

Earl's Corner



Earl Lewis

As the old saying goes, “if you don’t like the weather in Kansas, wait five minutes and it’ll change.” Maybe it hasn’t been only five minutes, but we are certainly in a much different situation in 2019 than we were in 2018. Last year we were dealing with drought, some severe, in the majority of the state. This year we have seen record amounts of rainfall.

In fact, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration confirmed that May 2019 was the wettest month ever recorded in Kansas.

We have seen record reservoir levels, severe flooding and untold damage. If there is a silver lining, it is that for the most part our flood control systems worked about as well as could be expected. Emergency management personnel at the local, state, and federal level were reasonably well coordinated. KWO staff helped with the coordination effort at the state level. In particular, Nate Westrup and Chris Shultz spent many hours, including providing 24-hour support over the Memorial Day weekend, helping to make sure

folks knew what was coming and where resources would do the most good. I can’t thank them, and countless others, enough for the work they have done.

We spend a lot of our planning efforts in Kansas focused on drought, and rightfully so. This flood has however, shown there is a need to revisit our flood management as well. Most of our flood infrastructure was built between the 1950s and early 1980s. It’s still working well, but in some instances, is showing its age. In some areas we have also seen where flood protection is probably not what it should be. Flooding will return, perhaps more frequently than we have currently been planning for. The question is whether we will be more prepared for the next one.



Flooding of Tescott, Kansas

FY2020 State Water Plan Appropriations

During the 2019 session, the Kansas Legislature again acted to include additional funding for water projects. This year, \$4.5 million was included in the State Water Plan Fund in addition to the fee revenue which has been the foundation for the water budget in recent years. To fund the additional appropriations, \$4 million will be transferred from the State General Fund (SGF) and \$500,000 from the Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF).

The funding, included within the annual appropriations bill, follows many of the recommendations put forth by the Kansas Water Authority (KWA) in their recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. The KWA had recommended restoration of the full \$6 million SGF and \$2 million EDIF transfers. The

complete KWA budget recommendations from this last year can be found on page 5 of 2019 Kansas Water Authority Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature which is located on the Kansas Water Office website at www.kwo.ks.gov.

In April, the KWA recommended the agencies develop a budget recommendation for the next fiscal year, again asking for the full SGF and EDIF demand transfers. This process is currently underway, with KWA budget recommendations with plans to have them finalized at the July 30-31 KWA meeting in Goodland, KS.

View FY2020 State Water Plan Appropriations Table on Page 2.

FY2020 State Water Plan Appropriations Cont.

FY2020 State Water Plan Appropriations			
Department of Health and Environment		Department of Agriculture	
Contamination Remediation	\$ 1,088,301	Interstate Water Issues	\$ 490,007
TMDL Initiatives	\$ 278,029	Subbasin Water Resources Management	\$ 608,949
Nonpoint Source Program	\$ 303,208	Water Use	\$ 72,600
Harmful Algae Bloom Pilot	\$ 450,000	Water Resources Cost Share	\$ 2,448,289
Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy	\$ 730,884	Nonpoint Source Pollution Asst.	\$ 1,857,836
Drinking Water Protection Program	\$ 350,000	Aid to Conservation Districts	\$ 2,192,637
TOTAL--KDHE	\$ 3,200,422	Watershed Dam Construction	\$ 550,000
		Water Quality Buffer Initiative	\$ 200,000
Kansas Water Office		Riparian and Wetland Program	\$ 154,024
Assessment and Evaluation	\$ 700,000	Water Transition Assistance Program/CREP	\$ 299,745
MOU - Storage Operations & Maintenance	\$ 410,000	Irrigation Technology	\$ 100,000
Stream Gaging	\$ 423,130	Crop and Livestock Research	\$ 350,000
Technical Assistance to Water Users	\$ 325,000	Streambank Stabilization	\$ 500,000
Vision Education Strategy	\$ 100,000	TOTAL--KDA	\$ 9,824,087
Reservoir and Water Quality Research	\$ 350,000		
Water Tech Farms	\$ 75,000		
Watershed Conservation Practice Imp	\$ 700,000		
Equus Beds Chloride Plume Project	\$ 50,000		

Reorganization & Incorporation of the Vision into the Kansas Water Plan

In January 2015, The Long Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas was completed to provide a long term planning framework to address declines of the High Plains/Ogallala Aquifer, decreasing reservoir water supply storage lost due to sedimentation, as well as other items tied to water conservation, water management, technology & crop varieties, and additional sources of supply. Governor Kelly recognizes the value of the water resources in Kansas and for the economic prosperity of the state and has expressed the desire to initiate a process to help measure implementation progress and make necessary adjustments to help the long-term success of water resource planning efforts within Kansas. With the five year anniversary of the Vision approaching it is an appropriate time to evaluate implementation progress made to this point, provide an opportunity to identify new or emerging water resource issues, update and develop new regional goals and actions plans, and incorporate these items into the Kansas Water Plan.

After initially being unveiled at the April KWA meeting in Abilene and currently underway with the June/July 2019 RAC meetings, this process of reorganization and incorporation of the Vision

into the Kansas Water Plan includes these strategic objectives:

- Evaluation of progress made and proposed changes based on implementation results to date
- Identification of additional issues and/or topics not previously addressed
- Identification of priority regional water resource projects
- Reorganization of Vision and incorporation of action items into the Kansas Water Plan

Included within this process will be the opportunity for local stakeholders to provide input on local water resource issues, including those which might not be accounted for in the current Vision or within the associated regional goals and action plans. Development of new or modifications to existing regional goals and action plans are to be expected from this process, as well as evaluation of the statewide Vision document for reorganization and consolidation purposes. Ultimately, this process will yield a merged Vision/Kansas Water Plan document which will be utilized to help guide the water resource planning efforts in Kansas.

Kansas Flooding Update

Since the end of April, Kansas has seen an influx of rain leading to 66 emergency declarations including 33 federal declarations. Many Kansans have experienced heavy rainfalls which have caused flooding. Many questions have been raised about Kansas water and why Kansas was so greatly impacted by the heavy rains.

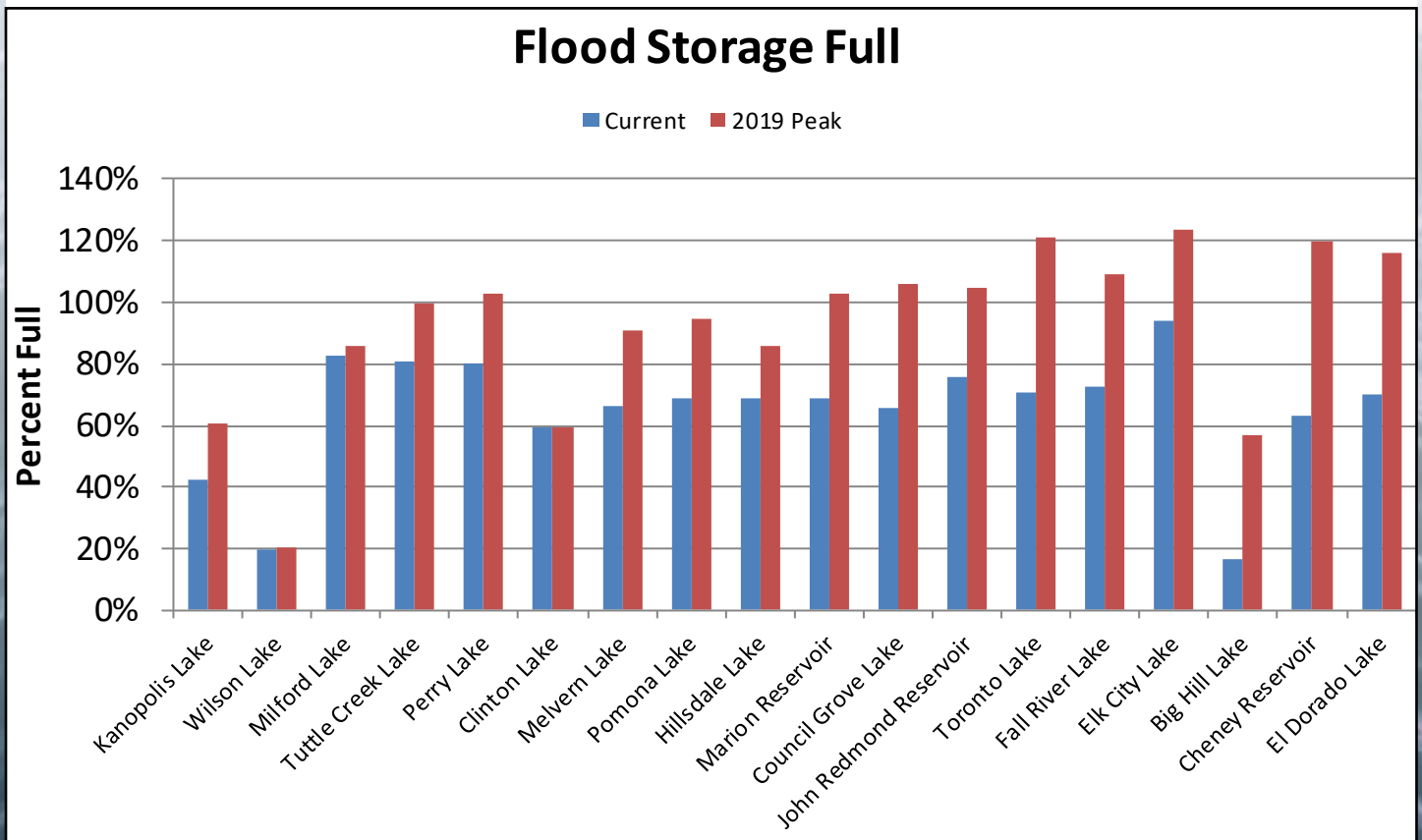
Kansas' rivers and reservoirs are operated as a system which release and store water for water use needs. Our reservoirs have been holding the water from upstream rivers to prevent worsening the already high water conditions in the downstream rivers brought on by spring rains. In accordance with each lake's U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Water Control Manual, each reservoir is restricted in its releases according to the current flows at designated downstream river locations. Every attempt is made to lessen downstream impacts through the controlled releases of water.

Water is being held in our reservoirs to reduce the flood risk over the entire system, including downstream states. However, Kansas reservoirs

can only hold a certain amount of water safely. Precipitation in the watersheds above some of the reservoirs has caused them to fill all of their available flood storage capacity. The reservoirs were built for flood management and when a reservoir is at its full flood storage capacity, it needs to be lowered and water released downstream to protect the integrity of the dam. Some water has been released because some reservoirs were at their full flood storage capacity.

Releases made from the reservoirs are managed according to inflows from rivers and runoff. Currently for some reservoirs releases are being made at a minimum amount to ensure safe project operation and to restore flood control capacity. It is anticipated that high lake levels will continue to persist and effects on downstream locations and will be closely monitored. Once flows downstream lessen, water will be released as quickly and safely as possible.

For more information on flooding in Kansas visit our webpage; <https://www.kwo.ks.gov/reports2/flood-response>



The graph above displays the current flood storage at the indicated reservoir as well as the peak level for 2019



THE WATERFRONT CALENDAR

June

- 24- Kansas Regional Advisory Committee Meeting, Holton, KS
- 27- Missouri Regional Advisory Committee Meeting, Atchison, KS
- 28- Red Hills Regional Advisory Committee Meeting, Medicine Lodge, KS

July

- 02- Solomon-Republican Regional Advisory Committee Meeting, Downs, KS
- 30-31- Kansas Water Authority Meeting, Goodland, KS

August

- 08- Homeland Farm Field Day
- 09- Jacob, Weber, R & E Goering Farms Field Day
- 20- Circle C, Long Farms Field Day
- 23- WaterPACK & ILS Farm Field Day

September

- 04- Northwest Kansas Technical College Field Day
- 05- The Garden City Company-Roth Family, T&O, Harshberger Farms Field Day
- 05- Hatcher Land & Cattle Farm Field Day
- 10- Loess Hills Water Quality Farm Field Day

For comments or questions on The WaterFront please contact Katie Patterson-Ingels at Katie.Ingels@kwo.ks.gov

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Sponsorship opportunities are available for the Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas.

For sponsoring information visit : <https://kwo.ks.gov/newsevents/governor's-water-conference>

We greatly appreciate our generous sponsors and thanks to those who have already committed their support! Sponsorship deadline is July 31st!

(Registration for the conference begins early September)

— **SAVE THE DATE** —
GOVERNORS CONFERENCE ON THE
FUTURE OF WATER IN KANSAS
NOV 7-8, 2019

HYATT REGENCY, 400 W WATERMAN ST, WICHITA, KS 67202

