

Lower Kansas WRAPS Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 19, 2009

Douglas County Extension Office, 2110 Harper, Lawrence, KS

Present: Rick Davis, Coordinator, Mark Johnson, SLT Chair, John Bond, Dave Bruton, Jennifer Blattman, Jerry Wooley, Tom Olson, Susan Garrett, Amanda Reed, Susan Iversen, Jeff Bunch, Heather Schmidt, Will Boyer, Jim Weaver.

The meeting opened at 9:07 a.m. with introductions around the table.

► Update on meeting with KDHE – Watershed Management Section regarding SFY2010 project funding

Rick Davis, Mark Johnson, John Bond and Harold Klaege met with KDHE representatives recently to discuss the 2010 PIP and how it will address two priority impairments in the watershed: fecal coliform bacteria (FCB)/E. coli bacteria (ECB) and urban/runoff issues. It was determined that the plan will be carried out by the three focus groups proposed for the watershed:

- The Stranger Creek Focus Group will include representatives from KSU Extension Service, Kansas Grassland Water Quality Stewardship Project, the Kansas Rural Center (KRC), Leavenworth County Conservation District (LCCD), Kansas Forest Service (KFS) and Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams (KAWS) and will establish a local working group of producers to guide work in this subwatershed of the Lower Kansas.

-BMP's deliverable: 1,000 ft. of fence; 2 watering tanks; 534 ft of pipeline.

- The Urban (Eastern Lower Kansas) Focus Group will include agency representatives and citizens from Wyandotte, Johnson and eastern Leavenworth counties.

-BMP's deliverable: 19 acres of critical area seeding or other BMP's to be determined.

- The Western Lower Kansas Focus Group will include agency representatives and citizens from Douglas, Jefferson and western Leavenworth County.

-BMP's deliverable: 1,000 ft. of fence; 2 watering tanks; 534 ft of pipeline.

- Target public education BMP's for all three Lower Kansas WRAPS subwatersheds will include workshops, field days and newsletters.

Comments on the plan:

- We need to identify which subwatershed of Stranger Creek will be the subject of our assessment study so KAWS can schedule it. There are at least five HUC 14's to consider.
- Jerry Wooley has studied the area using an NRCS aerial mapping program and created a power point presentation. The CAFO's are highly visible. He can bring this to our next meeting.
- The BMP's given are intended to meet load reduction goals of 5,000 lbs/yr for nitrogen, 4,000 lbs/yr for phosphorus and 3200 lbs/yr for sediment. These goals were calculated with an EPA model used by KDHE which works backwards from measured levels to the desired levels indicating no impairment. These calculations are the sources of TMDL numbers.

- Typical NRCS projects such as fencing, livestock watering devices, bioretention cells and swales, etc. have removal standards associated with them so that expected load reduction of pollutants can be calculated. The KDHE calculator also has an urban component with load reduction estimates for stormwater management practices.
- Amanda told us that it has been the practice to distinguish between standard NRCS projects and demonstration projects, i.e., innovative, untried proposals, but from now on everything will be considered a demonstration project.
- The 534 ft of piping proposed is much more than would normally be needed for 2 alternative watering projects. It would probably be useful to lower that number and increase the amount of fencing planned. KDHE does realize that these are ballpark figures and what is eventually done depends somewhat on the opportunities that arise.
- Rick asked if we could fund a proposal for a practice that is not listed in our BMP deliverables. Amanda said we could if we had money left and it was a useful project addressing a priority.

➤ Update on September 8 meeting with KDHE – Watershed Management Section.

Rick and John will meet with Amanda Reed and Tom Stiles on September 8th to review the most current data on bacterial contamination in the Lower Kansas. This new data should allow us to set honest goals for bacterial load reduction and determine BMP's to achieve these goals.

➤ Discuss Lower Kansas EPA Nine Element Plan.

The draft sent out to the SLT mainly covers Element 2: an estimate of load reduction expected from management measures. Most of the material included cites deadlines and dates from 2004 and 2008 because more recent data is not available. KDHE will address TMDL's for the Lower Kansas again in 2010. Decisions will have to be made on the location of additional monitoring stations.

It will be necessary to determine how many BMP's need to be implemented to address TMDL driven load reductions. There are studies of the load reductions associated with various BMP's and these will guide us in funding decisions. Two resources we will be able to use in completing the plan are *Getting in Step* from the EPA and "Resource FCB Needs Inventory" from the SCC which details estimates of costs for technical assistance and treatment for CAFOs .

➤ Updates from service providers

- Will Boyer recently installed a solar well pump and completed a project on a horse farm among other work..
- KFS is holding a Forestry Field Day in Valley Falls at the Danny Barrow ranch on October 15th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Delaware WRAPS is involved and KFS would like as many WRAPS groups there as possible. We could have a table display. There will be presentations on pond fish management, direct seeding practices and other topics, and the Jefferson County CD Stream Trailer will be there. For more information visit the KFS website:

www.kansasforests.org/calendar/index.shtml

- The DCCD is starting a three year Cover Crop Demonstration Project comparing the effects of planting a single cover crop, a mixture of cover crops or no cover crop on soil fertility, compaction, productivity and more. Some study plots will be grazed. They plan to bring in someone from Haskell to study the biology and also hope to interest gardeners. The Kick Off Field Day is October 8th.
- LCCD has a number of projects waiting for funding. Because of the financial crisis they have had to move to a smaller office and may have to cut hours.
- The Friends of Hidden Valley recently completed a stream bank stabilization and riparian planting project along Quail Creek in Lawrence. Will Boyer and the KFS worked on this. The project was funded by the Friends and a grant from the Elizabeth Schultz Environmental Fund.
- The Regional Upland Bird Partnership is having a meeting on September 11th at the FSA office in Manhattan. The emphasis will be on tallgrass prairies.

► Other agenda items

WRAPS Service Agreements: Rick showed a sample contract and discussion followed as to whether we should move to this level of formality. Our service providers for FY2010 are KFS, KRC, CD Buffer Coordinators and Will Boyer, KSU Watershed Specialist.

Comments on service agreements:

- They would improve the flow of information on the distribution of WRAPS funds.. They would also help with focus group recruitment because we could show people specific plans and accomplishments. If you document what the WRAPS group and the providers have agreed to, then all expectations are clear and on the table
- The Delaware WRAPS asks for written quarterly reports from service providers while some WRAPS just ask the service providers to attend meetings and give reports. KDHE gets this information directly from service providers because they have their own contracts with providers specifying what amount of time will be spent in various areas.
- One problem with yearly service agreements is that the service providers cannot always know in advance where the work will emerge. Much of it is driven by landowner requests for assistance. However service agreements could be done on a project-by-project basis. KDHE recommends agreements because there have been disconnects between WRAPS groups telling service providers that they want services, but then not planning projects before the budget year is too far advanced for them to be accomplished. Having a service agreement requires you to plan.
- The service providers working on the Rock Creek TMDL formed a focus group of sorts and then met with the watershed group to coordinate activities. The geographic priority gave it cohesion.
- Since our next meeting is in the Stranger Creek watershed can we do something similar? Jerry's power point could be a platform for a presentation to producers. After discussion it was felt that there is not enough time to get the word out effectively before the 9/23 meeting. We must communicate with as many producers as possible to let them know that we have money, are ready to move and seek their input.

Mark summarized the intent of the group: We will have a meeting with our service providers to pinpoint the priority areas in the watershed, coordinate the activities of providers in our focus areas and create agreements specifying our expectations and the services that will be provided to meet them.

The SLT voted unanimously in favor of this statement.

► Pending Project Update

Rick requested that the group review project applications from the last fiscal year to clarify whether or not they should still be on our pending list. Status of projects is as follows:

- Billy Skeet's project in the LCCD is in process
- The Fairway Hills project was not funded.
- The Oregon Trail project was not funded.
- The Brian Smith project in the WCCD is stalled because of a disagreement over the most appropriate and economical technique for the project. We cannot fund the gabion baskets Mr. Smith wants to use because other methods are better suited to the site. If he is not willing to follow conservation district advice in completing the project, the money will be reallocated to a different project.
- The Bonner Springs stream stabilization project has been hanging fire for a long time. There is a design. It was decided to give them 60 days to sign a contract with a provider so work can begin or we will withdraw our funding and reallocate it. Rick will write the letter notifying them of our decision.

► Next Meeting – September 23rd Leavenworth Co. Fairgrounds in Tonganoxie

Some agenda items will be:

- Jerry Wooley's power point on the Stranger Creek watershed
- Selection of a HUC 14 for KAWS aerial assessment
- Stranger Creek focus group
- Bacterial TMDL's and load reduction strategies
- Discuss and prioritize new project applications

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Iversen