

Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

**10 am, Thursday, February 25, 2021
GoTo Meeting and Conference Call**

Members in Attendance:

| Name | City | Category | Term | Present |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------|---------|
| Timothy Driggs (Chair) | Phillipsburg, KS | Public Water Supply (cc) | 2023 | Yes |
| Keli Habiger (Vice-Chair) | Phillipsburg, KS | Fish, Wildlife & Recreation | 2023 | Yes |
| Mike Brzon | Courtland, KS | At Large Public | 2021 | No |
| John Cockerham | Osborne, KS | Conservation/Environment (cc) | 2021 | No |
| Rhonda Coffman | Agenda, KS | At Large Public | 2023 | Yes |
| Raymond Debey | Cawker City, KS | Agriculture (cc) | 2023 | Yes |
| Robbin Dibble | Alton, KS | At Large Public (cc) | 2021 | Yes |
| Donald Hellwig | Solomon, KS | Agriculture | 2021 | Yes |
| Stanley Kats | Prairie View, KS | At Large Public | 2023 | No |
| Terry Nelson | Phillips County, KS | Irrigation West | 2021 | No |
| David Pfizenmaier | Clay Center, KS | At Large Public | 2023 | Yes |
| Arnold Ross | Webber, KS | Irrigation East | 2023 | No |

Others in attendance:

| Name | Agency | Name | Agency |
|--------------|--------|------------------|-----------|
| Josh Olson | KWO | Jennifer Nichols | KDHE |
| Lauren Koons | KWO | Douglas Helmke | KRWA |
| Sara Maguire | KWO | Diane Odle | FPAC NRCS |

- I) **Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am by Chair, Tim Driggs. Self-introductions were given with RAC roll call completed on the conference call line.
- II) **Review of October 20th meeting notes:** The meeting notes were reviewed and approved as written.
- III) **RAC Business:**
 - a. **Rural Water District No. 2 and Cawker City Source Water Protection Plans:** Doug Helmke (KRWA) gave a presentation on source water protection plans for Rural Water District No. 2 (RWD2) and Cawker City, maps available [here](#). Doug stated that he and Ken Cope are source water protection specialists that identify threats and solutions to those threats. Doug outlined the aspects included in a source water protection plan. Doug stated that RWD2 reached out to him for a source water protection plan. Doug showed a map of the source water protection area, which includes four wells southeast of Ottawa County State Park, just outside of the impacts of a former Atlas missile silo site. Doug explained that the plan has measures to address other potential threats, and that the District will promote local public health foundations. Additionally, law enforcement was asked to monitor the site for vandalism, and it was requested that the wellfield be added to existing datasets. Doug then described the Cawker City plan, noting the water system included wells located south of town. Doug mentioned that, when conservation pool or higher is reached at Waconda, the wells are below surface water, but he assumed that surface water is not entering the wells. County departments with mapping responsibilities will add the wells to their datasets. Doug noted fire cisterns, which are unknown to be filled or not, as well as underground storage tanks. Doug also mentioned a smoke test of the public sewer lines. Ray noted that he was familiar with Cawker City,

mentioning that the dike around Cawker City goes to bedrock, and asking if there was any protection from that. Doug responded that they tried to put the lines of the protection area around the full extent of groundwater flow. Doug noted that groundwater flow is north to south, and though he was unsure of the depth of the dike, they tried to encompass the full area of interest for the plan. Ray mentioned that he remembered seeing the installation of the dike. Don noted that there had been a plan to turn the missile silo site into a livable space, though he was unsure if it was still active. Doug responded that there is a mobile home on the site.

- b. Review of 2020 HAB Season:** Jennifer Nichols (KDHE) gave a presentation and update on HAB activity in the Solomon-Republican region in 2020, available [here](#). Jennifer noted that KDHE is trying to hire interns for the summer, and though applications may have closed online, good candidates can still send a resume to her. Jennifer provided an overview and definition of blue-green algae. Jennifer noted that the relationship between cell count and toxicity is not 1:1, which makes monitoring more complicated. Jennifer described the negative side effects of HABs, noting that KDHE tracks when a health impact is reported and tests for HABs. KDHE has a ranking system based on visitation to prioritize sampling when needed. Jennifer noted that nine lakes in the Solomon-Republican region have had documented HAB events and sampling. Jennifer shared the HAB advisories from 2010-2020, noting that HABs are a problem for water supply, tourism, and other interests. Rooks County State Fishing Lake, Webster Reservoir, Norton-Sebelius Reservoir, Agra Lake, and Lovewell Reservoir all had HAB advisories in 2020. Jennifer noted that Kansas has over 70 public water systems that draw from reservoirs and rivers. KDHE has a program for voluntary sampling by public water suppliers to expedite analysis and the advisory designation process. 25 systems participated in 2019. 33 systems participated in 2020. Jennifer mentioned that the EPA doesn't have MCLs for microcystins, but does have health advisories. Jennifer outlined future HAB-related activities, including finding cost-effective solutions. Jennifer explained that the scale and size of reservoirs affects treatment options, as larger waterbodies require higher treatment costs. Additionally, wind moves blooms across shorelines, making them difficult to treat. Jennifer also described research to utilize satellite imagery to improve prediction and detection of HABs. Other projects mentioned included Milford peroxide treatments and carp removal. Jennifer noted that WRAPS projects include targeted BMPs where KDHE offers cost share and incentives in an effort to reduce watershed nutrient inputs. A highboy interseeder has been used for planting cover crops before or close to harvest times, which helps maintain year-round growth. There were some limitations caused by COVID last year, but the service will be available again this year. Jennifer also explained how to do a jar test with an algae sample to determine if it is potentially a HAB: collect a water sample with algae in it and refrigerate it overnight. If the algae floats, it is potentially a HAB. If the algae sink, is likely not toxic. Doug asked if a sonic device to break up algae in Milford was being pursued. Jennifer responded that the technology has been pursued in smaller waterbodies, but not yet in larger ones. Jennifer noted that the technology is still on the table. David noted that the causeway causes a siltation barrier and seem like a HAB breeding ground in Milford. Jennifer mentioned that a "blanket" technology was being considered for implementation, and sonic treatments were previously considered.
- c. Kansas Water Plan Update:** Josh Olson (KWO) gave a brief update on the Kansas Water Plan, explaining that Guiding Principles sections are currently posted on the KWO website for review, available [here](#). Josh noted that regional sections were currently being worked on and shared an example draft regional section for the Neosho. Josh also mentioned that Connie Owen was the new director of the Kansas Water Office and shared a message from Connie to the Solomon-Republican RAC.

- IV) Agency or Public Comments:** The meeting was opened for agency and public comments. There were none.
- V) Upcoming Meetings:**
- a. Kansas Water Authority meeting (TBD– Conference Call)
 - b. Next Solomon-Republican RAC meeting (May – Doodle Poll)
- VI) Adjourn:** Tim adjourned the meeting with no further business at 11:01 am.