



Arkansas River Advisory Committee

Meeting Highlights from August 24, 2005

Place: 8th Floor, City Hall 455 N. Main, South Conference Room

Next Meeting Scheduled: September 28, 2005

In attendance:

Libby Albers, Department of Environmental Services
Ken McCloskey, KS Department of Wildlife & Parks
Lucy Burtnett, Sedgwick County
Marsha Carr, Riverside Citizen's Association
Tom Kneil, Arkansas River Coalition
Tonya Bronlewee, E.A.R.T.H.
Yvonne Cather, Sierra Club
Irene Hart, Sedgwick County
Kay Johnson, Environmental Services
Betty Pitts, Riverside Citizen
Larry Hoetmer, Parks Department
Sharon Fearey, City Council

Agenda Item 1: Canoe and Kayak Access: Ken McCloskey and Larry Hoetmer

Update on the proposed Canoe Trail that will extend from Rice County to the Oklahoma Border:

- A greensheet will go in front of the City Council on Tuesday, August 9, 2005. The proposal will be for the KDWP to provide \$30K seed money to be matched by the Wichita Parks Department's \$30K. The Park Department's plan is to reallocate the \$30K that was set aside for an athletic field master plan to the canoe trail master plan. This would give both groups **\$60K to hire a consultant to create the master plan**, which would then be used as a tool to secure construction funding. Future funding may include the Coast Guard or Land and Water Conservation funds.
- **Current access:** five points in Rice County, none in Hutchinson, one in Oxford, one in Wichita at Garvey Park, and one at the South Arkansas Greenway (near Derby). For a description of the South Ark Greenway: <http://wichita.gov/CityOffices/Park/Parks.htm?ID=79>
- The proposal calls for an access point every five miles beginning in Rice County and ending near the Oklahoma border. **First phase would be from South Hutchinson to Oxford.** The access points would have special names that are evocative of points of interest or the uniqueness of the location. Safety information would also be displayed at the access points. A flume or chute could be used to bypass the Lincoln Street dam. A good example of a flume: http://www.denvergov.org/South_Platte_River/template21141.asp
- KDWP is continuing to meet with smaller communities along the river corridor to gain participatory interest: Mt. Hope (8/29/2005), Maize, etc. The Cities of Derby and Oxford have already declared their interest in the project. The LABC would also like a presentation on the proposed canoe trail.
- One of the goals would also be to establish a webpage that would link to current river conditions and have a program for float trip planning.
- The Ark **River Advisory Committee would act as a core advisory group** and provide direction to the consultant.
- **Challenges:** dealing with the properties owners that are adjacent to the river. The Ark River is federal property since it is a navigable river but there may be some misconceptions as to who owns the river.

Agenda Item 3: Funding

- A. Federal Appropriation:** A federal appropriation was submitted in 2005 for continued monitoring of the Arkansas River and the encouragement of stakeholder involvement. The City would like to

find some seed money to implement a project similar to that of the Cheney Lake Watershed – a financial co-op between COW and landowners in the watershed. No appropriation was granted but the City will resubmit for 2006.

- B. WRAPS:** the Watershed Restoration And Protection Strategy application was submitted to KDHE for funding in 2005 http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us/nps/wraps/wraps_brochure.pdf. The City of Wichita, Sedgwick County Conservation District, K-State, and the Cheney Watershed received an email and follow letter regarding the applications. KDHE has requested that all groups work together on a unified project and be granted \$50k for 2005. A letter of response is due to KDHE in a week. The City plans to talk to individuals in Topeka about the situation. COW has originally requested \$100k, which would have also funded an Ark River coordinator position. The K-State project is well into its third year and has a rural focus rather than urban and the SCCD project was focusing on Big Slough.
- C. City's Strategic Planning:** Visioning for the Arkansas River needs to be presented at the DAB's that include river access. Visual and public access to the river should be kept open.
- D. Target Grant for Water Quality:** The City of Wichita (COW) did receive a target grant to assist the Water Quality section of the Department of Environmental Services with identification of unsewered areas within the city limits. There are approximately 4000 unsewered properties within the city. Jack Brown is the consultant and should have a report to the committee by the August meeting. The Advisory Committee will be allowed to comment on the findings.

Agenda Item 4: General Discussion

Tom Kneil will continue to update the group with KDHE's effort to strengthen the protection of Kansas' rivers. Currently, those rivers listed as "navigable" are protected federally (Big Ark, Kansas/Kaw, & the Missouri). KDHE is working to protect those rivers not currently listed in order to provide greater protection against impact from landfills:
http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us/waste/apps/distance_from_pub_water_supply_inf_req.pdf

Agenda Item 5: Other Items

The original **Ark River Symposium ideas** have been condensed and sorted in an Excel format. They have been distributed to the Technical Group. Both groups have been tasked with inputting updates to the efforts originally suggested and returning them to Libby Albers. Sierra Club provided their updates at this meeting.

Place pictures of canoeists up on the City's webpage. Marsh Carr will take picture of canoeists in her neighborhood. Here is a link to the current webpage: <http://www.wichita.gov/Residents/River/>

Begin a River Speaker's Bureau. So many groups have been impressed with the information that Vaughn Weaver has provided in his talks that Marsha and Kay Johnson suggested that a speaker's bureau should be formed. Libby will contact members of the group and create a spreadsheet and information that could be placed on the web.

Next River Trash Round Up: May 6, 2006. The Sierra Club plans to do advertising before the event and combine the clean up with a float trip. They will also do a literature drop to the houses and businesses along the river one week prior to the even. Sierra Club will work with the City to get the to neighborhood associations, high school groups, boy scouts, and others.

Adjourn

Next Meeting:

- Discuss a potential display at Exploration Place that would illustrate the Arkansas River, its dams, pollution site, drought impacted areas, etc.
- Discuss Target Grant with Jack Brown