



Solomon Basin Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Solomon Basin Advisory Committee
6 p.m., Tuesday, June 8, 2010
KDA- Division of Water Resources
Stockton, Kansas.

DRAFT

Members in Attendance: Raymond DeBey (Chair), William Elliott, Stan Kats, Joe Keith and J.P. Metzler.

Members Absent: John "Bruce" Wyrill III, Dennis Lehman, Dee Blubaugh and Kendal Francis.

Others in Attendance: Dan Wells, KDHE Northwest District Office Administrator, Hays; Mark Shaw, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Webster Reservoir; Teresa Webb, Program Assistant, Solomon RC & D and Coordinator, Waconda WRAPS; David Means, Kansas Department of Agriculture/Division of Water Resources Field Office; and Hank Ernst, Kansas Water Office

BAC Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve the agenda, amended to include Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study, was made, seconded and approved with no dissenting votes.

Agency Reports: Teresa Webb introduced herself as the new coordinator for the Waconda WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies Program). She told the committee that she is working on the group's 9-element plan that, among other components, identifies water resource concerns in the watershed, possible solutions and approximate cost of implementing those plans. A completed plan is a prerequisite for funding requests through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Funding comes from EPA 319 Funds administered by KDHE.

She also described a grant application submitted by the Solomon RC&D that would have far-reaching implications for watershed work. The Solomon Valley RC&D in early June submitted a final grant application to USDA/NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) for development of a system that exploits the frequent overpass of satellite sensors to derive information on tillage practices for the Waconda and Prairie Dog WRAPS areas. The products from the system would be a quarterly assessment map of tillage type (tilled vs. no-till). These products could be made available via a web-based map service to allow rapid access, review and download.

A grant application for the same project will also be submitted to the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) ROSES Terrestrial Hydrology Program. The Solomon RC&D was one of four RC&Ds nationwide chosen by NASA to submit a grant application. NASA, she said, has volumes of information. The agency wanted a local group to verify what's actually in the field. The potential is to be able to differentiate between the type of growing crops.

BAC Business: March 2, 1010 meeting notes approved as presented.

MEMBERS:

RAYMOND DEBEY
Chairperson
Fish & Wildlife
Cawker City, KS

**ORVILLE 'DEE'
BLUBAUGH**
Vice-Chairperson
Recreation
Phillipsburg, KS

DENNIS LEHMANN
Conservation/
Environment
Gaylord, KS

JAMES METZLER
At-Large Public
Minneapolis, KS

JOHN WYRILL, III
Dryland
Kirwin, KS

JOSEPH KEITH
Industry/ Commerce
Penokee, KS

KENDAL FRANCIS
Municipal Public
Water Supply
Beloit, KS

STANLEY KATS
Agriculture
Prairie View, KS

WILLIAM ELLIOTT
At-Large Public
Glade, KS

For questions please
contact: Hank Ernst
Basin Planner
785-296-3185

Hank.ernst@kwo.ks.gov

BAC Member Reports: Bill Elliott of Glade told of his plans to talk up the importance of private well water testing. He showed the committee a water sampling kit that he received from Sherry Koster, County Sanitarian for North Central Kansas, based out of Smith Center at the Smith County Health Department. She serves Phillips, Smith, Rooks, Osborne, Jewell, Mitchell and Republic counties. He told of his plans to speak to the rural water district at a meeting later in June.

KWA Update - May Kansas Water Authority Meeting: J. P. Metzler reported on his attendance at the KWA meeting held in May in Wichita, Kansas. He represented the Solomon BAC at Chairman Ray DeBey's request during the meeting of the state's 12 Basin Advisory Committees.

J.P. thanked Ray and committee members for the chance to attend the meeting. He pointed out that the Solomon River basin is the most diverse basin in the state. It has three reservoirs, ground and surface water irrigation, a Groundwater Management District, and the whole spectrum of land uses dryland and irrigated farming, rangeland and livestock production.

He said that he'd like to see the committee become more involved in the basin, perhaps starting with an educational push. The discussion that followed indicated support for J.P.'s ideas. Chairman Ray DeBey coined the term Basin "cation," short for education. Others took it as cation, for a positively charged basin. Numerous venues were mentioned, from county fairs to conservation district meetings.

Hank Ernst mentioned the youth education resources provided by the Kansas Association of Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE), Ag in the Classroom, and the Kansas Environmental Leadership Program (KELP). He offered to contact them to check on available materials that might be reformatted for adult learners and to see who in the basin took part in any or all of the trainings offered by the education groups.

J.P. told the group about a water education game that would allow participants to learn the impacts of personal choices and outside factors on water resources. A couple of years ago, he participated in a Water & Society course offered at K-State. The course was comprised of students from various disciplines and likewise was taught from multiple professors representing several different departments. The student's final project was to collaboratively create a board game aimed at providing water resources education pertaining to economics, job creation and water use. J.P. felt the game was very beneficial and that a similar format could be utilized as part of Basin "cation." J.P. said he would check with K-State professors on the availability of materials from the Water & Society course and ask for additional feedback regarding educational activities that could be used. Tentative plans included bringing up the idea of BACs' involvement with basin education at the next meeting of the BAC chairs held in conjunction with the KWA meeting Aug. 5-6, 2010 in Paola.

Chair Ray DeBey reminded members that any educational effort would require additional work and initiative.

Nov. 4-5 Kansas Water Authority Meeting in Beloit. Learning of the upcoming KWA meeting in the Solomon basin, BAC committee members asked Hank to extend a welcome on the committee's behalf.

Smoky Hill-Saline Basin Draft Policy: Access to Storage in Kanopolis Reservoir. The 2006 drought that lowered the water level in Kanopolis Reservoir set in motion activity that resulted in a proposed policy to allow formation of a Lower Smoky Hill River Special District. The special district, if approved by the Kansas Legislature, would allow stakeholders (irrigators and others) to own and manage a portion of the storage within the lake. Currently, the State of Kansas has a Water Assurance Program administered by the Kansas Water Office. It's limited to municipal and industrial users.

Total Maximum Daily Loads. Dan Wells, Northwest District Environmental Administrator for the Kansas Department of Environment, told the group of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) interest in establishing numerical standards for nutrients and suspended solids as pollutant sources statewide. KDHE has relied on a narrative approach to identifying and addressing the State of Kansas' 35% nutrient reduction plan for water leaving the state.

Tom Stiles, Chief of the Watershed Planning Section of KDHE's Bureau of Water, in a memo to the BAC, indicated that EPA Region VII understands the context of Kansas' approach. The federal agency is reviewing the state's Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) as to consistency with EPA policy and Kansas Water Quality standards. Approval of the Kansas approach is expected by this fall. Point sources (cities/industry) already have been advised of revised phosphorous discharge levels they must meet.

Legislative, Budget, Communications Issues. Legislative, budget, and Basin Advisory Committee communications outreach efforts were discussed via two teleconference/Glance sessions in late May and early June. While the entire committee member expressed appreciation for the approach, only three were able to listen in. They asked if it would be possible to record the presentations and make them available for open-ended viewing. Hank said he'd let KWO management know of this request.

A copy of the new quarterly newsletter, "The WaterFront," was shown to members. They were also encouraged to go to the KWO web page to see the revised BAC pages. Chairman Ray DeBey offered the first commentary to be posted on the Solomon BAC web page. He asked members to consider what they might say when it's their turn.

Basin Priority Issues: Subbasin Water Management- BAC members indicated their support of the existing priority issues, but asked that information contained in the models for the Upper North Fork and Upper South Fork Solomon River and appropriate technical assistance be made available for further education in the basin. For example, could the model be used to determine the impact of a new water use industry, to substantiate the connection or lack of connection between the surface water and the Ogallala-High Plains aquifer, to help identify High Priority Areas outside of Northwest Kansas GMD 4 boundaries? Can we obtain safe yield at the current usage rate?

Ogallala-High Plains Aquifer Water Level Declines- The cooperative approach to addressing groundwater declines being taken by farmers in GMD4's high priority area known as Sheridan 6 is of interest to the committee members. They asked Hank to follow-up to arrange for GMD #4 manager Wayne Bossert to talk with them about work in Sheridan 6.

Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study- Open houses on the study will be conducted at 30 locations within the entire Missouri River basin. The Congressionally authorized study's objective is to review the project purposes established by the Flood Control Act of 1944.

Programs authorized for Kirwin and Webster under the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program include flood, irrigation, recreation, and fish and wildlife. These are four of the eight potential authorized purposes. The other four are water supply, water quality, navigation, and hydroelectric power generation. Glen Elder's authorized purposes also include water supply and water quality. Upcoming open houses will be held:

July 13, 2010 Holiday Inn Holidome, 605 S.W. Fairlawn, Topeka, Kansas
July 13, 2010 114 Navarre Hall, Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence, Kansas
July 14, 2010 Ramada Inn Conference Center, Salina, Kansas
July 15, Holiday Inn at the Campus, Manhattan, Kansas
August 4, 2010, Sandhills Conference Center at Quality Inns and Suites, North Platte, Nebraska.
August 5, 2010 Double Tree Hotel, Aurora, Colorado

All but the Lawrence meeting begin at 5 p.m. and end by 8 p.m. The Lawrence meeting will begin at 11 a.m.

For more information: www.mraps.org Comments will be accepted through September 20, 2010. They can be e-mailed to: mraps@usace.army.mil or sent to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study, Attn: CENWO-PM-AA, 1616 Capitol Avenue, Suite 9000, Omaha, NE 68102-4901.

Messages to the Kansas Water Authority: The following messages were asked to be forwarded to the Kansas Water Authority:

Message 1: The Solomon Basin Advisory Committee supports the designation of water conservation as a beneficial use.

Message 2: The Solomon Basin Advisory Committee seeks to identify the water deficiencies and surpluses in the Solomon River basin that would help determine actions needed to economically benefit the basin. Information gathered would be used to help focus the development of a water resource education campaign.

Future Meetings: The Kansas Water Authority will meet August 5-6, 2010 in Paola and Nov. 4-5, 2010 in Beloit.

Next Solomon BAC meeting will be at **6 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 21, 2010 at the DWR Field Office in Stockton.**

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