

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE WATER COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ron Highland at 9:00 am on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, in room 152-S of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

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

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Sean Miller - Groundwater Management District #1
Tim Boese - Groundwater Management District #2
Mark Rude - Groundwater Management District #3
Shannon Kenyon - Groundwater Management District #4
Orrin Feril - Groundwater Management District #5

Others in attendance:

No list available

Presentation on:

Sean Miller, lobbyist for Groundwater Management Districts #1, #3 and #4, delivered a short overview of the structure and purpose of GMDs, which were established to allow local control of establishing management goals and roles in conserving the amount of water in the various aquifers under western Kansas. The 5 different Kansas GMDs were established based on variances of depth of the water table within the aquifers to allow for unique solutions in each locality.

Miller then described the activities of GMD #1, which covers part of the Ogallala Aquifer in western Kansas. In February, the Chief Engineer of the Division of Water Resources of the Department of Agriculture approved the Wichita County LEMA ([Attachment 1](#)). Miller also described GMD #1's budget and the projects that have recently been funded by it ([Attachment 2](#)).

Tim Boese gave background information on GMD #2, which covers the Equus Beds aquifer in south-central Kansas ([Attachment 3](#)). He then presented various charts depicting the percent change in aquifer thickness between 2015-2017, average annual use in acre-feet, water level measurements, and other figures ([Attachment 4](#)).

Mark Rude then delivered a presentation on GMD #3, which covers part of the Ogallala Aquifer in southwest Kansas ([Attachment 5](#)). GMD #3 is the largest of the Kansas GMD areas in the driest part of

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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the state with the most water in storage and consuming nearly half of all Kansas groundwater that is consumed annually to sustain a large portion of the Kansas agriculture gross state product. Rude then discussed the budget and various water conservation projects associated with GMD #3 ([Attachment 6](#)).

Shannon Kenyon then delivered a presentation on GMD #4, which covers part of the Ogallala Aquifer in northwest Kansas ([Attachment 7](#)). GMD #4 is beginning to look at renewing both the Sheridan 6 LEMA and the GMD 4 LEMA beginning in 2023 and working to provide tools to producers to help them manage with less water than historically used. It provides a cost-share program for water-saving technology. It has also made available a phone app where producers can take a picture of their meter and it will track their water use, water right data, and LEMA quantities.

Orrin Feril then delivered a presentation on GMD #5, which covers the Big Bend aquifer in western Kansas ([Attachment 8](#)). Over the past 45 years, the District has implemented several water conservation and aquifer management programs to provide this region with long-term supplies of water for future generations. Through the 1980's, the District implemented well spacing, sustainable yield and water quality requirements for new applications for water. In the early 1990's, water flowmeters were required for all diversions of water within the District as well as a District-wide closure for new water permits. In the 2000s, the District authorized small use exemptions under 15 acre-feet and the ability to move water long distances within the Rattlesnake Creek drainage basin.

With no time left for questions, Chairman Highland adjourned the meeting at 10:27am.