

March 18, 2009

Joint meeting of the Arkansas River Technical Task Force and the Arkansas River Citizens Advisory Committee

IN ATTENDANCE:

Rich Basore – KDHE	Tabitha Kling – COW
Tonya Bronleewe – KSU	Tom Kneil – Ark River Coalition
Erin Brady – Terracon	Nancy Larson – KSU
Darren Brown – CDM	Cherrie Nolden – Sg Co Conservation District
Susan Erlenwein – Sedgwick Co	Natalie Snyder – COW
Sharon Fearey – COW Council member	Curt Van Boening – Wichita Audubon Society
Irene Hart – Sedgwick Co	Vaughn Weaver - COW
Hoyt Hillman – MAPC	Claire Willenberg – North Riverside Homeowners

Nancy Larson gave an overview of the Kansas State University Sedgwick County Research and Extension Pollution Prevention Institute (KSU PPI) staff effort to educate citizens about proper pharmaceuticals disposal. Pharmaceuticals in water are a nationwide problem even though these are in very small amounts (ppb & ppt). However, these compounds are difficult to remove from water and there is a persistent bio accumulation causing a generational impact. Many municipalities and governmental bodies are working to head pharmaceuticals off before they get into water.

K-State PPI, with the help of an intern, put together an education campaign targeting county households with a “how to properly dispose of old drugs” campaign. This included getting posters and bag fliers (tear offs that could be stapled to bags in stores) out to pharmacies, medical clinics, veterinarians, and senior centers. Over 200 facilities were reached. Advertising was also done at libraries and through church newsletters. They followed up on their work this past winter and found that 96% of the posters were still up. When they had someone call some of the facilities requesting help in disposing of old drugs, 92% provided “toss in trash” guidance, and 27% added the advice of “do not flush these down the drain or toilet.” The program is looking at expansion in Douglas and Harvey counties.

Group conversation included suggestions that the program have the “tear off” bag flyer information printed straight on the bags; targeting senior companions of shut-ins; having law enforcement have drop-off lock boxes in the substations; send the information out through meals-on-wheels.

Council member Sharon Fearey spoke about reviewing and renewing the purpose of the Arkansas River Technical Task Force and the Arkansas River Citizens Advisory Committee.

The Tech committee was appointed by the City and County Managers due to action needed for a Federal grant that had been obtained. The Citizens Advisory Committee came into being through neighborhood groups agitating for river problems to be addressed. Once the groups were up and going they got a life of their own, but this has resulted in their meeting without direction or purpose. Rich Basore noted that two committees in one too many. He agreed that the committees need to redefine the focus and get something that’s workable. Irene Hart suggested that the group develop an action plan that is focused on the Arkansas River and meet every other month. This would almost be a sort of “Friends of the River” committee. Hoyt

Hillman would like the focus to be watershed wide with public education to counter the river's image and to spread the word about what causes river problems. Tom Kneil wonders that if this is an advisory committee, then where does the advice go. Sharon Fearey would like to see a brainstorming group made up of everyone who has ever attended one of the two committee meetings, with the results of that meeting being presented in workshop or at City Council or County Commission meetings. Irene Hart liked the idea of having a watershed wide waterways committee with representatives being from each of the watersheds. Becky Lewis thinks that the committee should end up being a WRAPS stakeholder committee and the purpose for the committee would come from the WRAPS grant. Becky spoke about the City's search for a consultant to pull this together. Susan Erlenwein noted that the County is doing their own stakeholder search without the benefit of a consultant. Susan would like for the City & County to combine the results of their information collection to locate holes that need filling. The group consensus was that a one time meeting of the two committees (ARTTF and ARCAC) would be arranged with all previous committee members being invited attend. This group will look at the WRAPS goals and mandates. The group will consider the problems and concerns that they have about the Big Arkansas watershed in this area. The group will decide what focus a stakeholders committee should have and how this group may participate in bringing this about.

Hoyt Hillman shared his vision of the Promoting Public Education for Riparian Filters and River Bank Stabilization meeting he's arranged to take place this Saturday, March 21st from 10 a.m. to noon at the Sedgwick County Extension Office, Meadowlark Room, 7001 W. 21st Street. He wants to see groups from around the area identify high visibility projects that will help the watershed corridors. He has asked the groups he's invited to share examples of what has been done elsewhere, as well as bring ideas of opportunities from our communities of lawn to river projects. Hoyt would like to see education signs at all of these projects, so that when they're completed citizens will be more aware of solutions to watershed problems. He'd like to know that the Park Dept. could back off and leave buffer areas next to streams and rivers without getting angry phone calls.

It was decided to forego the usual round-robin sharing time. Curt Van Boening introduced himself and explained that he'll be representing Wichita Audubon Society at these meetings. Tonya Bronleewe shared the upcoming Cattle Producers annual meeting brochures and encouraged interested people to take one.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes taken by: Kay Drennen COW ES Dept.