

## Earl's Corner



Earl Lewis

Earlier this month the Kansas Water Authority (KWA) met in Goodland. It was the first meeting with new Chair Connie Owen, as well as four new voting members. On the agenda was appointment, or reappointment, of half of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) members. Any time you

have new folks involved it gives an opportunity to be reinvigorated and look ahead to new approaches on our common challenges.

You may recall at the April KWA meeting we announced an effort to update the Kansas Water Plan and incorporation of the Vision into the Water Plan. A key part of the effort initially discussed in Abilene is aligning our goals and actions along more topical

lines. During the discussion that day we included the following proposed core principles to consider in this effort:

- Ensuring Each Citizen has a Reliable Water Supply
- Conserving and Extending the High Plains Aquifer
- Securing, Protecting, and Restoring our Reservoirs
- Improving our State's Water Quality, and
- Developing and Maintaining our State and Local Water Infrastructure

Over the next few months we, along with each of the RACs, will be holding public outreach sessions to get input into the water planning effort. We also need to be asking the questions of how and what the public is willing to pay to fund water in Kansas. I encourage each of you to get involved and work to bring additional voices into the discussion. Thanks to each of you for your continued service to our state's water resources.

## Meet New Kansas Water Authority Chair - *Connie Owen*



Connie Owen

Connie Owen was appointed to serve as Chair of the Kansas Water Authority by Gov. Kelly this summer. She is a licensed attorney and has practiced Kansas water law for more than 25 years. As an administrative hearing officer for the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources, (KDA-DWR) since 2004,

she presided over the initial hearings for the first two Local Enhanced Management Areas (LEMAs), as well as numerous hearings addressing abandonment of water rights, water law enforcement, applications for new water rights and change aspects of existing rights.

Prior to this role, Connie served as legal counsel for KDA-DWR, advising the Chief Engineer on water

law administration, enforcement and conducting all administrative and intrastate litigation.

Connie previously served as a research attorney and motions attorney for the Kansas Court of Appeals. A lifelong Kansan, Connie earned her B.S. degree from Emporia State University in 1981 and her law degree at the University of Kansas in 1988.

Connie and her husband, Dan live in Overland Park and have two sons.

"My experience has exposed me to real-life water issues that affect individuals and families, as well as businesses and municipalities," Connie said. "As Chair of the Authority, I welcome the opportunity to apply the knowledge and expertise of the board members, professionals in our state agencies and stakeholders throughout Kansas to protect our water resources for current and future generations."

# September KWA Meeting Recap

Recently the Kansas Water Authority (KWA) met in Goodland under the new direction of Constance (Connie) Crittenden Owen who was appointed Chair this past summer by Governor Kelly to lead the KWA. In addition to Owen, several new members were present including: Jeremiah Hobbs representing the State Association of Kansas Watersheds, Chris Ladwig representing the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and industrial water users, Sen. Carolyn McGinn representing Environment and Conservation, and David Stroberg representing Groundwater Management Districts (GMD) 2 & 5. Sara Baer, new Director of the Kansas Biological Survey, is also a new Ex-Officio member of the KWA.

Major actions taken by the KWA included approval of RAC membership for positions with 2019 term expirations as well as approval of State Water Plan Fund (SWPF) budget recommendations for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2021.

For KWA action on RAC membership, the KWA re-appointed 54 currently seated members to serve another 4-year term on their respective RACs and appointed 25 new members to serve on nine of the RACs. New chair and vice-chair appointments will take place in the coming weeks. Once Connie makes those, RAC membership rosters will be updated and posted on the appropriate webpages.

Following involved discussion among the full KWA on agency budget recommendations and RAC input on priorities to consider for inclusion, action was taken on a budget recommendation package to provide to the Governor and Legislature for SFY 2021. As in recent years, the KWA decided to develop a SWPF budget recommendation package which focuses on full restoration of the State General Fund (SGF)/Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF) demand transfer totaling \$8 million. Enhancements and appropriations which took place for SFY 2020 were recommended as base-level funding program funding for SFY 2021, with additional enhancement recommendations for 12 projects/programs/initiatives totaling \$3,170,100 and ultimately creating a budget recommendation

package which includes full restoration of the SGF/EDIF demand transfer. The table highlights the specific projects/initiatives which were approved for inclusion within the KWA SFY 2021 budget recommendations.

Other actions of note by the KWA included approval and authorization of the Kansas Water Office (KWO) Director to proceed with negotiations with the Lower Smoky Hill Water Supply Access District for purchase of additional irrigation storage space in Kanopolis Lake; approval for KWO to enter into a multi-state Planning Assistance to States (PAS) agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a flood risk management study for the Lower Missouri River Basin in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska; and approval for the KWO Director to enter into an agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to receive and utilize High Hazard Potential Dams Rehabilitation Grant Funds. Presentations were also provided by the Kansas Geological Survey on the Arbuckle in Kansas and Groundwater Management District (GMD) 4 on water conservation efforts in northwest Kansas.

<b>State Water Plan Fund FY2021 Budget Recommendation</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>Enhancement Recommendation Above FY2020 Appropriation</b>
<b>Department of Health and Environment</b>	
Drinking Water Protection Program	\$ 150,000
<b>SUBTOTAL-KDHE</b>	\$ 150,000
<b>Department of Agriculture</b>	
Watershed Dam Construction	\$ 400,000
Water Transition Assistance Program/CREP	\$ 300,000
Irrigation Technology	\$ 100,000
Streambank Stabilization	\$ 500,000
Real-Time Water Mgmt - Telemetry - <i>SWRM</i>	\$ 25,000
Water Supply Restoration Program	\$ 465,000
<b>SUBTOTAL-KDA</b>	\$ 1,790,000
<b>Kansas Water Office</b>	
MOU - Storage Operations & Maintenance	\$ 70,100
Technical Assistance to Water Users	\$ 100,000
Watershed Conservation Practice Imp	\$ 300,000
Water Injection Dredging (WID)	\$ 660,000
KGS Arbuckle Study	\$ 100,000
<b>SUBTOTAL-KWO</b>	\$ 1,230,100
<b>Total State Water Plan Enhancement Recommendation</b>	<b>\$ 3,170,100</b>



# Kansas Flooding Update

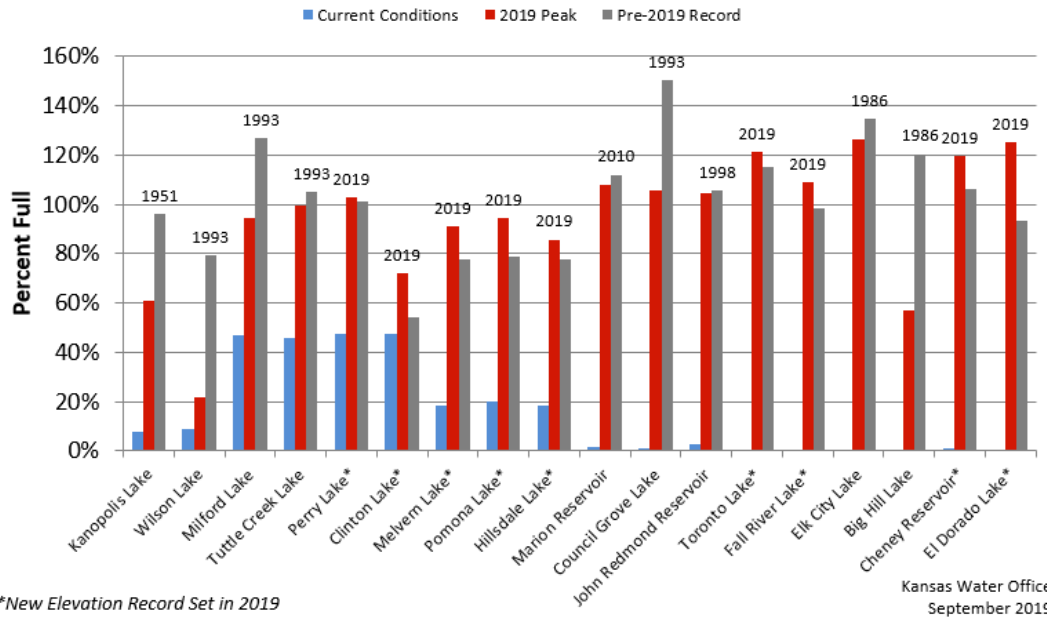
Nine of 18 major federal reservoirs in Central and Eastern Kansas attained record setting elevations in 2019.

and was granted permission to deviate from the flow restrictions at Waverly, Missouri, an increase of 50,000 cubic feet per second above what is normally

allowed. With this increase in the amount of downstream flow allowed, the Kansas River reservoirs should be able to return to normal levels prior to the winter freeze.

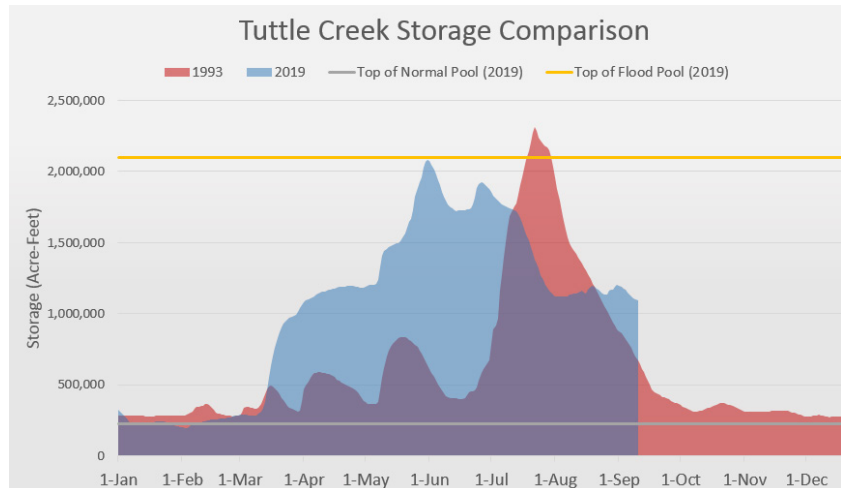
Futher illustration of the stored water in Tuttle Creek Lake, for example, is shown through time below, comparing 1993 to 2019. While the peak storage was higher in 1993, water has had to be stored in the reservoir significantly longer in 2019.

## Flood Storage Filled



The majority of these records were set in late May and early June following a series of large precipitation events that occurred during the month of May. Downstream conditions have allowed reservoirs in the Arkansas River Basin to return to normal pool since May but reservoirs in the Missouri River Basin are continuing to be emptied as downstream conditions allow.

High flows in the Missouri River have kept many reservoirs, especially in the Kansas River basin, holding water much longer than normal. As shown in the Flood Storage Filled chart, only about half of the flood storage capacity is available in Perry, Tuttle Creek, Milford, and Clinton. The Corps of Engineers operating manuals don't allow releases from these reservoirs if it will cause flooding or exacerbate flooding conditions downstream. Missouri River flood conditions in the State of Missouri were the primary cause of restricted releases from the Kansas River basin. Over concern of not having all flood storage empty in time for the next flood season the Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, pursued



Kansas Water Office staff were called upon as a resource for the better part of May and June, assisting the Kansas Department of Emergency Management at the State Emergency Operations Center. Along with other federal and state agencies, KWO provided a level of expertise on flood operations and impacts to the emergency management team. Currently there are 70 counties designated as Federal Disasters which enables those counties to restore their infrastructure and get things back to normal as quickly as possible.



# THE WATERFRONT CALENDAR

## September

26- Missouri Regional Advisory Committee Meeting, Atchison, KS

## October

02- Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting, Downs, KS

11 - KWO Photo Contest deadline

14 - Governor's Conference Student Proposals due

24 - Governor's Water Conference registration deadline

## November

7-8 - Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas, NEW LOCATION - Wichita, KS

## December

19- Kansas Water Authority Meeting, Salina, KS

For comments or questions on  
The WaterFront please contact

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