WATER MANAGEMENT - DRAFT

Key themes from stakeholder outreach:

- Modify reservoir operations and downstream targets to most efficiently operate reservoirs for water supply
- Identify opportunities to increase the regionalization of water supply, where doing so would improve the long-term water supply reliability
- Propose changes to Water Appropriation Act and Rules and Regulations to promote a better balance between efficient water use and economic benefits

Questions and Common Themes from each breakout

How can multiple uses of our reservoirs (municipal/industrial, recreation, flood control, etc.) be balanced to most efficiently operate the state's water supply reservoirs?

- A balanced, effective use of the state's water supply reservoirs is dependent on the Corps of Engineers process and the level they will allow the state to participate in the implementation and change of that process.
    - We need to gain flexibility from Corps of Engineers on reservoir management, including pool rise to store more water.
- We should explore the opportunity to purchase water storage without involving the Corps of Engineers.
- A 10-year plan or MOU with the Corps of Engineers should be developed for water operations.
- The level of investment the state wants to make in the purchase of reservoir supply will help determine how to best balance the multiple uses of our reservoirs.
- Implications of purchasing and management for Kansas Assurance Districts need to be determined and considered when balancing the multiple uses of our reservoirs.
- To allow for the use of extra storage, the management of pool rises needs to be investigated.
- There is a need to expand the current communication structure beyond the reservoir networks to include the Kansas and Neosho Rivers.
- Reservoir management should not be limited to flood control (as it might often be at the federal level), but instead also include watershed related issues and upstream sedimentation.
    - Although, flood control is a key to balancing concerns amongst stakeholders.
- Managing reroutes of sediment downstream will benefit both the reservoir and the downstream ecosystems.
- Releases need to be managed to ensure good downstream water quality as well as reservoir health.

What are the situations in which regionalization should be encouraged? And what role do you think the state should play in promoting regionalization?

- The state should play a leadership role in promoting regionalization and getting projects started.
- Regionalization commonly occurs because of necessity - Lack of water is usually a good impetus.
- Regionalization and cooperation is important for infrastructure.
- Regionalization should be encouraged to address access to water and the impact of water rights transfers. Physical and financial limitations for expansion and distribution of water water supplies should also be addressed through regionalization.
- Regionalization should encouraged when there are human and environmental concerns and an economic analysis indicates regionalization is the best approach.
- It is important that legislature and administration understand that water issues impact people statewide, whether its irrigation in Western Kansas or sedimentation in Eastern Kansas.
    - The state should have an understanding of issues specific to each region, but should not favor one region over another.
- Downstream water users who have excess should be forced to lose it to upstream uses. All parties should understand that the amount of water will vary and change over the years.
- The effective management of our relationships with neighboring states is important.
- Communicate our state's commitment to making meaningful change. It is important that people know Kansas is going to do something.
- Basinwide initiatives should be arranged to capture ideas and connect with other stakeholders.
- Small towns should be linked to solve infrastructure concerns.
- For small towns that are set on working independently, community development funds should be established to help alleviate the costs for providing affordable water in these areas.

What additional tools are needed to provide greater flexibility for the management of water while protecting the resource?

- The administration of water policy at the state level should be reevaluated to create a single state agency.
- Watersheds could form Basin Advisory Committees as an additional tool for flexible water management while protecting the resource.
- The "use it or lose it" policy should be evaluated for effectiveness.
- Conservation should be defined as a valid long term use of water.

- Infrastructure should be put in place to transfer excess water from one area of the state to another area in need of water.
- Property right holders should be able to trade their water rights to make money by selling their rights to higher profit use.
- Inter-basin transfer law should be examined as an option for water management. This law is scary to many people who want to move water a significant distance.
- A review of local sources of supply should be conducted.
- Data collection should continue to be enhanced and utilized to define priorities of using resources. This data should also be used to model and project changes and economic benefits relative to quality, quantity and environmental benefits.
- Climate change modeling should be used to assist with management scenarios.
- Multipurpose lakes and and LEMA's are good tools for flexibility.
- With regards to The Water Appropriations Act, terms of reuse need to be explored and defined. In addition, there should be more flexibility on place of water use.
- Rural and urban interests should have equal voice.

How can educational opportunities between users be created and sustained (ex – Municipal v. Irrigation; Ogallala v. Reservoirs)?

- Education must be made personal to the audience by using stories to get the message across.
- Young people (K-12) should be educated about water usage before they become independent water users.
    - Existing systems should be used to facilitate this education, such as formal secondary or post-secondary, FFA and social organizations.
- It is important to reach people who may not traditionally be apart of the conversation.
- Farmers and ranchers should be educated about the WRAPS program (erosion etc.).
- Create K-State Research and Extension specialist positions that focus solely on Western Kansas issues.
- Conservation districts should continue to focus on youth and adult education on water and environmental issues.
- Use water use information from across the state to educate people about municipal water use and the impacts of personal water usage.
    - Examples of best practices or experiences to share could come from Hays.

- A central website for all water related issues and educational materials should be developed and promoted.
    - Nebraska and Texas have this resource we could use as examples in developing our own website.
- Encourage participation in local meetings (Conservation Districts, GMD's etc.).
- A communication plan should be developed to promote the water vision and education. This plan should be owned and administered by one state agency.
- Specific water use groups, such as municipalities or irrigators, should be represented by their own leadership in water discussions. Information should be provided to each leadership so that groups may better understand their water usage as well as be able to articulate it to other water use groups.
    - Water data sets should be used to glean this information and define it's meaning scientifically and factually.
    - Best practices for each water use group should be captured and shared within the group.
    - KSU and DWR studies should be shared to display actual water use.
- The cost of doing nothing needs to be discussed so as to understand the impact of no education efforts.
- Education campaigns need to be crafted specifically for different water use groups, such as rural citizens versus urban citizens. Each group has it's own set of needs, interests and questions that should be addressed.
- Funding must be considered when developing education campaigns.
- To create and sustain educational opportunities, the intention and terms of application must be defined.
- Educate people about how important access to surface water is to their daily lives.

Of the feedback you have heard related to Water Management, what do you feel would lead to the greatest probability of achieving the Vision?

- The focus should be broadened to include wildlife, hunting and recreational uses as well as industrial and agricultural uses.
- The dollar value of water should be closer to that of other utilities, such as electricity.
- Dialogue with the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation should be improved.
- Regionalization with other states should be explored further, especially with Corps districts.
- Encourage and empower strong local buy-in into the missions of the water vision.
- We need to recognize there are multiple solutions, not one.
- When making decisions, the economics associated with them needs to considered.
- Immediate and serious action is necessary.

- The initial implementation of the water vision by the state is an important consideration when discussing the vision.
- The risks and benefits of raising pool levels within reservoirs need to be assessed. We must understand that we will not always be in a drought.
- A focus should be made on streambank stabilization efforts.
- The public does not have a 50-year attention span. Five, ten, fifteen-year plans should be developed and then a 50-year plan.

Other ideas related to Water Management not reflected in this summary that the Vision Team should consider?

- The State Water Plan needs to be funded properly for ideas to come to fruition.
- To help determine priorities, develop a matrix of options to show the rate of return for each water use.
- Better relationships should be developed and maintained with the EPA.
- Easements ensured for the life of project are important, especially for watersheds getting 404 permits.
- A reservoirs should be built on the Arkansas River as far west as it can be supported.
- We should explore changing the dynamic of economic development around lakes.
- The aquifer project should be adjusted to provide opportunities to move water west and between reservoirs.
- Utilize the water conservation plan that is required to be submitted to the state by public water suppliers.
- Manage the quality and quantity of water in Kansas.
- Water management should be a part of all aspects of state management, including industrial development, health, education, etc.