

Red Hills Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

10:00 am March 1, 2019

Medicine Lodge Kansas

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Present
Suzanne Drouhard (Chair)	Danville, KS	Agriculture (cc)	N
Clark Bibb	Coldwater, KS	At Large Public West	Y
Ken Brunson	Pratt, KS	Fish and Wildlife	N
Jim Harden	Clark County, KS	At Large Public (cc)	Y
Jeff Porter	Medicine Lodge, KS	Local Government	Y
Hi Lewis	Wichita, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	N
Larry Mangan	Wellington, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	Y
Vacant		Agriculture (cc)	-
Mark Watts (vice-chair)	Medicine Lodge, KS	Industry/Commerce	Y
Phil White	Wellington, KS	At large Public East	Y
Jay Zimmerman	South Haven, KS	At Large Public	N

Others Attending: Armando Zarco (KWO), Diane Knowles (KWO)

Welcome/Introductions: Everyone was welcomed by Mark Watts, committee vice-chair. Self-introductions were made.

Agenda: The draft agenda was accepted as presented.

Review of Past Meeting Notes: Draft meeting notes from the Oct 2018 were accepted as presented.

Kansas Water Authority Activities and Actions: Diane Knowles provided a summary of the December Kansas Water Authority (KWA) meeting. December 19th meeting in Wichita highlight: Approval of reports, agreements (surplus water report, draft annual, Kansas River study cost share agreement) RAC membership and message responses. KWA heard information about training for the RACs, status of compacts and the Tuttle Creek WID, Kansas Reservoir Protection Initiative, Harmful Algal Blooms, Water Tech Farms and private well project. Annual Report to Governor and Legislature was sent to the RAC.

January KWA meeting was attended by Mark Watts for the Red Hills RAC. He also participated in the legislative visits. January Legislative visits: 70 legislators scheduled appointments with KWA and RAC teams (28 people). Mark reported the legislators had varied interests including interest in the Pilot Produced Water project, Hays water transfer and funding.

January KWA in Topeka saw KWA approving authority to negotiate contracts for water, and messages from RACs. They heard about sorghum research from K-State and updates on projects (Milford RCPP, Republican River, section 1122 and a little from the Lt.Gov.

RAC membership for all 14 regions is beginning in order to fill the positions that expire June 30, 2018. This is approximately half of all RAC members. For the RH it is 6 of the 11 members that expire; Vacant (Ag) , Hi Lewis (Ind/Com), Larry Mangan (PWS), Phil White (At Large E), Clark Bibb (At Large W) and Ken Brunson (F&W). Diane summarized the process noting that current and new members must have applications in by May 31, 2019.

Regional Activities

Pilot Produced Water Project: The original company has declined to continue on the project, but an alternate company has come forward to treat produced water to usable standards. We have an extension from the Bureau of Reclamation until September 2019 to complete the work. The MOU with BOR has been adjusted. KWO and the various parties hope to meet on site soon to work out final schedule.

Water Technology Farms: Armando Zarco provided an overview of water technology farms in Kansas, primarily in western Kansas until this next year. 10 farms in 2018, 6 of these are WCAs. He also noted when final decisions are made probably 5 more water technology farm will be added for 2019. One of these may be outside Harper. It is anticipated all will have field days in either July or August. Discussion of funding, technology and priorities occurred.

Other Updates

Conservation: Diane noted that the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition applied for grant to add staff for TA on ranch land management to address invasive species among other things. Titled "Building Technical Range Planning Assistance Capacity CCGA Proposal" expect to reduce backlog of grazing management plans and wildlife conservation plans for NRCS. This will include support of ongoing efforts to remove Eastern Red Cedar from the Red Hills. KWO provided a letter of support.

Lake Goal update: no update at this time.

Diane noted that the RAC had asked to be kept informed on the R9 Transfer request by cities of Hays and Russell. At this time the conditional decision on the water right changes has not been issued (as of 2/28/19). The transfer process to consider moving water from Edwards County north for use by the cities will begin if the changes are conditionally approved.

Status of the Quivira/Wildlife Refuge Impairment/Rattlesnake Creek issue was requested. Diane noted GMD5 and DWR continue to work on remedies that include augmentation and a Local Enhanced Management Area (LEMA). Water withdrawal reductions being discussed include conservation programs such as CREP and WTAP, along with end gun removal at part of the LEMA proposal. KDA and KWO along with The Nature Conservancy and WaterPack meet with USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) to discuss a CREP program. Until USDA has rules written to address changes under the 2018 Farm Bill, progress will be very limited.

Other Business

Agency reports not already covered: none

Public Comments: none

Questions & Issues from Members: Larry Mangan noted a new project on the east side of Wellington. This biogas plant will use the city of Wellington water and possibly gray water.

Messages to KWA: none

Future Meetings

RAC's next meeting expected to be in late May or early June to provide input to KWA on budget to KWA. We may try a conference call depending on the timing with planting and other farming needs.