



Upper Republican Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Notes

Upper Republican Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting

1:00 pm, Wednesday, January 17, 2018
Northwest Kansas GMD #4, 1290 W. 4th, Colby, KS

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Sid Metcalf (Chair)	Oberlin, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2019	Yes
Mike Schultz (Vice-Chair)	Brewster, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2019	Yes
Brian Baalman	Menlo, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2021	No
Shannon Kenyon	Colby, KS	Groundwater Management	2019	Yes
Gary Fisher	Atwood, KS	Local Government	2021	No
Ken McCarty	Rexford, KS	Agriculture Industry	2019	No
Tyson McGreer	Colby, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2021	Yes
Ian de Waal	Saint Francis, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2019	No
Vacant		At Large Public 2	2021	
Vacant		Conservation/Environment (cc)	2021	
Vacant		Agriculture 2	2021	

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Ken Beougher	Public
Steven Walters	KDA/DWR
Ray Luhman	GMD No. 4
Kevin Klag	KDWPT
Abby Athen	KDWPT
Alexandra Davis	KWO
Richard Rockel	KWO

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:15pm by Chairman, Sid Metcalf. A quorum was present; four of the eight committee members were present. Chairman Sid Metcalf welcomed those in attendance to the meeting. Everyone present provided introductions of themselves.

2. Approval of April 2017 Meeting Minutes

Mike Schultz made a motion to approve the April 2017 meeting notes as presented. The motion was seconded by Shannon Kenyon. The motion carried. Notes from the January 2017 meetings still need approval.

4. Update on GMD No. 4 Local Enhanced Management Areas (LEMA)

The Committee received an update on the GMD No. 4 district-wide LEMA request that was submitted to the Chief Engineer of the Division of Water Resources on April 10, 2017. Shannon Kenyon provided an update on the hearings that have been held for the proposed LEMA as well as potential outcomes of Chief Engineer David Barfield's upcoming decision.

The first public hearing was held on August 23rd, 2017 and in September notification was received that the hearing had gone smoothly and was successful. The second hearing was held on November 14th, 2017 where testimony was received. The LEMA is being challenged by Intervenors' and there is a lot of testimony to sift through that the Chief Engineer will have to address. The record closed on December 22nd, 2017 and the Chief Engineer has 120 to make a decision. Shannon explained that it may come back with changes or ready to go into effect in the current year or in 2019. There is also the possibility that it may go into litigation. All of the testimony can be reviewed online on the KDA website LEMA link.

5. State of the Resource Project

Richard Rockel gave an explanation of the drafting of a State of the Resource document and planning for a public outreach event specific to the region. Comments were received from the Committee on a rough draft of the document and input was requested. Discussion continued as to what the Committee would like to see highlighted as Implementation Needs for the region to implement their approved Action Plan and Priority Goals.

Modifications: Shannon Kenyon pointed out that in the last sentence on page 5 that the SD6 LEMA information is not updated. Mike Schultz stated that the first paragraph on page 5 should emphasize voluntary conservation programs. It was noted by both Mike and Shannon that in the last sentence on page 5 and in the Figure 8 summary that *still in decline* should be used in place of the word *stabilized*.

The committee discussed the importance of including the Nitrate Issues in the City of Brewster as a Water Quality Topic. Richard Rockel has looked at getting water quality data from KDHE, and Tyson McGreer noted that he would be willing to provide water quality data as nitrogen is the largest concern in Colby as well. There are no glaring issues but the committee agreed that it should be monitored constantly. The question arose as to what the long-term contaminations trends are and what the fluctuations are throughout the year. Is there an action plan if the problem gets worse, and is the worst yet to come due to the time it takes for nitrate to reach the ground water? Both Mike and Tyson made comments on changes to pumping and blending to control the problem, but that cleanup is costly and small municipalities cannot afford it. It is difficult as it is to operate plants without enough certified operators.

Development of Needs: The following needs were discussed by the committee to be included in the State of the Resource Report.

- Water conservation and quality education
- Water conservation area and water efficient irrigation technology incentives – Continuation of Northwest Kansas Technical College Water Technology Farm project
- More funding for education and demonstration projects
- Improved communication methods, avenues, and new partner groups?
- Supportive of funding a water law review as proposed to 2018 Kansas Legislature (the bill has not yet been proposed)

Ray Luhman, Manager GMD No. 4 suggested that the group consider supporting a group of attorney's to look at the water appropriation act and how it applies to today. Legislation will be produced to form a committee. Shannon Kenyon shared that GMD No. 4 has given the Northwest Kansas Technical College funding in the same amount as last year.

Outreach Event Planning: It was discussed by the committee to shoot for an early April timeframe in order to coincide with the April Legislative break. Potential event locations within Colby were discussed, and several suggestions were given for speakers including the City of Hays and the Northwest Kansas Technical College. Kevin Klag stated that

KDWPT would be willing to do a booth. Radio, water bills, and social media were all considered as outreach options. Focus should be on potential for water crisis, and there will have to be an incentive to get people to attend. Discussion continued on the possibility of having one main event and then having smaller breakout events to talk about issues in a small local group setting to encourage those in attendance to participate and give comments. The point was brought up that SOTR information should be utilized year round in presentations to groups and at meetings.

6. Funding to address municipal system leaks

Shannon Kenyon discussed three municipalities within the region that she has looked into that have major water usage issues due to leaking. Help could be provided to these municipalities through assistance with funding and grant writing. Park was the primary concern as the municipality has a water loss of 60-70%. The primary issue is the city cannot isolate and find the leaks due to the fact that there is a need for valves to provide shut off points. Shannon went through Kansas Rural Water to find out the city's needs and after multiple attempts to contact the city has not heard back.

Sid Metcalf suggested the possibility of using drones to located where the ground is saturated, but is unsure whether or not the method works through concrete. It was decided that Richard Rockel would reach out to Park to help address this immediate problem.

7. Education Outreach and High School Programs

Alexandra Davis with KWO provided an update on High School Education initiatives taking place in the Upper Smoky Hill Region. Pilot projects are being developed with three schools within the Upper Smoky Hill Region to address the concern of having water subject matter specific to Western Kansas. There have been discussions with GMD1 about utilizing their Cost Share Program to get local farmers working with the schools and new technologies. These pilot projects will be presented at a Summer Education Water Workshop for educators and administrators to evaluate and become supplemental curriculum for high school science and agriculture classes. Provided the success of the projects and summer workshop the same approach could be used in the Upper Republican Region.

It was discussed that a video shot in Western Kansas would be a useful tool for teachers in the classroom. College classes could be a resource in creating such a video. The Kansas Association for Teachers of Science was brought up as a potential resource. Discussion continued on wanting more on water topics from the State Board of Education.

8. Producer Survey

Alexandra Davis & Richard Rockel put together a Producer Survey at the request of the Cimarron RAC to help establish a baseline for tracking adoption of water conservation technology, conservation practices, and involvement in conservation programs and initiatives. This survey could be utilized in the Upper Republican RAC to address Goal #4: *Increase utilization and adoption of water conservation technology and practices by 10% by 2020. Actively seek annual funding to ensure successful achievement of goal.* There currently is no baseline in Western Kansas to track this type of information.

It was pointed out be several committee members that most producers would not be likely to fill out and return such a survey. The idea of having the survey at meetings and events to be handed out was discussed as a possibility to increase participation.

9. Other Business

a. Agency Reports

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, & Tourism: Kevin Klag of the KDWPT stated that he and Abby Athen were there to stay updated and informed. He mentioned that KDWPT has many education programs and events and they would be willing to provide suggestions on event planning and would be interested in being included in the State of the Resource Outreach Events. Kevin gave an update on projects within the region. A grant was received for tamarisk removal that was used to hire out a contractor. The trees were cut and then sprayed, with follow up spraying continuing on re-sprouts. There is a push for playa conservation, and if landowners have playas they can use funds to put a buffer around them to keep sediment out.

Kansas Department of Agriculture – Division of Water Resources: Steven Walter of the Division of Water Resources provided an update on changes to penalties and MYFA. Fines for non-reporting for water have gone up and are per water right. The penalty matrix for over-pumping has changed significantly, a first time violator can be suspended. It is used to allow users to take a MYFA and spread out over multiple years. The deadline for MYFA may be changing to December 1st. 2017 was a pretty good year, went out and measured wells but otherwise working on some possible WCAs in Southwestern Kansas.

b. Public Comments

No public input was received.

c. Messages to the Kansas Water Authority

Shannon Kenyon made a motion to draft a letter with the following message to the KWA:

The Upper Republican RAC supports the funding of a water law review as proposed to 2018 Kansas Legislature.

The motion was seconded by Mike Schultz. The motion carried unanimously. Richard Rockel will put together a rough draft and send it out. (Note: the bill at this time had not yet been proposed)

d. Future Meetings

Next RAC Meeting: Potentially March 7th @ 1pm (Poll will be sent out)
KWA: January 23-24, Topeka, KS
SOTR: Looking at early April

10. Adjournment: at 3:30 pm