

Marais des Cygnes Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Marais des Cygnes Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday July 20, 2023, 10:00am

Ag Choice, Osage City, KS

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Lyle Wobker (Chair)	Paola, KS	Agriculture 2	2023	Yes
Keri Harris (Vice-Chair)	Ottawa, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2025	Yes
Don Stottlemire	Rantoul, KS	At Large Public 2	2023	No
Jared Morrison	Topeka, KS	Water Assurance District	2023	No
Lori Kuykendall	Lyndon, KS	WRAPS	2023	Yes
Mike Mabrey	Edgerton, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2023	No
Gary Armentrout	Centerville, KS	Public Water Supply 3	2025	Yes
Gayla Speer	Wellsville, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2025	No
Ron Brown	Fort Scott, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2025	Yes
Scott Yeargain	Ottawa, KS	Conservation/Environment 2	2025	Yes
James DePriest	Iola, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2023	No
Ray Samuel	Richmond, KS	At Large Public 3	2025	No
Laura Hines	Lawrence, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2023	Yes

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Lauren Campbell	KWO
Victoria Potts	KWO
Doug Cole	KDHE
Don George	KDWP
Kaitlin Knauss	WRAPS
Levi Short	KCC
Terry Medley	KDA-DWR
Clint Goodrich	KDHE

- I. **Welcome and Introductions** The meeting was called to order 10:04am by Chairperson, Lyle Wobker.
- II. **Agenda:** Ron Brown (Conservation/Environment) moved to accept the agenda. Gary Armentrout (Public Water Supply) seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Review of May 2023 Meeting Notes:** The meeting notes from the May 2023 meeting were reviewed. Scott Yeargain (Conservation/Environment) moved to accept the meeting notes. Laura Hines (Industry/Commerce) seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Updates – KWO

a. June 2023 KWA Meeting

Victoria Potts (KWO) provided an update from the June 2023 KWA meeting. The main highlights from this meeting included the approval of the FY 2024 water marketing rate increase, approval to enter into contract negotiations with the City of Emporia for water supply from Council Grove, an update of the Kansas Water Plan budget guidelines, approval to enter into a PAS agreement to study the feasibility of a regional wastewater facility near Hillsdale, KDHE presentation on the Northwest Kansas Mineralization Study, KGS update, and an update from KDHE and DWR on the KS/CO Arkansas River Water Quality Summit.

b. Kansas Reservoir Protection Initiative

Lauren Campbell (KWO) provided an update on the FY2024 Kansas Reservoir Protection Initiative program. Three new watersheds (Perry, Pomona, and Hillsdale) were added to the program as there was \$1.5 million in funding to allocate. There was discussion about the barriers to get landowner signups in the new watersheds' eligible areas.

c. Education and Outreach

Lauren Campbell, in place of Angela Anderson (KWO), provided an update on education and outreach to the RAC. Recently a Request for Proposals (RFP) went out to develop a Kansas specific curriculum for water education, which can then be posted on the Kansas Runs on Water webpage expected to be up and running by the end of the year. In the meantime, KWO has been doing education and outreach internally with events such as local water festivals, field days, and water specific events at the capitol.

V. FY2025 Budget Input Discussion

Victoria Potts (KWO) provided the RAC with the background and context in regard to the current budget situation from the State of Kansas' perspective. She informed the RAC that their input today is essential in determining water priorities and resources looking into the upcoming fiscal year. The RAC members discussed the questions provided from the KWO and gave their feedback. A motion was made by Gary Armentrout (Public Water Supply) and seconded by Lori Kuykendall (WRAPS) to submit the RAC budget feedback to the KWA Budget Committee. The RAC's budget input was approved to send onto the KWA Budget Committee.

"The Marais des Cygnes Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) would like to pass the following feedback to the Kansas Water Authority Budget Committee for consideration for the FY 2025 State Water Plan Fund.

- i. *The RAC would like to highlight the following progress of note for the regional and statewide water resource issues:*
 - a. *The legislative recognition of the importance and need for change in Kansas water resources.*

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- i. *Matching funds for aid to Conservation Districts increased to close to 1-1 match.*
 - b. *The recognition and transparency of the state of the High Plains Aquifer. Addition of the language “halting the decline” and “reducing use” of the High Plains Aquifer in state policies and documents.*
 - c. *Funding and implementation for Aquatic Invasive Species education and prevention via AIS trailers.*
 - d. *Increased HAB program awareness from the public and private entities.*
 - ii. *The RAC would like to highlight the following activities that could potentially be most impactful under the Guiding Principles.*
 - a. *Education for kids and showing them the importance of water*
 - i. *Need to start this process young*
 - ii. *Create or utilize an existing water curriculum at every grade level*
 - iii. *The RAC would like to prioritize the following activities that would be most impactful for the region under the Kansas Water Plan 5 Guiding Principles and the actionable items:*
 - a. *Increased need for cover crops and other best management practices to increase soil health in the region which would address protecting our reservoirs. There is need for a mindset and cultural change for successful implementation of these practices. A possible solution would be to offer more incentives for implementation.*
 - b. *Need for increased education of water resources at local levels. Need to get water back into the school curriculum. Need to educate the schools to understand the importance of prioritizing water/conservation education.*
 - iv. *The RAC would like to address the opportunities for “low hanging” issues or priorities:*
 - a. *Utilization of education programs that are available to the state.*
 - b. *Change of regulations for watershed districts to build more watershed lakes.*
 - i. *Cost benefit ratio for mitigation*
 - c. *Funding for structural practices*
 - v. *The RAC would like to address the following urgent emerging issues, priorities, and unique opportunities:*
 - a. *Educating elected officials on the importance of water/conservation, especially for the boots on the ground efforts locally.*
 - b. *Technical assistance for new/growing programs.*
 - i. *Engineering TA*
 - c. *Lack of contractors in some areas of the state to implement the conservation practices.*
 - d. *Development of the intermodal area north of Hillsdale and the increased sedimentation and nutrients into the lake.*
 - e. *Abandoned oil wells in the state*
 - i. *Bonding requirements need to match the environmental risk of implementing oil wells*
 - f. *Increased funding for structural practices.*
 - g. *Educate land owners on the need for a buffer along streams and educate county on the need for buffers along the ditches.*
 - h. *Need for funding mechanism for land taken out of production for recreation.*
 - i. *Need to address Eastern Red Cedars and other woody species encroaching on prairie/rangeland*
 - vi. *The RAC would like to address the following future considerations for SWPF expenditures currently missing:*
 - a. *Need to increase public access to local rivers and streams that are not currently designated as navigable i.e. Marmaton, Marais des Cygnes...*
 - i. *This would increase public interest and understanding of Kansas water resources.*
 - ii. *Possible solution is long-term land lease or public easement.*

- iii. *This would increase revenue from tourism via sales tax to rural areas in the state.*
- ii. *The RAC would like to address other input/feedback to highlight for consideration by the KWA budget committee:*
 - i. *Virtual attendance for Kansas Water Authority meetings.*
 - ii. *The state needs regulation prohibiting conflict of interest with regulatory authorities or agencies.*

VI. RAC Goals Implementation Timeline (KWO):

This agenda item was skipped due to time constraints.

VII. RAC Messages to KWA: No messages were sent to the KWA at this time.

VIII. Questions and Future Issues from RAC Members:

Scott Yeargain (Conservation/Environment) updated the RAC that he is working on getting a tour of a CAFO in the region set up for the October meeting.

Ron Brown (Conservation/Environment) brought up an idea on cost-share programs/crop insurance requiring cover crops to participate. Lori Kuykendall (WRAPS) mentioned her experience and the input she has heard from local farmers on cover crops causing issues for neighboring farms crop.

IX. Educational Events in the Region:

Keri Harris (At-Large Public) mentioned that there is a soil health event taking place in Waverly, KS on August 15th. She also mentioned that the Soil Health Alliance webpage is a great place to look for soil health events going on in the region.

X. Agency Input:

- a. Don George (KDWP) updated the RAC on the AIS boat cleaning trailers and the use they are getting. It is not as high as he expected, but there is hope that the longer the trailers are around, the more use they will get.
- b. Doug Cole (KDHE) expressed thanks for RAC support of KDHE programs, such as HABs, spill remediation, and remediation of the underground storage tanks.
- c. Cint Goodrich (KDHE) introduced himself and encouraged the RAC to keep pursuing and supporting soil health
- d. Levi Short (KCC) updated the RAC on the abandon well plugging program with funds from the federal infrastructure bill.

- XI. Public Input:**
No public input.

- XII. Adjournment:** Lyle Wobker adjourned the meeting at 12:12pm.

Future Meetings:

- a. **KWA Meeting – August 23, 2023 – Location and Date TBD**
- b. **Fall RAC meeting – Location and Date TBD**