

## Word From The Street

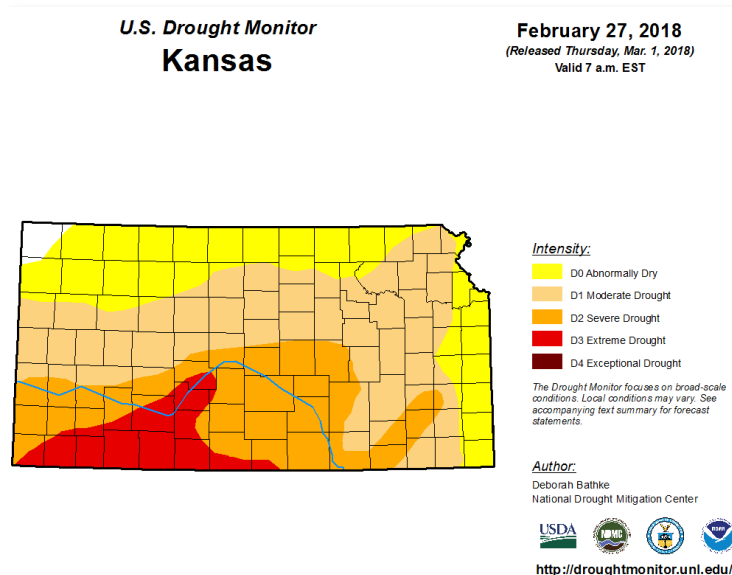


Tracy Streeter

As I look at this week's Drought Monitor, 73 percent of Kansas is in moderate to extreme drought. Two weeks ago, this number was 61 percent. The balance of the state is categorized as abnormally dry. While we hope the spring rains will alleviate these conditions, it's not too early to start thinking about and planning for drought conditions to persist, and perhaps intensify, as the year progresses. Additionally the threat for wildfires exists statewide.

I'm sure those in agriculture production, whether crops or animals, are making a plan to mitigate the effects of continued drought conditions. Public water suppliers are always thinking about weather conditions and evaluating their raw water sources. As we all know, drought is insidious and deciding when

to start adapting to worsening conditions is more art than science. My advice to all is to start thinking about a persistent 2018 drought now and put your conservation plans on the table. I hope you all can call me 'Chicken Little' later this year.



## Legislative Update

The Kansas Legislature has wrapped up their first two months of the 2018 calendar. Earlier in the session, members of the Kansas Water Authority (KWA) and Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) met with more than 100 legislators to discuss priorities for the \$8 million State General Fund/Economic Development Initiatives Fund (SGF/EDIF) transfer. KWA Chairman Gary Harshberger also testified before three committees, highlighting the 2018 Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature.

There are several pieces of water-related legislation that were given hearings in various committees, but only two were considered by the full House and Senate. One bill which has passed the house favorably is HB 2691. This bill, as amended, would change the deadline to file an application for a multi-year flex account (MYFA) with the Chief Engineer from on or before October 1 to on or before December 31, of the first year of the MYFA term for which the application would be made. The Senate passed

SB 194, which would permit groundwater management district boards to increase the maximum water withdrawal charge from \$1.50 for each acre-foot to \$2.00 for each acre-foot. In addition, the bill would eliminate a provision of current law that permits the boards of groundwater management districts to assess a greater annual water withdrawal charge if more than 50 percent of the authorized place of use of the water is outside the district.

The appropriations process will continue into March, as the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget Committee has met to consider the State Water Plan Fund (SWPF) budget, and will make a recommendation to the full House Appropriations Committee next month. The Senate Ways and Means Water Subcommittee will meet on March 5 to discuss the SWPF. We continue to hear from numerous legislators that water is an important issue they want to address this session.

## Federal Update Water Resource Development Act

On Monday, February 12, the White House released its long-awaited infrastructure proposal. The President's proposal seeks to "incentivize the development of effective and efficient water infrastructure, outcome-based procurement, and full life-cycle asset management to improve water infrastructure." This proposal will take legislation to enact, and therefore attention turns to Congress. The topic of infrastructure has been talked about both in the executive branch and in Congress, as the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is up for reauthorization in 2018. WRDA contains provisions which assist the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with water resource projects across the nation. KWO has been working with U.S. Senator Jerry Moran's office on specific provisions for the 2018 WRDA which will help maintain and protect the federal water infrastructure in Kansas. The KWO is interested in provisions dealing with 404 Compensatory Mitigation, authorities within the Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Program, sediment management, changes to credit for work done by non-federal sponsors related to operations and maintenance, work done "in-kind",

and Corps of Engineers dam safety cost share provisions. House and Senate Committees are working to draft their legislation now, and KWO will continue to engage with members of Kansas' Congressional Delegation throughout the process.



## Water Research Coordination

In an effort to promote state-wide collaboration and support of the research needs identified in the Vision, a state-wide research coordination effort has been underway with representatives of K-State Research and Extension, Kansas Geological Survey, Kansas Biological Survey, the University of Kansas, U.S. Geological Survey, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Water Office. The purpose of this group is to coordinate research needs and facilitate statewide collaboration to support implementation of the Vision.

Recently, the group has identified three major areas on which to concentrate efforts at this time: Water Quality, Ogallala-High Plains Groundwater Depletion and Reservoir Sedimentation. Under each of these broad categories, the group has further identified specific focus areas in need of additional research. The areas that will be addressed first include streambank stabilization effectiveness, irrigation and alternative crop technologies and harmful algal blooms are included in this initial effort.

Small research coordination teams focusing on each of these areas have convened to meet and discuss the needs for future research. The objective of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for subject matter experts to work together to identify gaps in the research and existing data, determine what is needed to fill those gaps, foster better collaboration among the state's institutions and maximize funding opportunities. Research and related activities to be funded through this program will be identified and prioritized by the research teams and recommended to the Kansas Water Authority.





## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

The Kansas Water Office (KWO) received notification in December 2017 from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that a \$2.88 million commitment would take place to leverage NRCS technical and financial assistance with those from a number of partners to implement a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) project to improve water quality conditions within the Milford Lake Watershed. Runoff from precipitation events is a source of nutrient loading contributing to aquatic conditions which promote formation of harmful algal blooms (HABs) within Milford Lake. This project will implement cropland and livestock-related conservation practices within the Milford Lake Watershed to decrease nutrient runoff and sediment.

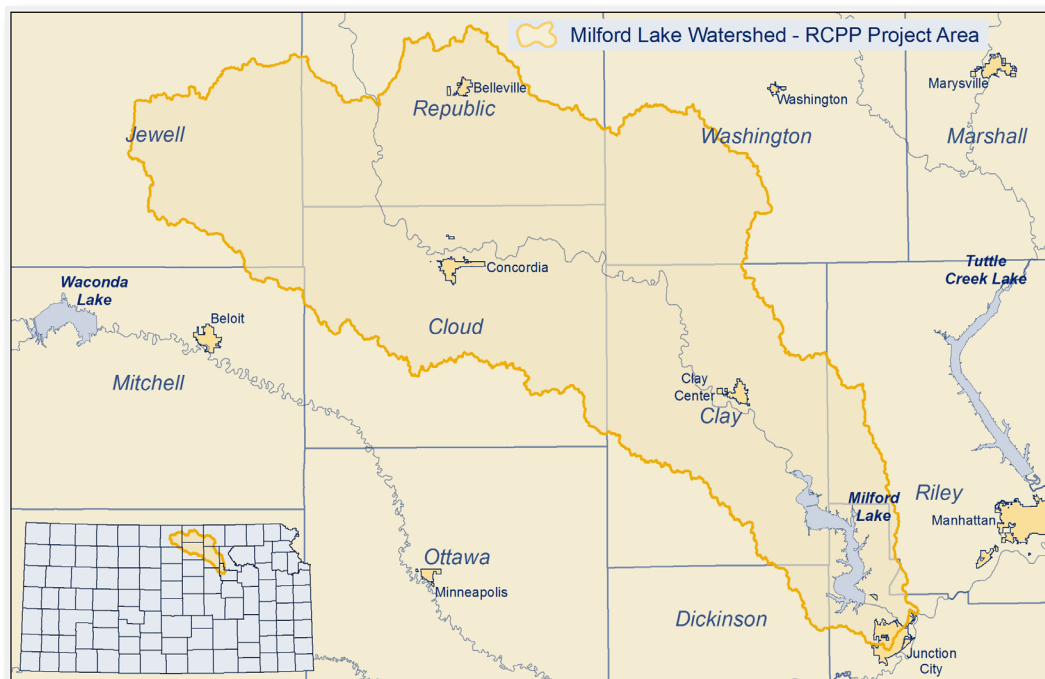
“We are elated the Kansas Water Office Milford Lake project was selected for funding and appreciate the support of the 28 contributing partners,” said Governor Jeff Colyer, M.D. “As this lake serves as a water source to many Kansas communities, this project exemplifies the potential for a comprehensive watershed approach and presents a tremendous opportunity to impact nutrient loading within the lake.”

This project serves as one of the largest efforts undertaken within the Milford Lake Watershed to bring together partners to work with NRCS on implementation of conservation practices. The other partners consist of state agencies, public water suppliers, farm organizations, local units of government, university and state researchers, county conservation districts, agricultural groups, private businesses, and non-profit organizations.

“The Kansas Natural Resources Conservation Service is delighted to be working with the Kansas Water Office to improve water quality in the Milford Lake Wa-

tershed. NRCS has dedicated conservationists that are ready to provide technical assistance and conservation planning to help producers identify conservation practices to address resource concerns in the watershed,” said Sheldon Hightower, Kansas NRCS Acting State Conservationist. “We have a great relationship with the Kansas Water Office and I appreciate their leadership in this project.”

KWO is currently working with NRCS and all project partners to finalize the scope of work with the goal of having an official rollout of the project later this year. For more information about this RCPP project please visit [www.kwo.ks.gov](http://www.kwo.ks.gov).





# THE WATERFRONT CALENDAR

## March

- 5- Neosho RAC Meeting, Hillsboro, KS
- 7- Verdigris RAC Meeting, Coffeyville, KS
- 7- Upper RAC Meeting, Colby, KS
- 12- Great Bend Prairie RAC Meeting, Pratt, Kansas
- 21- Red Hills RAC Meeting, Medicine Lodge, Kansas
- 23- Stream & Riparian Restoration Public Meeting, Wetmore, Kansas
- 26- Equus-Walnut RAC Meeting, Location TBD
- 27- Missouri RAC Meeting, Atchison, Kansas

## April

- 3- Solomon-Republican RAC Meeting, Downs, Kansas
- 9- Kansas RAC Meeting, Topeka, Kansas
- 13- Water Conservation Field Day, Garden City, Kansas

For comments or questions on  
The WaterFront please contact  
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## Save The Date!

### Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas

November 13-14, 2018  
Hilton Garden Inn  
Manhattan, Kansas



For more information,  
visit: [www.kwo.ks.gov](http://www.kwo.ks.gov)

## *Congratulations on your retirement!*

### **Tina Rajala**

Thank you Tina for your 36 1/2  
years of service to the state of  
Kansas!

Tina began at KDHE, and in  
1984 joined the Water Office  
as a Water Resource Planner-  
in Hydrology and Evaluation.

Her technical assistance to  
our public water suppliers, as  
well as her skills in mapping,  
and water data management  
will be greatly missed. Tina's  
last day as a KWO team-  
member will be March 9.