

# Neosho Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

## Neosho Regional Advisory Committees Meeting

May 23, 2023 1:30pm

The Nature Conservancy office, Cottonwood Falls

### Neosho Members in Attendance:

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
Wes Fleming (Chair)	Burlington, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2023	Yes
Lisa Suderman (Vice-Chair)	Hillsboro, KS	WRAPS	2023	Yes
Dean Grant	Emporia, KS	Water Assurance District	2023	No
Joe Buchanan	Council Grove, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2021	Yes
Jay Byers	Pittsburg, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2025	No
James Triplett	Pittsburg, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2025	No
Brian Obermeyer	Cottonwood Falls, KS	Conservation/Environment	2023	Yes
Susan Hague	Cedar Point, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2025	No
Dale Strickler	Iola, KS	Agriculture 2	2025	No
Tisha Conard Richardson	Wilsey, KS	At Large Public 2	2023	Yes
VACANT		At Large Public 3	2023	
VACANT		Industry/Commerce 2	2025	
VACANT		Ranching/Grazing	2023	

### Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Angela Anderson	KWO
Eugene Goff	USACE
Doug Cole	KDHE
Mallory Burton	LCCD/CCCD
Joe Large	USACE
Gary Kepley	USACE

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Wes Fleming (Industry/Commerce) at 1:30pm. Wes gave thanks to The Nature Conservancy for providing the meeting location. Wes had RAC members and public attendees introduce themselves.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** Lisa Suderman (WRAPS) moved to approve the agenda. Brian Obermeyer (Conservation/Environment) seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Review of April Neosho RAC Meeting Notes:** The meeting notes from the April 2023 Neosho RAC meeting were reviewed. The meeting notes were approved as read.

- IV. Aquatic Invasive Species Program Update:** Chris Steffen, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Coordinator with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, provided a presentation and update on the state's aquatic species' statuses. (See presentation on the KWO website: <https://kwo.ks.gov/docs/default-source/regional-advisory-committees/neosho-rac/neosho-rac-presentations/2023-may-neosho-rac.pdf>). Chris stated that 35 waterbodies in Kansas are now infested with zebra mussels. While there are no white perch, native to the east coast, in the Neosho region, they are found in other regions. Bighead carp have a unique situation in the Lower Neosho in that there is an isolated population for the past 30 years. He went on to talk about other species such as Silver carp, Black carp, Northern snakehead, Bluecat fish, Rusty crayfish, and Quagga mussels. Chris stated the lower Neosho River has a high diversity of crayfish. He reviewed for the group that Quagga mussels, though not yet found in Kansas, live on soft substrate, such as the silt that is often found in Kansas reservoirs. It has been determined that Zebra mussel veligers were studied leaving the Council Grove Reservoir and were seen in Oklahoma's waters in five days during times of average flows. Finally, there was a 35-pound Alligator gar caught in the Neosho River near Parsons in October of 2021.

Chris Steffen went on to discuss the Agency's AIS Program. They added three positions in September of 2022: 2 full time dealing with carp in the Neosho and Kansas Rivers; 1 focusing on pet trade. The agency will also be doing monitoring, detection, and prevention work at the lakes this summer, including quagga mussel eDNA sampling in Kansas waters. In 2022, they began treating some Eurasian Watermilfoil infestations, including mined land pits in the region.

Due to support from the State Water Plan Fund, the agency was able to establish boat cleaning stations. The stations have wireless hook-ups to enable the agency to know when and how much the tools are used, as well as when the tanks with cleaning solution are empty. Wolf Creek lake has a stationary station. Chris supplied the calendar list for the portable stations (Neosho State Fishing Lake will have a portable available from June to July 1<sup>st</sup>, Council Grove Marina will have one portable from July to September 1, 2023, Yates Center City Lake during that same time period, and Parsons City Lake from September to October 31<sup>st</sup>.)

A lot of conversation was had surrounding the presentation including questions on phragmites in ditches, regenerative agriculture producers using fish as soil enhancers, and cost share/partnership opportunities.

- V. Neosho RAC Goals Implementation timeline:** Angela Anderson (KWO) started the group on the discussion of looking closer at their Goals/Action Plans to think about an implementation timeline. It was noted that in the goals, it mentions "nutrient loading", but nothing specifically mentioned concerning nitrates. The group discussed how diverse the Basin is in regards to traits. The group asked Angela to send the excel spreadsheet out to the group with the next meeting's materials in order to review and think on closer.

The RAC also had numerous questions regarding U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) strategy for reservoir releases. There was conversation with the present USACE personnel surrounding this and streambank stabilization. The group would like more discussion in the future about thinking of the reservoirs as part of a system.

- VI. Questions and Future Issues from RAC members:**

The RAC indicated they would like to tour/visit a Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks decontamination station and the Phosphorus Removal Structure in Marion.

**VII. RAC Messages to the KWA:** There were no messages for the KWA.

**VIII. Agency Input:** Doug Cole (KDHE) thanked the group for their support of Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE). He stated KDHE was currently doing a mineralization study in which they rely upon their Local Environmental Protection Program (LEPP) partners. He will update the RAC as information is made available.

Eugene Goff (USACE) stated it was a good meeting and appreciated the conversation.

Joe Large (USACE) agreed and appreciated the conversation and information on the various carp species.

Angela Anderson (KWO) announced that the RAC membership drive will be starting soon with several of the RAC members' terms expiring June 30, 2023. Any interested individual may submit an application. She also reminded the group that this summer's meeting will include the annual State Water Plan Fund budget recommendations agenda item.

**IX. Public Input:** There was no public input.

**X. Educational/Outreach events within the Region:** Nothing to update.

**XI. Public Meetings in the Region:** The group was made known of an item of potential interest in that Marion County was approved for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) with Farm Service Agency (FSA) for producers with no water. Rural Water District #1 does not allow livestock hook-up with their rural water like other rural water districts do during such emergency statuses. The reasoning given is it will cause the district the need to drill a new water well.

**XII. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 3:23pm.

**XIII. Future Meetings:**

- a. **KWA – Wednesday, June 7, 2023, 8 am-5pm, Dodge City, KS**
- b. **Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas – November 15-16, Manhattan**