

Marais des Cygnes Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Marais des Cygnes Regional Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday October 31st, 2023, 2:00am

Library District #2 Linn County, 209 N Broadway St, La Cygnes, KS 66040

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Keri Harris (Chair)	Ottawa, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2025	Y
Laura Hines (Vice-Chair)	Lawrence, KS	Water Assurance District	2025	Y
Don Stottlemire	Rantoul, KS	At Large Public 2	2025	Y
Lyle Wobker	Topeka, KS	Agriculture 2	2027	Y
Lori Kuykendall	Lyndon, KS	WRAPS	2027	Y
Trenton Morris	Edgerton, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2027	Y
Gary Armentrout	Centerville, KS	Public Water Supply 3	2025	Y
Gayla Speer	Wellsville, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2025	Y
Ron Brown	Fort Scott, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2025	N
Scott Yeargain	Ottawa, KS	Conservation/Environment 2	2025	Y
Charles Finley	Gardner, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2027	Y
Ray Samuel	Richmond, KS	At Large Public 3	2025	N
Larry Schulte	Lawrence, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2027	Y

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
James Cubit	Pottawatomie Creek Watershed District
Pat Toth	Franklin County
Kailin Knauss	Miami County Conservation District
Doug Cole	KDHE
Angela Anderson	KWO
Holly Steiber	Public
Levi Short	KCC
Julie Shaffer	KCC
Don George	KDWP
Chris Steffen	KDWP
Lauren Campbell	KWO

I. Welcome and Introductions:

The meeting was called to order 2:01pm by Chairperson, Keri Harris (At Large Public), and had everyone in attendance introduce themselves.

II. Agenda:

Lyle Wobker (Agriculture) moved to accept the agenda. Gayla Speer (Agriculture) seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Review of May 2023 Meeting Notes:

The meeting notes from the July 2023 meeting were reviewed. Gary Armentrout (Public Water Supply) moved to accept the meeting notes. Lyle Wobker (Agriculture) seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Updates – KWO

a. August and October KWA Meetings

During the August KWA meeting, the authority took several significant actions. The KWA granted negotiation authorization to the City of Independence, approved a contract for the City of Marion, and approved the renegotiated contract with the Cottonwood and Neosho River Basin Water Assurance District #3, specifically addressing the need for additional storage space. The RAC Operations Committee presented the recommended applicants for membership on the RACs. New members on the Marais des Cygnes RAC included Trenton Morris (Public Water Supply), Charles Finley (At Large Public), and Larry Schulte (Industry/Commerce). Also, the KWA approved the Fiscal Year 2025 budget recommendations put forth by the Kansas Water Office, considering input from all 14 RACs. Furthermore, the meeting touched upon the Hays/Russell Water Transfer discussion, with the Kansas Water Authority expressing interest in becoming a commenting agency in this matter.

In the October meeting, the KWA approved the water purchase contracts for the City of Emporia, City of Coffeyville, and City of Independence. Also, the KWA asked for meetings in 2024 to include nearby RAC chairs to provide updates on progress in goals and action plans during Kansas Water Authority (KWA) meetings. The Kansas Water Office (KWO) reported that the Annual Report is currently in progress. The meeting also featured updates on the Hays/Russell Water Transfer discussion. Other notable topics included updates from the Kansas Biological Survey, the Kansas Association of Watershed Districts, and a tour of the KBS Field Station.

b. Education and Outreach Update

Angela Anderson (KWO) provided the RAC with several updates from the KWA and KWO. As discussed previously, going forward, Kansas Water Authority (KWA) meetings will include a new agenda item of nearby Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) chairs to presenting at KWA meetings, sharing ideas, RAC goals, positive developments in their areas, and identifying actionable items with the KWA. The Marais des Cygnes RAC was asked to present at the January meeting in Topeka.

Angela also provided an update on RAC meetings. Starting 2024, RAC meetings will include a new practice of providing 2 minute updates from each RAC member on their position category. The next meeting will also have a RAC orientation and refresher for new and continuing RAC members.

Angela also briefed the committee on the Kansas Water Plan Partnership Initiative, highlighting grant opportunities for project implementation aligned with the KWP guiding principles or RAC goals. It was emphasized that RAC goals must be identified during the application process, and letters of support from the RAC are highly beneficial for prioritization. Furthermore, Angela provided an update on the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE), which is now serving as a new consultant for Kansas Water Office (KWO) education and outreach. The main objective of this contract is to develop a Kansas specific water curriculum for K-12 students.

V. RAC Goals Implementation Timeline (KWO):

Keri Harris (Chair) led the RAC through a discussion of an implementation timeline and prioritization of the Marais des Cygnes goals and action plans. The discussion is summarized in the tables below.

Priority goal #1: Reduce cumulative sediment loads entering Melvern Lake, Pomona Lake, and Hillsdale Lake by 10 percent every 10 years to extend the life of existing infrastructure.

Action Step	Priority	Phase	Responsibility	Additional Needs/Info	Update on progress
I	High	ongoing	Partners mentioned	Persistent and periodical reports on quantity of BMPs being implemented within the region to the RACS	Conservation districts working with local producers to implement BMPs. KRPI has been extended to two waterbodies in the region (Hillsdale, Pomona). WRAPS is working in the region to implement BMPs in the Hillsdale watershed. Pomona and Melvern get WRAPS funds from the partnership grant with KDHE and KACD.
II	High	Connected with I			
III	High	Connected with I			
IV	High	Ongoing		KWO	Bathymetric surveys ongoing with the KWO BASE program
V	Medium			KWO	KWO working on WID with USACE. Projected to start in Fall of 2024. Waiting to see results of WID.

*there was further discussion about the history and context of this goal and the usefulness going forward.

Priority goal #2: Ensure water supply storage in the Marais des Cygnes Region is able to supply for 110% of the projected demands through the year 2050.

Action Step	Priority	Phase	Responsibility	Additional Needs/Info	Update on progress
I	NA	ongoing	KWO	Need to make sure growth includes industrial demands	
II	High	NA			
III	High	NA			
IV	NA	Ongoing			

Priority goal #3: Continually work to prevent the spread of AIS, including Zebra and Quagga mussels, into Kansas Lakes that are not currently infested, by working with the agencies focused on AIS.

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Action Step	Priority	Phase	Responsibility	Additional Needs/Info	Update on progress
I	High	ongoing	KDWP		5 Watercraft cleaning stations made and developed with FY 2023 SWPF money.
II	NA	ongoing			Watercraft cleaning stations are also education vehicles.
III	NA	NA			

VI. Silver Jackets Presentation:

This agenda item was skipped.

VII. RAC Messages to KWA:

None.

VIII. Questions and Future Issues from RAC Members:

Keri Harris (Chair) led a discussion on talking points provided for drafting up a report to give to the Kansas Water Authority during the January meeting. Gary Armentrout (Public Water Supply) mentioned that sedimentation and lack of water storage as the most important issues in the region. Larry Schulte (Industry/Commerce) mentioned nutrients as one of the larger issues as well. Some success stories include the successful WRAPS programs in the region, Conservation District funding increases, and overall funding for water with the last legislative session, which ultimately impacts the region.

IX. Educational Events in the Region:

Keri Harris (Chair) mentioned that Soil Health U is coming up January 18-19, 2024 in Salina. There are scholarships available through the Conservation District Offices for anyone interested.

X. Agency Input:

Don George (KDWP) provided an update to the RAC on the Farlington Fish Hatchery's efforts in the development and dispersal of the Fat Hucket Mussels and efforts on restocking the rivers.

Doug Cole addressed several key updates from KDHE. First, he discussed small town infrastructure support for wastewater. Second, he highlighted the groundwater quality monitoring network collaboration with the Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) to establish ambient water quality measures. This initiative stemmed from uranium issues in western Kansas. Third, Doug mentioned that the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is currently involved in the matter of backup water supply. Additionally, Doug underscored the potential risks of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) in water supplies.

Levi Short from the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) updated the committee on the ongoing federal plugging efforts.

XI. Public Input:

James Cubit from Potawatomie Creek passed out Kansas Watershed booklet to each RAC member.

XII. Adjournment:

Membership: Lyle Wobker, Chair, Paola, KS; Keri Harris, Vice-Chair, Ottawa, KS ; Gary Armentrout, Centerville, KS; Ron Brown, Fort Scott, KS; Lori Kuykendall, Lyndon, KS; Jared Morrison, Topeka, KS; Mike Mabrey, Edgerton, KS; Gayla Speer, Wellsville, KS; Don Stottlemire, Rantoul, KS; Scott Yeargain, Ottawa, KS; James DePriest, Iola, KS; Ray Samuel, Richmond, K; Laura Hines, Lawrence, KS.
KWO Planner: Lauren Campbell, 785-296-3185; Lauren.Campbell@kwo.ks.gov

Gary Armentrout (Public Water Supply) moved to adjourn the meeting. Lyle Wobker (Agriculture) seconded the motion. Keri Harris (Chair) adjourned the meeting at 3:56pm.

Future Meetings:

- a. **Governor's Water Conference – November 15-16, 2023 – Manhattan, KS**
- b. **KWA Meeting – December 13, 2023 – Location and Date TBD**
- c. **Winter RAC meeting – Location and Date TBD**