

Kansas-Lower Republican Basin Advisory Committee
May 22, 2008
Manhattan, Kansas
Meeting Notes

Attendance:

Basin Advisory Committee Members Present

Arnold Ross (Vice Chair) Larry Shannon, Daniel Howell, Charles Johnson, Chris Mammoliti, Laura Calwell

Basin Advisory Committee Members Absent

Carl Nuzman, Shane Munsch, Joel Davidson, Bill Ramsey

Others in Attendance

John Piskac (NRCS), David Barfield (DWR), Katie Tietzort (DWR), Mike Christian (K-State), Morgan Powell (K-State), R.J. Harms (Corps of Engineers), Gary Larsen, Tim Martin, Don Martin, Bob Wiethorn, Earl Lewis (KWO), Marty Burke (KWO)

Welcome and Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Arnold Ross (Vice Chair). Those present provided self-introductions.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved, with the addition of a BAC membership report under BAC business, on a motion by Larry Shannon and seconded by Laura Calwell.

Agency Reports: David Barfield, Chief Engineer of the Division of Water Resources gave a presentation on the status of the Republican River Compact and compliance issues with Colorado and Nebraska. He stated that damages to Kansas from non-compliance with the Compact had been calculated at \$72 million. Barfield described efforts by the upstream states to augment flows in the Republican River.

Earl Lewis, Assistant Director of the Kansas Water Office provided a legislative report including resolutions opposing navigation releases from reservoirs in the KLR basin and encouraging federal agencies to cooperate with the State on lake management. He described an interim study of expanded fees for reservoir storage and an initial allocation of \$500,000 to purchase additional storage in Milford and Perry Reservoirs.

Katie Tietzort (DWR) described an upcoming public hearing on regulation changes and water appropriation permit applications. John Piskac (NRCS) said all WHIP contracts in the area had been approved and additional funding could be available for EQIP. Morgan Powell (K-State) gave a report on the KERP program and encouraged enrollment in upcoming sessions. R.J. Harms (CoE) described proposed lake level management plans for 2009.

Public Comments: There was a question from an agricultural producer on how Kansas intends to get Nebraska to respond to non-compliance with the Republican River Compact. David Barfield responded on efforts by DWR and the Kansas Attorney General's Office. On another question on how any payments to Kansas would be distributed, Barfield said federal law prohibited direct payments to landowners and any revenues would go toward projects to enhance water management.

Review of meeting notes: The February notes were approved on a motion by Larry Shannon, seconded by Charles Johnson. The motion carried.

Status of BAC Membership: Marty Burke reported that Jim Cobler had resigned from the BAC and expressed appreciation for his service. He said the position for “Other Public Water Supplier” would be advertised through July 18 and any applications received would be available for review at the next BAC meeting.

Constituent Group Reports: There were no constituent group contact reports.

Kansas Water Plan Policy Issues and Public Meeting: Earl Lewis (KWO) described proposed new policy sections of the *Kansas Water Plan* as part of the reservoir sustainability initiative. He gave a presentation on the Reservoir Sustainability Initiative including proposed policies for enhanced stream stabilization and riparian/wetland protection and asked the Committee to comment of whether they considered this the right direction.

There was discussion and comment that a systematic approach will be necessary to reduce sedimentation. There were comments that if the State is proposing to encourage conservation easements, there also need to be enhanced participant cost-share and funding for monitoring to ensure compliance. Support was voiced for redesigning the SCC program with enhanced state financial participation.

In response to a question on the projected cost of streambank protection, Earl Lewis cited WRAPS assessments of approximately \$5 million above Kanopolis Reservoir and \$8 million in the Verdigris basin. There was concern that available funding is spread over too many small WRAPS projects. Support was expressed for increased regulatory oversight to address ongoing alteration of riparian areas.

Lewis continued with the proposed policy for surface water management and access to storage. He described the financial mechanisms involved with the water assurance district and the potential benefits of expanding membership beyond municipal and industrial water users.

There were questions from the Committee on the statutory basis of the assurance program, distribution of assurance storage in the basin reservoirs, how new assurance members would participate financially compared to existing members and how assurance storage relates to minimum desirable streamflow.

Basin Specific Activities and Updates: Marty Burke described the timeline for development of basin priority issues for the Kansas-Lower Republican Basin and explained that the watershed restoration and protection issue approved by the KWA in August of 2006 would remain in the basin section of the *Kansas Water Plan*. He said several related basin issues suggested at the previous BAC meeting had been combined and recommended the following additional priority issues.

1. Evaluate surface water management and conservation, including supply and demand analysis, to improve reservoir sustainability and address the availability of adequate public water supply to meet long-term needs in the basin.
2. Channel degradation in the Kansas River, particularly in the lower reaches, threatens water intakes, bridge abutments and other “hard points.” Utilizing ongoing river channel survey

information, strategies to address the causes and effects of bed degradation need to be developed.

There were comments from the committee that the bed degradation issue should be expanded to include biological impacts on habitat diversity and quality and about the need for ongoing support for WRAPS projects.

Messages to the Kansas Water Authority: Chris Mammoliti moved, seconded by Laura Calwell, to send the following message to the Authority: The Kansas Water Office should take a closer look at increasing regulatory oversight and combine with enhanced use of conservation easements and program delivery through WRAPS. The motion carried.

Other Business: The Kansas Water Authority meeting on June 12 and 13 in Atchison was announced. The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be July 24 at the USDA Service Center in Manhattan.

Adjourned: The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m. on a motion by Chris Mammoliti, seconded by Larry Shannon.