



Word from the Street



Tracy Streeter, Director

The talk this summer among our water community has been focused on progress and whether we're making any or not. The answer, in my opinion, is clearly yes. Here are a few of our recent accomplishments:

- \$1.2 million restored to the State Water Plan Fund by the Kansas Legislature
- The addition of 11 new Water Technology Farms
- The addition of six Water Conservation Areas, including a countywide effort in Wichita County
- Awarded construction contracts for the stabilization of 9 streambank sites and initiated designs for 13 new sites above John Redmond and Tuttle Creek Reservoirs
- \$1.8 million in EQIP contracts awarded by NRCS above our federal reservoirs for sediment reduction practices, nearly doubling the number from last year
- Funding approved for the Kansas Geological Survey to expand the groundwater model for the Equus Beds Aquifer
- Water Advocates Program initiated by the Kansas Department of Agriculture
- Bureau of Reclamation grants awarded for water reuse projects in Garden City and Red Hills Region

- Water conservation educational events hosted by western Kansas RACs

However, to move the needle in a substantive way on our most critical issues, we have to do more and do it faster. At the August Kansas Water Authority meeting budget priorities were adopted and they will be requesting from the Governor and Legislature, the full transfer of the State General Fund and Economic Development Initiatives Fund to the State Water Plan Fund. This \$8 million dollar request will greatly enhance our abilities to implement the Water Vision Action Plans developed by the 14 Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) along with addressing several other Kansas Water Plan priorities.

This fall, in an effort to document the status of our water resource issues and document progress in addressing those issues, KWO, in collaboration with state and federal agencies and university partners, will be developing State of the Resource Reports for each of the 14 regional planning regions. These reports will be shared with each of the RACs and will serve as a measuring stick for annual accomplishment and a tool for the identification and prioritization of future actions.

The Water Vision process, advocacy efforts of the KWA and RACs, as well as the support of the many stakeholder organizations has elevated the understanding and importance of our water resources to unprecedented levels across the state. Thanks to all for your efforts and let's keep up the good work!

Federal Update

On July 26, 2017, Congressman Ron Estes introduced H.R. 3383, which would designate the Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control Project as the M.S. “Mitch” Mitchell Floodway. At the August Kansas Water Authority meeting, they took action to formally support this legislation. A letter of support was sent to each member of the Kansas Congressional Delegation, encouraging them to also support the bill.

Mr. Mitchell held numerous positions in Wichita and Sedgewick County, serving as the Flood Control and Maintenance supervisor for the City-County Flood Control office, assistant superintendent of public works maintenance, and flood control superintendent, Metropolitan Area Planning Commission chairman – and the list goes on. As the flood-control superintendent, he was a key figure in the success of

the “Big Ditch.” The Wichita-Valley Center Flood Control channel is a series of floodways and diversion canals designed to protect against flooding of the Arkansas River, the Little Arkansas River, Cowskin Creek, Chisholm Creek and the Big Slough. It was completed in 1959. Mr. Mitchell also served three terms as a member of the Kansas Water Authority.

State Legislature Update

A Natural Resources Interim Committee will convene this fall over a two-day period. Members include Chair Rep. Tom Sloan, Vice Chair Sen. Dan Kerschen, Sens. Bud Estes and Marci Francisco, and Reps. Ponka-We Victors, Ken Rahjes, and Doug Blex. Dates and times of meetings have not been set.

Meet Our New Staff and Interns

Chris Shultz grew up south of Topeka where he attended Washburn Rural High School. He received his B.S. in Civil Engineering from Kansas State University (KSU) and M.S. in Civil Engineering from Colorado State University (CSU). Throughout his education, Chris became keenly interested in water resources and water quality as they relate to civil engineering in the hopes of improving people’s everyday lives.



Chris Shultz

While attending CSU, Chris worked with a stream-aquifer model to investigate and improve water quality within the lower Arkansas River valley in southeastern Colorado. Prior, he worked for the United States Department of Agriculture in a wind erosion group, KSU in an asphalt lab, and on a design team in the Biological and Agricultural Engineering department at KSU.

As KWO’s Associate Engineer, he will primarily work with the MEKRO (Multi-basin Evaluation of Kansas Reservoir Operations) OASIS decision support model that is used for reservoir and river basin water resources management. He will help improve operations decisions in the model and incorporate surface water/groundwater interaction.

His hobbies include hiking, biking, camping, fishing, and swimming, along with some computer programming.

KWO Summer Interns

Karli Pryor is from Dixon, California. She is studying Agriculture Communications at K-State with an emphasis in

agriculture and will graduate May 2018. Karli will continue working for KWO this fall.

Karli created multiple user-friendly handouts and fact sheets that KWO will be able to use to increase water education. She also helped with increased posts on social media and created educational videos on multiple programs and reservoirs that will be featured on our new website.



Karli Pryor

Madeline O’Neill is from Washington D.C. and studying Civil Engineering at Kansas University with an Environmental concentration.

Madeline was an asset in helping the Streambank Stabilization Inter-Agency team to prioritize streambank hotspots within the three priority watersheds. She created maps and tables for internal use to help the team visualize the erosion locations and priority.

Together both of the girls created user-friendly maps of water supply storage customers within their respective regional planning areas. These maps will be useful to effectively show water allocations within certain river basins.



Madeline O’Neill

Throughout August, the Kansas Water Office (KWO) Northwest Kansas Technical College and Kansas State University hosted a series of six Field Days, showcasing several of the Water Technology Farms found in Kansas. Last year there were three Water Technology Farms and there are now 13 implementing and testing the latest irrigation technologies, specifically designed with water conservation in mind. Each of the participating locations demonstrated technologies and discussed the improvements their operation has experienced since becoming a Water Technology Farm to attendees.



Hatcher Land & Cattle, Nick Hatcher

Armando Zarco, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources, stated that Circle C Water Technology Farm has only used 10 percent of their five year water conservation area quantity so far this year.

“With a Water Conservation Area, this year’s unused water can be carried over to future years,” said Zarco.

The Water Technology Farms are 3-year pilot projects, developed in response to the Kansas Water Vision to address our state's water supply issues. The concept was developed to demonstrate it is possible to reduce water use, gain flexi-



Circle C Water Tech Farm Field Day

bility with water use and continue to remain economically viable. Weston McCary, Northwest Kansas Technical College- Precision Agriculture program director, saw the benefit of participating in the Water Tech Farms as a way to train his students and work with producers to make an impact on the Ogallala aquifer and improve the management of water use in irrigation agriculture.

There are 17 students total in the Precision Agriculture program who have been working with producers on the

7 participating water tech farms this 2017 growing season. The students worked with industry partners to install soil probes, program variable rate scripts and then help train the growers on how to use various tools, apps and equipment.

“The moisture probes, coupled with timely rains, have allowed our sprinklers to sit idle much of the summer,” said Gerald Franklin, Northwest Tech Water Technology Farm participant and owner of the state’s first Water Conservation Area. He also shared with attendees, “The beauty of the probes in a wet year is showing us how rainfall moisture remains in the soil profile, which in turn, allows us to bank our groundwater and reduce our input costs.”



Students setting up Water Tech Farms

The farms are also great examples of public-private partnerships. Tom Willis, owner of the first and largest tech farm, T&O Farms, described how he trusts soil moisture probes and the advice of his crop consultants to shut off his irrigation systems and/or delay irrigation to conserve water on his farm and get a deeper plant root profile.

“K-State is working with partners to help address questions and concerns so that in the future, farmers will fully embrace the technology,” said Jonathan Aguilar, water resource engineer with K-State Research and Extension, based in Garden City, Kansas. “Each farm is set up slightly different, depending on the primary concern the producer has. For example, one farm has three adjacent spans with different modes of application for comparison purposes. In all fields, soil moisture sensors are installed and tested for accuracy as feedback or for its performance in the different soil types.”



Jonathan Aguilar at ILS/WaterPACK Field Day



The WaterFront Calendar

For comments or questions on The WaterFront please contact

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NEW WEBSITE!

Check it out at:

www.kwo.ks.gov

September

- 1– Regional Advisory Committee Drought Workshop, Burlington, Kansas
- 14– Missouri RAC Meeting, Atchison, Kansas
- 21– Equus-Walnut RAC Meeting, Wichita, Kansas

October

- 3– Marais des Cygnes RAC Meeting, Osawatomie, Kansas
- 10 - Kansas Water Authority Meeting, McPherson, Kansas
- 12– Neosho RAC Meeting,
- 13– Smoky Hill-Saline RAC & City of Hays Conservation Field Day, Hays, Kansas
- 19– Kansas RAC Meeting,
- 19– Verdigris RAC Meeting

November

- 8–9 - Governor’s Water Conference, Manhattan, Kansas



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Kansas Water Office

Photo Contest

Help us celebrate our love for water by sharing your favorite photos and experiences involving Kansas water resources.

Enter your pictures into the KWO's annual photo contest here: <http://kwo.ks.gov/news-events/kwo-photo-contest> or email them to kwo-info@kwo.ks.gov. KWO will accept photos until October 2, 2017.

For contest details please visit the above KWO webpage and invite others to send their photos in too!

The 10 finalists will be voted on by the people’s choice at the Governor’s Water Conference.

Kansas Water Office
PHOTO CONTEST
Enter by Oct. 2, 2017

Governor’s Water Conference



SAVE THE DATE!

Governor’s Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas

November 8-9, 2017

Hilton Garden Inn, Manhattan, Kansas

www.kwo.org



Registration is OPEN

Sponsorship opportunities are still available for the conference. Please contact KWO for more information. We hope you are saving the date to attend!

Thank you to our dedicated sponsors who have committed so far!!