



Kansas Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

**9 am Friday, June 12, 2020
GoTo Meeting and Conference Call**

Members Attendance:

<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Term</i>	<i>Present</i>
Dawn Buehler, Chair	Eudora, KS	Recreation	2023	Yes
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	No
Marlene Bosworth	Sabetha, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2023	No
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	Yes

Others in attendance:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Representing</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Representing</i>
Josh Olson	KWO	Troy Munsch	NRCS
Lauren Koons	KWO	Allison Block	Public
Richard Rockel	KWO	Allyn Lockner	Public
Nate Westrup	KWO	Makayla Patton	Public
Connie Owen	KWA		

- I) **Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at 9:02 am by Chair, Dawn Buehler. Self-introductions were given with RAC roll call completed on the conference call line.
- II) **Review of April 30th meeting notes:** The meeting notes were reviewed and approved as written.
- III) **RAC Business:**
 - a. **Update on KWA response to RAC funding message:** Dawn opened the discussion, noting that Connie Owen, KWA Chair, was on the call. Dawn summarized the KWA response, which stated that the KWA is committed to and continues to seek full restoration of statutory transfers to the State Water Plan Fund (SWPF). The response also stated that, in light of pandemic-induced budgetary issues, the KWA does not feel it is prudent to seek adoption of the sales tax measure recommended by the Blue Ribbon Task Force (Task Force), but encouraged the RAC to review and identify funding needs and consider alternative measures. Sarah thanked the KWA for reviewing and responding to the RAC message and stated that the Kansas RAC Funding and Governance Subcommittee agreed with the KWA that the Blue Ribbon Task Force recommendations are outdated. Sarah stated that the RAC wanted to get a read from the KWA regarding raising and spending funds for water projects, including potentially doing regional efforts to raise funds for regional projects, which the public might be more supportive of. Darci noted that she attended the KWA call where the message was discussed and didn't feel that the KWA was necessarily

Membership: Dawn Buehler (Chair), Eudora, KS; Heath Horyna (Vice-Chair), Topeka, KS; Adam Bauer, Milford, KS; Rick Bean, Topeka, KS; Marlene Bosworth, Sabetha, KS; Brad Bradley, Overland Park, KS; Glenn Brunkow, Westmoreland, KS; Sarah Hill-Nelson, Lawrence, KS; Leslie Holthaus, Beattie, KS; Daniel Howell, Frankfort, KS; Darci Meese, Lenexa, KS; William Ramsey, Leawood, KS; Greg Wilson, Olathe, KS;
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saying the Task Force recommendations were bad recommendations, but rather, it is a bad time given the current economic situation. Connie responded that the general thought was not permanently abandoning the Task Force recommendations, but that they would be difficult given the current economic situation. Greg suggested that the situation demonstrated the need for regional funding mechanisms, noting that reliance on the State will come with COVID-related difficulties, as well as other issues that occur. Greg stated that the KWA should let the RAC know if they can pursue regional funding, similar to watershed districts that use such funding mechanisms. Sarah brought up the Groundwater Management District (GMD) statutes for western Kansas. Sarah noted that though the Kansas region does not utilize groundwater like western Kansas, with a change to the statutes, funds could potentially be raised regionally from surface water. Will suggested that it would be difficult to come up with a silver bullet to the funding issue, and that it would likely require a nickel-and-dime solution without a major event that causes increased prioritization of water. Dan noted that, in 2019, Tuttle Creek Lake lost an estimated 8% of remaining storage, a major event. Brad suggested that the RAC ask Connie what the RAC should do next about alternate, flexible models for regional funding. Connie responded that there is so much need related to water issues in Kansas that, even with full statutory funding, projects would still be underfunded, and alternatives need to be considered. Connie mentioned Sarah's idea of modifying the GMD Act to include surface water, noting that it was an interesting idea. Connie suggested that those kinds of ideas need to be discussed to explore what options might be feasible, suggesting that, like Will said, the solution will likely be a combination of tools. Connie also stated that, in her personal view, there is value in addressing priorities on a regional basis versus the entire state, particularly if there are ways to help one region without jeopardizing others. For next steps, Connie suggested the RAC keep looking at creative options, noting that it is always a good time, but especially now, to share thoughts with representatives and state officials, who care what their constituents are saying. Connie also asked that the RAC stay in touch with the KWA, and when there are concrete ideas, to work them up and bring them to the KWA for consideration. Sarah thanked Connie for her comments. Sarah noted that the GMD Act was written with the intention of "allowing users within a watershed to determine their destiny," and stated that is what the RAC wants, to be able to advocate for themselves and their water regionally. Connie noted the need to get other agencies involved, such as DWR and KDHE, as they need to be onboard for something to move forward. Dawn wrapped up the discussion suggesting that the Funding and Governance Subcommittee reconvene with the full RAC after Goal setting and budget recommendations are complete, likely in the fall.

- b. KWO regional budget summary feedback:** Josh (KWO) referred the group to the regional summary documents provided by the KWO and asked if there was any feedback or questions about the materials. Dawn noted the summaries were very helpful and thanked Richard (KWO) for putting them together. Richard explained that the idea came from the performance-based task force and a desire to break the budget down to a RAC level. Richard noted that the intention was to give the RAC a useful tool to understand the SWPF better. Richard also stated that there are some KWO staffing and COVID-related changes that are not yet represented in the documents. Richard mentioned the full funding need column and explained it was an opportunity for RACs to assess needs and suggest where additional funding is needed. Greg asked if there was a way to reference project prioritization within the document, using the KWO website as a reference of active projects. Richard responded that some categories, such as O&M, are fairly locked in. Richard also noted that there are transactional summaries within the KWO, but they are more difficult to get from other entities, basically limited to the county level. Dawn asked what category WID would fall under. Richard and Josh suggested that the bulk of WID would probably be under A&E with a smaller portion that could potentially also be considered to fall under the reservoir and

water quality category. Heath asked if there was information about how programs may be related or the impacts of one program on another. Richard said there was value in chatting with agencies to get a better idea, but that it can get somewhat complicated. Heath suggested the need for a collaborative approach to establish indirect correlations to stretch funding further and potentially have more success. Richard noted that was part of the benefit of the RAC having the regional budget summary information, to allow the RAC to ask questions. Brad asked about the overlap between the regional budget and aid to conservation districts. Leslie explained that aid to conservation districts is for offices, etc. and that water resources cost shares are for BMPs, such as the wetland/riparian program and NPS pollution. Adam agreed with Heath, noting the benefit in consolidating and making the dollar go further. Greg stated that the budget summary appeared to follow the guidelines of the KWA to determine to which regions money goes, but does not really address project prioritization.

- c. Project prioritization matrix:** Dawn transitioned the discussion to Greg's prior recommendation to utilize a project prioritization matrix. Greg stated that there is a need to determine criteria for how to evaluate prioritization of projects. Greg shared a draft prioritization matrix he created and explained that he made a list of projects from the KWO website. Greg asked for feedback on the criteria and weighting he used for the matrix, noting there are probably 20-30 projects that need to be prioritized. Will asked how Greg came up with the weighting criteria, and Greg responded that it was a best attempt based on KWA guidelines, RAC Goals, and personal thoughts on what should be prioritized. Greg suggested that, when under funding constraints, projects near completion should be prioritized, and projects previously recommended by the RAC should be prioritized. Brad commented that the first time evaluating projects with the prioritization matrix would help identify factors that were missed or unnecessary. Dawn reminded the RAC about their emphasis on science-based and watershed-based policies and the need to incorporate such considerations. Dawn asked the RAC to provide feedback on the evaluation criteria and weighting by the next RAC meeting. Greg suggested using the matrix on the Kansas Reservoir Protection Initiative (KRPI) as an example, so the RAC evaluated the project based on the matrix criteria. Greg stated that there were likely to be budget issues from COVID-19, and this would give the RAC some more justification for the recommendations they would be making. Brad mentioned incorporating the prioritization matrix into the RAC budget recommendations. Will suggested that the RAC develop the criteria for the prioritization matrix, have the KWO use it to make a prioritized project list, and then have the RAC review the results to make sure the priorities make sense. Will and Brad agreed with Greg that the prioritization matrix would give strength to the RAC's arguments about what projects are priorities. Josh noted the need to determine evaluation criteria quickly given the RAC will be making budget recommendations at the July meeting. Dawn requested that RAC members provide feedback to Josh by the end of the week, so the KWO could complete the evaluation by the July meeting.
- d. Review of Goal 1 and Action Plan:** Dawn opened the discussion about Goals and Action Plans. Josh noted that Nate (KWO) had reviewed Goal 1 regarding reservoir storage and reallocation, as requested by the RAC, and was on the call to discuss it. Nate shared several suggested revisions with the RAC. Nate explained that flow demand is related to water quality (WQ) targets and consumptive demand is related to the Water Assurance District (WAD) and water users. Nate further explained that the biggest demand is maintaining targets, noting that WQ requirements are approximately 1000 cfs while consumptive requirements are typically only 200-300 cfs. Nate commented that the current agreement states that WAD releases will be made in the absence of WQ storage. Nate also expressed that WQ targets are most appropriately met by releases from WQ storage. Nate suggested that the RAC not make goals that are too

definitive about what to do with remaining storage from an operational or financial standpoint. Greg brought up the question of whose responsibility it is to maintain flows. Greg noted that the Corps has some responsibility, and the WAD does as well. Greg suggested that it will be a game-changer when all future use storage is called into service. Sarah asked if there should be a Goal about storage capacity and reallocation and asked Nate what he recommended it should be. Nate responded that it should absolutely be a Goal and noted the need for a pathway to more appropriate management. Josh suggested that he and Nate further discuss Goal 1 and its Action Plan after the meeting and offer revisions at the RAC meeting in July.

Review of Goal 4 and Action Plan: Dawn opened discussion on Goal 4, related to water consumption reductions, and reminded the group that she had previously suggested it be removed. Brad commented that, according to WaterOne, there wasn't currently a shortage of water, but he wondered if it was a problem upstream. Brad also stated that he would potentially be in favor of removing the Goal. Glenn agreed that there wasn't really a shortage now, but questioned if there would be in the future. Glenn also agreed the Goal could probably be removed. Sarah supported getting rid of the Goal, stating that the RAC needed to focus on more legitimate Goals, such as Dawn's proposed Goal. Dan and Will expressed support for removing the Goal. Greg noted that the conservation efforts suggested should primarily be done by water suppliers and that it was more of a site-by-site issue. Dawn agreed, noting that it was not something the RAC has a lot of control over. Heath mentioned that the KWO was in charge of municipal conservation plans and that it was an effective program that the RAC should support. Dawn recommended adding support for the program as an Action under Goal 2. Based on the comments of the RAC, Dawn suggested Goal 4 be unofficially eliminated and tabled for the time being.

Review of proposed Goals: Dawn asked the RAC if there were any proposals for new Goals or Actions. Heath mentioned that the RAC had briefly discussed accounting for unaccounted water/water loss. Heath expressed support for programs to assess water losses. Dawn noted that the issue was an Action under Goal 2. Will commented that water loss is a supplier issue/responsibility, such as metering facilities. Will noted that work has been done on the topic, and KDHE has developed criteria to help small water operators complete evaluations. Brad expressed support for Dawn's proposed Goal (included in the meeting materials), and noted that the Nature Conservancy would call it natural solutions. Sarah also expressed support for the proposed Goal. Greg commented that he wasn't sure the issue of Nebraska's sediment coming into reservoirs had been addressed. Dawn suggested adding an Action regarding working with Nebraska to reduce sedimentation into reservoirs. Sarah noted that the ultimate goal is to reduce sediment. Goal 3 was identified as a good fit for the proposed Action. Sarah brought up Dawn's Goal regarding natural solutions and noted that it relates to the book regarding beaver impacts (Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter). Sarah suggested that the Goal needed to be more specific in the Action Plan and follow the SMART format. Sarah recommended including pilot projects in the Action Plan and proposed including a beaver pilot project. Dawn questioned what the RAC could ask the KWO and other agencies to do to meet the Goal. Sarah suggested asking for an annual report defining natural solutions and identifying where they might be implemented. Greg noted that the State of the Resource report provides some information. Dawn stated that she would like the KWO to provide info regarding what natural solutions are already being used and have the RAC define some natural solutions that need to be considered. Brad suggested talking to The Nature Conservancy about the Goal. Dawn recommended that Brad get suggestions for the Goal from The Nature Conservancy for the RAC to consider at the next meeting in July.

IV) Agency or Public Comments

- a. Allyn Lockner noted three items from the RAC meeting discussion that he wanted to address. First, regarding Goal 1, he asked if the Goal meant that the State would be holding off on purchasing storage until Goal 1 was achieved. Second, he expressed disappointment about the deletion of Goal 4, and stated that he believed the RAC should have conservation language and support for suppliers and dry land farmers in the Goals. Third, he noted that there was both a Priority Goal #1 and proposed Priority Goal #1 and asked which was actually Goal #1. Josh explained that proposed Goal #1 will most likely become Goal #4 if it is approved by the RAC.

V) Upcoming Meetings:

- a. Next KWA meeting (June 17th, 2:00 PM, GoTo Meeting)
- b. Next Kansas RAC meeting (July Doodle poll)

VI) Meeting was adjourned by Dawn at 11:25 am