

Big Blue River Compact
State Report
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Legislation

The 2021 legislative session has been relatively quiet related to water issues. One bill related to the Multi-year Flex Accounts passed this year that allows for newer water rights to be eligible for the program as well.

The recently passed budget includes a 10% cut in the state general fund for all state agencies in response to reduced revenues from COVID. SGF is typically used for personnel and operations.

Water Conservation

In February of this year, final approval was given to implementation of a local enhanced management area, or LEMA, in Wichita County in West Central Kansas. The LEMA reduces water use by about 15% throughout the county for the next five years. This builds on other LEMAs in previous years in NW Kansas. We continue to have Water Conservation Areas developed with around 86,000 acres currently enrolled saving around 12,000 acre-feet per year.

Litigation

In January, the Audubon of Kansas filed suit against the state and federal government over lack of water right administration related to the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in South Central Kansas. This is a long-standing issue with a senior water right at the refuge at the bottom end of the Rattlesnake Creek basin and approximately 1,500 junior groundwater irrigation wells upstream

Water Quality

The state continues to look at areas of deteriorating water quality including for Uranium in Southwest and Northwest Kansas. The Kansas Geological Survey is sampling groundwater in the Arkansas River Valley and Kansas Department of Health and Environment is sampling domestic wells in the Upper Republican

Flooding

The 2019 flood continues to focus efforts in Kansas. We continue to work with our partners in Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri on Missouri River flooding. In Kansas, we still see interest in most of our eastern basins on looking at additional flood reduction efforts, and in a couple places, we are seeing requests for help with high groundwater levels in low lying areas near some rivers.

Tuttle Creek sediment and water injection dredging

Sedimentation continues to be the major concern with Tuttle Creek Lake. During the 2019 flood, approximately 8 percent of the storage was lost to sediment in a single year. The Kansas Water Office continues to work the Corps of Engineers so seek a pilot project to implement a water injection dredging

project to pass additional sediment through the reservoir. A portion of the funding for the demonstration project was provided in the recently passed state budget.