

Next Board Meeting Date(s): **March 10 2005, 10:00 a.m.**

30TH ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

The 30th annual meeting of the district was held February 16, 2005 in Goodland, KS with 48 persons in attendance. The 29th annual meeting minutes (from the February 18, 2004 meeting in Hoxie) were approved as presented. Incumbents Jon Friesen (Thomas) and Dave Rietcheck (Sherman/Wallace) were re-elected for another 3-year term, while incumbent Gale Walz chose not to run again. The new Cheyenne County board member elected was Roger Zweygardt, St. Francis.

A proposed 2006 budget was approved by the membership for public hearing later in the year. This proposed budget totals \$404,250.00.

The 2004 audit was approved with no material discrepancies. The district spent \$360,439.00 in 2004 while bringing in \$479,181.00. The \$118,741.00 remaining were carried over and re-budgeted into the 2005 operating budget in January. Just over \$77,000.00 of this carryover are Foundation funds that will continue to be carried forward until outside funding is obtained.

Two topics were updated and discussed - the GMD4 enhanced management effort and the various irrigation transition programs. While the gist of all the questions and discussion on these two issues cannot be covered in this space, there was healthy discussion with many audience members participating. There was general support for the developing aquifer sub-unit process with a continuation of the thought that local management is better than state solutions alone. There was also positive support for funding voluntary irrigation transitions based on offered incentive payments. Much discussion touched on the source(s) and likelihood of any proposed incentives.

As always, any questions over the district operation should be directed to the office or any board member. The provisional 2005 annual meeting minutes have been posted to the web page for review at: www.gmd4.org/an-mtg.html

NOTICE OUR NEW FORMAT?

After all this time, we have decided to give the **Water Table** a facelift. This new format we hope is easier to read (although it won't necessarily be written any better) and will certainly be easier to put together. It is also easier to print and provides more flexibility for photos, graphs, maps and other such objects, although these will remain black and white or shades of gray. The only downside is that it provides more space for articles, so there will be a little more to read each edition. Don't be afraid to offer any comments you have - either way.

WATER AND FUTURE OF KANSAS

The 22nd annual KSU water conference for 2005 is scheduled for March 17 in Topeka at the Capitol Plaza Hotel. The agenda is another interesting one focusing on "The 'Political Science' of Water: Integrating Science into Policy". Conference information and online registration are available on the web at this address: <http://www.dce.ksu.edu/dce/conf/waterfuture>.

This year the board presidents of all 5 Kansas GMD's will be among the many speakers and will be addressing the enhanced management plans for their district's. Mark March 17 on your calendars and plan on attending.

GMD 3 HIRES NEW MANAGER

The Southwest Kansas GMD 3 has hired Mark Rude as its new manager. Mark was the former division of water resources water commissioner in DWR's Garden City field office. He brings a lot of water experience to the district and has already begun the job. We look forward to working with Mark as we have with all the districts.

SOLOMON BASIN WORKING GROUP CONTINUES

Within the Division of Water Resources, Department of Agriculture, there is a program called the **Subbasin Water Resources Management Program** (SWRMP). There are several basins in the state involved in such management planning - the Solomon River Basin being the subject of this article. The entire effort is to bring the interested stakeholders together to cooperatively work on a management plan to achieve the state water plan goal for this basin - sustainable resource yield - without having to initiate top-down, state regulatory efforts. After initially signing up the interested stakeholders, the working meetings began to look at the basin supply problems, the water data available and possible solutions. The Solomon Basin working group involves: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, GMD 4, division of water resources (administrative support), Kansas water office, Kirwin, Webster and Glen Elder irrigation districts, Solomon BAC, U.S. and Kansas wildlife and parks, NRCS, KSU Extension, and dryland and irrigation interests.

The Solomon River basin was divided into 5 subbasins (the upper and lower north fork, the upper and lower south fork, and the mainstem) and water use patterns, recharge, precipitation and runoff characteristics and other data were gathered for each subbasin in the hopes of defining specific water budgets that can at the same time show the size of the resource shortfall problem, and, point to possible ways of reaching sustainable yield. Due to the developing enhanced management process within the GMD, the subbasin sustainable yield goal does not currently extend upstream past the Ogallala Aquifer boundary.

The stakeholder group has been working since early 2002 on these issues - up to just recently collecting and reviewing data. While there have been some areas of agreement among the participants, the group has not yet agreed on several important decision-points. Last meeting (Feb. 10) the group decided to focus on four fundamental issues (for the upper basins only) - What is the extent of the problem?, What has caused the problem?, What is the goal?, and What ways can the goal be reached? It was also agreed that the participants would return to the next meeting with individual suggestions on possible goals. While the state water plan goal is to reach sustainable yield, this benchmark within the state water plan is only guidance, and does not represent state policy unless the Legislature enacts an appropriate statute on the recommendation of the Kansas Water Authority.

This is an important process to track if you're interested in water resources in the Solomon. More info: <http://www.ksda.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=54>

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METERING UPDATE

During the January board meeting the metering MOU between our GMD and the division of water resources was approved, signed by our district, and forwarded to DWR for signature. This MOU calls for all non-domestic wells in GMD 4 to be metered with state approved meters before 2010. This effort will be phased in over 4 years on a schedule as follows:

Year	Area
December 31, 2006	NW/4 Section
December 31, 2007	NE/4 Section
December 31, 2008	SE/4 Section
December 31, 2009	SW/4 Section

Other aspects of the MOU are:

- 1) DWR will issue all the orders for meters - likely in January or February of the target year. Orders will be issued early in the target year with meters required before the well pumps and no later than December 31.
- 2) A computer data base will be co-developed to facilitate easy and coordinated data entry and tracking.
- 3) GMD staff will inspect the bulk of the meter installations with DWR assisting when appropriate. The inspection will collect the following information: specific location of the meter by GPS or footages; meter manufacturer, serial number and model number; meter units and multiplier; dated meter reading; and a comment line for remarks or periodic inspection data.
- 4) The inspection will check for installation compliance. If not installed to manufacturer specifications, the meter will be deemed out of compliance unless a rate test shows accuracy within +/- 6%. If out of compliance, a new order will be issued by DWR for the responsible party to come into compliance. DWR will enforce these orders via their administrative fine authority. Fines cannot exceed \$1000.00, with each day being a separate offense.
- 5) Monitoring will involve a random selection annually of enough wells to support a 95% confidence level of 90% compliance. Additionally, the GMD can add specific wells as manpower allows. The monitoring effort will get reviewed annually.
- 6) The MOU will be annually evaluated and can be amended by agreement of both parties. It can also be rescinded by either party with 90 days notice.

Questions or comments can be directed to the district office or to Scott Ross, DWR, Stockton, KS. Stockton's phone is 785-425-6787. We are both responsible for public education regarding this new effort.

KANSAS WATER CONGRESS COMMITTEE MEETS

The State Affairs Committee of the Kansas Water Congress met January 10, 2005 in Topeka to discuss water issues the group may want to study, take a position on and promote to the Legislature and/or state agencies during 2005. Out of these discussions surfaced 3 issues that will be worked on further - hopefully resulting in a formal KWC position to be promoted. These were:

- ❖ Irrigation Transition Assistance Program (ITAP)
- ❖ Kansas V. Colorado Funding Directions
- ❖ Funding for Contracted storage in Federal Reservoirs

The Committee authorized the drafting of "White Papers" on all 3 items to further identify all positions and issues before considering any final advocacy position. For advocacy, the diverse, 29-member KWC will need a 2/3rds majority approval on any issues.

SOLOMON METER ORDERS BEGIN

The state division of water resources (DWR) in late November issued meter orders on all wells in the Solomon Basin outside the GMD boundaries. These wells must be metered by May 1, 2005. The remainder of the Solomon Basin wells will be picked up in the GMD 4 metering program starting in 2006. Civil penalties and/or modification or suspension of the water right can occur for non-compliance. Extensions are possible, but must show compelling reasons and be requested in writing on or before April 1, 2005. Don't forget to file the "Notice of Completion" within 30 days of installation.

Editorial Comment

By Wayne Bossert, GMD 4 Manager

COLORADO EQIP PLANS TO HELP - MORE

The Burlington Record (CO) quoted NRCS on their EQIP ground and surface water program. They said: "GSWC was introduced three years ago with an emphasis on irrigation system improvements. The 2005 program will strongly emphasize conversion to non-irrigated crops... We have significantly increased funds for land use conversion practices and will favor these practices in 2005..." Now being offered in CO are 3 incentive levels to set aside/retire irrigation wells. For 3-year set asides there is up to \$162/ac (\$54/ac/yr) if the well capacity is at least 3 GPM/ac. The incentive is reduced for smaller capacity wells. For a 5-year set aside, the offering is a maximum of \$270/ac (\$90/ac/yr for 3 years), and for a permanent retirement it is \$450/ac (\$150/ac/yr for 3 years) - and no 4th, non-payment year is required as in other states.

In the Republican River Compact area of Colorado, to boost participation levels, a new district has been formed and is offering incentives over and above the EQIP funds - from \$175-\$550/ac additional dollars for permanent retirements; from \$65-\$400/ac more for the 5-year set asides; and from \$50-\$250/ac more for the 3-year set asides. The lower end of these dollar ranges are for wells farther from the river. The higher ranges are for wells closer to the river and for surface water diversions. The additional district funding comes from new taxing authority Legislatively provided. These guys are serious about reducing consumptive water use, which incidentally, is necessary if Colorado is to comply with the Republican River Compact Settlement issued by the U.S. Supreme Court recently - at least in these drier times.

It is refreshing to see the NRCS in Colorado embracing the needs of the state and adjusting their program to more fully support state and local resource goals. We are continuing to work here in Kansas on a similar program with similar incentive levels to help us meet the most recent state water planning goals for the Ogallala. I'll keep you posted.

The Water Table

Sponsored by the Northwest Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 4, 1175 S. Range, Colby, KS, 67701. Mailing address: PO Box 905, Colby, KS 67701-0905. The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (except the noon hour) - closed on State holidays. Editor is Wayne Bossert.

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