



Missouri Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Missouri Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 11, 2024, 10 am
In-Person/Virtual Meeting: USD 409 Meeting Room
Atchison, Kansas

Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Michelle Wirth (Chair)	Kansas City, KS	Public Water Supply 3	2025	Yes
Doug Allen (VC)	Sabetha, KS	Public Water Supply 2	2025	No
Joel Mahnken	Leavenworth, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2025	Yes
John Bishop	Atchison, KS	Recreation	2027	Yes
Martin Simon	Atchison, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2025	No
Mike Stec	Atchison, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2027	Yes
Jeffrey Grossenbacher	Bern, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2027	Yes
Chris Griffin	Troy, KS	WRAPs	2025	Yes
Carl Johnson	Leavenworth, KS	Conservation/Environment	2027	Yes
Brett Neibling	Highland, KS	Agriculture 2	2027	No
Dan Bowen	Atchison, KS	At Large Public (2)	2027	Yes
Vacant		Tribal Representative	2027	
Vacant		Agriculture Industry	2027	

Others in attendance:

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Marsha Setzkorn-Meyer	KDA-DOC	Mike Beezhold	KDHE
Kirk Tjelmeland	KWO		

- I) **Welcome/Introduction:** Michelle started the meeting at 10:02 am with Tj reading the list of those in attendance and asking if there were others on the line, there were none.
- II) **Approval of the Agenda:** Michelle asked if everyone had reviewed the agenda and requested a motion to approve it, John moved to approve the agenda and Joel seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously.
- III) **Discussion of December 13th KWA Meeting in Concordia:** Tj led this discussion with the meeting agenda displayed on the screen. Richard Rockel provided the KWA the Surplus Water Report along with a drought update. There was discussion by KWA members about Drought Planning and how reservoir sustainability fits in this along with regionalization between water suppliers. Victoria gave an update on the Annual Report and that some edits will be completed and the report will be ready to print for the legislative visits. There was an update given on the Equus Beds. Victoria gave a report on HB2302 funding and the dollars available for the Technical Assistance and Project Grants providing details about the application process and who can apply. Terry Medley, DWR, gave a

Membership: Michelle Wirth (Chair)-Kansas City, Doug Allen (Vice) – Sabetha, Joel Mahnken - Leavenworth, Chris Griffin - Troy, Carl Johnson -Leavenworth, John Bishop -Atchison, Martin Simon – Atchison, Jeffery Grossenbacher – Bern, Brett Neibling – Highland, Mike Stec – Atchison, Dan Bowen-Atchison, **KWO**
Planner: Kirk Tjelmeland, 785-368-8149; Kirk.Tjelmeland@kwo.ks.gov

report on dam safety, lots of aging structures-lack of reporting-limited cost share are contributing to the decline in our dams across the state. There is a need for more employees to complete dam inspection and enforcement actions. He mentioned the need to increase application fees or registration fees as a way to generate funding. Legislative visits and the January KWA meeting were discussed to end the meeting.

IV) RAC Business:

- a. Review of the October 25th and December 19th meeting notes: Michelle asked if everyone had reviewed the October 25th meeting notes and if there were any edits or corrections. Marsha, from DOC, offered a name correction. Carl moved that the notes be approved and John seconded, this no other discussion they were approved. Michelle asked everyone to review the December 19th notes that were being displayed on the screen for edits or corrections. There were none and John moved to approve the notes as written and Chris seconded. With no other discussion the notes were approved.
- b. MO River Subcommittee Report: Michelle led this discussion with the following points from the recent MRRIC meeting:
 - There are no flow related actions anticipated on the river to support bird habitat this year. Overall, the piping plover is seeming to be stable to increasing in population and habitat is currently considered sufficient
 - There is about a 50/50 chance that a Flow experiment will be conducted on the upper river below Fort Peck this year. This is an attempt to simulate a “natural” hydrograph to attract fish (pallid sturgeon) to areas where spawning might be successful. This will not be noticed below Gavin’s Point
 - Current science does not indicate that this will need to occur on the lower river but that could change pending the results on the upper river experiment. Fish ARE spawning every year on the lower river and there is evidence of natural recruitment with young fish being located all the way in the Mississippi river.
 - The bypass channel around Intake Dam on the upper river went into use last year and they have successfully tracked several pallid sturgeon using it. This will allow fish to reach spawning areas that have a higher likelihood of success and were previously unavailable.
 - IRCs—structures being built to support the interception and growth of young fish. There are two of these scheduled to be built this year on the lower river. However, these are likely to be the last two built. Skepticism and pressure from WRDA bill and CPMR have resulted in the Corps and USFWS consulting to develop a new Biological Opinion that should be available later this year. IRCs are not a significant concern to water supply but can be concerning for Flood risk, navigation, and the dredging industry.
 - An Adaptive management workshop and at least one more plenary are planned to be scheduled this year. They are hoping the new BIOP may be

available in May during the workshop with a plenary coming in the fall/winter.

Michelle also mention that the release from Gavins Point dam has been increased to 15,000 cfs to assist downstream utilities with ice formation during this upcoming cold spell. Mike asked about the cost of an IRC, no one had an estimate but would try and track that down.

- c. Ag Subcommittee Report: Jeff mentioned with fully funding the State Water Plan he would expect to see something tangible from this. He stated there are lots of water issues across the state i.e.: Hays R9 transfer and Quivira wetlands that have significant impacts on surrounding communities. USFWS has delayed their request for water for a year however when they do request water it will affect local communities and ag producers. The drought persists and he has a friend in SW Kansas that hasn't raised a crop for 7 years which eliminates the possibility of crop insurance. He said the rain has helped but ponds are low or dry and people are still hauling water.
- d. Education Subcommittee Report: John didn't have anything but was very interested in what Laura had to say.

V) Education Update – Laura Downey, KACEE: Laura led this discussion with a PowerPoint located [here](#). She gave a little history on Kansas Association for Conservation & Environmental Educators (KACEE) forming in 1969 as a public/private partnership to improve science based environmental education. Pooling resources to have a larger impact is critical to educate the youth at camps, school and even zoos. Laura said they provide numerous workshops across the state to educators on multiple subjects like, Discover a Watershed. KACEE operates with grants and other funding sources including a recent contract with KWO to develop a comprehensive educator guide for teaching about water in Kansas. She said that KACEE is working on the Educator Water Leadership program looking for students or governing officials to be that person of influence. Laura asked the RAC about the most important issues that people should know about the Missouri Region. Several were offered: Water quality, Terrane of the region, Missouri River, River connection to groundwater, Agriculture, Tributaries like Independence Creek, How much the river has changed over time, the cost or value of water, history-first portion of Kansas settled due to the river, importance of shipping. Marsh brought up the importance of engaging with teachers and Laura said they are. Michelle wanted to emphasize a few items mentioned: history, commerce, Missouri River water supply, Glacial Aquifer, water quality problems-nitrates and where does my water come from. Later in the meeting, Dan brought up that students much be given the opportunity to get outside and be part of nature.

Laura mentioned a bit about a group she is part of, Kansans for Conservation coalition that is working towards a dedicated funding source for conservation needs across the state.

VI) RAC Chair Report to KWA meeting in Topeka: Michelle is working on a presentation to the KWA on January 24th and is looking for some photos from RAC members illustrating the region. Items that

should be included in the ppt: a unique region, Missouri River, Education, Agriculture and Glacial Hills. Mike Stec supplied some flooding and low water ice photos of the river.

- VII) RAC member Training – KWO:** Tj ran through the PowerPoint on Regional Advisory Orientation which gives some history and responsibilities of KWO. The ppt also illustrates the locations of KWA members, how they are selected and lists the Ex Officio Members that provide information to the KWA on occasion. One of the main tasks of KWO is to update and implement the Kansas Water Plan which is done with the help of the RAC. The 14 RACs across the state provide valuable input KWO and KWA on water issues in their particular region which are incorporated into the plan and ultimately funded with State Water Plan dollars. RAC input is vital in providing the local connection to where funding is necessary. The RACs are structured with the Chair and Vice Chair serving two-year terms and all members on a four-year term with approximately half of the terms expiring every two years. Meetings are conducted by the Chair using Roberts Rules or Order with a minimum of 4 members being a quorum. These are public meetings and are advertised as such with notes and presentations being made available to the public.
- VIII) Review of RAC Goals – KWO:** Tj displayed a spreadsheet that had the RAC Goals and Action Steps listed with responsible parties and some updates. In the interest of time, Michelle wanted this sent out as homework for RAC members to review. Then be able to provide comments at our next RAC meeting.
- IX) Other Issues/Events or Agency Updates:** Chris mentioned that the Doniphan County Conservation District meeting will be held Monday January 22nd in Troy and invited KWO to participate. Tj said he planned on being there. She also mentioned an event on Tar Spot and sudden death Syndrome for February 9th at the Klinefelter Farm just east of Hiawatha. Marsha, KDA-DOC, wanted to let everyone know that Steve Frost was named as the new Executive Director for the Division of Conservation.
- X) Public comments:** There were none.
- XI) Messages to the KWA:** There were none.
- XII) Upcoming Meetings:**
- a. Legislative Visits January 23rd in Topeka – Michelle and Carl will be participating.
 - b. KWA meeting in Topeka on January 24th – Michelle will be presenting.
 - b. Next Missouri RAC meeting Thursday, March 21st, USD 409 Meeting Room, 10 am has been requested – when approved information will be posted on the KWO calendar.
- XIII) Adjournment of Meeting:** Michelle asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting and John moved and Joel seconded the motion and it was unanimous, 12:02 pm.