



# Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

## Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

10:00 am, Wednesday, October 18, 2017

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	No
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	No
David Pfizenmaier	Clay Center, KS	At Large Public	2021	Yes
Arnold Ross	Webber, KS	Irrigation East	2019	Yes
Scott Ross	Stockton, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	Yes

### Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Kelly Stewart	KDA/DWR
Chris Beightel	KDA/DWR
Larry Kendig	Public
Pete Gile	KBID
Kirk Tjelmeland	KWO

- Welcome and Introductions:** Chairman, Donald Hellwig called the meeting to order at 10:15 am, unresolved computer problems didn't allow the projector to function, all present provided self-introductions.
- RAC Business:**
  - Don asked about the August 2<sup>nd</sup> notes, additions or corrections and there were none. Initially I had posted an uncorrected version of the notes that Don caught pretty quickly, corrected version was posted.
  - Don talked a little about the 16-17 KWA meeting, the RAC chair meeting that was supposed to go for half an hour and ended up being 2 and a half hours. He thought it was good to have the chance to visit with the other chairs and see what each RAC was up to and the challenges they are facing. At the Chair meeting there was some discussion about wanting to keep the committees engaged and relevant. The Chair meetings will be continued but maybe not at every KWA meeting and more time will be set aside for the chairs to meet.
- State of the Resource Document:** Tj went through the document that had been sent out to the RAC and talked about necessary changes to fit the needs of the RAC. The Executive Summary will be completed once the content of the

**Membership:** Donald Hellwig (Chair), Solomon, KS; Mike Brzon, Courtland, KS; John Cockerham, Osborne, KS; Raymond Debey, Cawker City, KS; Timothy Driggs, Phillipsburg, KS; Stacey Forshee, Ottawa County, KS; Keith Houghton, Tipton, KS; James (JP) Metzler, Minneapolis, KS; Terry Nelson, Phillips County, KS; David Pfizenmaier, Clay Center, KS; Arnold Ross, Webber, KS; Scott Ross, Stockton, KS  
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document is finalized. The Purpose and Background sections are common to all the STOR documents, few edits but what is in the document now is what will be in the final. RAC Goals section is straight forward, restating of goals with link to RAC's webpage on the KWO website. On page 11 with the reservoir capacities Scott Ross would like to have chart that shows all reservoirs capacity loss so the RAC can do some comparison. I did add the current reservoir elevation table because I thought it was important and there will be a link to current conditions. The 3 pages with the Progress and Needs sections were distributed to see what needed to be added. Larry Kendig brought up how the streambanks had become steeper over time. He asked about keeping more water in the Reservoirs. It was explained that the USACE or BOR only allows so much water over Conservation pool to be stored in the Reservoir, one of their policies that would not be easy to change. Scott Ross stated that we need to provide good explanations on sections but keep the document simple. Ray and David led the group in a discussion of terraces and how the standard terraces designed by the NRCS don't fit the needs of the producer and may be taking a good deal of land out of production by removing all of the topsoil. There are a good number of terraces that are put in by producers with their own money that are functioning very well. Larry brought up about all the ponds that had been built over the years and how many have been silted in. Scott brought up that the watershed ponds should be constructed high in the watershed to get the greatest benefit. He also mentioned that in the 1980's Tom McLain, Kansas Geological Survey (KGS), put together Watershed Management document that had some good information on terraces. J.P. brought up several issues on how good cover crops are, soil health and biological changes that take place in when implemented. Soil is more fertile with less inputs, more soil moisture, less runoff and better quality water.

It was decided by the RAC that they would like to have two separate meetings related to the STOR document, one for local officials and one for educators. Don asked Tj to look at the calendar and give the group a few dates the first two weeks of January. Ray offered their room for a meeting location.

4. **Economic Study on Keith Sebelius Reservoir by the Docking Institute:** Tj talked through the preliminary report that had been submitted to the KWO for review. The Institute had done a good job establishing the value of the reservoir to the Norton community and the surrounding regions. However they had missed the mark on determining the value of the water left in the reservoir by the contract with the Almena Irrigation District. Modeling completed by KWO on the reservoir determined that 2.4-4' of water was kept in the reservoir on an annual basis with the contract in place. Part of the Scope of Work for the study was to establish a value of that extra water to the Norton community. The Docking Institute are doing some recalculations and will submit another report shortly to address this. Larry wanted to know if there was a movement that put a greater importance on recreation than Agriculture, Don thought there was. Larry thought there was a significant need to improve the efficiency of the Kirwin/Webster Irrigation Districts however there is no economic incentive. If these districts were more efficient in delivering water the demand would be less and more water could be kept in the reservoirs.
5. **Lower Republican Access District:** Not a great deal to discuss very little progress. However there was a meeting a couple of weeks ago with KDA/DWR and KWO staff to work through how the District would function. The bullet points will be distributed to the access district steering committee and a meeting will be held after harvest to keep this moving forward. District is designed to use surplus water from the RRC and provide Junior Surface and Groundwater irrigators during times of MDS administration. Don asked if this would be available to producers every year, Water will only be available to the District on years where there is surplus water available. However the district needs to be established to take advantage of those occasions when there is water available.
6. **Republican River Compact:** Chris Beightel talked through his PPT since the projector was not working, PPT has been posted on the KWO website ([here](#)). He started with a review of the process since 2013 and moved through every

year ending with 2017 which has 9,300 AF of water left in the ground in NE that is owed Kansas. Chris said that NE is very conservative by nature and 2018 will be a dry-year forecast based on their modeling and that for 2018 NE will need to supply 20,800 AF to comply with the compact. Review of the KBID supply looks good with project supply currently at 36,560 AF and expected to increase to 45,590 AF by June 1<sup>st</sup>, Warren Act Water is currently at 14,100 AF and expected to decline to 12,000 AF by June 1<sup>st</sup>, and Lovewell currently has 24,723 AF and is expected to rise to 30,299 AF by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Looks like there will be a more than excellent supply of water 87,899 AF as of June 1<sup>st</sup> with the 9,300 AF still in the ground. Chris went on to explain that NE is in good shape as well with 2 ways to get out of the Water Short Year (WSY) Sum of all irrigation water plus water in the ground  $\geq$  119,00 AF or sum of all water in Harlan County Lake (HCL) available to Kansas  $\geq$  68,000 AF. He went on explain that the Kansas concerns: Full supply KBID, access to 9,300 AF of water in the ground and don't want to pay for Warren Act water. As for NE, their concern is augmentation, lot of bad media around pumping to comply with Compact especially with levels of aquifer dropping relatively quickly in the area that is being used for pumping. At the fall decision meeting NE put on the table that it would rather pay for the Warren Act water (\$10+/AF) than augment at \$45-60/AF. Final decisions from the meeting will have KBID using the project water first, hoping for larger inflows, and if KBID needs to use the Warren Act water NE will pay the BOR for the cost of that water. The 9,300 AF will remain in the ground for future use. Larry brought up again how inefficient the lateral systems are and Pete added that they lose at least 30% in the laterals and water delivered from HCL there is a 50% loss.

**7. Agency and Public Input:** - Agency employees offered information throughout the meeting.

**8. Other Issues:** – **Pete** also mentioned that he is part of a WaterSMART grant writing session that the BOR is putting on November 2<sup>nd</sup> in McCook, NE and he invited everyone to attend. There was some discussion about the loss of water through Rural Water Districts and if they are around that 15% figure that is pretty good.

**9. Future Meetings:**

- a. Governor's Water Conference: November 8-9<sup>th</sup>, Hilton Garden Inn & Conference Center, Manhattan, KS 66502
- b. KWA meeting December 12, 2017, McPherson, KS
- c. Solomon-Republican RAC meeting (Doodle poll, early January)
- d. KWA meeting January 23-24, 2018, Topeka, KS