



# Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams

## Lower Kansas WRAPS

### December 4, 2007 Meeting Summary

The December 2007 meeting for the Lower Kansas WRAPS was well attended, with approximately 25 participants including state and federal agencies, consultants, KAWS personnel, and concerned citizens. A list of attendees is included at the end of this summary. Greg Foley, executive director of the State Conservation Commission as well as Bob Reschke, Riparian and Wetland Coordinator, also attended. The meeting was held at the Bass Pro Shop in Olathe from 9 am til noon, followed by lunch at Islamorada Restaurant on-site.

The meeting began with introductions, an overview of the meeting, and a short summary of the November kick-off meeting. Then, **Tom Schrempp of the Johnson County Water District No. 1** gave a talk on the challenges of a city water district. Perhaps the highlight of the talk were the photos and discussion on the emergency repairs of the old weir and construction of the new coffer cell dam on the Kansas River below I-435 to ensure a constant water supply for District No. 1. Keeping ahead of the continuing degradation of the River channel is quite a challenge. Tom also briefly discussed the challenges of low flow in the River due to drought and winter ice, the occurrence of Zebra mussels and Asian carp in the watershed, and waste water discharges above water intake structures. KAWS hopes to put Tom's presentation on its website or at least provide a link to the talk.

Laura Calwell, the Kansas Riverkeeper, handed out a flyer requesting urgent action on Westar Energy's request from the Corps discharging waste water into the Kansas River from a new scrubber system at its Jefferies Energy Plant west of Topeka.

The meeting then moved into a discussion on the issues and challenges facing the Lower Kansas River Watershed. A list of issues was formulated with discussion. In order of entry, the list included

1. Recruitment of Stakeholder Leadership Team
2. Role of urban municipalities in the WRAPS process
3. Livestock impacts on streams during low flow events
4. Stream health—sedimentation, degradation, water quality
5. Public education and involvement to address issues
6. Watershed management of the urban: rural interface
  - a. Economics, environmental protection, planning  
(e.g., in Wyandotte County, new developments being put on septic systems due to lack of infrastructure)
7. Sustainable growth—location, causes & effects, priorities; WRAPS assessment phase
8. Water conservation
  - a. Education, grants, infrastructure for efficient water use, MARC
9. Political involvement—stakeholder involvement, US Army Corps, consulting firms
10. Bed degradation (Kansas River)
  - a. Kansas Water Office conducting system-wide data and survey
11. City, local, and county level involvement
  - a. How to implement plans, recommendations, etc.
12. Universities, colleges—education, stormwater innovation
  - a. County extension involvement, NEMO (non-point education for municipal officials)

A number of people agreed that the biggest issue, one that is an on-going challenge for both KDHE and KAWS, is recruitment and maintenance of the Stakeholder Leadership Team or SLT. Given this challenge, it may be prudent to have a separate meeting (or two) on the formation of SLTs.

The discussion moved into WRAPS funding, prompted by Greg Foley's questions on how WRAPS funding works, how does the Lower KS WRAPS get \$ when it hasn't even started, etc. He added that we are at a crossroads with WRAPS. It appears the concern is how to adequately fund the WRAPS programs when there is limited money for such a purpose. Do you give a little of money to everyone to keep the groups around or appropriate the funds to one or two groups in most need? Also, how is it determined which technical service provider gets what funding. Certainly, prioritization is the key. The budget for the Lower KS WRAPS was developed from previous budgets for the Upper Wakarusa and Mid-Kansas WRAPS groups. A question was asked on how funding is split between the four phases of WRAPS—development, planning, assessment, and implementation. John Bond responded that the majority (50% or more) of funds would go into implementation, with approximately 10%, 25%, and 15% going to the other phases, respectively. Others seemed to agree with that response. Another person indicated that appropriation would depend on the source and target of funding. Someone added that as WRAPS matures, there is a need to look at all sources of funds (beyond current funding from the EPA, KDHE, KWO, and SCC). Discussion continued, with Bob Beilfuss responding that WRAPS applied well in rural areas, but that the current WRAPS can't address issues of the HUC 8 level. This would involve a long-term process (10 to 20 years), with involvement of a larger, diverse, and dedicated group (with access to more funding). He or someone else added the need for outreach to more of the players (e.g., US Army Corps of Engineers) and the question on how to get them to these meetings. Additional funding, political involvement, and outreach are critical for such a complex and diverse watershed like that of the Lower Kansas River.

The discussions moved into the next topic—upcoming and proposed [WRAPS] projects. A number of non-WRAPS projects were mentioned including the Corps/KWO's identification of a potential mitigation site along the river and Turkey Creek SAMP. The purpose of this topic on WRAPS projects was to identify a project or two to use the \$15,000 budgeted in 2008. John Bond indicated that it was important to get some demo projects identified for funding soon. Someone asked how the potential projects were judged and prioritized, with Jerry Jost indicating criteria would be important for accuracy, fairness, and all. John Bond indicated there is a set of criteria and that he would send it along to everyone.

Someone added it may be worth going beyond WRAPS funding and talk with agencies about other possibilities (given the size of the watershed, etc.). Typically this process involves a formal request to KDHE for 319b funding, to KWO for state funding, and SCC for additional funding will be necessary. Tom Stiles mentioned some on-going studies of KDHE including livestock demo projects and wastewater and stormwater assessments at Mill Creek, above Lake Olathe, and Gardner Lake. Cheri Miller was curious about the pharmaceutical study at Wyandotte Lake and requested information from Tom Stiles.

Frank was urged to find out the existing WRAPS projects in the Lower Kansas Watershed by requesting this information from the KDHE, KWO, and SCC so that on-going projects can be documented and future requests can be prioritized accordingly.

The meeting adjourned around 2 pm after discussions concerning the time and location of the next meeting. Susan Garrett agreed to look at the availability of the fairgrounds in Tonganoxie on January 11, 15, and 17, in 2008.