

**Republican River Basin-Wide Plan
Stakeholder Advisory Meeting Minutes
June 16, 2015 | Community Center; Cambridge, Nebraska**

Stakeholder Advisory Committee members in attendance were:

Jared Baker	Michael J. Kahrs	Nate Schneider
Mike Delka	Max Kaiser	Richard Siel
Brad Edgerton	Curtis Kayton	Daniel Smith
Troy Fletcher	Jim Kent	Shad Stamm
Josh Friesen	Bradly Knuth	Glenn Taubenheim
Dave Fulton	Jerry Kuenning	Ted Tietjen
Jerda Garey Vickers	Kent Lorens	Marcia Trompke
Mike George	Jeff Loschen	Dack Vesta
Wayne Haarberg	Gale Lush	Tom Vickers
Dale Helms	Timothy McCoy	Todd Watson
Dick Helms	Cedric McDaniel	*Craig Scott for Aaron Thompson
Robin Hinrichs	Dan Nelsen	
William (Bill) Hoyt	Roric Paulman	

Plan Development Team members in attendance were:

Mike Clements	Nate Jenkins	Emily Bausch
Scott Dicke	Jim Schneider	Patti Banks
Sylvia Johnson	Jennifer Schellpeper	Phyllis Johnson
Jack Russell	Amy Zoller	

Individuals from the community present during the meeting included:

Steffanie Fries
Rick Spencer
Chelsea Erickson
Steve Fries

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the meeting was published on the Department of Natural Resources web site (dnr.nebraska.gov), the following three newspapers – Holdrege Daily Citizen, McCook Gazette and Imperial Republican and the project website (dnr.nebraska.gov/RRBWP/).

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

The following informational materials were distributed via stakeholder notebook:

- Meeting Dates
- List of Stakeholders
- Map of the Republican River Basin
- Nebraska Revised Statute 46-755
- March 31, 2015 meeting minutes
- June 16, 2015 Meeting Agenda
- Republican River Basin Generalized Well Depletion Zones map

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

- NDNR Director-Jim Schneider, Acting Director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR), welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting for the Republican River Basin-Wide Plan (RRBWP).
- Stakeholders-Each Stakeholder introduced themselves to the group and gave a general description of their role in community.
- Basin-wide planning team-Patti Banks introduced each member of the RRBWP development team, including the Lower, Middle, Upper Republican and Tri-Basin Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) and the NDNR representatives.
- Meeting materials-Patti presented the new meeting materials
 - Stakeholder binders Patti reviewed materials provided in the new Stakeholder binders and explained these would be used throughout the process, with new materials to add at subsequent meetings
 - Meeting minutes-Minutes from the March 31, 2015 meeting included in the binder were available for comment for the next 15 days, after that date, minutes will be accepted as presented.
 - General Basin Map-a large size wall version will be available at all meetings to be used as a location reference
 - Sustainability definitions-two existing definitions will be posted on the wall with areas for stakeholder suggestions to be added

Patti discussed the format of the meeting and reviewed the agenda with the group. The morning session would include an education session about the basin's water supply and end with discussion about the online polling shortly before lunch.

EDUCATION SESSION – Basin Water Supply

Jim Schneider, NDNR, delivered a presentation on "Interbasin Transfers, hydrologic concepts and Basin Water Supply". The presentation included a handout of a map depicting three generalized well depletion zones (stream, transitional, and groundwater) for the Basin. In depth discussions followed each topic that was presented.

- Some major points of discussion follow:
 - Relationship of well depletion zones to basin-wide planning
 - The complicated nature of correlating historic baseflow and runoff changes to basin-wide land use and land cover change

- Overall compact compliance and how that burden is distributed, and how the Basin-wide plan relates to compact compliance.
- Suggestions for changes to material follow:
 - Well depletion map: show the percentage of total land area in each zone, in addition to the area of land in each zone
 - Well depletion map: Exclude the areas that extend outside of the Republican River Basin
 - Graph of inflows vs. irrigated acres: it was suggested to also show dryland acres on these graphs

The presentation and discussion lasted until the lunch break, and the online survey results discussion was postponed until after the lunch break.

Lunch Break

Lunch was provided to the group and discussion was adjourn from 12:00pm to 12:30pm.

Survey (executive committee, online forum) Discussion

Following lunch, discussion began based on the online survey that was sent to the Stakeholders via SurveyMonkey. The survey was extended to a group vote. The stakeholders were provided GREEN, YELLOW, and RED voting cards as a way to show support, neutrality, or disagreement. After some discussion, stakeholders decided that yes (green) and no (red) were the only cards that should be used and decisions should be made without the yellow cards.

- Executive committee vote: The group decided that an Executive committee was NOT needed. The general consideration of the group were that the meetings and flow of information are working as currently configured with the NRD managers and NDNR representatives bringing the coordination meeting discussion to the stakeholder meetings.
- Online forum vote: The stakeholder group voted to continue the online forum. The group noted that they valued the in person discussion but wanted some online polling in between meetings. The forum would include online surveys, the results of which would be brought back to the group. It was noted that all decisions pertaining to basin-wide plan would ultimately be made at the scheduled stakeholder meetings by the entire group. If there is something Stakeholders would like to be included in online surveys, they may contact the plan development team.

WORKING SESSION

The Stakeholder group was divided into 6 small groups to discuss two questions. The questions each group discussed were:

1. How do you suggest community vitality is achieved?
2. Can you identify the issues that need to be addressed through this process?

Summary of small group discussion:

Question #1 – Community Vitality, What is it and what are the roles of the NDNR, NRD, and individuals?

- Water must be regulated to achieve sustainability

- Continued Compact Compliance
- Jobs, specifically the water necessary to keep jobs going
- Stable water supply
- Retaining and attracting young people – through incentives
- Investment in infrastructure
- Schools are important to the community and these rely on an agricultural tax base
- Predictable, stable regulations over the long haul
- Grain and Animals
- Everyone gets water or compensation
- A stable irrigated economy
- Aquifer health and longevity directly ties to human health and longevity
- Increase efficient use of resources including human resources – increase non water related jobs
- Maintain the tax base
- Ways to Measure success = change in average age, change in non-ag property values
- DNR's Role: Collect good, accurate data, disseminate information, provide funding, conduct research
- NRD's Role: Collect data, implement plans, provide funding, provide the mechanism for local control
- Individuals Role: Stewardship, implementing best management practices, continue to provide local input

Question #2 – Top Issues for the Plan to explore and address

- Sustain and increase aquifer supply
- Unity throughout the basin, so we present a unified voice and set a good example for the rest of the state
- Find a balance, commonalities between groundwater and surface water users
- Find Common Ground
- Leadership, especially in western Nebraska
- Identify funding options for projects
- Similar policies among the NRD's
- Invest in infrastructure to store and transport excess water (e.g. Platte River excess flows)
- Water and Economic Sustainability
- Efficient Use of Water – a list of what would help most
- Revisit the Compact
- Longevity – long term sustained supply and use of water
- Maintain the riverbed
- Get Kansas 101% of what we owe them

- Platte River Diversion – consider injecting excess water into the aquifer

Open floor discussion:

Diverting excess flows from Platte River Basin to the Republican River Basin

- Jim provided information about a pilot project to route excess water from the Platte River to the Republican River.
- Several members in the stakeholder group showed interest in learning about how infrastructure could be put in place to divert excess water from the Platte River Basin into the Republican River Basin.
- It was requested to bring inter-basin transfer criteria from the statutes to the next meeting

Additional questions/comments:

- Can the NRD file for appropriations for excess flows (NRD files). Answer: Any flow that is not appropriated can be applied for.
- Concern about storage capacity being lost due to aging infrastructure (e.g. sedimentation of Harlan County Reservoir)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public attending the meeting was invited to provide comments. No individuals provided comments to the group.

NEXT MEETING

On behalf of the entire basin-wide plan development team, including the four NRDs and NDNR, Patti Banks thanked the stakeholders for attending and participating in this process. The next meeting will be held at the Cambridge Community Center from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm on August 18th, 2015. The meetings are scheduled to occur on the third Tuesday every other month at the same location. Future meetings are scheduled for August 18, October 20, and December 15. Meeting agendas, presentations, and meeting minutes will be available on the project website (dnr.nebraska.gov/RRBWP). Stakeholders are asked to provide any further input to Karen and/or Patti, and their contact information is on the website as follows:

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