

# Water PACK Presentation to House Water Committee 8/22/23

Who is Water PACK

Proposed Amount of Reductions

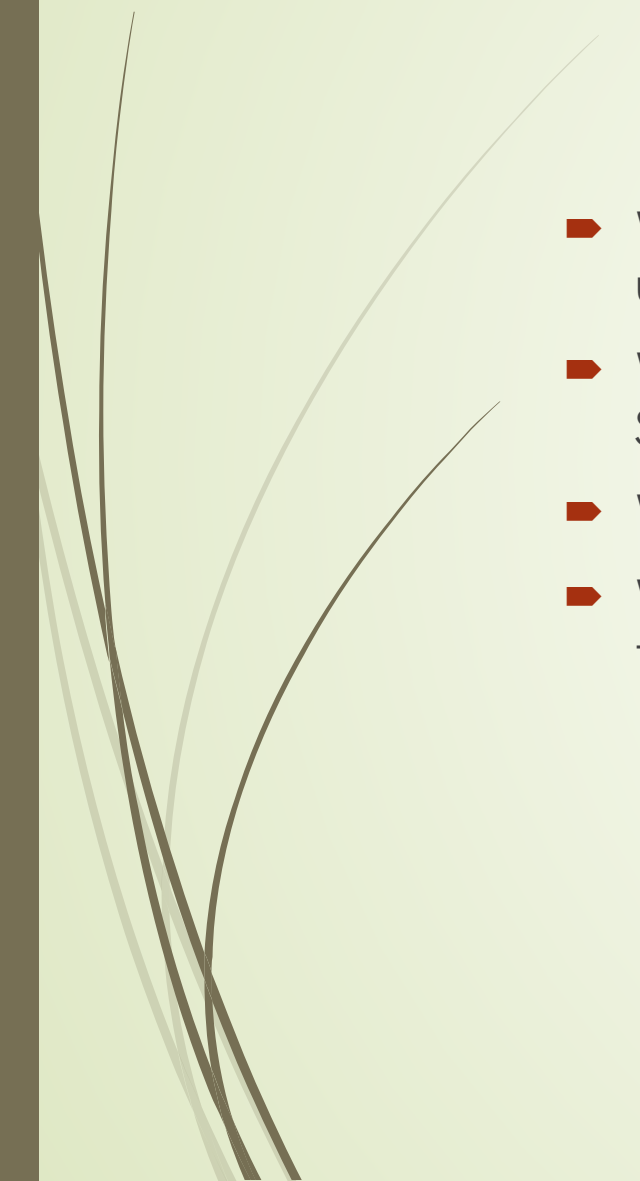
Economics of Proposed Reductions

Issues With Proposed Timeline (Staying Out of Court)

USFW Refuge Management Plan



# The Water Protection Association of Central Kansas Water PACK

- ▶ Water PACK is a grass roots organization started in 1990 to give members a unified voice in matters relating to the use of agricultural water.
  - ▶ Water PACK's membership base is made up of producers from Pratt, Stafford, Kiowa, Edwards, Pawnee, and Barton counties.
  - ▶ Water PACK is committed to finding proactive, science based solutions.
  - ▶ Water PACK believes that the best solutions to problems are reached through collaborative efforts rather than punitive administration.
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Schools, Health Care, Grocery Stores,  
Local Governments, Fire/EMS,  
Cooperatives/Crop Input Providers,  
Equipment Dealers/Vendors, Utilities,  
and all other aspects of the regional  
economy.

Cattle Feeding, Dairy  
Production, Milk  
Processing, Meat  
Processing, Grain  
Production, and Ethanol

Water

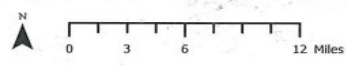
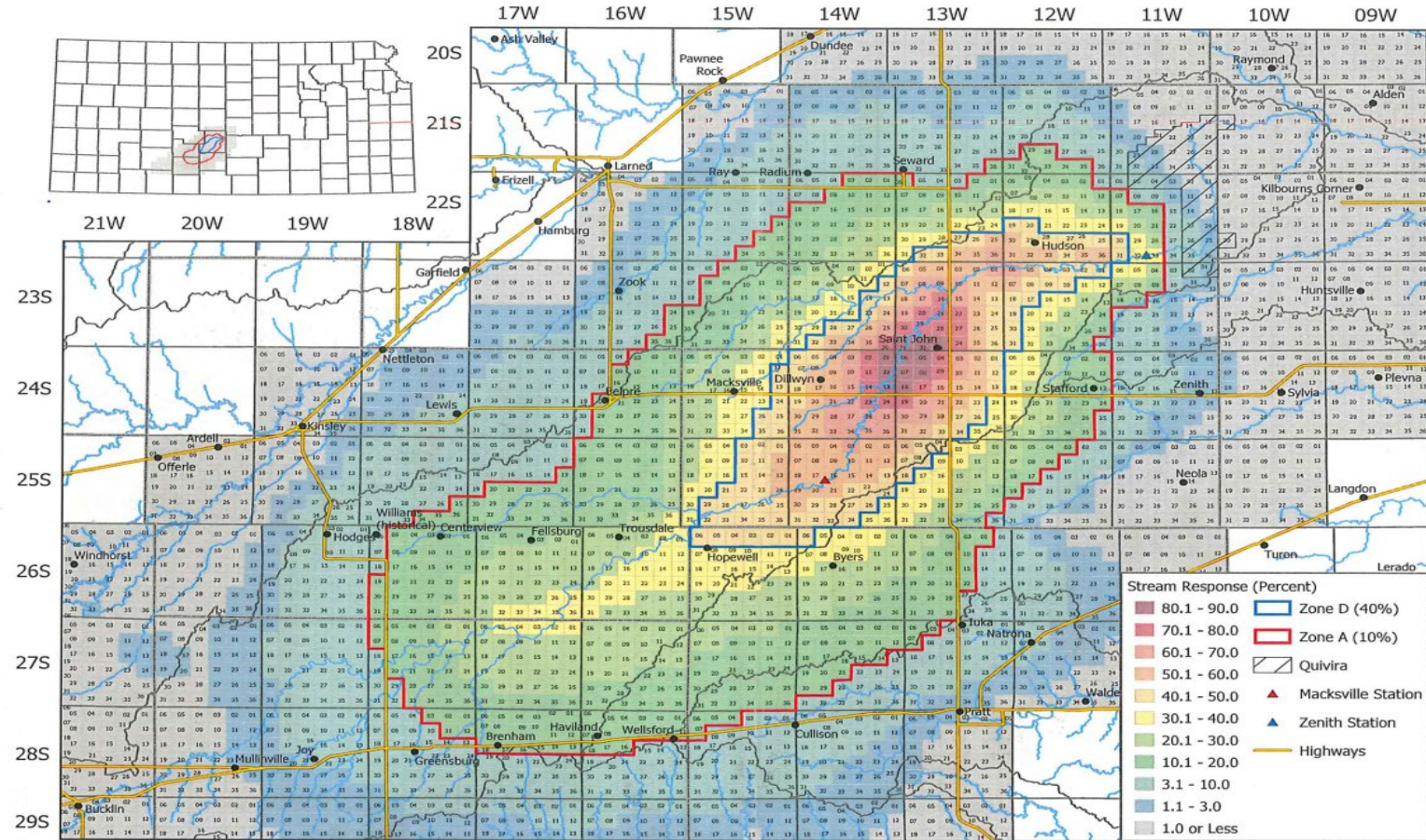
40% of the Gross Domestic Product of the state of Kansas is generated west of Pratt exclusively from the sale of agricultural products.

When talking about water in western Kansas it is critical to remember the balance it takes to keep this pyramid upright.



# Impact Area

**Rattlesnake Creek Streamflow Response Regions**  
 1998 - 2007 average streamflow response (pct) at Zenith gage as calculated using the GMD No. 5 model.



"Streamflow response" represents the portion of the groundwater pumped that would have become streamflow.

Features on this map represent conditions as of the date of the map and are subject to change.



Kansas Department of Agriculture  
 Division of Water Resources  
 Modeling date: November 16, 2017  
 Document date: February 14, 2018



# Proposed Reductions

- ▶ The Division of Water Resources (DWR) claims that year after year Rattlesnake creek loses an additional 400 acre feet (AF) of flow to junior groundwater users.
- ▶ To stop this continuing decline DWR proposes to reduce junior groundwater pumping by 30% based on historical use in the basin. This reduction addresses only the decline in stream flow, not the actual impairment.
- ▶ The impairment will require an additional 4000 AF of reduction in junior pumping. This equates to an additional 2% reduction based on historical use for a total of 32%.
- ▶ In addition to the 32% reduction in historical use DWR will also require 4000 AF of water to be pumped into the stream annually from the augmentation well field to be constructed by Groundwater Management District #5.





## The Math on the Proposed Reductions

- ▶ Average reported use in the impact area for 2012-2021 equates to 13.5 inches of irrigation per acre.
- ▶ The amount of water authorized on the majority of the irrigated land in the impact area is 18 inches per irrigated acre. On average producers are only using 75% of their authorized water year in year out.
- ▶ A 32% reduction based on historical use will leave producers with 9.2 inches of water per year available to apply.
- ▶ The reductions as proposed amount to a 49% reduction from the authorized quantity approved by DWR.
- ▶ The numbers above represent water use for all crops grown in the impact area as an average. The primary crop produced is corn. A good irrigated corn crop will require 16-17 inches of irrigation water in a normal year, and more in a dry year.



## Economics of Proposed Reductions

- ▶ There are too many scenarios to quantify in this presentation with any degree of accuracy from a production level. Based on the proposed limitations irrigated corn production in the impact area will have to be reduced by half based on the water needs of the crop.
- ▶ The erosion to balance sheets, and net worth due to reduction in property value will have a huge impact on operations in the impact area. As irrigated property is valued based on allocation, well capacity, and soil type it is reasonable to expect the value of irrigated land to fall by 35-40% based on the proposed reductions. With 221,000 irrigated acres in the impact area and a reduction in value of \$2,000/acre this equates to an \$884,000,000 hit to property values.
- ▶ As irrigated acres decline margins on those acres are also reduced. This has a direct effect on debt repayment capacity. Most operators have obligations to lenders for land, equipment, and other capital improvements. These long term business plans do not account for the sudden changes to production levels these proposed reductions will cause.

## Issues with DWR's Plan for Direct Administration

- Direct Administration is the equivalent of martial law in terms of water. The solutions will be dictated to water users with little or no input from the effected stakeholders. "Here is a 48% reduction in your allocation, your welcome!" It also applies cut to all water users regardless of type of use. Municipal, recreational, irrigation, and livestock will all be cut the same.
- If DWR stays the course it's on these cuts will be implemented in the next 30 days effective for the 2024 irrigation season. This timeline effectively takes many of the remedies that have been in the works off the table. To take water through administration, and then dole it back out as remedies come on line will create anarchy as producers try to figure out where they stand, and then communicate that to lenders, and all other effected parties.
- History tells us that once water is surrendered it never comes back.
- As GMD 5 is responsible for providing funding for augmentation direct administration will reduce their annual revenue stream as it is based on allocation.
- Nobody wants to go to court other than the lawyers. We have to come up with a solution that does not involve litigation. Litigation stops effective communication and places the fate of all parties in the hands of a court system with very little experience dealing with water issues.





## The Quivira Management Plan

- ▶ If one groundwater user file an impairment against another DWR requires the filing party to take every measure possible to insure they have fully developed the resource before DWR will proceed. This means that if my well is 100 feet deep, and yours is 200 feet deep I can't claim you are impairing me until I drill to my well to the 200 foot depth.
- ▶ Quivira has a management plan in place the requires water during specific times of the year. This is to produce forage for the migratory birds seasonally as they pass through the refuge. There are times of the year that there is water in the creek that they could divert if they had a place to store said water. At present with no storage they simply let the water run by the refuge, and as they did not divert it that water does not count toward solving the impairment.
- ▶ Developing water storage on the refuge would negate many problems for both the refuge, and for the producers in the impact area. With 22,000 acres there should be a place to build storage without compromising habitat.

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Water



Thank you for the opportunity.

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