

**Walnut Basin Advisory Committee
Tuesday May 20, 2008
The Ridge Restaurant, Winfield**

Meeting Notes

Attendance:

Basin Advisory Committee Members Present

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

Basin Advisory Committee Members Absent

Kirk Hayden, Wayne Kachel

Others in Attendance

Sandy Koontz (Butler County Conservation District), Betty Criss (KWA), Deb Baker, Margaret Fast (KWO), Tom Stiles (KDHE), Doug Blex (KAWS), Kacy Bookout, Sydney Bland (Ark City Traveler), Angela Buzard (REAP)

Welcome and Introductions: Chairman Russ Tomevi opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Self introductions were made by all in attendance.

The Agenda was modified to remove the report concerning Lake Level Management Plans since El Dorado Reservoir does not have a current plan.

Agency Reports

There were no agency reports.

Public Comments

Angela Buzard extended an invitation to the Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP) conference that will occur on Thursday May 29th in Hesston.

Constituency Group Reports

There we no constituency group reports.

Contamination/Remediation Report

Deb Baker summarized the annual contamination/remediation report prepared by KDHE. In the Walnut Basin, the major issues concern refineries and heavy metal contamination.

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. A new TMDL for Winfield City Lake has been developed and KDHE recommends it be high priority. After review, no changes have been made to the high priority TMDL for eutrophication and siltation at El Dorado Reservoir. Tom discussed other recommendations and changes which are summarized in the handout. These recommended changes will be incorporated into the Walnut Basin Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy section of the Kansas Water Plan. A public hearing will be scheduled for the Winfield City Lake TMDL in conjunction with the next BAC meeting on July 22 in Winfield. After that they will be submitted to EPA for approval.

BAC Business

The February meeting notes were approved without dissent.

The committee discussed the need to initiate a watershed restoration and protection planning effort for El Dorado Reservoir. Angela Buzard and Sandy Koontz offered assistance in organizing the effort and to establish priorities. The COE Feasibility Study is complete and Marc Masnor will be invited to the next BAC meeting to discuss the results. This study will provide a basis for setting priorities for watershed work. The cost share program offered by the city of Winfield to landowners in the Winfield City Lake watershed to install BMPs was discussed.

An announcement about the American Public Works Association awards to the City of El Dorado for the wetlands installed at the wastewater treatment plant was made. The city won both the Kansas Chapter award and the National Project of the Year award in the two to ten million dollar category.

Surface Water and Sediment Management Policy Issues

Margaret Fast discussed a PowerPoint presentation concerning these policy issues and input from the BAC was requested.

Sediment management Issue

On Grouse/Silver Creek, there was major streambank loss during the 2007 flood. It was discussed that due to the unique circumstances leading to the flood, including steady rainfall over a prolonged period resulting in saturated conditions, the system was overwhelmed and some erosion could not be avoided. It was discussed that streams migrate through their flood plains naturally and you cannot force them to stabilize through artificial means. Streambank stabilization is difficult. BMPs are intended to keep topsoil on the land and to prevent it from eroding. A healthy riparian area helps to hold banks in place during most flow conditions, and also traps sediment from the landscape from entering the stream system. It was discussed that we are facing serious threats from sedimentation in rivers and reservoirs and that more concerted effort should be directed towards stabilizing streambanks as a priority measure to reduce sedimentation. More on the ground activities are needed and quickly. Also, flexibility for landowners is needed to implement stabilization and other activities. It was discussed that a wetland map is needed so we know what we have where and can target our education and

other efforts. Wetlands have management issues. The general public is willing to compensate landowners for taking wetland areas out of production. Significant funding is needed to support the conservation easement protection program and efforts are not happening fast enough to be effective.

Surface water management issue

Yield calculations are not available for El Dorado Reservoir so we don't know what we have available to offer for additional uses. There was discussion about the ability of the state to utilize the water in the sediment pool while the pool is not filled with sediment. The policy paper will be clarified to explain this better.

Basin Priority Issues

Deb discussed the draft basin issues under development. It was agreed that the Watershed Restoration and Protection (WRAPS) issue is on the right track and will be discussed at the KWA meeting in June.

The flood management issue was discussed and a clarification was made that flood control structures could also be used as water supply storage as in multi-purpose lakes. If the basin could face water shortages in the future, we should make multiple uses of water storage reservoirs. Off channel storage was discussed and it was noted that the Equus Beds recharge project is a form of off channel storage.

During discussion of the surface water management issue, it was noted that market forces are driving water supply issues and that water is treated as a commodity rather than a resource. Supply decisions are being made based on the cheapest cost per gallon, not on the most reasonable use of the resource. Infrastructure is being developed without effective planning, with rural water district lines and city lines not coordinated and resources are wasted with this approach. It was discussed that rural water districts in urban areas are counter productive. It was suggested that long range planning should include the concept that effective marketing of water through leveraging of state and federal funding for infrastructure be included.

The recreational use of the Walnut River issue was discussed. The committee recognizes that a change in water law would be required to effectively open the river to more recreational uses and that this issue will be lower priority than the others for development; however the committee wants to keep it open. Economic impacts could be substantial if contiguous areas for access and egress were available. It was noted that about 1 ½ miles of the Walnut River are open to the public near the Kaw reservoir backwaters and that this area is not well utilized. It is likely that longer stretches would be more highly utilized. It was noted that people living in the basin usually have access to water recreation opportunities but that the demand is coming from those outside of the basin who live in larger cities.

The urbanization issue was discussed in detail. There was a desire by the committee to keep this issue separate and not try to cover it within the WRAPS and surface water issues. Deb will continue to develop this issue.

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

Next meeting dates: The next meeting will be Tuesday July 22nd in Winfield, with the TMDL public meeting held before the BAC meeting.

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.