



GMD3 Board Room, 2009 E. Spruce St. Garden City, 67846
Meeting in person and by Zoom.
March 26th, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Called to Order

President Lollar called to order the March 26th, 2024, Upper Arkansas River Basin Watershed meeting at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was in the GMD3 Board Room.

Welcome and Introductions

Directors Present

Abram Lollar, President, Recreation/Environment Representative
Fred Jones, Vice-President, Municipal Representative
Gina Gigot, Secretary, Groundwater Representative
Hugh Brownlee, Treasurer, At Large
Troy Dumler, Surface Water Representative,
Bill Simshauser, Conservation Representative

Directors Absent with Notice

Sam Hands, Stock/Industrial Representative
Monte Morgan, At Large

Members and others Present in person or by zoom

Kevin Salter	DWR, Division of Water Resources
Patty Stapleton	GMD3
Trevor Ahring	GMD3
Jason Norquest,	GMD3
Keadron Pearson,	KWO, Kansas Water Office
Mark Rude,	GMD3
Libby Albers,	KAWS, Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams
Callen Izatt,	DWR, Division of Water Resources
Michael Beezhold,	KDHE, Watershed Management
Scott Satterthwaite	KDHE, Watershed Management
Keadron Pearson,	KWO, Kansas Water Office
Johnathan Aguilar,	KSU, Kansas State University
Emily Vsetecka,	Sunflower Electric Power Corporation

Approve Agenda

President Lollar asked to consider the agenda for the March 26th, 2024, meeting. [Bill Simshauser made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Gina Gigot seconded. The motion passed.](#)

Approval of Minutes

President Lollar drew the board's attention to the February 13th, 2024, minutes. Patty reviewed a couple of changes that were brought to her before the meeting. [Fred Jones moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Gina Gigot seconded. The motion passed.](#)

Financial Report

President Lollar drew the board's attention to the Financial Reports. Hugh Brownlee noted the balance in the checking account. No bills are due. [Fred Jones moved to approve the Financials as presented. Gina Gigot seconded. The motion passed.](#)

Watershed Restoration Plan
Overview of proposed projects and strategies-Trevor Ahring

Proposed projects and strategies.

1. Reduction of Groundwater Pumping

- Support measures to reduce groundwater use and improve water use efficiency within or adjacent to the watershed boundary.
- The long-term goal of groundwater use reductions is to stabilize groundwater declines.
- Projects that conserve water while expanding on other existing conservation or benefiting the environment should be prioritized.
- Water Conservation Areas
- LEMA's
- Cost Share for Technology Improvements
- Decision Support Tools

Discussion occurred amongst the group on prior appropriation. The final agreement was to re-word bullet one to read: "Support to stabilize or improve groundwater use and improve water use efficiency within or adjacent to the watershed boundary. Also, change the title to "Stabilizations and/or improvement of the aquifer."

2. Improved Efficiency of Surface Water Irrigation

- Watershed ditches do not receive sufficient irrigation flow, so groundwater is used to supplement.
- Improvements to the efficiency of surface water deliveries advance the ability of the ditch systems to share the river and reduce groundwater demand.
- Lining irrigation ditches to prevent seepage, conversion of open ditch to pipe, conversion of flood irrigation to center pivot, and implementing farming practices that save water.
- WaterSMART WEEG
 - Improve water use efficiency and create renewable energy.
 - Objective to invite eligible applicants to leverage their money and resources by cost sharing with Reclamation on projects that seek to conserve and use water more efficiently, increase the production of renewable energy, mitigate conflict risk in areas with a high risk of future water conflict; enable farmers to make additional on-farm improvements in the future, including improvements that may be eligible for NRCS funding.
 - Award maximums are \$5,000,000, but most projects that do not generate power should apply to the \$500,000 funding group.
- WaterSMART Small Scale Water Efficiency Projects,
 - Similar to the WEEG program, but for projects that don't cost as much.
 - Max grant of \$100,000. The total project cannot exceed \$200,000.
- KDHE Canal-Lining Program
 - Within the watershed to reduce the infiltration of poor-quality water near domestic and municipal wells.
- Build Kansas Fund
 - Provides matching dollars for projects that successfully apply for Federal grants under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

3. Improvement or Mitigation of Poor-Quality Water

- Projects that improve or mitigate poor water quality within the watershed will be a priority of the Upper Arkansas River Watershed Group.
- NWQI
 - KDHE successfully received the grant, and GMD3 is waiting for a contract.
 - Implementation grant will direct targeted funding to water users within the watershed to improve efficiencies and soil health and reduce the infiltration of poor quality water from the surface.

Scott suggested a wording change instead: "reduce the infiltration of poor-quality water." Maybe better wording is, "increase the ability to dilute the groundwater with better quality water."

- City of Deerfield
 - Seeking funding to evaluate four alternatives and be ready for construction when they cannot meet drinking water standards.

4. Addressing the Desertification of the Sand Hills.

- Programs that address the desertification of the sand hills are a priority of the watershed group.
- CREP
 - Partnership between the Division of Conservation and NRCS, with cost-share support from GMD3.
 - Some irrigators have successfully used the program to establish CRP grasses, but some producers have failed to establish grass successfully.
 - Not all lost irrigation acreage has enrolled in CREP.
- Alternative to CREP
 - Allow the producer to keep a reduced water right.
 - Provide competitive payment to producers.
 - Irrigators could obtain a conservation easement to receive a tax benefit and ensure the land does not return to irrigation.

Trevor advised his goal is to get a full document to the group by the annual meeting.

Old Business

Annual Meeting

Trevor reminded everyone that the First Annual Meeting will be held on April 17th at The Clarion. The event will begin at 6 p.m. with a buffet that includes chicken fried steak and roast top loin, followed by the Board of Directors voting instructions. Hannas Zacharias will be the guest speaker, and the election results will be announced during his intermission.

New Business

There was no new business to bring to the table.

Public Comment and Announcements

Keadron Pearson with the Kansas Water Office announced some important dates:

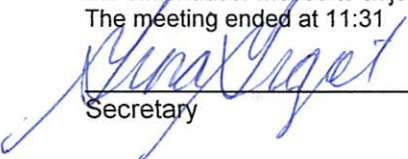
- ✓ WISE Tour will be on May 29th in the GMD1 Footprint.
- ✓ Upper Ark RAC will meet tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. at the Finnup Foundation.
- ✓ Cimarron RAC will meet at 1 on Thursday, in Hugoton.
- ✓ ARKWIN is open to the public and will be held April 18th and 19th. A social will be held at Hidden Trail Brewery on the evening of the 18th.


Fred Jones announced that The City of Garden City has been working with other communities to try to form a Chapter of the "Water Reuse Association." Forming this State Chapter will help determine best practices, ensure we have good projects that do not impact water supplies, and get regulatory officials involved.

Adjournment

Bill Simshauser moved to adjourn; Gina Gigot seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting ended at 11:31


Secretary


Recording Secretary

Projects Roundtable

- Fishpond on Buffalo Reserve
- Public Outreach/Education
- Wildwood Park
- Terrace to refill Hamilton County Lake or use Ft. Aubrey Ditch Right
- Removal of tamarisk
- Saltcedar removal from Dodge City to John Martin (Ducks CIG Proposal)
- City of Garden City feasibility study for water reuse
- Playa Restoration Program (Ducks)
- Repairing breach upstream of Garden City
- Rebates for municipal water conservation
- Creating Recreational Opportunities
- Restore Fort Aubrey / Spring Creek Lake east of Syracuse
- Assess / Evaluate strategic ditch lining to improve delivery and confine spread
- Evaluation of produced Water reuse
- Augmenting Basin Water Supply
- Groundwater Conservation
- Managed Aquifer Recharge
- Xeroscape Reduce lawn water use
- Deficit irrigation on crops
- Saline Water Management
- Livestock Water Conservation
- Expansion of BDA around tributaries
- Soil Health
- Infiltration
- NWQI

Mission Statement

To improve and protect the quality and quantity of the Arkansas River and connected aquifers for the sustainability of life in the basin.

Review of timeline for milestones

It appears that the group is ahead of schedule.

- ✓ June 2022: kick-off meeting, allowing stakeholders to be acquainted with each other. (completed)
- ✓ August 2022: advertise the group to potential members. (on-going)
- ✓ October 2022: Develop a Mission Statement. (completed)
- ✓ January 2023: Draft Bylaws and articles of incorporation (completed)
- ✓ February 2023: Submit 270 Day report to the Bureau of Reclamation (completed)
- ✓ April 2023: Finalize Bylaws and articles of incorporation. (Articles of Incorporation completed)
- ✓ June 2023: Select a coordinator/facilitator in accordance with the adopted Bylaws
- August 2022 through June 2024: Discuss project concepts and the watershed restoration plan.
- June 2024: Pass a final watershed restoration plan, including a prioritized list of projects and goals for the future.