

Verdigris Regional Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Verdigris Regional Advisory Committees Meeting May 10, 2023 1:00pm Independence Public Library

Name	City	Category	Term	Present
John Ditmore (Chair)	Coffeyville, KS	Industry/Commerce (cc)	2023	YES
Bob Culbertson (Vice Chair)	New Strawn, KS	Conservation/Environment	2023	YES
Doug Blex	Independence, KS	WRAPS	2023	YES
Ken McNickle	Mound Valley, KS	Public Water Supply	2025	NO
Harold Engle	Madison, KS	Agriculture (cc)	2023	YES
Brian Graff	Neodesha, KS	At Large Public 2	2025	YES
Gary Kelley	Sedan, KS	Conservation/Environment (cc)	2025	YES
John Black	Howard, KS	Agriculture	2023	YES
Ron Smith	Fredonia, KS	Industry/Commerce	2025	YES
Pamela Walker	Altoona, KS	At Large Public (cc)	2025	NO
John Garriss	Independence, KS	Public Water Supply (cc)	2023	YES

Others in attendance:

Name	Agency
Lauren Campbell	KWO
Allen Zylstra	USACE
Doug Cole	KDHE
Eugene Goff	USACE
Nate Westrup	KWO
Derek Haines	WRAPS

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, John Ditmore (Industry/Commerce) at 1:05pm. John took roll call.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** John Black (Agriculture) moved to approve the agenda. Ronald Smith (Industry/Commerce) seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion passed unanimously.
- III. **Review of January 2023 RAC Meeting Notes:** The meeting notes from the January 2022 Neosho and Verdigris joint meeting were reviewed. Bob Culbertson (Conservation/Environment) moved to accept the meeting notes. John Black (Agriculture) seconded the motion. There was no discussion. Motion passed unanimously.
- IV. **Updates**
 - a. **KWA January and April Meetings**
Lauren Campbell (KWO) provided an update from the January 2023 KWA meeting. The two relevant items being an updated contract from Elk City with Coffeyville Resources and the legislative visits. John Ditmore (Chairperson) clarified Coffeyville Resources did not start a new contract for water out of Elk City, but just updated the name on the existing contract after a

reorganization changed the name of the company. Bob Culbertson (Conservation/Environment) discussed his experience with legislative visits with the KWA and items discussed with the legislature such as reservoir debt paydown, reservoir maintenance, water plan funding, and questions with the Ogallala aquifer. John Ditmore gave an historical overview reservoir payments overtime and thanked Bob Culbertson and Rep. Doug Blex for working on these projects.

Lauren Campbell then talked about the April KWA meeting and the KCC abandoned well plugging efforts in the Verdigris. John Ditmore talked about his experience with some discovered wells. Doug Blex (WRAPS) gave his thought on the how wells are prioritized to be plugged. Lauren also briefly explained the Upper Arkansas RAC message that has been passed along to the KWA Ogallala Aquifer subcommittee.

b. Legislature

Lauren Campbell (KWO) provided a brief overview of the Senate Substitute for House Bill 2302, which includes an additional \$35 million into the State Water Plan Fund, creating two new grant programs, and \$52 million carved off for reservoir debt pay down. Doug Blex (WRAPS) gave a historical overview of HB2302 thought process of getting the bill developed. He clarified discussed the investment portion of the bill for reservoir debt and the difference between money coming from the SGF instead of from sales tax carve-off.

Lauren then provided an outline of House Bill 2279 which outlines GMD reporting requirements of financial reports. Doug also gave some background and context to the creation of 2279.

c. Membership Drive

John Ditmore (Chair) made an announcement for the membership drive coming up this summer. He reminded those that have ending terms to consider reapplying if interested or thinking of people that may be interested in joining.

d. Other

Lauren Campbell (KWO) provided an update on the Coffeyville Resources low-head dam and let the RAC members know the letter of interest for PAS funds was about to be submitted after the KWO received the letter of support from Coffeyville Resources.

V. Regional Reservoir Operations and Drought Discussion (KWO)

Lauren Campbell (KWO) provided a brief overview of the drought monitor, reservoir operations, and summer forecast from the drought team meeting. Currently the Verdigris basin is within extreme drought and exceptional drought conditions. Target flows are less than 5% of the historical median, and flows in the lower basin are being primarily supported by releases from Toronto. The summer may bring some local improvements with predicted localize severe weather, but overall the drought will likely continue. John Ditmore (Chair) mentioned how the weather pattern has been changing into more intense precipitation in this region and his experience tracking precipitation and the effect on the drought monitor.

Nate Westrup (KWO) explained that flows in the basin are being maintained out of Toronto but it is a complicated system to make sure to not drain any reservoir system. Toronto is approaching normal pool soon, so management will need to be adjusted.

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John Garriss (Public Water Supply) explained the incoming industry, a soybean mill, is estimating about 600,000 gallons per day (12" line), returning about 40,000 gallons per day, consuming most of their water. There are potential upgrades, but not the money for that yet. The RAC discussed this incoming industry, the products, byproducts, and location. The anticipated timeline is the plant will be up and running by spring of 2024.

VI. RAC Goal Implementation Timeline

John Ditmore (Chair) explained that this agenda item is for prioritizing RAC actions plans to move forward with making progress towards goals and setting a timeline to do so. Dawn Buehler (KWA Chair) has asked all of the RACs to identify the low-hanging fruit of their action plans and to set metrics to report progress to the legislature.

The RAC discussed goal #1: "Increase drought tolerance in the Verdigris basin by optimizing reservoir releases and maintaining storage capacity." John gave a bit of history and context to the creation of this goal. The RAC discussed the reservoir sedimentation and the Coffeyville low-head dam. Eugene Goff (USACE) provided information on WID on Tuttle Creek and offered to get more information on potential sediment passthrough methods for reservoirs in the basin. The RAC then discussed reservoirs and their percentage filled with sediment. Bob Culbertson (Conservation/Environment) provided information on WRAPS efforts for implementing sedimentation BMPs in the region. Nate Westrup (KWO) discussed the operations of the Verdigris and explained that a reallocation study for Elk City Reservoir would not be feasible due to the flooding in 2019 showing that the flood storage in the basin is not sufficient.

Priority Goal #1

Action Step	Priority Level	Phase	Responsibility	Additional Comments
I	High	1	NA	Currently working on this with Coffeyville Resources
II	High	NA	NA	WID pilot project on Tuttle Creek in Spring 2024. Will evaluate more after this project.
III	Medium	Ongoing	WRAPS, NRCS, Conservation Districts	
IV	Complete	Next step is covered in Action Plan 1. CVR intake improvement, then modify MOA operations to make target flows lower.	KWO	The KWO has done about as much as possible for efficiency of releases. The next step is improving the low head dam at CVR.

Priority Goal #2 was not discussed at this time.

Priority Goal #3 will be discussed at a future meeting with a KDWP representative.

Priority Goal #4 is an ongoing, continual process with the development of Kansas Runs on Water

VII. Questions and Future Issues from RAC Members

The RAC would like to have a copy of the rules and regulations of the grants for 2302.

VIII. Educational Events in the Region

Prairie Walk June 1st soil health, plant identify, Neal community center 9:30am.

IX. KWA Messages

No messages.

X. Agency Input

Doug Cole- thanks for interest and support for actions. Exploring possibility of regional PWS study, somewhat similar to mineralization study, LEPP identify local needs. Doug will keep updated.

XI. Public Input

No public input.

XII. Adjournment: Adjourned 3:13pm.

XIII. Future Meetings:

- i. KWA Meeting – June 7, 2023 – Dodge City, KS
- ii. Summer RAC meeting – time and location TBD