

Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

10 am, Tuesday, January 17, 2023

Pioneer Seeds Meeting Room, 240 W. US Highway 24 Downs, Kansas & Zoom Meeting

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Donald Hellwig, Chair	Solomon, KS	Agriculture	2025	Yes
Raymond Debey, V-Chair	Cawker City, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2023	Yes
Timothy Driggs	Phillipsburg, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2023	Yes
Keli Habiger	Phillipsburg, KS	Fish, Wildlife & Recreation	2023	Yes
Mike Brzon	Courtland, KS	At Large Public 2	2025	No
Rhonda Coffman	Agenda, KS	At Large Public 3	2023	No
Robbin Dibble	Alton, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2025	Yes
Stanley Kats	Prairie View, KS	Irrigation West	2025	No
Sharon Sahlfeld	Beloit, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2025	No
David Pfizenmaier	Clay Center, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2025	No
Arnold Ross	Webber, KS	Irrigation East	2023	Yes
Amanda Johnson	Glasco, KS	Conservation/Environment 2	2023	Yes

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Amelia Nill	KWO	Chelsea Erickson	KDA-DWR
Jennifer Nichols	KDHE	Pete Gile	KBID

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Chairman, Don Hellwig (Agriculture), called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. Don took the time to call on each attendee for a brief introduction before beginning the meeting.
- II. **Review of November 1st Meeting Notes:** Don (Agriculture) asked if everyone had seen the November 1st notes and if there were any additions or corrections, there were none. A motion was made by Robbin Dibble (Conservation/Environment) and seconded by Arnold Ross (Irrigation East) to accept the notes. The notes were accepted with no changes.
- III. **RAC Business:**
 - a. **RAC Responsibility Presentation:** Amelia Nill (KWO) gave a presentation reviewing the responsibilities and role of the RAC and its members. She highlighted items from the RAC member notebook such as IPM, the typical annual schedule, and the Kansas Open Meetings Act. She stated that the RAC and its members serve as the eyes and ears for the issues and interests happening at a local level. The RAC is then responsible for communicating this to the KWO and KWA. Amelia wanted to remind the RAC of these responsibilities as the RAC begins a new year.

- b. **Bostwick Irrigation District Update:** Pete Gile (KBID) informed the RAC that the Boswtick Irrigation District (KBID) is working a design group to implement more diversions from the Republican River with storage in Harlan County Reservoir. He said that there are multiple laterals that are now in pipe, which is helping to reduce the operation spill from laterals and wasteways. He also mentioned the initial automation project from 2020 to “tame” diversion problems at Guide Rock Dam. He said that the automatic control of the gates is to help minimize spill and that there are currently 10 structures, including 3 measuring stations and a base station. Pete also brought up the structure automation at the Lower Courtland Canal (phase 2) began in Fall 2022. This will include 17 wasteway outfalls and the headgates will be much more accurate. After this project, Pete said that they will be looking downstream at replacing other gates. Pete stated that the water saved at the diversion dams gates is estimated to be 3-4000 AF/year and this provides a major change in both labor and accuracy. He said looking forward into this season, the river flows and lake levels are not looking great with adequate supply in Harlan and significantly impacted supply in Lovewell.
- c. **Interstate Compacts Update:** Chelsea Erickson (KDA-DWR) provided the RAC with an update about recent interstate compact activity. Chelsea said that 2023 is a compact call year and they are currently predicting less than 19,000 AF in Harlan County Reservoir. She said that Colorado is currently retiring acres in the eastern region and is required to retire 10,000 acres by 2024. Colorado also has plans to construct Bonnie reservoir in order to reestablish the South Fork stream through the reservoir, but no progress has been made on that yet. Additionally, in the Colorado compliance pipeline, they are pumping about 11,000 AF into the North Fork river for a credit. Chelsea then mentioned that on a recent engineering committee call, Nebraska claimed an accounting error. For the regional KDA-DWR office, Chelsea said that their mains concerns are over pumping and the dryness of this year.
- d. **Legislative Updates:** Amelia stated that the 2023 Legislative session recently got started. She said that there is a House Water Committee again this year, bringing more attention to water. She said that it is possible for the public to watch Committee hearings live on the Legislative YouTube and that she would share that link with the RAC.
- e. **Kansas Water Authority Updates:** Don Hellwig (Agriculture) recapped the previous Kansas Water Authority meeting that took place in Colby, KS in December. He mentioned that one of the main points of discussion was the language surrounding groundwater use from the High Plains Aquifer. He said there was a discussion of how to define the groundwater use moving forward. The Kansas Water Authority settled on the effort to halt the depletion of the High Plains Aquifer. The other main point of discussion at the KWA meeting was the messages from the Missouri and Upper Republican RACs about the proposed water transfer ‘proof of concept. Amelia also mentioned that the KWA recently approved the 2023 Annual Report to the Governor and the Legislature, which is available to view on the KWO website.
- f. **KWO Updates:** Amelia did not have any further updates from the Kansas Water Office.
- g. **Regional Event Sharing:** Amelia opened up this time to allow RAC members or other agency people to share upcoming events that are happening within the Solomon-Republican region that the RAC may want to have a presence at. Many RAC members shared events, such as Local Working Group meetings for the Conservation Districts, Farmer to Farmer meetings and

Conservation District Annual Meetings. There was also mention of local meetings like Rotary Club meetings that RAC members or KWO could participate in.

IV. Agency or Public Comments:

V. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. Kansas Water Authority, January 25th, (Topeka, Kansas)
- b. Solomon-Republican RAC: Doodle Poll (March/April)

VI. Adjourn: A motion was made by Arnold Ross (Irrigation East) and seconded by Ray Debey (Agriculture) to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned with no further business at 11:44 am.