



# Upper Smoky Hill Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

## Upper Smoky Hill Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

9:00am (MT) 10:00am (CT), Wednesday, June 5, 2019

Fort Wallace Museum

2655 US-40

Wallace, KS 67761

### Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Shane Mann (Chair)	Quinter, KS	Irrigation	2019	No
Frank Mercurio (Vice-Chair)	Scott City, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2019	Yes
Maurice Miller	Healy, KS	Agriculture Industry	2019	No
Mike Todd	Scott City, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2019	No
Farrin Watt	Leoti, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2021	Yes
Kyle Spencer	Scott City, KS	Groundwater Management	2021	No
Richard Randall	Scott City, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	Yes
Shelly Turner	Healy, KS	Financial	2021	No
VACANT		Industry/Commerce (cc)	2021	

### Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Steven Walter	KDA-DWR
Steve Frost	KDA-DOC
Alexandra Geisler	KWO
Armando Zarco	KWO
Matt Unruh	KWO

- Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:30am CT by Vice-Chairman Frank Mercurio. All present provided self-introductions. A quorum was not present; three of the eight committee members were present.
- Approval of Agenda:** Alexandra Geisler (KWO) recommended to move Budget Information Recommendations to after the RAC Goals/Action Plan Review & Timeline.
- Review of April Meeting Notes:** The meeting notes from the April meeting were discussed. There were no corrections or additions.
- LEMA Update: Armando Zarco (KWO):** reported on the LEMA because Kyle Spencer was unable to make it to the meeting. Since the annual meeting there have been two main issues, one which involved voting which was resolved ending in the original board members staying on. It has taken so long to get a LEMA plan in front of the Chief Engineer that it is almost impossible now to get it approved for 2020. The Chief Engineer has reviewed the draft plan, but the board had to cancel their last meeting and has not yet had the chance to review those comments. They will discuss it at the next board meeting on June 19<sup>th</sup> at 8am.

**Membership:** Shane Mann (Chair), Quinter, KS; Frank Mercurio (Vice-Chair), Leoti, KS; Maurice Miller, Healy, KS; Mike Todd, Scott City, KS; Farrin Watt, Leoti, KS; Danny Welsh, Wallace County, KS; Kyle Spencer, Scott City, KS; Richard Randall, Scott City, KS; Shelly Turner, Healy, KS  
**KWO Planner:** Alexandra Geisler, 785-296-0865; [alexandra.geisler@kwo.ks.gov](mailto:alexandra.geisler@kwo.ks.gov)  
 Armando Zarco, 620-276-2901; [armando.zarco@kwo.ks.gov](mailto:armando.zarco@kwo.ks.gov)

Armando then provided an update on the GMD4 LEMA, for which there was a hearing last week in Hays. The posed question is whether or not the GMD statute is lawful. The hearing involved attorneys from both sides stating the facts, it was open to the public but not public comments. They are now waiting on the final order from the judge. He also noted that Ray Luhman, GMD4's current Manager is retiring at the end of this month and will be replaced by Shannon Kenyon.

5. **RAC Goals/Action Plan Review & Timeline:** Matt Unruh (KWO) explained that working with the RACs on updating goals and action plans is the kick start to KWO updating the Vision and incorporating it into the Kansas Water Plan. The intent for today is to provide the committee a status update, and get feedback on if and where work is needed within the current goals and action plan. Following this round of meetings, there will be public meetings scheduled in the Fall to give the public an opportunity to provide input to KWO and the RACs. That feedback will be compiled and provided back to the RACs to be taken into consideration when finalizing revised and/or new goals and action plans. The new administration recognizes the progress that has been made on raising awareness and action taken, and wants to continue to build upon that momentum.

Alexandra Geisler (KWO) presented a PowerPoint on the process of updating the RAC's Goals and Action Plans. The RAC then went through the Goals and Action Plans and the discussion proceeded as follows. The committee thinks that the goals themselves are good, but that there has not been tangible action on any of them. They are reluctant to say that any action that has taken place was spurred on by the committee. The RAC has no authority to take or force action. There must be action or 20 years down the road there will be very few towns left and the local areas will shrink down to nothing.

Matt Unruh (KWO) explained that the RACs responsibility is not to be active implementors, but to focus on acting as the local sounding board to provide KWO input to help with coordination. KWO will report back on progress and the committee will provide continued input and feedback. If the committee feels strongly about a certain direction, then a message can be sent to the KWA as they are the drivers at the state level.

Alexandra Geisler (KWO) suggested that if the committee is happy with goals but not progress, that they should focus their attention on the action plans. Creating clear and concise plans can help to drive action. The committee decided with only three committee members present that it is best to wait to dive into any detail on edits until the next RAC meeting. Alexandra will send out an overview of today's discussion and a copy of the action plan to give members time to prepare ahead of the next meeting.

6. **Budget Information & Recommendations:** Matt Unruh (KWO) presented on the KWA budget recommendation for FY20 and FY21, developed in the last week of May by the KWA Budget Committee. Matt explained the overall budget process and timeline pointing out that similar to the involvement of the RACs in last year's budget process, today is an opportunity for the committee to evaluate the proposed budget and determine if it is consistent with their goals and regional priorities. They have the opportunity to provide feedback such as what projects are the highest priority for this region, changes needed to funding amounts, or if there are projects not listed that should be included. This feedback will be compiled from all fourteen RACs and provided to the KWA Budget Committee for consideration when putting together recommendations to bring forward to the full KWA.

Matt briefly discussed the Governor's budget and how the SWPF is utilized, funded, as well as the \$3.25 million and the \$8 million transfer. Matt then went through the budget recommendations, highlighting changes from the previous fiscal year and budget items that may be of interest in this particular region. The RAC discussed which programs and projects they felt were a priority to fund in order to accomplish the goals and action plans for the

Upper Smoky Hill Region. The RAC put together the following recommendations to send out the group as a whole for approval, and once approved provide as a message to the KWA.

*The Upper Smoky Hill RAC supports the proposed budget and would like to highlight the following line items as priorities that are important to fund in order to accomplish and carryout the goals and action plan of the USH RAC. These items include Water Transition Assistance Program (KDA), Water Conservation Specialists (KDA), Water Conservation Manager (KDA), Water Technology Farms (KWO), and Irrigation Technology (KDA). The USH RAC would also like to support funding for Crop and Livestock Research (KDA) with the recommendation to include research on Sorghum and Water Tank Overflow Recycling Systems for Feedlots.*

### 7. Agency and Public Input:

Armando Zarco (KDA-DWR Garden City Field Office): reported on behalf of Mike Meyer, who was unable to make it. It is a \$1000 fine for water use reports that are not submitted by 5 o'clock tonight. On top of that fee there is a suspension, and a fine of \$1000 per day if caught using that water right. The Garden City office has moved and is now located between Garden City and Holcomb. The office has a new hire, Brandon, who started last week and will have a new Water Conservation Specialist hired within the next couple of weeks.

Steven Walter (KDA-DWR Stockton Field Office): reported that GMD5 received comments back from the Chief Engineer in regards to Rattlesnake Creek. The message purveyed that the current plan won't cut it, and that DWR is considering an IGUCA. A group is in the process of forming in the Cheyenne County area to determine how the 2 million from Colorado will be spent in the South Fork area.

Steve Frost (KDA-DOC): reported that he is thankful to be able to attend today's meeting. He explained that he is located in Manhattan, and provided a brief description of what he does and what the DOC does as part of KDA.

Armando Zarco (KWO): reported that the next KWA meeting is coming up on July 30th & 31st in Goodland, and that because it is close it would be good for members of this committee to try and make it. The first day is a tour of the tech farm, and day two is the actual meeting. We are in the process of finalizing dates for the Water Technology Farm Field Days. Currently there are fifteen farms enrolled, but two of those may have to be delayed due to flooding. If anyone knows someone who is interested in joining the Water Technology Farm program, have them contact Armando.

### 8. Future Meetings

Kansas Water Authority: July 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> – Goodland

Next RAC Meeting: September TBD

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40pm CT.