

Missouri Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Missouri Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 2, 2021, 1:00 pm
Virtual Meeting

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Joel Mahnken (Chair)	Leavenworth, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2025	Yes
Michelle Wirth (VC)	Kansas City, KS	Public Water Supply 3	2025	Yes
John Bishop	Atchison, KS	Recreation	2023	Yes
Martin Simon	Atchison, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2025	No
Mike Stec	Atchison, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2023	No
Jeffrey Grossenbacher	Bern, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2023	Yes
Chris Griffin	Troy, KS	WRAPs	2025	No
Carl Johnson	Leavenworth, KS	Conservation/Environment	2023	Yes
Lisa Montgomery	Reserve, KS	Sac & Fox Nation of Missouri in KS & NE	2023	No
Brett Neibling	Highland, KS	Agriculture 2	2023	Yes
Doug Allen	Sabetha, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2023	Yes
Vacant		Fish and Wildlife	2025	No
Vacant		Agriculture Industry	2025	No

Others in attendance:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Dawn Buehler	KWA, Chair	Mark Rude	GMD #3
Randy Hayzlett	KWA, Member	Brant Peterson	Upper Arkansas RAC
Dave Jones	KDA-DOC	John Remus	USACE
Ginger Harper	USACE	Chance Bitner	USACE
Katie Tietsort	KDA-DWR	Keadron Pearson	KWO
Gaye Benfer	NRCS	Lauren Koons	KWO
Richard Rockel	KWO	Kirk Tjelmeland	KWO

- I) **Welcome/Introduction:** Joel started the meeting at 1 pm and thanked everyone for attending.
- II) **RAC Business:**
 - a. **Review of December 6th meeting notes:** Joel asked if everyone had read the notes and if there were any edits or corrections. Tj stated that he had inadvertently left Carl off the Members in Attendance table but that it would be corrected. No other corrections were noted and Michelle moved that the notes be accepted as modified and Brett seconded it. There was no additional discussion and the notes were approved unanimously.

- b. **Review of Legislative Visits January 26th:** Joel asked Tj if he would talk about this. Tj mentioned that John Bishop had participated in these along with members from other RACs and KWA members. There were around 40 visits scheduled however many of those participating took the opportunity to visit with additional legislators. He commented that the Capitol was not as crowded as in the past and the feedback from the legislative visits was positive. Dawn added that there was a positive attitude around the capitol with the state surplus funds. Dawn and Connie addressed the House Water Committee that morning, videos of those proceedings can be seen [here](#).
- c. **Review of KWA meeting – January 27th:** Joel asked Dawn if she would talk about the [agenda](#) from the meeting. She mentioned the meeting was held in person with a remote option from the Ramada. Dawn reported Richard Rockel, KWO, gave the surplus water report. Connie, KWO, gave the Kansas Water Plan update stating that it should be delivered to the KWA for the March 23rd meeting. Matt, KWO, gave the legislative updates which covered the Governor’s Budget recommendations which included fully funding the State Water Plan Fund. Governor Laura Kelly attended the meeting for a few minutes providing a glimpse as to what she would like to do with the project \$4 Billion surplus the state has: Rainy day fund, fully funding the state water plan, additional dollars to conservation and paying down debt. There was some discussion of the unfunded liability for Milford, Perry and Hillsdale Reservoirs and the millions of dollars this would save by paying these off. Dawn also mentioned a letter that was drafted by the KWA and directed towards legislative leadership supporting funding of several items. Tj mentioned that Richard and Katie Goff, KWO, had developed a State Water Plan Fund Data Dashboard that he would like to demonstrate at the next RAC meeting that will assist in budget recommendations.
- d. **Missouri River Subcommittee:** Michelle mentioned that the Fish working group for MRRIC had met and there was some concern about the pulse releases given the current drought conditions. She also said the potential diversion of a small portion of Missouri River water for the Central North Dakota water supply is still being litigated.
- e. **Ag Subcommittee:** Jeff mentioned the WOTUS under the Trump administration is being turned back to the Obama administration’s 2015 rules. The drought continues to plague a good portion of Kansas and surrounding states. The drought has pitted Nebraska against Colorado in a water right issue. He also mentioned a couple other water issues that remain unresolved, Hays R9 and Wichita ASR that could have big impacts on future water issues in Kansas.
- f. **Education Subcommittee:** John mentioned that he had visited the Angela, KWO, during the legislative visits and there would be some meetings coming up.

- III) **Presentation of Recent Successes:** Dawn Buehler led this discussion while showing a PowerPoint that can be found [here](#). She told a little about herself and her connection to the River and involvement with water issues for years. She mentioned Kansas Water Plan and the importance of this document to the RAC and all Kansans, noting the inclusion of RAC goals into the document. The Governor’s recommendation to fully fund the State Water Plan is a big deal since this hasn’t

happened for 15 years. With the additional state revenues there is lots of talk about paying off debt like the John Redmond bond or the unfunded liability of the reservoirs (Milford, Perry and Hillsdale). Dawn's work has been to help educate people on water issues so that informed action and decisions can be made. She thought RAC members should be the most educated on water issues so they can relay that information at coffee shops or other situations when water issues are raised. She mentioned with many Partners working in the same direction we'll have a positive impact on our water resources. Dawn brought up the work of the House Water Committee and a bill that should come out of committee pretty quickly dealing with water issues statewide. She thanked the RAC members for all their hard work on water issues and provided her contact information if anyone would like to visit with her.

- IV) Update on Missouri River Water Transfer POC:** Mark Rude led this discussion while working through a PowerPoint located [here](#). He gave some background information on groundwater use and development in the US indicating with a graphic that there are areas that are losing irrigated acres. There are 5 Groundwater Management Districts in Kansas, Mark is the Executive Director for GMD 3 in southwest corner of the state. He said they are currently updating their management plan along with many other activities. The GMD has taxing authority and collects \$.14/AF for water applied to the assessed acres that lay within the District boundary. A portion of these funds are used to help producers with technical assistance on documenting water use. With help from agencies like the Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) Kansas is data rich on water use, depth to water, saturated thickness and decline of the aquifer. He showed a graph illustrating the idea that groundwater levels could be stabilized if pumping from the aquifer was reduced and/or replaced by 700,000 AF/year. Mark discussed some of the items their producers are doing to conserve water and structural items to improve water management, more information on the GMD can be found [here](#). He also touched on the water quality issues related to the Arkansas River. Mark mentioned the surface water flows that might be available for moving to locations that needed the water like western Kansas, idea for the Proof Of Concept (POC). Mark explained the water was pulled from the Missouri River in Kansas City and approximately 6,000 gallons was delivered to a site in Wichita County. Permits had to be obtained from KDHE, KDWP and KDA-DWR prior to the movement of the water. The next POC was to deliver water to western Kansas as well as a site in Colorado. Carl asked how they knew the water made it to the aquifer? Mark's response was it just did. Carl also asked about excess water in the Missouri and how that is defined? Mark was unsure but John Remus thought he could help with this. Brett asked excess water, how much water was moved for the POC, cost of moving water and where on the Missouri was it taken from. Mark replied it was 6,000 gallons moved in a semi-trailer at the cost of \$5,000 of which a portion of which was paid by individuals. Katie responded the location was Ergon Asphalt and Emulsions Inc. on Wolcott Drive. Michelle was concerned about the lack of communication prior to the movement of the water. Mark apologized for this. Michelle also didn't see how the POC was related to aqueduct? Mark replied this was just a step in the process. There was concern raised about invasive species transfer and the addition of chemicals to eliminate those species from the

Missouri River water.

- V) **On-Farm-Field Trial Activity:** Dave Jones led this discussion mentioning that 95 county Conservation Districts across the state had taken advantage of the funding opportunity. Districts applied and were given \$3,500 each to work on high priority water resource issues in their county. An example would be the Doniphan County project, using reduced slope terraces and soil health practices and evaluate the effectiveness. Dave mentioned that not much work has been completed to date but producer contacts have been made and arrangements to get the trials in place are well underway. Project data will be collected this spring and summer and made available at a later date.
- IV) **Missouri River Flows:** John Remus led this discussion while showing the PowerPoint located [here](#). He mentioned the eight Authorized Purposes seven of which require access to water or releases. In this complicated system their top priority is “life safety”. Drought conditions continue to plague the basin with less than average snow pack or precipitation with the forecast runoff above Sioux City, Iowa to be 21.7 MAF which is above 2021 but still below the median. As of February 1st, the storage in the Missouri mainstem reservoirs was at 48.0 MAF, which is in the Carryover Multiple Use pool. Currently 12,000 cfs is being released from Gavins Point Dam which caused some problems: One Power Plant was taken off-line and several water intakes along the river are within a foot of sucking air. Icing can be of concern with ice jams or water being turned into ice and making less water available. John said adjustments in flow can be made for these issues however travel time needs to be accounted for, several days to move the water to where it might be needed. He anticipates the system to be 8.3 MAF below the base of flood control pool on March 1, weekly updates are available [here](#). Expected areas of impact include: reduction of hydropower generation, boat ramp issues on mainstem reservoirs shortening of navigation season and potential water supply intakes. Carl asked if John could inform the group on how many times since 2018 there was excess water in the River. John thought they could come up with that value. Michelle mentioned that she really appreciated the additional communication this past year from the USACE. John also mentioned there wouldn't be a flow test out of Fort Peck in 2022.
- V) **Other Issues or Agency Updates:** Katie Tietsort, KDA-DWR, mentioned that it is water use reports are due in by March 1st.
- VI) **Public Comments:** There were none.
- VII) **Messages to the Kansas Water Authority:** There were none.
- VIII) **Upcoming Meetings:**
- KWA Meetings, Locations TBD, March 23rd and April 20th
 - Next Missouri RAC meeting first couple weeks of April (TBD) in person/virtual?



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- c. Meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Membership: Joel Mahnken (Chair)-Leavenworth, Michelle Wirth (Vice-Chair)-Kansas City, Chris Griffin - Troy, Carl Johnson -Leavenworth, John Bishop -Atchison, Martin Simon – Atchison, Jeffery Grossenbacher – Bern - Brett Neibling – Highland, Lisa Montgomery – Reserve, Doug Allen - Sabetha, Mike Stec – Atchison,
KWO Planner: Kirk Tjelmeland, 785-368-8149; Kirk.Tjelmeland@kwo.ks.gov