

Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
 2 pm, Monday, February 24, 2020
 Phillipsburg City Office, 945 2nd Street, Phillipsburg, KS 67661

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Timothy Driggs (Chair)	Phillipsburg, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2023	Yes
Keli Habiger (Vice-Chair)	Phillipsburg, KS	Fish, Wildlife & Recreation	2023	No
Donald Hellwig	Solomon, KS	Agriculture	2021	No
Mike Brzon	Courtland, KS	At Large Public	2021	No
John Cockerham	Osborne, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2021	No
Raymond Debey	Cawker City, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2023	No
Rhonda Coffman	Agenda, KS	At Large Public	2023	No
Robbin Dibble	Alton, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	Yes
Stanley Kats	Prairie View, KS	At Large Public	2023	No
Terry Nelson	Phillips County, KS	Irrigation West	2021	Yes
David Pfizenmaier	Clay Center, KS	At Large Public	2023	No
Arnold Ross	Webber, KS	Irrigation East	2023	No

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Lynn Davignon	KDWPT	Mark Billinger	KDA-DWR
Tim Weltmer	USDA	Chris Steffen	KDWPT
Josh Olson	KWO	Cara Hendricks	KWO
Laura Totten	USACE	Kirk Tjelmeland	KWO

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Tim Driggs, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm asking everyone to move up to the big conference table, self-introductions were given around the room. Josh Olson will be assuming the planner role for the RAC gave a little background information. Only 3 members were present so there was no quorum.

- II. **Review of Legislative Visits January 28th:** Tim mentioned that he thought these went well and most of the legislators were very receptive to the visits and discussion of water issues. Tj added that the idea of fully funding the State Water Plan was heard often that day and a couple other days at the Capitol.

- III. **RAC Business:**
 - a) **Review of October 2nd meeting notes:** Tim asked if everyone had seen these and if there were any additions or corrections, there were none. They stand approved as written.
 - b) **Review of the December 19th KWA meeting in Salina:** Tim mentioned the Equus Beds Chloride plume-produced water contamination of groundwater, performance-based budget and the Arbuckle study being some of the standout items.

- c) **Review of the January 29th KWA meeting in Topeka:** Tim mentioned that the Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) presentations, Arbuckle and Equus Study/Update were memorable. Governor Kelly stopped by at spoke a few encouraging words on water at the meeting.

IV. Update from the USACE on the Kansas River Reservoirs Flood and Sediment Study: Laura, from the USACE, gave an update on the study which can be found [here](#). She mentioned the three partners had developed a Shared Vision statement to address several issues; Flood Risk Management, Sediment loading in reservoirs, Reduction of flood storage and water supply availability, Water quality issues and Drought. She stated that drought especially in the west is just as big of a problem as flooding in the east. Laura shown a couple slides with past outreach meetings that have been held and a list of potential meetings. Offering that they are willing to meeting with groups or individuals about the study. She mentioned the Kansas RAC had submitted a comment letter and the Solomon-Republican RAC is welcome to do the same if they have issues related to the study. A webpage has been constructed on the KWO website and can be found [here](#) that lists important information about the study and is the place to submit comments. Laura mentioned Water Injection Dredging (WID) as a possible method to help with sediment removal in Tuttle Creek Reservoir. Designed to fluff the sediment which is then passed though the tubes and sent downstream. She also mentioned this is not an implementation study and that those projects would come later. This study will ultimately speed up the process for implementation projects. Chris asked how the Bureau and Corps interact, Laura stated that the USACE takes over operations when flooding is occurring. Laura then reviewed the schedule for the project mentioning that some of the date are approaching quickly. If anyone has questions feel free to contact; Laura, Josh or Tj.

V. Review of Budget Information/Water Plan: Cara, Assistant Director, her presentation is available [here](#). This information was presented at the January 29th KWA meeting and is meant to inform the RACs on the budget process. Cara talked about where the funding comes from for the State Water Plan (SWP) Fund (fees/taxes), shortfalls from State General Funds (SGF) and Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF) about \$78 million since 2009. For 2020 there was \$4.5 million from SGF and EDIF that were added to the SWP. She stepped back to talk a little about the Vision and funding recommendations by the Blue-Ribbon Funding Task Force, restoration of the \$8 million from SFG and EDIF and 1/10 of 1% state sales tax to fund the \$55 million annual implementation needs. She showed a slide of water use, mostly municipal east and irrigation west. She stated the idea behind this is to look were SWP revenue is being generated and where that revenue is being spent. There was also a breakdown of the funding into 5 areas to better see where the funding is going for each county. This was compiled to put funding/region as well. The idea is to make sure SWP is tied to Action Plans. There was some discussion on Aid to Conservation Districts and how that it is a blended fund and this should be broken out to give a more accurate picture. Cara also mentioned there will be a webinar where the agencies will be providing more information on how these particular funds are being used. No date has been set yet. The idea behind all this budget information is to get the RACs better informed so they can provide more informed budget input in June.

VI. Review of Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS): Chris, from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) led this discussion and his presentation is available [here](#). He gave a little background on ANS and that they could be considered “Biological Pollution.” He serves at the ANS coordinator following the ANS plan approved by the Governor in 2005. Cara asked if that had been updated since and Chris answered no, because we could miss out on federal funding while the plan is being considered for

approval. He talked about the spread of ANS through ballast water, boat trailers and even “pet” releases. He mentioned that world wide ANS is costing \$137,000,000,000 or %5 of the global economy through clogged lines, higher utility bills and even diminished property values. ANS can be dangerous and even deadly stating the Asian Carp that jump when disturbed and inflict injuries since they can reach 70 lbs. Chris talked about the spread of phragmites and the dangers to duck hunters or individuals becoming disoriented in a dense growth. He has a budget of \$250,000 budget to address all ANS across Kansas stating that prevention is the cheapest solution. Surrounding states are spending millions of dollars on ANS and Kansas wants to be a good neighbor by doing its part. Zebra mussels are the number one priority. Originating in the Black or Caspian Sea and transported in ballast water to the great lakes in 1986. The larvae are microscopic and a single adult can produce a million offspring a year, very difficult to control. Laura asked if ducks spread them, Chris answered no. Terry asked about how many lakes in Kansas were infested, Chris said 32 with one smaller lake last year. However, the 32 include the larger water bodies in Kansas which accounts for 85% of the surface acres. He showed a slide of Kansas with the infested waters, mentioning that there are pockets in the northwest and southeast that the reservoirs haven’t been infested. The 2006 photo of El Dorado Reservoir was eye opening will all the mussels 3-5” deep on every hard surface. Water intakes are especially attractive to the mussels and there have been instances of reduced firefighting capabilities. Chris talked a little about the Platte River diversion to the Republican River with the possibility of contamination by white perch and Asian Carp. He mentioned the Bowersock Dam has provided protection to the rest of the Kansas River above the dam, only 6 Asian Carp made it over the dam in 1993. The Kansas River near its confluence with the Missouri River has reached an Asian Carp density similar to the Illinois River. These fish are plankton feeders and have impacts on others fish that depend on the same food source. Chris stated that another mussel species of concern is the Quagga mussel. These will out compete our native mussels do even better than zebra mussels in our aging silt bottom reservoirs. He mentioned there are several other species that will be impacting the state and we have to stay vigilant. There are some potential funding sources on the horizon that will require some state matching funds.

- VII. Update on the Milford Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):** Tj showed a presentation that is available [here](#), that was given at the February Jewell County Annual Conservation District meeting. The RCPP is off to a good start with over 20,000 acres enrolled last year in practices to reduce phosphorous loading into Milford Reservoir by 31,000 lbs. One of the slides showed the practices to be implemented in 2020 illustrating a lack of practices in Clay County. Targeted mailing will be delivered to that area along with other outreach. The 30+ partners are assisting producers financially to help develop better soil health and help their bottom-line buy funding some of the practices up to 90%. Funding may be used up before the 5-year program is over so producers are encouraged to apply now.
- VIII. Vision Public outreach Meeting:** Tj explained the meeting will be an open house format so people can come and go as they please. Tim was curious about how many people to expect and it was mentioned the other meetings had not drawn very many people. The meeting will be held in the same location as the RAC meeting, Phillipsburg City Office. No one came for the public meeting.

IX. Agency or Public Comments: Terry mentioned the goose problems at Harlan County Reservoir and the disgusting foam/slim and shared photos with the group. He also did not want the farmers blamed for the nutrient loading, sighting the Tyson plant not being located in Concordia because of possible HABs in Milford Reservoir.

X. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. Kansas Water Authority, April 14th, Hutchinson, KS
- b. Solomon-Republican RAC: Doodle Poll (April)
- c. Tim adjourned the meeting with no further business at 4:50 pm.