

Minutes of the July 15, 2009 Meeting of the Lower Kansas WRAPS
Leavenworth County Extension Office. 500 Eisenhower Road, Leavenworth, KS

Present: SLT Chair Mark Johnson, Coordinator Rick Davis, John Bond, Amanda Reed, Will Boyer, Steve Schaff, Ginny Moore, Heather Schmidt, Cheri Miller, Susan Garrett, Jerry Wooley, Susan Iversen

The meeting was called to order at 9:12 a.m. Everyone introduced themselves.

►Lower Kansas Budget Update:

Rick went over the final allocations for the coming fiscal year. The budget document had already been sent to the group by email for review.

Only \$15,000 was allocated for demonstration projects. The SLT has decided through email discussion that these monies will be distributed equally among the three subwatersheds.

The Leavenworth County Conservation District Buffer Coordinator did not receive any funding in the Lower Kansas WRAPS budget. The question was raised as to whether it would free up other dollars to fund the Buffer Coordinator if we directed our demonstration project monies to Leavenworth County. Jerry said it would not. The CD overall budget has been cut by about one-third.

We can request specific services from service providers receiving money from the Lower Kansas budget, but what they are able to deliver depends in part on how many projects they already have on their schedule. It would be useful if we could get brief updates from the service providers.

►Lower Kansas watershed issues, goals and objectives:

Discussion of this topic was postponed to another meeting. Rick already emailed the SLT an updated version of the issues, goals and objectives edited to reflect discussion at the June meeting.

►Discuss Lower Kansas EPA Nine Element Plan:

Recently Rick attended workshops addressing development of a Nine Element Plan. Matt Unruh of KDHE was a presenter. A Nine Element Plan Checklist from KDHE and the Region 7 Watershed Management Plan Review Criteria from EPA were given out at the workshops and will be posted on the KDHE website in the WRAPS section. They are very useful tools.

Rick went over the nine elements and shared information from the workshops.

- Element 1: Identification of causes of impairment and pollutant sources...*
This element will require a number of maps detailing impaired waters, TMDLs, regulated facilities, land use, monitoring stations, etc. Rick is working with Matt Unruh to determine necessary maps. KDHE has already produced many of them such as STEP-L maps and will provide others as needed.
- Element 2: An estimate of load reduction expected from management measures (BMPs)*
In the workshops it was suggested that the estimates be written to cover 10 years out to 30 years to allow for achievement of ultimate goals.

- *Element 3: Identification of critical areas and a description of nonpoint source management measures to be implemented to achieve load reductions.* Element 3 actually has to be developed before element 2 to determine appropriate BMPs and the load reduction that might be achieved given the characteristics and conditions of the targeted critical areas.
- *Element 4: Estimate of amounts of technical and financial assistance needed.*
- *Element 5: An information and education component to enhance public understanding and participation.* We need a partner to help develop materials for I & E.
- *Element 6: Schedule for implementing identified nonpoint source BMPs .*
This will set the timeline for meeting water quality standards in the Lower Kansas.
- *Element 7: A description of interim measurable milestones for determining whether BMPs are being implemented.* These milestones can be thought of as “outputs”. It was asked whether completion of demonstration projects can be considered to be outputs. Steve Schaff of the EPA regional office said yes. For example, if we wanted to convert 50,000 acres in the watershed to no-till, we could set an output goal of 10,000 acres per year for measuring interim progress.
- *Element 8: Criteria that can be used to determine whether desired loading reductions are being achieved...* These criteria can be thought of as “outcomes”.
- *Element 9: A monitoring component to evaluate effectiveness of BMPs over time.*
With a monitoring component or Quality Assurance Plan effectiveness would be measured using the outcomes set in element 8. QAP's of varying levels of complexity can be acceptable and range from KDHE doing frequent, multiple analyte checks to Citizen Science type monitoring with Petri plates.

Steve Schaff told us that the Kanopolis group purchased *Colilert* technology to check coliform levels and shares it with a local college. Heather said that Johnson County has this capability and we could purchase that service from them.

Discussion:

- This is a good quality management model, but at this point there is no money for actual load reduction activities to achieve our goals. Further, because of fiscal restraints, we are already considering concentrating on areas where there is already a monitoring station rather than being able to expand monitoring to understand the full extent of problems. There are many hurdles for this plan.
- Our subgroups will make the detailed plans on what is needed in each area and bring that work back to the whole group. If you focus on TMDLs and overlay TMDL maps on the STEPL maps, it helps determine areas and set reduction goals.
- Urban areas are spending a lot of money on improving water quality and work is being done through EQIP and other programs. It is a partnership effort. WRAPS can count the load reductions achieved through these other processes.

- Rick gave a brief review of the current state of the Lower Kansas draft plan:
 - Maps include the watershed HUC 12's, public water supplies, CAFO's, TMDLs, NPDES permits, impaired waters, etc.
 - 57% of stream/river segments in the Lower Kansas need TMDLs. In 2010 KDHE's TMDL group will come back to look at the Kansas/Lower Republican basin.
 - There is a wealth of technical information available at KDHE's TMDL website that will aid us to set goals, determine BMP's and create our draft plan.
 - Tech tip: Download Adobe Reader 9 professional to be able to add or subtract layers of data to the STEPL maps to better understand distributions and relationships.

►Project update:

- Brian Smith Streambank Stabilization on a tributary of Betts Creek. Smith is an engineer and wants to use gabion baskets to stabilize the streambank. This is expensive and not the preferred method for this particular site. Cheri Miller and others from the Conservation District have visited the site, explained the best solution and emphasized that there is an October 1st deadline for completion. Over \$10,000 has been allocated to this project from WRAPS and Wyandotte County. That money may have to be redirected to another project.
- Billy Skeet has his contractor lined up. The project was designed by Phil Balch of Wildhorse Riverworks.
- Bonner Springs Lions Park mitigation will not be done until late Fall. Phil Balch is in charge of the project now and plans to do much of the work himself for cost reasons.

►Other Business:

- Project solicitation:

John Bond announced that funds have been received and we need to send out a project solicitation with a submission deadline that allows time for the SLT to review the projects before meeting.

Although we planned to spend funds equally in the three subwatersheds, it was now decided that it makes better sense to fund based on the usefulness of the projects submitted. KDHE would like us to solicit projects targeting our top one or two priorities. We are encouraged to not just solicit but to actually seek out such targeted projects.

Rick will draw up a request for proposals and email it to the group for review.

- Dates for deadline/future meetings:

Wednesday, August 19th: Regular WRAPS meeting. Douglas County Fairgrounds.

Friday, September 4th: Deadline for submission of project proposals.

Wednesday, September 23rd: WRAPS meeting to consider projects. Tonganoxie 4-H.

- Announcements:

- There have been Green Infrastructure grants made as part of the Stimulus Package. Some in Congress are looking into making such grant funds permanent.
- Northeast Regional Upland Bird Partnership started by John Bond of KAWS with the goal of increasing numbers of upland birds and conserving their habitat has formed leadership teams and already collected donations and hired a grant coordinator. They plan to put funds into educating the public about priority upland bird species. There will be a workshop on Sept. 11 at the Regional NRCS office.
- The Kansas Grassroots Legacy Team of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever whose goal is to conserve habitat is working to put farm bill biologists in every county in Kansas to work with all the conservation programs that benefit grassland birds. This will be funded 50% by NRCS with equipment and other support and 50% by Pheasants Forever for staffing. Some very large donations of money and land have already been received. There will be a kick-off event at Cabela's on October 8th at 7 p.m.
- A Pasture Management Workshop is scheduled for August 28 at 6:00 p.m. at the Tonganoxie Fairground. The same program will be offered again on 8/29 at 9:00 a.m. at the fairgrounds in Gardner. Cheri Miller and Jerry Wooley are presenting. Topics are weed management, soil testing/interpretation, constructing a hot-wire fence, manure management, grazing management/utilization, pond management, cost share opportunities and native grass planting. \$5.00 fee at the door.
- There is a Rain Barrel Workshop on July 22 from 5-6:30 p.m. at Wyandotte Extension, 1204 N. 79th St., KC, KS. There will also be an Open House from 3-5 p.m. that afternoon.
- A Forestry Field Day will be held on October 15th in Jefferson County.

The meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Iversen