**Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting**

10 am, Tuesday, November 1, 2022

Pioneer Seeds Meeting Room, 240 W. US Highway 24 Downs, Kansas & Go To 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 | No |
| Timothy Driggs | Phillipsburg, KS | Public Water Supply (cc) | 2023 | Yes |
| Keli Habiger | Phillipsburg, KS | Fish, Wildlife & Recreation | 2023 | No |
| Mike Brzon | Courtland, KS | At Large Public 2 | 2025 | Yes |
| Rhonda Coffman | Agenda, KS | At Large Public 3 | 2023 | Yes |
| Robbin Dibble | Alton, KS | Conservation/Environment (cc) | 2025 | Yes |
| Stanley Kats | Prairie View, KS | Irrigation West | 2025 | Yes |
| Sharon Sahlfeld | Beloit, KS | At Large Public (cc) | 2025 | Yes |
| David Pfizenmaier | Clay Center, KS | Industry/Commerce (cc) | 2025 | No |
| Arnold Ross | Webber, KS | Irrigation East | 2023 | No |
| Amanda Johnson | Glasco, KS | Conservation/Environment 2 | 2023 | Yes |

**Others in attendance:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Agency** | **Name** | **Agency** |
| Amelia Nill | KWO | Kristin Kloft | KDA-DOC |
| Chris Griffin | MO RAC | Kelly Stewart | KDA-DWR |
| Bill Griffin | Public | Katie Acree | KDHE-WRAPS |

**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 May 24th Meeting Notes:** Don (Agriculture) asked if everyone had seen the May 24th notes and if there were any additions or corrections, there were none. The notes were accepted with no changes.

**III.** **RAC Business:**

* 1. **New RAC Member Introduction:** New RAC member, Amanda Johnson of Glasco, KS, representing Conservation/Environment 2 provided a brief introduction of herself. She stated that she works for the Mitchell County Conservation District.
  2. **Streambank & Ditch Erosion Discussion:** Amelia Nill (KWO) began this discussion by giving a background of why the RAC is interested in the topic, stating that it is currently one of their priority goals to monitor road ditch erosion. Kristin Kloft (KDA-DOC) then informed the RAC that she currently leads the stream team and that they conduct projects in identified priority areas. She also said that state funding is allocated to priority-ranked projects. She stated that her team is mainly focused on streambank sites, but does have the Riparian Quality Enhancement Initiative, which target smaller sites under 100 cfs. Chris Griffin (MO RAC) then added that through the NRCS, they have formed an RCPP with the County Bridge Department in order to build terraces/basins and underground outlets to slow down the water that reached roads. This was in an effort to reduce that runoff. She mentioned that whatever work the County Bridge Department did on roads and ditches served as match for the NRCS. Chris said the hardest part was getting the NRCS and the County to work together on a project such as this. Stanley Kats (Irrigation West) then stated that it would be necessary to educate engineers within the county on how to maintain terraces. Chis asked if drought and the lack of vegetation contribute to the runoff problem here. Stanley answered by saying, yes, the soil is very erosive and it cannot hang onto grass roots. Additionally, Stanley mentioned how a lot of the erosion is coming from existing structures not being maintained and that NRCS does not currently cost share on rebuilding existing structures.
  3. **Almena Irrigation District Update:** Amelia Nill (KWO) provided an update on behalf of Craig Ingram, who could not attend the meeting. She stated that their costs have doubled, so they had to refuse the original grant and apply for a new one in order to receive necessary funding. She said that is usually costs around half a million, but is now up to around $800,000. Additionally, the district is working on a few easements.Kelly Stewart (KDA-DWR) added that Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) approved the paperwork to modify the Almena Irrigation District’s water right. 17 pump sites were authorized along Prairie Dog Creek and there has not been any issues. He said that KDA has wanted to add a stream gage upstream, relatively close to the diversion dam, in order to know the natural flow, but he is uncertain if that has been installed.
  4. **Kansas Water Authority Updates:** Don (Agriculture) led the recapping of the latest Kansas Water Authority (KWA) meeting. He mentioned several of the presentations the KWA heard, such as an update on reservoir operations in drought conditions from Nate Westrup and an overview of future sedimentation projections from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Amelia (KWO) added that the KWA also provided recommendations to KWO about what they would like to see in the upcoming Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature. Amelia also highlighted the recently KWA-approved budget recommendations for the upcoming fiscal year. She pointed out the line items that are recommended to receive enhancements.
  5. **Additional KWO Updates:** Amelia (KWO) told the RAC that at the August KWA meeting, the final version of the updated Kansas Water Plan was approved. She said that this document includes the 5 Guiding Principles that will drive KWO planning efforts in the coming years as well as a background on each regional planning area. She then mentioned that the full document can be found on the Kansas Water Office website for public viewing.

**IV. Agency or Public Comments:** Kelly Stewart (KDA-DWR) informed the RAC that within the Solomon basin, the Bureau of Reclamation as been making releases from Waconda for maintenance purposes. This has meant that for the summer, irrigators below Waconda have had plenty of water. He stated that currently, the lake is well below conservation level and is now only making releases to meet minimum desirable streamflow requirements. Kelly then said that within the Republican basin, minimum desirable streamflow orders have been made on the Lower Republican, but they were called after the irrigation season. He finished his report by reminding everyone of the current drought conditions causing water shortages. Robbin Dibble, RAC member but also a representative for the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD), let the RAC know that through the Kansas Climate Smart Initiative, KACD will be helping to host farmer to farmer meetings. Additionally, Robbin stated that there is $3000 reserved for a soil health day that KACD will put on in the future.

**V. Upcoming Meetings:**

1. Kansas Water Authority, December 14th, (Colby, Kansas)
2. Solomon-Republican RAC: Doodle Poll (January)

**VI. Adjourn:** Don (Agriculture) adjourned the meeting with no further business at 11:15 am.