



# Upper Smoky Hill Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

## Upper Smoky Hill Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting

1:00 pm, Monday, May 7, 2018

KLA Environmental Services, 1303 Yucca Street (KS Highway 96 East), Scott City, KS

### Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Shane Mann (Chair)	Quinter, KS	Irrigation	2019	Yes
Frank Mercurio (Vice-Chair)	Scott City, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2019	No
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	No
Danny Welsh	Wallace County, KS	Groundwater Management	2019	No
Kyle Spencer	Scott City, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2021	Yes
Vacant		At Large Public 2	2021	
Vacant		Industry/Commerce (cc)	2021	

### Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Mike Meyer	KDA/DWR
Greg Graff	GMD1/KWA
Gary Boldt	Public/Cimarron RAC
Richard Rockel	KWO
Alexandra Davis	KWO

### Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Shane Mann began the meeting at 1:20pm. A quorum was not present; two of the seven committee members were present.

### Approval of Agenda

No changes to approve.

### Review and Approval April, November, and February Meeting Notes

No motion could be made for approval of minutes.

### Membership Discussion

Shane Mann welcomed Kyle Spencer officially to the committee. It was noted that Lonnie Busch has moved away and will no longer be on the committee. That leaves the RAC with two vacancies, industry commerce (cc) and an at large public. Greg Graff brought up Steve Compton as someone who may be a good fit. Richard Randals who was at the last meeting was also discussed as someone who may be potentially interested. Richard Rockel asked if we know anyone who is involved with feedlots. The committee agreed that it would be beneficial to find someone for a position if possible who is from eastern Lane County. Mike Meyer will check to find out if there is anyone interested who is connected to feedlots.

**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  
**KWO Planner:** Richard Rockel, 785-296-3185; [richard.rockel@kwo.ks.gov](mailto:richard.rockel@kwo.ks.gov)

### State of the Resource Report & Outreach Opportunities

The final draft has been submitted and is going through in house revisions at the Kansas Water Office before release. The Kansas RAC put together a presentation addressing SOTR materials as well as funding shortages which was shown to the members. It was stated that the presentation gives a lot of basic information, and that two of the pictures in the presentation should be taken out; the picture of kids playing in water and the picture of the irrigation demonstration with standing water in it. Richard Rockel had a question for the Wichita WCA Group but none of them were present. Alexandra Davis mentioned that she did send the presentation that was being used in outreach to schools to Tammy of the WCA to use, and Greg Graff asked if she could send it to the board, she said she will. It was also noted that as part of the education and outreach for the state a marketing company has hired and has come up with branding that should come out this summer. Once it is officially released it can be included in the presentation.

### LEMA Update – Kyle Spencer

Before Kyle started, Greg Graff brought up that it is in the RACs action plan to reduce irrigation by 25% based on recent average pumping history per water right by 2025. Annual water use for all irrigation users will not exceed net irrigation requirement for that county. He said it would be good to bring this to the GMD1 Board. In the LEMA Plan the board is working on in order to get flexibilities water rights owners would have to enroll in a WCA.

Kyle reported that the Board is making progress, and that the Wichita County WCA folks have been pushing for a LEMA. The Board wasn't initially thinking the same way because they wanted to do a district-wide. The current plan however is to initiate a LEMA in Wichita County alone to start in 2019, if they can get that far that fast. Working on Wichita County will provide an outline that will be interchangeable with other counties other than reduction factors. The GMD has a lot of ground to cover in a small amount of time. They have a Board meeting next week, and will be interviewing attorneys for legal-council at that meeting. The reduction factor still needs to be determined; they are proposing a percentage reduction. The floor and the cap have not been discussed at all. A method will need to be developed for due consideration for past conservation – there are ideas for how to determine if someone has conserved, but once that is determined there will need to be some sort of award for it. It is still pretty complicated.

In Shane Mann's opinion they should keep it simple and use NIR numbers which are hard to argue. It doesn't hurt to bring anyone up because they probably can't pump any more than what they are already using. People that are under get due consideration because they aren't affected, which makes it so much simpler. The GMD still wants to do a district-wide, but approach it county by county. They are looking at current KGS numbers, and want to make sure to fill any holes in observation wells; the only obvious one would be in Wallace County. Greg Graff said he is worried about not being able to afford the cost of continue legal-council. Shane responded by saying that once the LEMA goes into effect it is the responsibility of the Chief Engineer and not the GMD. Do it right the first time, and remember that the only people that have to pass it is the elected Board.

Kyle then switched gears to give a general update from GMD No. 1. Technology cost share this application period was slated to run through this month but ran out in March. The Board threw in another \$25,000 but it ran out again in April. \$265,000 in from when it was started in March of 2017. Can't fund anymore application before getting into the new budget year, but will likely start taking applications in December. Shane Mann asked if they have thought about applying for any grants. There could possibly be an issue with using taxpayer money for cost-share, but he can give them a list of grants to apply for that the GMD4 is applying for. Richard Rockel threw in that the Water Office can help GMD No. 1 draft out some grants if they wanted. The top 3 items that the cost-share is used for are probes, bubbler packages, and pivot control systems. This application period about \$54,000 was paid out in probes, and about \$59,000 in other tech.

There are still \$1000s not paid out yet, but are waiting for invoices to come in. There are separate applications for probes and other tech, but the money for both is being pulled from the same fund.

At this point Richard asked the question: What would you like to see from K-State in this area for research? And the responses went as follows:

- Kyle: SDI is too expensive, any problems it has are hard to find and there is the concern that rats will chew through it
  - Greg: Possibly research comparing Mobile-Drip to SDI? (It was noted that bubblers get us really close to what mobile drip can do)
  - Kyle: Compton up on Highway 4 has a bubbler and is also adding mobile drip
  - Greg: The big question is how do we get these practices adopted in the field, and get them in quicker? It would be good to get notices for Technology Farm Meetings out earlier to try and get more people, and have time for everyone to help in getting the crowds here. Also K-State just got a new grant that is shared with several states.
  - Shane: It would be good to get an app developed to look at water meters to track what you have used, what you have left, etc. (Nebraska has a water meter calculator) Something that is easy, can read or enter numbers, has a way to categorize, gives you a countdown or something similar, and keeps the dates it is turned on and off.
- \*\*Documentation is Key\*\***

The Master Irrigators was brought up and Kyle said that he had received an email from Earl at the Water Office about going down to Texas to meet with those guys and talk about it. It was discussed quite a bit at the Cimarron meeting last week and there is good interest in it.

### **Education Outreach and Teacher Workshop Update**

Alexandra Davis with KWO provided an update on the presentations that have been given and the projects that are in the works at schools in the area. A Teachers Water Workshop is scheduled to take place on June 19<sup>th</sup> at Wichita County High School in Leoti. There is a good line up of speakers and sessions for the teachers. No one from the WCA can make it, but it would be great if someone from the GMD would be available to give a welcome at the beginning of the day. Greg Graff said that he would be interested and should be able to come and do that. It is possible that due to conflicts with the date that there won't be enough RSVPs and it will have to be cancelled or rescheduled.

### **Drought Update**

Richard Rockel gave a presentation with updates on the current drought. Right now it is looking worse than it did this time in 2011. The Governor did sign an official drought declaration in March, and the USDA approved 28 counties for haying and grazing.

### **Legislation & Funding Update**

The budget was passed by both the House and Senate and would put \$3,250,000 in the Water Plan. It has not yet been signed by the Governor. Be on the lookout for an email from the Water Office that will be sent out with information once it has been officially signed.

### **Other Business**

Budget Process – More RAC input is wanted for the budget process. In the July or early August timeframe a meeting or stand-alone conference call will be scheduled for overview and comments on the budget proposal.

Governor's Conference Feedback – None

Water Office Changes – In the process of still looking for more applicants for the Garden City position, no changes yet.

### Agency Reports –

Mike Meyer KDA-DWR: If assistance is needed with the drought, MYFAs can be used or WCAs as a drought plan. Fifteen WCAs have been approved and one is getting ready to be approved. If it goes through 30,000 acres will be enrolled, Wichita County alone will have 24 soon.

### Public Comments –

Gary Boldt: It is interesting to come to these meetings because a whole different range of topics is covered compared to the Cimarron meetings. A problem across the board that is always being talked about is how to get people out to meetings. Last week at the Cimarron meeting it was discussed that we have good data, but how do we actually use it. A lot of time was spent talking about the Ogallala Summit. It was brought up by Jason Norquest that there is developments in Colorado for wells that GMD3 is fighting because they believe it will have effects on the Cimarron watershed and grasslands.

Greg Graff: If you look at the no-till people it took several years for the conference to get big. It would be good to put something together with irrigation and technology out West that is similar.

### Messages to Kansas Water Authority – None

### Future Meetings –

Water Authority: Next meeting is August 22<sup>nd</sup> in Dodge City

RAC: Doodle Poll – Alex will call members who have had low attendance

### Adjourn

3:20pm