

Upper Arkansas Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
 9:00 AM (CDT), Thursday April 28, 2022
 GoToMeeting Conference Call

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Roy Dixon (Chair)	Garden City, KS	Agriculture Industry	2025	Yes
Fred Jones (Vice-Chair)	Garden City, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2025	Yes
Kyle Averhoff	Garden City, KS	Dairy	2025	Yes
Hugh Brownlee	Syracuse, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2025	No
Titus Jaeger	Lakin, KS	Groundwater Irrigation	2023	No
Monte Morgan	Deerfield, KS	Surface Water Irrigation	2025	No
Bill Simshauser	Lakin, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2025	Yes
Abram Lollar	Garden City, KS	At Large Public 3	2025	Yes
Ray Slattery	Dodge City, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2023	Yes
Brant Peterson	Johnson, KS	Groundwater Management	2023	Yes
Jason Shamburg	Deerfield, KS	At Large Public 2	2023	No
Kyle Nelson	Holcomb, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2023	Yes
Joe Jury	Ingalls, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2023	Yes

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Matt Smith	PLJV	Randy Still	Pawnee WJD 81
Jude Kastens	KBS	Isaac Aberson	Pawnee WJD 81
Kevin Salter	KDA-DWR	Westen McCary	KWO
Mike Meyer	KDA-DWR	Keadron Pearson	KWO
Angela Anderson	KWO	Kirk Tjelmeland	KWO

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at 9:04 AM by RAC Chair Roy Dixon. Tj ran through the people on the computer with one person on the phone.
2. **Review of Agenda:** The agenda was reviewed. No changes requested by the RAC members.
3. **Review of January 2022 Meeting Notes:** The meeting notes were reviewed. There were no changes requested by the RAC members, it was moved and seconded that the notes be accepted as written.
4. **Regional Activities**
 - a. **Playas Recharging Kansas Communities:** This presentation was given by Matt Smith Playa Lake Joint Venture (PLJV) on the current status of the aquifer within the Upper Arkansas planning region. His PowerPoint is available [here](#). He showed a map of the playas that are from Texas north through Nebraska with about 22,000 playas in Kansas averaging about 4 surface acres each. He mentioned one of the larger playas (96 acres) in Lane County owned by Vance and Louise Ehmke have that has been the subject of several studies. Matt explained what a playa is; lowest point in the watershed, temporary wetland with a

wet/dry cycle, provided greater water infiltration than area around the playa and is good for wildlife. He stated that playas on average recharge the aquifer at about 3"/year however this is not sufficient to keep up with irrigation demands but could help preserve a communities water supply. Matt talked about Clovis NM and the playa work they had done resulting in the community had seen an increase in their water supply. Playa work alone is not the "silver bullet" for the declining water levels. There are 56 towns in Kansas with similar playa densities, one of the Cities is Leoti which Playa Lake Joint Venture (PLJV) is assisting to improve their water situation. He mentioned the Groundwater Recharge & Sustainability Project (GRSP) that using a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) totaling nearly \$3 million using: Irrigation efficiency, Technology, Well retirement and Playa restoration to increase aquifer water levels in Wichita and Greeley Counties. The playa restoration generally requires sediment removal, sediment clogs the large cracks and doesn't allow normal water infiltration and the addition of a grass buffer to slow sediment movement. Matt also mentioned the Sate Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) that is a Producer driven system using a targeted approach with multiple partners that restores the Playa hydrology. The presentation was followed by questions and discussion from RAC members. Bill asked how many playas were in the Upper Ark Region, Jude put in the chat 4,750. Matt also provided a map of playas in the Upper Ark Region located [here](#). Abe asked about the community of Sublette and who asked for or who should ask for the map. Matt responded that anyone can ask for the map. Kyle asked what are upper and lower limits to the SAFE program, Matt responded the irrigated Nation Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and dryland NASS. Kyle also wanted to know who manages land in the program and Bill wanted to know if Public Access had to be allowed. Matt responded that the landowner retains management rights and access is left up to the owner. Kyle also asked if Matt was familiar with Lubick, thought they were using injection. Matt wasn't familiar and said these systems are natural infiltration.

- b. **Remote Sensing:** Jude Kasten of the Kansas Biological Survey (KBS) gave this presentation with his PowerPoint located [here](#). He mentioned being from western Kansas and growing up on a farm with playas, which were often called something else. Using an aerial image, he explained the parts of a playa and how the macropores help increase infiltration. There are three groups/clusters of playas divided by the Smoky Hill and Arkansas Rivers. Elevation, precipitation and landcover are all characteristics of playas with 84% of them completely farmed through. The playas provide critical habitat for multiple species with the central flyway across western Kansas. The wet/dry cycle is critical to the playas and he showed several images, including the Ehmke playa. Technology improvements have allowed for better mapping of playas, identifying potential new playas or ruling out false playas. As part of a current study they are looking at recharge rates of several playas and also the impact of farming those playas, some of the images he showed very reduced production in playas. Jude assisted in construction of a website for remote sensing located [here](#). This site allows anyone to look at the data and images using ArcGIS. For example; Western Kansas Wetland Layers or multiple other layers that might be of interest. The site is full of information if a person wants to spend a little time looking for it.

5. Updates

- a. **Kansas Water Authority (KWA):** Tj (KWO) informed the RAC of items that occurred at the KWA April 20th meeting in Emporia: KWA approved KWO to enter into negotiations on contract amendment to supply water to Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station, Upper Republican provided a message to the KWA on water quality in their region, three RAC Applications were approved, State Water Plan should be out by the June KWA meeting, HB 2686 never made it to the house floor, State Water Plan looks like it will be funded to the \$8 million (SGF& EDIF), lengthy drought discussion – being closely monitored, Andy Lyon (DOC) talked about the GRSP program and playa lakes, Tom Stiles (KDHE) talked about infrastructure and the millions that will be coming to the State Revolving Loan Fund, Josh Olson (KWO) talked about the Water Injection Dredging (WID) project for Tuttle Creek and Connie ended the meeting around 2:30 pm

- b. **Kansas Water Office (KWO):** Tj (KWO) mentioned the newest staff member Westen McCary who will be the Water Tech person out west with a great deal of experience and background. Also, Keadron and her husband have a new addition to their family.

6. **Other Business**

- a. **Agency Reports:** None
- b. **Public Comments:** None
- c. **Future Agenda Items from RAC Members:** None
- d. **RAC Messages to the KWA:** None
- e. **Future Meetings:**
 - i. KWA Meeting: June, Pittsburg
 - ii. GMD3 Board Meeting: May 11th
 - iii. Bottom Line Conference, Lakin, August 24-25
 - iv. Governor's Water Conference: November 16-17 Manhattan

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.