



UPPER ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN WATERSHED GROUP

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

Meeting in person and by Zoom.

July 11, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Attendees:

Trevor Ahring	GMD3
Joscelyn Monarrez	GMD3
Gina Gigot	Producer
Keadron Pearson	Kansas Water Office
Emily Vsetecka	Sunflower Electric Power Corporation
Hugh Brownlee	Producer
Fred Jones	Garden City Water Resource Manager, Upper Arkansas RAC member
Troy Dumler	Garden City Company, Great Eastern Ditch & Ark River Compact Rep.
Kevin Salter	DWR
Callen Izatt	DWR
Sam Hands	Producer
Kurtis Meyers	District Wildlife Biologist-Garden City, KS
Brian Ellis	Scoular
Bill Simshauser	Upper Ark RAC/KS Association of Conservation Districts
Scott Satterthwaite	Watershed Management, KDHE
Michael Beezhold	Watershed Management, KDHE

Reviewed notes from June Meeting

Trevor and the group reviewed notes from the June meeting.

Election of Officers.

Bill Simshauser **nominated** Abe Lollar for **President**. Hugh Brownlee **seconded**.

Abe Lollar is **President** of the **Upper Arkansas River Basin Watershed Group**.

Bill Simshauser **nominated** Fred Jones for **Vice President**. Troy Dumler **seconded**.

Fred Jones is **Vice President** of the **Upper Arkansas River Basin Watershed Group**.

Troy Dumler **nominated** Hugh Brownlee for **Treasurer**. Bill Simshauser **seconded**.

Hugh Brownlee is **Treasurer** of the **Upper Arkansas River Basin Watershed Group**.

Keadron Pearson **nominated** Gina Gigot for **Secretary**. Troy Dumler **seconded**.

Gina Gigot is the **Secretary** of the **Upper Arkansas River Basin Watershed Group**.

Presentations

Wildlife and Water:

Alternative Use and Outdoor Recreation Opportunities in the Upper Ark River Basin by Kurtis Meier

Kurtis Meier is a district biologist for Kansas Wildlife and Parks who generates permission for the public to access private lands during specific seasons in Kansas through contracts. Currently, there are approximately 1.2 million acres tied to these contracts. Landowners receive an upfront payment. They accept annual payments depending on the contract. He went over various recreational activities throughout the Upper Ark River Basin. Kansas primarily comprises privately-owned land, making up 98% of the State. The largest continuous public land is the Cimmaron Grasslands, which are 110,000 acres. Kurtis explained different areas for recreational activities. These include Walk-In Hunting Areas, Walk-In Fishing Areas, Wildlife Areas & State Fishing Lake Arkansas River System, Private Lands, National Grasslands: Cimmaron grasslands, and State, Country, & ACE Reservoirs. Kurtis briefly touched on Walk-In Fishing Areas, which are private lands open to the public for fishing access rather than hunting. Kurtis discussed hunting regulations regarding different birds. People must apply for a turkey tag but explained that landowners with certain birds could be exempt from needing to apply for these tags. He reviewed different hunting regulations and species, explaining the different tags and their purposes. Kansas is one of two states that allow tours of native range bison. The State of Kansas owns three active herds; however, the State cut back the Bison due to dryness. The State sent 30 animals to auction in October and another ten in the next round in November. The current herd standing is 21-22. He reiterated that VPAs are not just for hiking access; HACH and VPAs are essentially the same programs with different names due to long-term funding cycles. Kansas Wildlife and Parks is self-funded through fees and seek federal grants and other alternative funding arrangements to gather the rest of the funds for their work.

Old Business

Adoption of Bylaws

Trevor Ahring suggested going through the bylaws again for new faces in attendance. "How do we want to fund ourselves?" was a question that arose during the review of bylaws. Kevin Salter asked what budget was in mind. Trevor responded with a \$10,000 approximate budget. The group discussed fundraising methods such as dues, fundraisers, and grant opportunities. Fundraising seemed to be the most heavily favored option. Looking for a fundraiser with an impact would be essential. The group can pursue Federal and State grants once incorporation is complete. Trevor mentioned he doesn't believe grant funds could be used for fundraising because they do not fall in the category. While reviewing Section III.b. Trevor suggested requiring a director to represent "recreation/environment" rather than "recreation" to make it easier to find eligible directors. Trevor asked the group to review the bylaws between now and next month's meeting and communicate with him regarding any alterations.

Update on Stateline Groundwater Gage

Since installation in 2014, the trend has been very flat at 800 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$; conductivity began to spike in 2019 at a steep rate and is currently greater than 1400 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$. There is insufficient data to explain this trend. GMD3 reached out to USGS to see if they had any more options for information. They will put together a proposal of approximate costs for another well in both Kansas and Colorado. Kevin Salter mentioned a new well put in by the State in Syracuse. Flows between Kendall and Syracuse lag. There has not been good documentation of this. Despite the inflow of rain, groundwater changes happen slowly, and their potential impact on the water is still difficult to tell.

Watershed Restoration Plan Update

Trevor and Joscelyn have been setting up meetings with different cities about their local water issues. They had a meeting with Fred Jones over a month ago to discuss some of the water concerns in Garden City. They are communicating with Lakin about visiting their water treatment facility soon.

New Business

Scott Satterthwaite wanted to include the group as partners for NRCS funding for incentives for implementing practices. He talked to Johnathan Aguilar and mentioned doing research in this area. A communication plan is necessary; Scott wants to incorporate farmers in EQIP programs and intends to appeal to water quality resource concerns. He sent out a spreadsheet to forward to the appropriate audience. Brian Ellis with Scoular reached out to Scott for partnership ideas to encourage adopting soil health practices.

Projects Roundtable

Adjournment

The meeting ended at noon.


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

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.