

**Water Vision Education and Public Outreach Coordinating Team**  
**List of Identified Gaps in Water Education in Kansas**  
**March 1, 2016**

January 7, 2016, the first public meeting to gather information on education and public outreach efforts on water education, throughout the state, was held in Manhattan. Fifty-nine stakeholders attended. The Coordinating Team met in February to discuss the findings and identified potential gaps for completion of Phase I Action Items.

At the March 10 meeting, those in attendance will be asked for input on how to fill the identified gaps. If stakeholders believe there are additional gaps, the Coordinating Team asks attendees to bring with them their proposed ideas, to include anticipated costs of implementation.

Information gathered and discussed in March will be utilized to assist the Coordinating Team in their presentation to the Blue Ribbon Task Force in April. A third public meeting is scheduled for May 12, where information from the April meeting will be shared and discussed. In May the Coordinating Team and Working Group will collectively set goals and provide recommendations for the state on water education and public outreach.

The charge to the Blue Ribbon Task Force, along with its member information and contact information for the Coordinating Team, can be found on pages three through five of this document.

The top identified gaps for each subgroup as identified from public input include:

**Community Facilitation/Learning**

- **Incentives** for the public at large to play an active role in education and outreach regarding water. Many will not change existing perceptions or habits without some clearly articulated reason to do so.
- **Need for a market survey** to determine the best way to communicate and educate the general public. Many programs that exist now are reaching a very small percentage of Kansans. A targeted approach is needed, but knowing how and whom to target is unknown.
- **People generally like to learn from one another** and people who are already involved in the community. It was suggested at the first session that a peer to peer network could be an effective way to teach the general public. The comprehensive nature of a program such as this is currently missing, as is the coordinated message.

**K-12 Curriculum and Career and Technical Education**

- **Incentives** to increase educational use of water resources in K-12 education classrooms. This does not necessarily mean dollars, but how we can incentivize teachers to add more water focused activities and information to their current curriculum. Incentives could include: use of contests, recognition, collaborative efforts with post-secondary,

collaborative efforts with state agencies, etc. Funds could be used to provide Professional Development for teachers using the various water resources which currently exist. On a statewide level, this could get into a large amount of money. Statewide efforts for Professional Development could possibly be in the \$250,000 range considering the wide variety of resources and the logistics.

- **Grants** for students in agriculture education for a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). If the goal is for students to develop SAEs or school-based projects related to water issues, there should be a grant to promote them. Offering a \$500 grant to a student to improve or start an SAE related to water is reasonable. If 20 students are involved in the project each year this equates to \$10,000 per year in grants.
- **Crosswalk science standards** to determine how current resources connect to Kansas Science Standards. This would require funding, manpower, and time to complete. It is estimated this would cost at least \$200,000 considering the vast amount of curriculum currently present. It is acknowledged some of this has already been done, but it is a time consuming task.

### **Out-of-Classroom Youth Education**

- **Availability of volunteers** interested in water issues is a concern. Incentives should be identified to attract qualified volunteers to engage in water education areas to include technical assistance.
- **Expressing water as a priority** in all areas of the state and promoting opportunities for enhanced awareness. A central website clearing house should be established for organizations to provide quality resources available to all citizens.
- **Collectively support and shape** education-related goals and initiatives utilizing a consistent main message.

Funding for the above identified gaps in out-of-classroom education may be provided through grants from a variety of organizations and agencies.

### **Media and Public Outreach Campaigns**

- **Overarching media campaign** to convey the importance of water regardless of where one lives in Kansas. A campaign by an outside marketing firm with expertise in social marketing would allow all water agencies, organizations, etc. to have a consistent main message which would be utilized to reach their members and interest groups. A complete brand development project to include: a survey to gauge awareness and needs, creative messaging, creation of messages in identified platforms, piloting the program, and full implementation start to finish is estimated at \$2,000,000. The timeframe is estimated at nine months to one year once a firm is identified to have a statewide media campaign.

- **One stop shop website** for Kansas Water, which would house information from each of the subgroups to include information on: media campaigns, education information, curriculum available for teachers, statewide water supply, research efforts, and information regarding our state's water priorities, etc. would cost \$25,000-75,000. A site which basically houses information would cost \$25,000, whereas an interactive site would cost \$75,000. The listed amounts do not include a budgeted amount past year one for oversight and maintenance.

## **Workforce Development**

- **Partnerships** should be established with post-secondary institutions to identify industry needs for new academic opportunities. There are currently no certifications or degree areas outside of residential/recreational irrigation and municipal use.
- **Identification** of jobs/career areas which exist, but are not well known or are not viewed as water related. Meetings with a variety of stakeholders to identify water related jobs and careers, along with the educational needs to meet industry standards, would be scheduled.
- **Establishment** of a career resource site listings-categorizing water related careers.

## **Blue Ribbon Task Force**

Achieving success in implementing the action items as identified in the vision and the state's priorities of the future will only be possible with long-term, affordable and sustainable funds. For this reason, an immediate priority action item of the Vision called for the establishment of a Blue Ribbon Task Force to develop a balanced, affordable and sustainable method to provide financing for water resource management and protection, including alternatives that utilize public and private partnerships.

Members of the Task Force, listed below, held their first meeting in January. The Task Force will review information on existing revenue sources and funding demands, research natural resource funding systems from other states, and evaluate future funding demands for water resource priorities. The Task Force will prepare a summary report and provide findings or recommendations to the 2017 Kansas Legislature.

Task Force Members:

Randall Allen – Kansas Association of Counties  
 John Bridson – Westar Energy  
 Colin Hansen – Kansas Municipal Utilities  
 Gary Harshberger – Kansas Water Authority  
 Terry Holdren – Kansas Farm Bureau  
 Karma Mason – Kansas Chamber and Kansas Water Authority  
 Erik Sartorius – League of Kansas Municipalities  
 Dennis Schwartz – Kansas Rural Water Association and Kansas Water Authority  
 Matt Teagarden – Kansas Livestock Association

Tom Tunnell – Kansas Grain and Feed Association  
 Senator Jim Denning, Overland Park  
 Senator Tom Hawk, Manhattan  
 Senator Larry Powell, Garden City  
 Representative Jerry Henry, Atchison  
 Representative Steven Johnson, Assaria  
 Representative Sharon Schwartz, Washington  
 Robin Jennison – Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism  
 Jackie McClaskey – Kansas Department of Agriculture  
 Susan Mosier – Kansas Department of Health and Environment  
 Tracy Streeter – Kansas Water Office

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