



Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

10:00 am, Tuesday, April 3, 2018

Pioneer Seeds Meeting Room, 240 W. US Highway 24, Downs, KS

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Donald Hellwig (Chair)	Solomon, KS	Agriculture	2021	Yes
James (JP) Metzler (Vice)	Minneapolis, KS	Industry and Commerce (cc)	2019	Yes
Mike Brzon	Courtland, KS	At Large Public	2021	Yes
John Cockerham	Osborne, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2021	No
Raymond Debey	Cawker City, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2019	Yes
Timothy Driggs	Phillipsburg, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2019	Yes
Stacey Forshee	Ottawa County, KS	At Large Public	2019	No
Keith Houghton	Tipton, KS	Fish, Wildlife & Recreation	2019	No
Terry Nelson	Phillips County, KS	Irrigation West	2021	Yes
David Pfizenmaier	Clay Center, KS	At Large Public	2021	No
Arnold Ross	Webber, KS	Irrigation East	2019	Yes
Scott Ross	Stockton, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	Yes

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Paul Gallagher	RMA	Larry Kendig	Public
Sandra Wick	KSU Extension	Steve Frost	KDA/DOC
Tom Roth	NRCS	Lynn Davignon	KDWPT
Kirk Tjelmeland	KWO		

I. Welcome and Introductions: Donald Hellwig, Chairman, called the meeting to order a few minutes after 10 am.

II. RAC Business:

- a) Don asked if there were any additions or corrections to the January 4th meeting notes, there were none.
- b) Don mentioned that the legislative visits went well. On the second day of the meeting the Governor made an appearance which was his last as Governor. There were also senate and house representatives that visited with the group. Basically the school funding issue has to be solved before the state can tackle other issues. However there is \$3-4 million that could be transferred into the State Water Plan Fund depending on what comes out of conference committees. There was a presentation on the Milford Lake Watershed RCPP and also one on the Sustainable Rivers Program which deals with the Kansas River.

III. Update from RMA: Paul Gallagher, Senior Risk Management Specialist, gave a presentation on Cover Crops, Crop Insurance, and the NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines which is available [here](#). Paul explained that Risk Management Agency (RMA) is a USDA agency that manages the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, providing crop insurance to producers. RMA has 10 Regions with KS being lumped with CO, NE and MO. RMA is working under the 2014 version that has the latest information on NRCS Guidelines to Crop Insurance. Larry asked about the difference between irrigated and non-irrigated ground with the difference being termination date. Termination dates are set up across the country according to precipitation, higher precipitation areas have a shorter period prior to planting. Producer can't harvest seed off of the cover crop or it will be

considered a cash crop. JP asked if there is much talk between RMA and NRCS on the cover crop issue, Paul said they follow the NRCS guidelines. Ray asked about the planting dates for corn and Paul said those had been moved back from 5/25 to 5/31. Paul gave several helpful websites in his power point to help producers through the process of acquiring crop insurance.

- IV. Update from NRCS:** Tom Roth, NRCS State Agronomist, gave a presentation on Nutrient management and fertility considerations with cover crops which is available [here](#). Tom talked about the basics of soil testing and grid sampling is probably the best to get a good picture of nutrients however it is more expensive. He provided a link to a web soil survey that could be very useful to producers (<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>). Tom talked a little about residue management and application of fertilizer, the inability of broadcast fertilizer to make soil contact with high residue amounts. He presented information about a KSU study that is working with different cover crops, rotations and the amount of nitrogen applied. Late-maturing soybeans used as a cover crop seem to provide the best sorghum yield with the least amount of Nitrogen input. Organic carbon is a big buzz word in the soil health area right now and the information Tom showed says the addition of manure adds the most carbon to the soil quicker than other practice. Actual soil sampling depths are important relative to which nutrient you are sampling for. He talked about the work that Nathan Nelson is doing at KSU with the field divided in to small sections and individual samples coming off of differently managed ground. Terry asked about sediment sampling in the Solomon River and Larry asked about nutrient sampling in the Solomon River near his place. I'll get Trevor Flynn from KDHE in contact with Larry and see if we can get the information he needs
- V. Update from KDA-DOC:** Steve Frost, Administrative Manager, gave a presentation on DOC activities in the region that is available [here](#). Steve had a slide that showed a pie chart of the State Water Plan Fund (SWPF), how the money was generated and that the expected revenue for 2019 was \$11,700,000. He talked about the 4 agencies that use the money from the SWPF and what line item the money is budgeted for. DOC for FY2019 is far below the highest level of funding due in part to the non-transfer of funds from State General Fund and the Economic Development fund. In the Waconda Lake drainage area there are Bacteria and Cropland Priority Areas that have had nearly \$340,000 spent on improvements from 2013 to 2017. Steve used a series of slides to highlight targeted areas in the Milford Lake watershed and the dollars spent in for particular practices. He mentioned the soil health workshops and the funding that is available for these events through DOC. Finishing with a description of the Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Initiative that is above federal reservoirs that is trying to enroll 10,000 acres and is paying \$225 for Tier 1 acres, map in power point. Larry asked about the Corps releasing water from Webster when they should be keeping as much as possible. Steve said the KWO works with the Corps on water level management. I added that the Corps allows the water to rise in the reservoir to a certain level into flood pool and if it goes above that they are going to release it to limit their liability.
- VI. Update from KSU Extension:** Sandra Wick, Crop Production Agent, gave a Cover Crop presentation which can be found [here](#). She began her presentation with definitions of Soil Health and Cover Crop with a little history of cover crops. She cited a 2012 USDA survey stating that 1.5% of the crop land in Kansas is planted to cover crops each year, she expected that is much higher now. She also cited a 2015-2016 producer survey that listed the top three benefits of cover crops as: Improves Soil Health, Erosion Control and Increases Organic Matter. Her question to the group was does it work for you? If you don't have livestock it may not. Does it make economic sense? Some of the mixtures are very expensive and you may not get the results you are looking for. They see a 3-5 seed blend being the best. A good deal of this is tied to annual precipitation. Larry thought the Hays property would be much more comparable than some of the eastern locations. Other research she cited indicated that biomass vs. seed cost have turnips and radishes equal, oats>barely, wheat or rye with peas being the most costly. There has been a cover crop tool developed for producers that is available at <http://mccc.msu.edu/covercroptool/covercroptool.php> Larry

thought this has been the worst year for cover crops since he has started using them, cold and dry, he likes to grow his own seed. JP has had problems with the oats being too nutrient rich to graze and he has been using spring planted rye which is working for him. He uses a 10 way mix and likes the weed suppression that has gotten with cover crops.

VII. Update on Milford Lake RCPP: Tj, KWO, gave a quick rundown of the project since a portion of it lies within the Solomon-Republican Region. The original project was over \$8 million with about half of that being partner match from 28 partners. The NRCS amount was reduced to \$2.88 million for EQIP practices to be implemented in the Milford Watershed over the next 5 years. A practice list already exists and a core practice list is being developed that producers would receive the greatest payment for. NRCS has not signed the contract however after final review is completed it is expected the KWO will have the contract in July of this year.

VIII. Update on the State of the Resource document: Tj, KWO, said Tracy and Earl are reviewing all 14 documents and will have comments back soon. Delivery of the message to the Conservation Districts seems to have been the best format for far.

IX. Update on the Lower Republican Access District: Tj, KWO, said this group is being formed as part of the Republican River Compact which sets up a surplus water account. This is water that Nebraska owes Kansas and would provide relief to Jr. water right holders along the Republican River when MDS is in effect. A board has been elected and is working their way through the process.

X. Comments: A RAC member presented the group with aerial photos from Lovewell Reservoir which was estimated to hold over 500,000 geese. The concern was the amount of nutrients these birds are depositing in the Reservoirs and that all the nutrient problems shouldn't be blamed on the farmer. An Ohio article addressed the concern, a goose can produce over a pound of droppings per day. It also said that a goose will defecate up to 28 times a day and the droppings are contributors of Phosphorus and Nitrogen to water bodies. In another article in the Marion County Register from August 2017 goose droppings were thought by some to be contributors to the blue green algae problems in Marion Lake. Efforts will be made in the future limit the time the geese are on the lake. This is something the HAB research group should be looking at as well as other issues.

XI. Future Meetings:

- a. Kansas Water Authority: April 18th Lenexa, KS.
- b. Solomon-Republican RAC: Doodle Poll (late July or early August?)