

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE WATER COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ron Highland at 9:00 am on Monday, February 15, 2021, in room 152-S of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Chris Waggoner, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Damien Gilbert, Committee Assistant
Meredith Fry, Legislative Research Department
Victoria Potts, Legislative Research Department
Zach Fridell, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Jason Hartman - Kansas Forest Service
Robert Atchison - Kansas Forest Service

Others in attendance:

No list available

Presentation on:

Jason Hartman, State Forester, introduced himself and his position. He then presented to the committee about the roles and duties of the Kansas Forest Service ([Attachment 1](#)). He began by describing the structure, staffing, and budget of the organization. He then turned the presentation over to Robert Atchison, Rural Forestry Coordinator, who described KFS' Rural Forestry Program. He then explained how healthy forests sustain water quality and quantity by trapping nutrients in soil, sieving floodwaters, reducing destructive water velocities, stabilizing streambanks, and creating habitats in and out of the stream. He then explored the Kansas Water Quality Advocate Network and its role in holding workshops to teach farmers and landowners the value and process of restoring riparian (forest-lined) streams.

Hartman and Atchison then stood for questions, including the non-water priorities of the Forest Service, the effectiveness of the multistate wildfire compact Kansas joined in 2017, the viability of nut trees as an agricultural product, the number of projects the Service takes on in a given year, and issues with invasive tree species.

With no further questions, Chairperson Highland adjourned the meeting at 9:41am.