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Jackie McClaskey, Secretary

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March 6, 2017

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Southwest Kansas GMD #3  
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Northwest Kansas GMD #4  
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Colby, KS 67701

Big Bend GMD #5  
125 S. Main  
Stafford, KS 67578

RE: GMD management program update recommendations

GMD Managers and Board Members,

During our joint meeting last November it was suggested that it would be helpful if KDA provided input and guidance to the GMDs on updates to their management programs, including advice on the level of detail required in such updates. Below are our thoughts and suggestions related to GMD management programs and their updates.

The GMD Act defines a management program as, “*a written report describing the characteristics of the district and the nature and methods of dealing with groundwater supply problems within the district. It shall include information as to the groundwater management program to be undertaken by the district and such maps, geological information, and other data as may be necessary for the formulation of such a program.*”

The Act requires the GMD Board to prepare a management program before undertaking active management of the district. In addition, the Board is to review the document at least annually and to update the plan as required, using the same process as required for the original program adoption (review and approval by the Chief Engineer, public hearing, adoption by the Board with notice to the Chief Engineer). Beyond the definition above and the process for adoption and revision of management programs, the Act provides little additional guidance.

Thus, we believe the Act provides significant flexibility for GMDs to develop a plan with the level of detail it believes necessary to outline and support the Board’s plan of action to address conservation of the District’s groundwater resources.

Last year GMD 4 updated its management program (see our web site or GMD 4's for a copy). It provides a good example of a plan update, particularly their work in designating high priority areas and the Board's active work in these area to develop plans for enhanced groundwater management. GMD2's management program also provides a good example of a plan with a significant level of data analysis to support their plan.

For your consideration, below is a listing of potential subjects for management program updates from KDA brain-storming:

- Identification and designation high priority areas within the GMD with plans to dialogue with water users within these areas regarding additional management they wish to explore and best means to accomplish (LEMAs, WCAs, proposing rules for the District, water banks, etc.)
- Education activities within the District to promote and facilitate the adoption of water savings measures and practices, particularly those which maintain the economic benefits of water use, such as alternate crops, use of technology and irrigation scheduling to reduce inefficient use, etc.
- GMD cost sharing on soil moisture probes and other technology for improved water management.
- GMD support for research on water conservation methods.
- Collection of stories and strategies from those who are using less water. Recognize those are using water most effectively. Develop a best practices manual for irrigation.
- Proactively work with those who are concerned about potential impairment and their neighbors before they file complaints.

In summary, we see the management program development and updating process as the means for each GMD to keep current its plans for action to fulfill the their purpose under the GMD Act: *to promote the conservation of groundwater resources and the prevention of economic deterioration; for associated endeavors within the state of Kansas through the stabilization of agriculture; and to secure for Kansas the benefit of its fertile soils and favorable location with respect to national and world markets.*"

We would be happy to meet with any of the GMDs as you develop updates to your management programs to share ideas and feedback during your update process.

Let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



David W. Barfield, P.E.

Chief Engineer

Kansas Department of Agriculture

Division of Water Resources