengarelli (KDWPT) gave a presentation on KWDPT conservation efforts and various management struggles, including flooding and sedimentation, available [here](#). Dustin noted that the presentation was a summary and review of information he provided to the RAC in 2018, in preparation for the Perry Field Day to be rescheduled this summer. The presentation included summaries of Milford, Tuttle, Perry, and Clinton Reservoirs. Dustin detailed how public lands, state properties, and federal properties are managed for wildlife benefits. Dustin noted that ag leases have a forbidden chemical list and that KDWPT utilizes soil tests to check for them. Dustin noted that KDWPT is pushing for no-till practices, specifically no tillage after harvest until March 1st the following year. Dustin also mentioned that flooding means fallow fields, which can lead to ragweed and smartweed and limit cover crops.

Dustin provided details about conservation efforts at Milford Reservoir noting that a lot of buffer strips at Milford were impacted by the 2019 flood with deposits of flood debris in ag fields and on buffer strips. KDWPT is working with the Republican WRAPS to establish cover crops at Milford. However, Dustin noted that many producers are not interested, even when implementation assistance is offered. KDWPT requires cover crops on competitive leases, which has driven the price per acre down. Brad asked what the reason was for producers not being interested in cover crops. Dustin noted that the biggest complaint was that cover crops are not a traditional agricultural practice, but KDWPT is working with the WRAPS program to educate about the benefits. Dustin mentioned that priority permittees, who don't have cover crop terms in their lease agreements, would go away at the end of 2024, and the leases would go out for competitive bid. Heath asked for background on the cost-share program. Dustin responded that, typically, producers want to till everything, plant wheat in the fall, till again, and then go to the next crop. Cover crop cost share attempts to cover the cost of seed, time, fuel, etc. and encourage producers to adopt the practice. Darci asked if there was cost share from RCPP. Dustin stated that they haven't been involved. Adam agreed, noting it had strictly been WRAPS. Adam commented that the producers don't want cover crops because there is a cost for seed without harvesting any cash crop. Adam noted that WRAPS pays for the cover seed, and the producers' contribution is their tractor, fuel, etc. Andrew Lyon (KDA-DOC) mentioned requirements for federal and state cost shares meant to be used on private land, noting that WRAPS has more flexibility for public lands.

Dustin continued with discussion of Tuttle, Clinton, and Perry. Dustin noted that Tuttle has more floodability than other reservoir systems, ranging from 30-90% fallow depending on the year. KDWPT is coordinating with KDHE at Clinton. Dustin noted that producers were worried about damages to crops and associated losses. Dustin mentioned four streambank stabilization projects at Perry and an 1135 restoration grant with the Corps. Dustin noted that Perry is a stronger area for cover crops with a 20% cover crop requirement starting in 2016. Cover crop requirements were included in all competitive bids starting in 2015. Dustin noted that Andrew Page is working on what cover crops percentage should be required on future contracts. Dustin mentioned that sedimentation was significant at Perry and other sites during the 2019 flood, noting 6-34" of siltation at the west river boat ramp and feet of silt on the parking lot. Dustin mentioned efforts to blade silt off roads up to approximately 1.25 miles from the Delaware River, as well as work to clean out ditches. Dustin noted that all reservoir floodplains gained inches to feet of silt, which killed a lot of natural, perennial vegetation, and was particularly devastating to grassland vegetation.

Dustin discussed moving water dynamics. Dustin noted that the straightening of the river and channelization, particularly on the Delaware River, causes issues and leads to deeper river channels and higher banks. Additionally, there has been a lot of streambank erosion, though established trees and riparian cover help where they are present. Heath asked if there were any plans for a weir system or protection at bends immediately following a straight section of the river. Dustin replied that he was not aware of any, but agreed that high speed flows cause erosion. Dustin also mentioned that tile outlet terraces are a potential issue that can speed up flow. Marlene replied that there are some benefits of tile outlet systems if they are designed to slow flow. However, she noted a lot of new designs are trying to go faster, which causes issues for nutrients and WQ. Marlene also pointed out that there are miles of straightened river and dikes impacting flow. Leslie mentioned that terraces are generally designed to hold water for 24 hours, but they can fail when there is a lot more water than designed capacity. Leslie agreed with Marlene that not all tile outlets are bad. Dustin mentioned that he had noticed a lot of terraces being put in, and it seemed like their was increased flow in the system in response. Dustin noted that the

increased flow may have been more related to precipitation though. Dustin stated that straightened flow is causing the Delaware to get deeper and deeper. Dustin noted it was good to hear that some outlet storages are being designed to hold water. Heath asked if the tile outlets are designed for a specific event and if they need maintenance. Marlene responded that the NRCS does have a standard, but she was unsure what it was. Marlene stated that sediment does build up, requiring maintenance to remove the sediment, maintain storage, and keep the outlet from being overtopped. Heath noted it sounded like a properly designed and maintained tile outlet can have a positive impact. Marlene speculated that the observed faster runoff may be the result of less grass and land use that would keep the water on land and out of the waterways. Dan noted that most tile outlet terraces probably are not designed for the bigger events that seem to be occurring more frequently. Dan also mentioned that there are miles and miles of straightened river on the Black Vermillion. Dustin mentioned that no-till can result in hardened ground that accelerates runoff but reduces sediment load. Brad responded that his experience with no-till has not been hardened ground, noting that no-till has made his ground spongy with better infiltration. Marlene interjected that the increased infiltration was true with continuous no-till practices, but that many producers do not maintain no-till continuously enough to get the full benefits.

Dustin concluded by stating that KDWPT is continually working to determine next steps to address needs. Dustin mentioned the example of Kyle Marsh, which used to be a lake and now is essentially a wetland system that is shrinking with each flood. Heath asked if KDWPT had a forbidden chemical list. Dustin responded that the agency created a list related to agricultural chemicals. Josh mentioned that the KWO and KDWPT were working on rescheduling the Perry field tour and asked what days and times would be preferred. The group suggested Wednesday mornings as a preferred time. Dan suggested the group could get lunch after the tour and discuss the topics covered.

- b. BMP Subcommittee Update:** Marlene Bosworth gave an update on recent activities of the Kansas RAC BMP Subcommittee. Marlene noted that Amanda Reed and Jaide Allenbrand were on the call. Marlene stated that Jaide has been helping the subcommittee with the BMP resource document. Marlene asked the RAC to review the document and provide feedback. Marlene noted that the subcommittee has met several times to work on putting the document together, which was an Action Step under Priority Goal #3. The document includes technical and financial resources available to producers. Marlene noted that assembling the document was a huge task, but KDHE came running to the rescue and helped the RAC move the project forward. Marlene mentioned that Jaide had recently been hired and assigned the task of helping with the project, which really helped move things along. Marlene stated that the intention was to set up the document from the perspective of a producer looking for help, noting that the “Getting Started” section gets right to the point and directs producers to their desired conservation goal. Marlene stated that the document was meant to be a helpful, fast resource. Marlene noted that the goal was to turn the document into an online resource, possibly hosted on the Kansas Runs on Water website. Marlene asked the group if they had any thoughts or feedback.

Heath said a big thank you to Jaide and Amanda for their help. Heath stated that this was the document the group had always wished to have, noting that it was a great resource that helped connect the dots. Jaide mentioned that she had started working at KDHE in January and assembling the document had been a good introduction to the various programs. Sarah stated that she was curious about Dan and Glenn’s thoughts about the document. Glenn responded that the document was exactly what he’d been asking for and said that the group needed to make sure that the resource was shared. Marlene further explained the layout and formatting of the document, noting that it was difficult to decide the level of detail with a

desire to minimize the information that could change and require updates. The goal was a document with longevity. Brad recommended running the document by Steve Swaffar of No-Till on the Plains for input. Marlene responded that the subcommittee wants to send the individual pages of the document to the associated agencies for feedback. Darci asked where the document would be kept and who would be responsible for dispersing it. Marlene responded that any of the agencies/programs listed in the document should have it available as a reference and be able to point producers to it online. Heath asked if any other RAC or group had put together something similar. Josh responded that he didn't think any other RACs had done anything similar. Josh suggested that, when the document is complete, it could be presented to other RACs to gauge their interest in completing something similar. Heath asked how much effort would be required to expand to other regions. Jaide responded that a lot of the programs are statewide and could just be copied and pasted, though not necessarily by KDHE.

Sarah stated that the document was a great example of a RAC working with an agency to meet a need. Sarah asked how it might serve as a model for future RAC activity. Heath stated that it got at the heart and soul of the RAC, centralizing regional knowledge; Heath noted the document exemplifies what RACs can provide, the ability to centralize information and disseminate it. Sarah noted it cut through the siloization of agencies. Marlene noted it was an educational piece for producers, but also for agencies. Marlene asked the group to review the document and send feedback to Josh. Heath mentioned that, when the document is ready to be shared, it will be stored on the KWO site, "Kansas Runs on Water." Heath asked if there had been any QA/QC conversations. Marlene responded that since the RAC had created it, they should probably keep an eye on it. Darci mentioned the need to include the KWA. Josh stated that the document needed to at least be shown to the KWA prior to public posting and said that he would check if that should happen before or after other agencies had the chance to review it.

- c. Funding and Governance Subcommittee Update:** Sarah Hill-Nelson gave an update on recent activities of the Kansas RAC Funding and Governance Subcommittee. Sarah mentioned that Burke Griggs had given some history of how water is governed at a previous meeting. Sarah noted that the subcommittee was originally going to make a suggestion for generating regional funding for water projects, but there was disagreement about how to meet that commitment. The group considered using existing legislation like the reservoir or GMD acts. Some subcommittee members supported that approach while others felt there were more significant organizational issues related to water, so the group should wait to see the actions of the House Water Committee. Sarah noted that it was suggested that the RAC reach out to federal legislators about funding needs. The subcommittee members all feel more time and attention is needed on water issues and would like to see a standing committee on water. Darci noted that the mission of the Funding and Governance Subcommittee is unclear. Darci stated that she thought the subcommittee members all agree that a standing committee would be helpful. Darci suggested that the subcommittee probably needs to see what direction the House Water Committee goes, and then, they can hopefully clarify their mission. Sarah stated the group feels that water is an important issue facing the state and demands greater attention. Brad stated that he agreed with most of what was said, but that he disagreed about the surface water management act comments.

Sarah had Josh share feedback from the KWO. Josh noted that the KWO was supportive of engaging with federal legislators, but would like to assist the RAC with preparing a concise, targeted message regarding what was being asked for. Josh stated the KWO would prefer to wait until after the State Water Plan was finished to take on that task. Additionally, Josh stated that the Kansas RAC's message had been shared with the RAC Operations Committee and KWA. The RAC Operations Committee had included support

for the RAC's recommendation to support a summer session for the House Water Committee, but didn't include the RAC's recommendation of supporting a standing committee on water in its resolution to the KWA. Josh stated that the RAC Operations Committee had expressed that they were not unsupportive of the idea of recommending a standing committee on water, but they thought it was the wrong time, as the House Water Committee still has another year to continue. Josh suggested waiting until next year to resubmit the recommendation to the KWA if the RAC was still supportive of a standing committee on water. Darci said that she understood that approach, but she thought there would be benefit in floating the idea this year. Darci noted that it takes time for such actions, and it might be a mistake for the KWA to wait. Sarah, Brad, and Marlene expressed support for Darci's position. Marlene stated that it seemed a bit ridiculous for Kansas not to have a permanent water committee. Marlene noted that she did not think the RAC should sit back and wait. Heath asked how a permanent committee on water would differ from the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee that deals with water issues. Darci stated that the agriculture committee is heavily focused on agriculture, so it would just require peeling off water-specific issues and putting them in the water committee. Sarah noted that there is currently a lack of downstream, urban representation. Darci noted that agriculture could still weigh in on the proposed water committee. Josh responded that he would recommend waiting to get an official message back from the KWA before sending another RAC message. Sarah stated that the Funding and Governance Subcommittee was on hold until they get a message back from the KWA.

- d. **Project Prioritization Matrix:** Josh gave an update on the responses he received for the trial run through the project prioritization matrix. Josh noted that responses were limited and several RAC members expressed that they felt unqualified to evaluate some of the criteria. Rick responded that some of the questions are very subjective, and some he just did not know the answer for the evaluation. Brad mentioned that he and Sarah had talked about the matrix. Brad noted that it seemed like some of the questions were more informational and may not really impact prioritization. Brad suggested having a knowledgeable staff member fill out the matrix and have the RAC critique the results. Sarah seconded Brad's recommendation and suggested having key agency people get together to go through the matrix for the RAC to critique. Rick suggested that the RAC could help with some of the criteria. Marlene noted the goal was to come up with a standardized method for project evaluation. Josh recommended keeping the matrix as more of an internal document. Marlene responded that the matrix is just a tool to help inform the RAC's funding priorities. Marlene suggested that the matrix should be used by the whole RAC, as it is better to have group consensus. Sarah agreed with the suggestion to make it a team effort of filling out the matrix. Rick suggested having the KWO answer the yes-or-no criteria and having the RAC discuss the other criteria as a group. Heath said that he was visualizing a human logic document. Heath noted that if the matrix could put be put into a conditional algorithm-based process, it would remove a lot of bias. Heath recommended automating the process as much as possible. Marlene responded that sometimes discussion about subjective items is important. Josh suggested that the KWO evaluate the yes-or-no questions, and then come back to the RAC to go through the remaining criteria as a group.
- e. **Kansas Water Plan Update:** Josh provided a brief update on the current status of the Kansas Water Plan.
- f. **Additional KWO Updates:** Josh mentioned the intention to have presenters on natural solutions at an upcoming RAC meeting and asked for suggestions for possible presenters. Sarah suggested having the author of the beaver book, and Brad agreed he would be great. Josh questioned if he might be appropriate to have for a webinar, so it would be open to other RACs as well.

IV) Agency or Public Comments

- a. Heath informed the group that his term was expiring in June, and he would not be applying to renew his membership on the RAC. He shared some closing remarks and a goodbye to the RAC.
- b. Allyn Lockner stated that he had some questions and comments, but they would not fit into the limited time left of the meeting. Allyn sent them to Josh after the meeting to share with the RAC. Those comments are included below:
 - a. KRAC is to be commended for preparing a directory of sources of financial and technical assistance for rural and agricultural water projects. Expanding the directory to include such assistance for urban and suburban water projects seems to be worthwhile since most of the KRAC population lives in cities and towns. Assistance sources may include the following federal agencies: Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Housing and Urban Development; Department of Commerce; Department of Homeland Security; Department of Defense (KRAC contains military facilities), etc. To share the directory work, the RAC which includes Wichita might be asked to prepare a directory for urban and suburban water projects. Combining the rural and agricultural directory with the urban and suburban directory into one directory might be possible later. A combined directory may give all RACs in Kansas an advantage over other states in competing for federal financial and/or technical assistance, especially if RACs or the KWA can obtain required matching Kansas Water Plan monies from the Governor and Legislature.
 - b. Most Kansans live and work in urban and suburban areas, and their populations are likely to grow in the future. They will have future water problems. Does the agricultural-rural orientation of KRAC's work need to be balanced by with adding an urban-suburban component?
 - c. If KRAC encounters difficulties in prioritizing water problems, it may estimate the risk and urgency of each problem, and the risk of each alternative solution of each problem. At KRAC's request, I can provide more information.
 - d. The Kansas River Region includes land and water in Nebraska and Missouri. Are water officials in these states aware of KRAC and its work? The same question is asked about the American Indian population residing in the region. Is KRAC in any danger of pursuing its work and the water officials and Indian population interrupting its work later because they were not informed or did not participate early in KRAC's work?
 - e. Until a large majority of Kansas voters insists their elected leaders use their political will and power to solve and prevent water problems, they will grow and become more expensive to solve and prevent. In the meantime, Kansans can concentrate on increased water conservation in all beneficial uses; wastewater recycling and treatment for drinking, sanitation, and industrial purposes; and follow the advancing technology for desalination of salt water. This should help in alleviating the impacts of drought and flooding in Kansas. An expanded Kansas public water information and education campaign could be a major factor in achieving these outcomes.

V) Upcoming Meetings:

- a. Kansas Water Authority meeting (Wednesday, June 9, 9:00 am – Conference Call)
- b. Next Kansas RAC meeting (July – Doodle Poll)

VI) Adjourn: Brad moved and Dan seconded to end the meeting. The meeting was adjourned with no further business at 12:12 pm.