

State of the Resources Report Presented to Kansas Water Authority

This week the Kansas Water Authority (KWA) met in Manhattan for their August meeting. The KWA received updates on water priorities in the state but two main topics were the focus: State Water Plan Fund Budget and State of the Resource Reports for surface and groundwater in Kansas.

State Water Plan Fund budget priorities for the coming fiscal years were approved with an emphasis on moving priority projects forward that focus on implementing the *Long-Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas*.

Many of the priority projects are targeted to address issues found in the State of the Resource Reports (SOTR), a comprehensive compilation of the state's water resources. The newly released SOTR reports were presented for each region of the state to the KWA. The purpose of these reports are to provide background and the most up-to-date water data and facts available to monitor progress on meeting regional and statewide water goals.

“These are intended to inform and educate Kansans about the true issues our regions face with their water supply,” said Kansas Water Office Director Tracy Streeter. “While good things are happening in the regions there is so much more to do and we need Kansans to understand why water has to be a priority for our state. These will be updated each year and serve as the resource for those making decisions about our water future.”

Each SOTR has implementation needs and actions plans that are key to help guide the KWA for establishing budget priorities as well as current conditions of surface water and groundwater within the perspective regional area. For example, in the Kansas region loss of reservoir storage is decreasing the basin's water supply, making it insufficient to meet projected drought demands by 2057. Tuttle Creek Lake is key to the Kansas Region's water supply and has lost more than 40 percent of its original storage so far. The KWA is recommending funding to move forward with an innovative project to pass more of the sediment through the reservoir and extend the supply.

The Upper Arkansas SOTR included information from water level measurements that show groundwater levels have an average annual decline of approximately two feet over the past decade. The regional priority goal for this area is to extend the usable lifetime of the Ogallala Aquifer for at least 25 years and slow the depletion of the aquifer by 25 percent in 10 years through the promotion of Local Enhanced Management Areas and Water Conservation Areas as well as other tools. To date, two percent of the total irrigated acres are in a water conservation

program to help conserve and extend the groundwater supply. The KWA is recommending \$500,000 be appropriated to assist in irrigation technology, and another \$250,000 for Water Technology Farms that demonstrate to producers how they can conserve water and maintain, or improve, their bottom line.

While only one eastern and western regional planning area is described as an example, each of the 14 SOTR have issues vital to their regional that need to be addressed. The complete reports for each region can be found on the Kansas Water Office website at www.kwo.ks.gov.

The KWA is responsible for advising the Governor, Legislature and Director of the Kansas Water Office on water policy issues. They also ensure that water policies and programs address the needs of all Kansans as well as serve as advisors of the *Kansas Water Vision* and *Kansas Water Plan*. The KWA was established in 1981 and consists of 13 voting members who are appointed by the Governor or Legislative leadership. State agency directors serve as ex-officio members.

The next meeting will be held in Wichita, Kansas in December. The KWA meetings are held throughout the year and for additional information and other upcoming meetings, visit www.kwo.ks.gov.