

Missouri Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Missouri Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 10, 2020, 9:00 am USD 409 Meeting Room &
GoToMeeting Conference Call

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Carl Johnson	Leavenworth, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2023	Yes
John Bishop	Atchison, KS	Recreation	2023	Yes
Neil Coufal	Troy, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	Yes
Stephen Glaser	Atchison, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2023	No
Jeffrey Grossenbacher	Bern, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2023	Yes
Chris Griffin (Chair)	Troy, KS	WRAPs	2021	Yes
Lisa Montgomery	Reserve, KS	Iowa Tribe of Kansas and NE	2023	Yes
Joel Mahnken (VC)	Leavenworth, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2021	No
Brett Neibling	Highland, KS	Agriculture 2	2023	No
Mike Stec	Atchison, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2023	No
Luke Terry	Robinson, KS	Fish and Wildlife	2021	No
Michelle Wirth	Kansas City, KS	Public Water Supply 3	2021	Yes
Vacant		Agriculture Industry	2021	No

Others in attendance:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Ginger Niemann-Harper	USACE	Jason Farmer	USACE
Josh Olson	KWO	Lauren Koons	KWO
Sara Maguire	KWO	Earl Lewis	KWO
Martin Simon	Public	Laura Downey	KACEE
Steve Adams	KDWPT	Kirk Tjelmeland	KWO

- I) **Welcome/Introduction:** Chris started the meeting at 9:10 am and asked everyone to introduce themselves both those in the room and those on the phone.

- II) **Review of the June 17th KWA Meeting:** This was put off until later in the meeting in an effort to get the speakers in to avoid conflicts. Later in the meeting Chris asked Earl about the KWA budget recommendations which can be found [here](#). Earl went through each one of the columns explaining the headings, along with each section: KDHE, KDA, KWO and KGS. He explained that some of the surplus funds could be swept and there is a 10% reduction in agency funding. The totals in the columns are very similar to the FY 2020 funding levels with some funds being moved to other expenditures. Chris asked about the reduction in the Aid to Conservation Districts and that this was contrary to the RACs budget recommendations and may inhibit some programs.

III) RAC Business:

- a. Review of the July 8, 2020 meeting notes – it was moved by John and seconded by Carl that the notes be approved as written, they were approved unanimously.
- b. Missouri River Subcommittee: Michelle said there was an effort in North Dakota to transfer water from the Missouri River out of its basin. Current of future withdrawals as presented in [this](#) PowerPoint totaling 154,000 acre-feet/year of diversion. There is currently a lawsuit (complaint) filed by the state of Missouri against multiple Defendants. The PowerPoint will be sent out to the RAC for review. John moved and Michelle seconded that a message should be drafted in opposition of the basin transfer. There was a good deal of discussion in opposing the transfer and the vote to draft a message to the KWA was unanimous. RAC members will review the PowerPoint and provide some input on draft language for Tj to draft in the next week.
- c. Ag Subcommittee: Jeff brought up there are a lot of water cases in the courts right now: Wichita ASR, Hays transfer, NW Kansas LEMA and term permitting-Kansas Water Law. He also mentioned that GMD voted their Wichita Representative off of the Board. Somewhat related to that was the movement of 6,000 gallons of Missouri River water to Arkansas River. Earl offered up some more information on these topics: ASR administrative issues on water recharge credits, challenge to the legality of the LEMA, the Hays transfer is a 2-step process to change Ag water to municipal water, the Wichita representative was voted off by the irrigation folks on the GMD Board and the movement of water from the Missouri River to the Ark River was a proof of concept. The water was hauled from a spot in Kansas City to the Ark River in Garden City. The one-time movement was permitted by KDHE, KDWPT and DWR. Michelle stated that there should have been more information on this to the RAC, Earl agreed and apologized. There was a good deal of discussion about keeping the RACs informed on water permits or applications taking place within a given region.
- d. The Education Subcommittee: John stated the subcommittee had met and talked about the science standards and that he had reached out to Laura Downey to visit with the RAC. He also introduced Martin Simon, retired professor from Benedictine College in Atchison. Martin talked a little about his previous employment and the possibility of having traveling labs for students to perform water chemistry. John thought each RAC has its own water education issues and should address those. Maybe have a Stream Team like the state of Missouri. Chris asked the education committee if they felt that the education goals needs to adjusted in light of information gathered from local educators. John indicated that should probably be done.

- IV) **Education Update KACEE:** Laura Downey led this discussion with the PowerPoint she used available [here](#). She mentioned that KACEE stands for Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education and was founded in 1969 with the goal of providing non-biased and science based environmental education. The idea of good environmental education teaches students how to think and not what to think. She stated that KACEE does a great deal of professional development through a variety of outreach tools. Project Wet is resource that teachers can pick an activity and provide a great learning experience. This is especially important with COVID and lots of virtual learning taking place. Laura provided one of the lessons, [Macroinvertebrate Mayhem](#), for

the RAC to look at. She mentioned all the Water Education that KACEE is involved with: Classrooms, Water Festivals, Day on the Farm, Camp/Scouts and other events. Laura stated the Shawnee County Water Festival with over 1,000 students in attendance annually. The [Green School](#) program started off small with a few interested people and has grown to over 500 schools. Students from these schools collect, analyze environmental data and formulate/implement a plan to correct issues. KACEE also has a program to engage adults in water conversations spreading ideas and knowledge. KWO had partnered with funding (\$40,000-\$50,000) on delivery of Project Wet for several years however that was stopped in 2013. During those years of funding, thousands of teachers received training and an estimate 100,000 students were reached annually! Laura did say that KDHE offers funding of approximately \$13,000/year. Chris thought that KACEE provides some very valuable materials and information. John thought the \$40,000 should be put back in the budget and appreciated Laura's presentation. Martin was impressed with KACEE and asked what their total budget was. Laura stated between \$300,000 and \$400,000. Martin said funding can be a problem, he has experienced this in his past.

- V) **Update on Management of Missouri River Mitigation Property - USACE:** Jason Farmer led this discussion with his PowerPoint available [here](#). He mentioned that the river is big and drains nearly 700,000 square miles covering parts of 10 states. The river has had catastrophic flood events in 1993, 2011 and 2019. There has been an effort to make the river more useable providing a 9' deep navigation channel. Efforts to do this included streambank stabilization and structures within the river to provide self-scouring. Jason showed images over time as the sediment accreted in a short amount of time. At this same time, levees were built so that land behind the levees was protected and could be farmed. It was estimated that approximately 550,000 acres of habitat was lost through this process, either terrestrial or aquatic. Through the mitigation process it was decided that habitat replacement of 166,750 acres would suffice. To date approximately 65,000 acres of habitat have been restored. Budget constraints have limited the acquisition of additional property. Jason said the focus for the past 7-8 years has been on endangered species like the Piping Plover and not much on aquatic species. The exception is the Dalby Bottoms chute which provides a diversity of instream fish habitat. He said, there are not those large areas that are frequently flooded providing that diversity of habitat that was once in place on the Missouri River. Martin mentioned that the effort has been too focused on endangered species and not diversity which would benefit multiple species. Martin said it would be nice to return to a broader area of concern.
- a. **KDWPT Mitigation Property Overview:** Steve Adams led this part of the discussion. The Benedictine Bottoms was the first mitigation property in the program and like all property in the program was acquired from willing sellers. The Missouri River before manmade impacts was very diverse in habitat and species. He agreed with Jason that the focus has been on the three species however there are 30-40 other species that need attention as well. Habitat diversity seems to be the key however limited budgets don't allow for the purchase of more property or implementing habitat changes. Steve said KDWPT has to be good neighbors so they must weigh the effects of habitat changes on the mitigation property they manage. Carl asked if there enough sites along the River to reach the goal of nearly 167,000 acres. Steve said yes, KDWPT is often approached by willing sellers it is a matter of funding. Other states along the Missouri are

experiencing the same thing, willing sellers but lack of funding. Available funding is the key to purchasing more mitigation property and providing more habitat diversity.

- VI) Update on Missouri River Public Assistance to States (PAS):** Earl led this discussion. He mentioned that there are four states (KS, MO, IA & NE) that entered into an agreement with the USACE to look at the Lower Missouri to try and identify pinch points and lessen the flood risks for the states. He stated that over the last several years we have had some of the worst flooding ever, 1993, 2011, 2018 and again in 2019. A Kansas stakeholder group has been put together and have met a couple of times identifying priority areas of concern. The Highway 59 flooding-limiting access to Atchison and Highway 7 flooding near White Cloud are the two areas that came out of the meetings. These aren't the only areas with nearly 12,000 acres affected by flood waters in 2019. The idea is to manage the river as a system with cooperation for all four states. The USACE will conduct a flow frequency study which could result in a General Investigation, possibly providing funding for changes to the river improving conveyance. Joel Mahnken and Mike Stec are members of the stakeholder group.
- VII) Update on the Missouri River Stakeholder meeting:** Tj gave a quick recap on the joint meeting between Kansas and Missouri on flooding issues from White Cloud down through Atchison. Jennifer Hoggatt, MO DNR, conducted the August 27th meeting, soliciting input from stakeholders along the river on problems areas and possible solutions. Missouri had many more acres affected by the 2019 flooding than did Kansas.
- VIII) Review of Goal #5:** Tj led this discussion, pulling up the draft goal that had been sent out to the RAC for review. There was one line added, *“Request state agencies keep the Missouri RAC informed of activities, permits or other action taking place in the region and submit final results of any project or demonstrations occurring.”* John moved for approval of the goal as written and Lisa seconded it. There was little discussion and the new goal pass unanimously. The draft Goal #5 can be found [here](#).
- IX) Agency Updates:** Chris mentioned that they are allowing people in the office by appointment and they are social distancing. Doniphan County had approximately 48 CRP contracts this year which was an increase from the last several years. Chris also had \$72,000 worth of Cover Crop contracts made possible by KACD & KDHE funding. She also mentioned the filming of Thad Gieger for the PACE farm that will be put up on the KWO website. Tj will send out link. The area is short several employees. No other agency comments.
- X) Narrated PPT:** Tj just wanted to let RAC members know that this was a good informational tool and that we will be recording again this year if possible. Chris suggested that contact be made with individual Conservation Districts to make sure they would be conducting their Annual Meetings.
- XI) Public Comments:** There were none.

XII) Messages to the Kansas Water Authority: Missouri River Water Transfer, Tj will work on message.

XIII) Upcoming Meetings:

- a. September KWA meeting: CANCELLED
- b. [Next Missouri RAC meeting: Thursday December 3rd 9 am USD 409 Meeting Room](#)
- c. Reminder of NE Kansas Rural Prosperity tour, September 16th 5:30-7 pm.
- d. Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am