



Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

10:00 am, Wednesday, August 2, 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	2017	Yes
Mike Brzon	Courtland, KS	At Large Public	2017	Yes
John Cockerham	Osborne, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2017	No
Raymond Debey	Cawker City, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2019	Yes
Timothy Driggs	Phillipsburg, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2019	No
Stacey Forshee	Ottawa County, KS	At Large Public	2019	Yes
Keith Houghton	Tipton, KS	Fish, Wildlife & Recreation	2019	No
James (JP) Metzler	Minneapolis, KS	Industry and Commerce (cc)	2019	Yes
Terry Nelson	Phillips County, KS	Irrigation West	2017	No
David Pfizenmaier	Clay Center, KS	At Large Public	2017	No
Arnold Ross	Webber, KS	Irrigation East	2019	Yes
Scott Ross	Stockton, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2017	Yes

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Kelly Stewart	KDA/DWR
Keli Habiger	NCCED
Dan Wells	KDHE
Lynn Davignon	KDWPT
Pete Gile	KBID
Brad Krohn	USFWS

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Chairman, Donald Hellwig called the meeting to order at 10:02 am and all present provided self-introductions.
2. **RAC Business:**
 - a. Don (RAC Chair), introduced JP Metzler as the new Vice-Chair for the Solomon-Republican RAC. Don went on to explain that the position had been there since the RAC's were formed however there hadn't been a big push to fill the position.
 - b. Don asked about the May 1st notes, additions or corrections and there were none. There was a little discussion about timing of the notes and if the RAC would like to see them earlier, members at the meeting liked the timing of the notes now. No change is necessary.
 - c. Don talked a little about the May 17-18th KWA meeting and the most memorable portion was the tour and the golf course incident. The presentations from the other RAC's were interesting, good chance to see what is happening in other areas of the state.

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
KWO Planner: Kirk Tjelmeland, 785-296-3185; kirk.tjelmeland@kwo.ks.gov

3. **Update on the Almena Irrigation District Contract (Action Plan item)** – Keli Habiger, who works for the Norton City/County Economic Development and has been working with the Secure Sebelius Lake foundation to fund the new contract between the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) and the Almena Irrigation District. The foundation held a fund raising event, sporting clay shoot, to cover their share, \$25,000 of this year’s contract. The event had 97 shooters with around 500 people attending the information meeting following the shoot. The foundation gained a good number of future contacts and tried to educate the attendees on the need for the contract. Keli thought the biggest hurdle for the group is education of locals on the necessity of the contract and contributions to keep the contract in force. Lynn Davignon (KDWPT) and Tj (KWO) offered to attend a City Council meeting and explain the importance of keeping the extra water in the reservoir.

4. **Update on Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB’s)** – Dan Wells, KDHE from Hays, gave a short PPT however he offered to present the longer version if the group wanted. His presentation is available on the KWO website. In Dan’s PPT he explained what algae were: simple, nonflowering plants that lack true stems, roots leaves and vascular tissue – base to the aquatic food chain. Blue-green algae are a type of bacteria known as Cyanobacteria and are found in 88% of lakes. Three things that often cause Blue-greens are: nutrients (phosphorus), temperature (high), and water column stability (float). The blooms when excessive pose risks for human, pets, livestock and wildlife. Toxins created by the bacteria have no known antidotes. The three most common Blue-green algae in Kansas are *Microcystis* spp., *Anabaena* spp., *Cylindrospermopsis*, and *Aphanizomenon*. Collecting a glass jar of the algae and refrigerating it for a day will let you know if you have Blue-green algae or not, they float. Dan talked about possible treatments and expenses for those treatments, keeping nutrients in place is the best solution. He ran through the Watch, Warning and Closure levels for water bodies and talked about the local lakes and how they change from week to week. There were several questions ranging from economic impact at Milford Reservoir to the treatment of water for public use.

5. **Update on Kirwin Reservoir** – Brad Krohn, USFWS, presented a PPT on Kirwin Wildlife Refuge which is available on the KWO website. Brad wanted the group to know that he dealt strictly with the land around the reservoir. He gave a good web site to get current Reservoir information <https://www.usbr.gov/projects/index.php?id=471>. With recent inflows from the Solomon and Bow Creek, Kirwin has experienced a drastic pool rise which Brad said is cyclic and he expects the reservoir to decline a couple more feet this year. These drastic increases and slow declines reap fantastic benefits for fishery and area wildlife. The reservoir was constructed for irrigation purposes so he expects a 6-8’ decline in water annually. The USFWS try and manage wetlands around the reservoir to capture water when it is available providing more hunting opportunities. Brad was asked about migration patterns with the changes in reservoir and playas, he said the birds continue to be in the flyway but have shifted back and forth over the years. When asked about visitation he said on a normal year 80,000 visitors and on a good year 90,000-110,000. Even with the number of actual hunters and fishermen declining their visitation has remained fairly constant due in part to social media. People are drawn from all over the country by the promise of good hunting and fishing.

6. **Update on KBID** – Pete Gile, Superintendent of KBID, said the District is in pretty good shape and are able to receive their 15⁷⁷/acre allotment. He said Lovewell Reservoir is down about 2.5’ and Harlan County Lake is down about 6’. He mentioned the completion of the 33.0 lateral and that they would be starting on the 32.1 lateral this fall which will take approximately \$450,000 in materials/pipe. KBID is looking to purchase a new larger trencher to complete this work that is valued at \$.5 million. He has received a \$75,000 WaterSMART grant for the 32.1 lateral project and will be working on a larger grant for next year. Pete mentioned that he had been in communication with Dave and Chris from DWR about delivering the water that is in the surplus account and that there’ll will be meetings coming up shortly on the compact. Pete also mentioned the removal of the fish barrier at Lovewell Reservoir this fall since it had fallen into disrepair. Along those lines he asked about eradication of crayfish in the canals.

7. **Lower Republican Access District** – Tj, KWO, had a couple of handouts that described the people who would benefit from the Access District. The District would benefit any producer along the Republican River that is affected by MDS. There has been a steering committee put together and they have had a couple of meetings. The water the District would have access to would be in the surplus account created by the Republican River Compact (RRC). There are several issues to resolve since this is the first time something like this has been attempted.
8. **Agency and Public Input:** - Kelly Stewart, DWR, mentioned that there had been no MDS however we have come close. He thinks we should make it through the rest of the growing season without any problems
9. **Other Issues: Soil Biology Field Day** – JP explained that the RAC had sent responses to the KWA about changes of dates for RMA so that producers were allowed to better manage their property. There are a good number of producers that are experimenting with practices in the region that will improve the soil health. Tj attended a Soil Health workshop in JA County that provided a great deal of information.
10. **Future Meetings:**
 - a. Kansas Water Authority: August 16th-17th, Pittsburg, KS. 7 eastern RAC's will present their Action Plans.
 - b. Governor's Water Conference: November 8-9th, Hilton Garden Inn & Conference Center, Manhattan, KS 66502
 - c. Solomon-Republican RAC: Doodle Poll (late November or early December?)