

Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
 10:00 am, Wednesday, October 2, 2019
 Pioneer Seeds Meeting Room, 240 W. US Highway 24, Downs, KS

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	Yes
Donald Hellwig	Solomon, KS	Agriculture	2021	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)	2023	Yes
Timothy Driggs (Chair)	Phillipsburg, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2023	Yes
Rhonda Coffman	Agenda, KS	At Large Public	2023	Yes
Robbin Dibble	Alton, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	Yes
Stanley Kats	Prairie View, KS	At Large Public	2023	Yes
Terry Nelson	Phillips County, KS	Irrigation West	2021	No
David Pfizenmaier	Clay Center, KS	At Large Public	2023	Yes
Arnold Ross	Webber, KS	Irrigation East	2023	Yes

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Lynn Davignon	KDWPT	Rob Bolan	NRCS
Dan Wells	KDHE	Laura Totten	USACE
Kirk Tjelmeland	KWO		

I. Welcome and Introductions: Don Hellwig, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:03 am with self-introductions around the table. All four of the new members were present and provided a little background.

II. RAC Business:

- a) **Review of July 2nd meeting notes:** Don asked if there were any additions or corrections to the July 2nd meeting notes, there were none. They stand approved as written.
- b) **Review of the September 3rd-4th KWA meeting in Goodland:** Don mentioned the tour the evening of the first night to Little Jerusalem, newest Kansas State Park. Park will be opening on October 12th with regular admission prices being applied. The items on the agenda that stood out for Don were the new KWA people, new RAC membership, City of Lawrence water contract, a presentation on the Arbuckle contamination, brief project presentations and budget information.
- c) **Transition to new Chair:** Don handed the committee Chair position over to Tim. Don was presented with a KSU hat for his service to the RAC.

III. Update from the USACE on the Kansas River Reservoirs Flood and Sediment Study: Laura gave a presentation on this new study which can be found [here](#). She mentioned that this study has been in the works for years however it wasn't authorized until 2018, making funding available. This \$3 million study is a 75/25% match with the Kansas Water Office (KWO) and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) as partners. A webpage is under construction on the KWO website and can be found [here](#) that lists important information about the study. Laura went on to explain that the study is designed to collect public input on a variety of issues in the Kansas River Watershed. Ray wanted to know are we trying to reach all levels of users and what type of outreach is being used. Laura stated all levels using public meetings, social media and the web site. She went on to explain a Shared Vision statement is being developed now and there are 3 primary focus areas of the study (Flood Risk Management, Sediment Management and Reservoir operations). Lynn asked if studies like this had been completed before. Laura responded a few and a reference was made to the Central Valley California study. Tj offered that the Bureau of Reclamation had completed several watershed studies. Lynn also asked about water retention in the reservoirs and Laura stated that the Waverly gage had been high a good portion of the year causing Kansas Reservoirs to hold water. However, there was a deviation that will allow for a higher than normal flow past the Waverly gage. Ray asked about reservoir sedimentation and how that impacts flood storage, Laura said this is one of the items this study is could look at. Laura concluded the presentation stating this in not an implementation document.

Tj passed out a Fact Sheet with the pertinent details on one side and the Kansas River watershed on the back side. The watershed is huge so the \$3 million may not go far but comments throughout the watershed are valuable.

IV. Review of 2019 HAB Season from KDHE: Dan led this discussion and the information he cited is located [here](#). He thought this was a typical year with KDHE sampling 45 water bodies which are driven by complaints. They do not sample any private waters, public waters being their focus and especially ones that have a high likelihood of public contact. KDHE had collected and analyzed 208 samples so far this year. He wanted to address three lakes in our region: Norton, Webster and Lovewell. Dan mentioned the three status levels for HABs: **Watch**-4ug/L Microcystin or cell count of 80,000/mL, **Warning**-20 ug/L Microcystin or cell count of 250,000/mL and **Closure**-2,000 ug/L Microcystin or cell count of 10,000,000/mL. Last year, Norton had experienced a bloom that had gotten into the public water supply so they have equipped the treatment facility to use activated charcoal to prevent similar problems in the future. Norton experienced a bloom with a cell count of 6,898,500/mL in the middle of June prompting a Warning Status. The counts dropped back to 583,065 cells/mL the next week, still a warning but much less. Dan said Webster was bad last year with Closure levels a good portion of the year. This year with a cool spring it took longer for the bloom to start, June 24th with a cell count of 909,155/mL putting it at Warning Status however it dropped off and didn't return until after the recreation season in September. He stated even at Warning levels people just need to take appropriate actions to keep themselves safe, washing fish fillets and also hands. Lovewell was also later this year with a peak bloom of 8,426,250 cells/mL on July 8th and dropping off considerably the next week. Remaining manageable the rest of the summer. David agreed that maybe the cloudy weather had limited the growth but he wondered about additional nutrients with surface application of fertilizers over the past 20 years. Mike asked if the cells

are there year-round and Dan answered that they are and are found in most water bodies. Don brought up about the legacy phosphorus and how that could be impacting blooms even if we limit inputs. David asked about the waterfowl additions to the system and it was thought they have an effect. Dan talked a little about the treatment of the Gathering Pond by the Milford Hatchery with a peroxide-based algaecide, expecting a report on this. Other KDHE work includes water level management and sonic blasters of differing sizes. Dan also mentioned the jar test-take a sample in a Mason jar and put it in the refrigerator overnight if there is a green scum on the surface you have a HAB but you can't determine the severity with this.

- V. Review of RAC Goals #1 and #2:** Tj led this portion with the discussion of reviewing the Goals and making necessary changes. There was considerable discussion about Goal #1 and it was modified slightly to read: *Continue to develop a clearinghouse of technical tools, agreements and personnel for use alternative for Solomon-Republican region waters. An example could be the marketing contract for Keith Sebelius Reservoir/Almena Irrigation District that reached an agreement to cease irrigation below an established elevation.* A couple of the steps in the Action Plan were also modified to read:
- ❖ Continue to support the Norton County Community Foundation in their efforts to maintain the Keith Sebelius Reservoir Minimum Pool Agreement with the Almena Irrigation District.
 - ❖ Support the use of Lake Level Management Plans to benefit all lake user groups.

There was also a good deal of discussion on Goal #2 and it was adjusted slightly to read: *Reduce inbound sediment loads through conservation measures, with a focus on the White Rock Creek watershed, moving into Lovewell Reservoir by 25% every 10 years.* Also, one item was added to the Action Plan.

- ❖ Use information from the Kansas River Reservoirs Flood and Sediment Study to assist in the evaluation.

Ray added that dams are soil collectors and that the movement of sediment is a natural process that has been going on for a long time. We need to be looking up in the watersheds and using ponds to help trap some of the sediment and nutrients before it gets to the reservoirs. David thought we need to work with local County Commissioners with some structural practices to help solve the erosion of county roads.

- VI. Update on the Milford RCPP:** Tj started this discussion with by mentioning the Kansas Reservoir Protection Initiative (KRPI) showing a map of the current focus areas noting that it was relatively close to the Region and that more money may be put into this program next year. He mentioned the success of the 2nd year of the KRPI, 244 applications with the bulk of these in Marshall Co. totaling \$788,165.51. He moved to the Milford RCPP and pace of government, process started in April of 2017 and we are to the point of getting practices on the ground. There is a total of 19 contracts totaling \$1.1 million which is nearly half of the \$2.2 million that was set aside for NRCS Financial Assistance for the 5-year project. The bulk of the contracts are in Republic, Jewell and Washington Counties, with the majority of this funding set to be used for cover crops. There will be partner incentive payments made on some of the practices from the 30+ program partners. The RCPP appears very success in it's first year on contracting and the only adjustment will be continual signup instead of signup dates.

- VII. Vision Public outreach Meetings:** There was a group discussion on this and it was decided to hold the public outreach meetings in January. There will be two locations, Phillipsburg and Beloit, Tj will send out a Doodle Poll for that month of January for the best dates for the RAC.
- VIII. Agency or Public Comments:** Dan mentioned that KDHE is participating in a loan forgiveness program for Public Water Suppliers that have barrowed more than \$10,000 from the State Revolving Loan Fund.
- IX. Future Meetings:**
- a. Governor's Water Conference, November 7-8th, Wichita, KS – registration is open [here](#).
 - b. Kansas Water Authority, December 19th, Salina, KS
 - c. Solomon-Republican RAC: Doodle Poll (January)
 - d. Vision Public Meetings: Doodle Poll (January)
 - e. Tim adjourned the meeting with no further business at 12:02 pm.