

UPPER ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN WATERSHED GROUP

GMD3 Board Room, 2009 E. Spruce St. Garden City, 67846

Meeting in person and by Zoom.

August 15, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Called to Order

President Lollar called to order the August 15, 2023, Upper Arkansas River Basin Watershed meeting at 10:02 a.m. The meeting was in the GMD3 Board Room.

Welcome and Introductions

Directors Present

Abram Lollar, President, Recreation/Environment Representative

Sam Hands, Stock/Industrial Representative

Fred Jones, Vice-President, Municipal Representative

Directors Absent with Notice

Gina Gigot, Secretary, Groundwater Representative

Hugh Brownlee, Treasurer, At Large

Troy Dumler, Surface Water Representative,

Bill Simshauser, Conservation Representative

Monte Morgan, At Large

Members and others Present

Callen Izatt DWR

Kevin Salter DWR

Kurtis Meier District Wildlife Biologist-Garden City, KS

Marisela Castro Bureau of Reclamation

Mark Boos Producer

Mark Rude SW KS GMD3, Finney County Drainage District #2

Patty Stapleton SW KS GMD3

Trevor Ahring SW KS GMD3

Sam Hands Producer

Michael Beezhold KDHE

President Lollar noted that due to a lack of quorum, the approval of Bylaws or any other business will not occur.

Approve Agenda

President Lollar noted that we will review the agenda due to a lack of quorum.

Approval of Minutes

President Lollar asked Trevor Ahring to review the July 11, 2023, board meeting minutes.

Presentations

WaterSMART Planning and Project Design Grants-Trevor Ahring

Trevor Ahring reviewed several opportunities the Watershed group could pursue:

- **Water Strategy Grants** are for projects to conduct planning to support water supply and management solutions (domestic water supply projects for disadvantaged communities, water conservation, and drought resilience)

Leverage money and resources by cost sharing with Reclamation for initial or early-stage planning activities, including outreach and collaboration, technical analyses and assessments, and project scoping activities to identify and prioritize potential implementation projects.

Develop a strategy document for water supply projects, water marketing activities, water management projects, and activities and river restoration activities, including planning projects to restore a natural feature or to use a nature-based feature to reduce water supply/demand imbalances or the risk of drought or flooding.

- **Project Design Grants** are for projects to conduct project-specific design for projects to improve water management or water supplies.

Leverage money and resources by sharing the final design of medium and large-scale groundwater supply construction, water management construction, and restoration projects with Reclamation.

Excluding design and permitting costs, the medium and large-scale projects have construction/restoration costs of at least \$250,000. Applicants should have performed some general planning work and preliminary studies. The grant should result in a final design package at approximately a 60% design level.

Drought Contingency Planning is a proposal to develop or update a new Drought Contingency Plan. It would provide funding for planning to increase water reliability and improve water management through expanded technologies and modeling capabilities.

Proposed projects must be divided into two phases:

Phase 1: must include the establishment of a Drought Planning Task Force, the development of a Detailed Work Plan, and the development of a Communication and Outreach Plan.

Phase 2: After review and acceptance of the Detailed Work Plan by the Reclamation, the planning lead designated by the applicant will develop the plan, including the required Drought Contingency Plan elements.

Awards can be up to \$400,000. The Water Strategy Grant and the Project Design Grant projects, with the primary purpose of providing domestic water supplies to disadvantaged communities or households (that do not have reliable access to domestic water supplies), do not require matching funds. Water Strategy Grant and Project Design Grant projects that can demonstrate ecological benefits by increasing water supply reliability for ecological values and are developed as part of a collaborative planning process that includes consideration of ecological values require a 25% match. Projects without a demonstration of ecological benefit require a 50% match.

The evaluation criteria are made up of a point system:

Evaluation Criteria

- **Project benefits....35 points**
 - Identify the threats to water supply, water quality, and river-based ecosystem or watershed health within the geographic area.
 - Describe how threats impact specific water users or sectors in the geographic area.
 - Describe how the planning or project design will help address the threats to water supplies and uses.
- **Inclusion of stakeholders, stakeholder support, and previous planning efforts....25 points**
 - Will the project help meet the water supply needs of a large geographic area, region, or watershed?
 - Describe if an existing water planning effort supports the project.
 - Identify stakeholders in the area who have committed to supporting the planning process.
 - Additional points will be awarded to design projects that are collaborative and inclusive of stakeholder input.

- Ability to meet program requirements....20 points.
 - Describe how the project addresses the program-specific requirements
 - Describe the approach that will be done to meet the applicable program components and requirements.
 - Explanation of project cost
 - Describe how prior planning work or existing programs will be incorporated
 - Identify staff with appropriate technical expertise and describe their qualifications.
- Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities....15 points.
 - Describe how the project will reduce climate pollution: increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, protect public health, and conserve our lands, waters, and biodiversity.
 - Explain how the project benefits those disadvantaged or underserved communities using the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Interactive Climate and Economic Justice Screening tool.
- Nexus to Reclamation....5 points (these points are hard to get out here in Western KS)
 - Is there a Reclamation project, facility, or activity within the planning area?
 - Is the area in the same basin or a Reclamation project, facility, or activity?
 - How will this project benefit a basin where a Reclamation project, facility, or activity is located?
 - Does the applicant have a water service, repayment, or O&M contract with Reclamation?
 - Does the applicant receive reclamation water?

October 17, 2023, is the first due date, with an anticipated award on July 1, 2024, and anticipated project completion by June 20, 2027

April 2, 2024, is the second due date, with an anticipated award on January 2, 2025, and anticipated project completion by December 31, 2028.

Old Business

Adoption of Bylaws

The consensus of those present was to hold a special meeting with the board to proceed with the Adoption of the Bylaws.

Review of May Colorado/Kansas Water Quality Summit

Trevor reviewed the agenda presented at the Colorado/Kansas Water Quality Summit. The next meeting will be in Kansas.

New Business

Membership Process

The past consensus of the group was not to charge dues the first year but keep it a possibility for years after. The group reviewed the membership card. President Lollar suggested adding a donation line. Also, put a link on the web site to complete a membership card.

Preliminary Budget

Trevor reviewed the future budget.

501(c)3..... \$600.00

Annual Meeting

Meal\$3,000.00

Website Maintenance\$3,168.00

Subtotal.....\$6768.00

Other budget items to consider would be a Facilitator for the group (approximately \$6,000 a year) along with Education and outreach, Scholarships, and a possible audit.

Suggestions from the group were made to look at self-managed websites, such as WIXX or SQUARESPACE.

Fundraising

Fundraising activities were brought up for discussion.

- Hidden Trail Brewery: if ok with the group, Trevor will visit with them this week to hear options.
- Tank Float down the River. This should be an event for next year. Visit with Friends of KAW; they have done floats and could provide guidance.
- Trap/Turkey Shoot.

Adjournment

The next meeting will be on September 12. at 10:00 a.m. Trevor will send out the red-line bylaws from the attorney. Today and set up a date to pass them.

The meeting ended at 11:11 a.m.

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

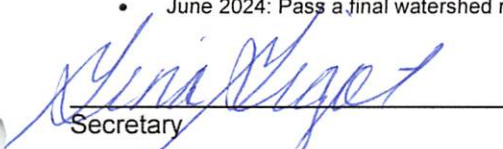
Mission Statement

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.


Secretary


Recording Secretary