

**Walnut Basin Advisory Committee
Tuesday February 26, 2008
Playa Azul Restaurant, Augusta**

Meeting Notes

Attendance:

Basin Advisory Committee Members Present

Russ Tomevi (Chairman), John Bailey, Robert Wilson, Kurt Bookout, Tom Dixon, Kirk Hayden, Wayne Kachel, David Brazil, Dale Shaffer, Roger Black, Rodger Maechtlen

Others in Attendance

Sandy Koontz (Butler County Conservation District), Betty Criss (KWA), Deb Baker (KWO), Bill Johnson (KCC), Eric Banner (KDHE), Tom Stiles (KDHE), Bruce Falk (DWR)

Welcome and Introductions: Chairman Russ Tomevi opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Deb Baker discussed the basics of Parliamentary Procedure. A handout describing making a motion and other commonly used actions was distributed for future use by BAC members.

Self introductions were made by all in attendance.

The Agenda was approved as presented with no dissenting votes.

Agency Reports

Bill Johnson reviewed the KCC activities summarized in the Status Report prepared by KWO. Due to new home construction around the Flint Hills Golf Club, several old wells had to be replugged due to salt water contamination. This is also known as the Dinkler site.

Bruce Falk reported that the Blatant Recurring Overpumping Program (BRO) administered by DWR, usually targeted to western areas of the state, now includes all counties in the basin. For permits identified to be included in the BRO program, meters have to be installed and correctly read and monthly water use reports are required. These permit holders are subject to future fines if they continue to exceed their permit limits.

Deb Baker presented information provided by Craig Johnson from KDWP because he was unable to attend. While the Zebra mussel (Zm) population declined in El Dorado Reservoir during the drought of 2006 and early 2007, recent veliger counts are up again and it is expected that population numbers will recover to pre-drought conditions. The population will probably continue to fluctuate until carrying capacity is reached. Water quality conditions may also have contributed to the decline. Zms stop reproducing when temperatures drop below 55 degrees. Ice will scour them off of surfaces. Gizzard Shad populations continue to be depressed, which is problematic because they supply food for other fish. The cause of the decline is still unknown. Populations of Zms in Winfield City Lake declined after the flood of 2007 but they quickly repopulated.

Total Maximum Daily Loads Update: Tom Stiles, KDHE Watershed Planning Section, provided an update on TMDLs in the Walnut Basin. A handout was provided summarizing the information discussed. TMDLs are being updated in the Walnut Basin in FY 2008. During the first round of TMDL development in 2002, the main issues were bacteria, eutrophication, and siltation. This has not changed. El Dorado Reservoir still has a high priority TMDL for eutrophication and siltation.

Silver Creek currently has a high priority TMDL for dissolved oxygen. Analysis by KDHE indicates that this may be due to natural causes and asked the committee for advice on whether it should be changed to medium priority.

Tom discussed the change in bacteria sampling to *E. coli* as the indicator organism and reviewed the changed sampling protocol, which is also discussed in the memo included in the mailing materials. Tom reported that sampling is now more in sync with the new procedures and they are better able to make decisions on impairments. The new sampling protocol makes it more difficult to demonstrate impairment by bacteria. The Little Walnut River and Rock Creek still show impairment, so the high priority status TMDLs in these streams should not change. While the high priority status for the Whitewater and Upper Walnut Rivers should also remain, it is expected that they may be delisted in 2012 during the first major exercise to compare the 2002 and 2012 303d lists.

The El Dorado Reservoir data has been reviewed because there are more data available since the TMDL was developed five years ago. New data include a bathymetric survey and SWAT model among others. When the TMDL was written, it didn't reflect effects of Zebra mussels. The clarity in the reservoir has increased dramatically to about 5 ft. deep. Chlorophyll a is also increasing while nutrient levels are decreasing. There is not enough information to rewrite the TMDL so he recommends keeping the high priority status and continuing to monitor. We need to learn more about the Zebra mussel impacts while continuing to try to reduce incoming nutrients.

A new high priority TMDL for eutrophication and siltation is being developed for Winfield City Lake. A new bathymetric survey has been completed and USGS maps were digitized and used to estimate the original capacity. Based on this, the relative siltation has been low but there are elevated phosphorus levels which is reflected in increased chlorophyll a concentrations.

Cowley County State Fishing Lake has no elevated bacteria levels. Lakes are generally effective at killing off bacteria due to their long detention times.

Eric Banner, KDHE Watershed Planning Section, discussed the work he has been doing on dissolved oxygen levels in southeast Kansas streams. A handout on this topic was included in the mailing materials. Based on this discussion, the committee recommended that the TMDL on Silver Creek for dissolved oxygen be changed from high priority to medium priority.

A question was asked about the source of the bacteria contamination on the Lower Walnut River. Because water quality is good during low flows, the source is likely cattle whose manure runs off during rain events as opposed to septic systems. If the source were septic systems, contamination would also be expected to occur during low flows.

There was some discussion about stormwater runoff and requirements that municipalities have in reducing runoff pollution. Stormwater programs usually have components of both mandates and incentives which both work toward reducing loads.

BAC Business

The October meeting notes were approved without dissent.

Deb reviewed the agenda items concerning the sediment management strategy that were included in the mailing materials, the proposed Water Plan Budget, and legislative issues. There was discussion about HB 2638 which is being opposed by the League of Kansas Municipalities on behalf of the smaller cities. It was noted that setting a size limit such as excluding cities with a population below 10,000 might help.

There was discussion about the cost effectiveness of dredging, which has been estimated to cost about \$5,000/acre foot, not including the cost of disposal of the dredged material.

Deb asked for input on the BioEnergy and Water meetings held in late 2007 and early 2008. Suggestions for future meetings included cyanobacteria (causes, effects, management) and water as an industrial development issue in more general terms, beyond the bioenergy topic, including economic development in general. The Walnut Basin will need new sources of surface water to promote much more industrial development. Another topic is problems in implementation of regional water supply strategies and incentives to overcome these. There is currently a lack of cooperation and common vision among users.

BAC Member Reports

David Brazil noted that Cowley County is trying to purchase pictometry that would have important GIS applications. Current photography accessible to a wide audience is needed and it needs to be kept current.

Basin Priority Issues

The committee voted to keep the current priority issues in the plan. These are regional public water supply systems and watershed restoration and protection.

Damage to watershed structures due to catastrophic flooding in the summer of 2007 is an issue. A statewide evaluation of costs is needed to determine the overall costs and secure funding. Districts don't have funds on hand to address all the damages. Most of the damage was to spillways. A self insurance program could be developed to ensure reserve funds for future damages. There is some money available from the NRCS Emergency Watershed Program but none from FEMA.

Hazard Class changes to dams are an issue. Flood inundation maps need to be developed as a tool to address and hopefully prevent downstream development which results in hazard class changes. Cowley County has instituted a notification policy to landowners buying property in inundation zones.

Status of flood control dikes and who is responsible for maintenance.

The state should support efforts to engage the federal government to assist with water supply issues.

Recreational access on the Walnut River should be re-evaluated. Review past efforts to increase access on non-navigable rivers.

Examine the role of rural water districts in contributing to urban sprawl and loss of agricultural land. Who should have access and who shouldn't and who makes these decisions? Fire protection is often lacking and this is one of the main purposes of creation of districts. Aerial mapping would help. Also, some cities are restricted in how and where they can expand due to running up to RWD boundaries. This is related to the current issue for further action in the Walnut Basin Section that suggests studying the impacts of urbanization in the western part of the basin on water quality, public water supply, flooding and related issues. Coordinate basin planning efforts with the Lower Arkansas Basin to assure that these issues are addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Inter-basin water transfers.

Zebra mussel impacts. How to contain the problem.

Bruce Falk noted that the Wellington formation used by the cities of Andover, Augusta and Wellington has some potential problems looming because the status of the aquifer is unknown. The current basin section only mentions alluvial wells. The Wellington formation is also a source of groundwater in the basin. Because there is a rapidly growing population using groundwater in the area, there is potential for overuse. Overuse is difficult to prevent because so little is known about its characteristics which makes it difficult to design management strategies for the future.

Public Comments There were no comments from the public.

Messages to the Kansas Water Authority: There were no messages to the KWA.

Next meeting dates: uesday May 20, Winfield; Tuesday July 22, location TBD; Tuesday September 30, location TBD. All meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. with an optional dinner at 5:30.

At the next meeting, a representative from the Corps of Engineers will be invited to discuss the recently completed El Dorado Reservoir Feasibility Study. Chris Gnau from the Kansas Water Office will be invited to discuss water supply issues in the basin. Committee members can request additional agenda items by calling or emailing Deb Baker at 785-296-0612; dbaker@kwo.state.ks.us.