



Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1

HIGHLIGHTS FROM COUNTY LEMA MEETINGS—JUNE 2013

(Local Enhanced Management Areas)

Western Kansas Groundwater Management District No. 1 recently held their second set of County LEMA meetings for the five counties within the District. The goal is to come up with a plan of action to help conserve and prolong the Ogallala Aquifer for future generations. Each County meeting had similar formats. District Manager Jan King gave a review of previous information followed by the GMD Board's perspective. Administrative Assistant Ashley Vondracek took notes of the discussions. Other agencies represented included the Kansas Division of Water Resources and the Kansas Water Office. The number of people in attendance (stated below) do not include GMD #1 Staff, GMD #1 Board Members and State Agency Staff. Here are some of the comments and highlights from these meetings. **(There is a decision synopsis for your reference, on the back of this page.)**

Lane County June 10, 2013 — There were 16 people in the audience. The first comment heard was, "How do we convince people we have a problem? People who should be here, are not." The question was asked if feedlots were included in the "Sheridan 6" LEMA and yes, they were. They also asked if it was feasible to get the rules from the Sheridan 6 LEMA so they would not have to recreate a LEMA process. A copy can be found at the Northwest Kansas GMD #4 website: <http://www.gmd4.org/EnhancedMgt/SD6.htm>. Attendees were in favor of being able to transfer any unused annual amount over to the next year. (A total amount of water can be given for the length of the LEMA in order to have more flexibility for the user.) Can land already in a conservation program (state, federal etc.) be exempt from the LEMA? Yes, if the majority of the people, GMD #1 Board and the Chief Engineer all agree to approve this condition as being part of the LEMA. Does the Board have a date in mind as to when they want the LEMA to begin? One to two years was suggested. The Division of Water Resources would monitor the enforcement of the LEMA. Other comments heard included: "Let's move forward and get this done. We have already wasted enough time. Try to get as many people involved as possible. Perhaps a smaller area would be better instead of the entire District. Would the Legislature override a LEMA? Probably not since the current members are in favor of the process. The Board should draw up a plan. It is too difficult for all owners to vote. Those in attendance should be the ones who vote since they are interested enough to be present. **The next Lane County Meeting will be held on August 5, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. CDST.**

Wichita County June 11, 2013 — There were 56 people in the audience. Most of the discussion included various conservation factors with various years for the length of a LEMA. Discussion included a 20% conservation factor for a 5 year period, 30% for 5 years, 40% for 5 years, or use the past 10 years and exclude the 3 highest and 3 lowest years' usage. The question was then asked, percentage of what? The discussion then turned to which years' data would be the comparable years. The average usage of 2008—2012 was considered as well as just using the 2012 year. It was noted that the Division of Water Resources would be in charge of enforcement but that the LEMA proposers would decide the consequences as long as it was more strict than the State's regulations. Minimum and maximum inches per acre were discussed. The maximum included 15" down to 12". The minimum was 8". Of course the question was asked as to which acres would be used, the average amount of acres over the past 5 years or the highest amount of acres during any one year of the past 5 years. Transfer of water between wells was discussed. Most were in favor of irrigation units whereby the amounts of several wells could be added together and used as needed for a certain pivot. The length of time for a LEMA ranged from 4 years to 10 years. The question was asked if the State could come in and trump the LEMA. It would probably not happen with the current administrators. The majority of attendees in this meeting were in favor of using a show of hands for voting purposes — at this time. They were also in favor of a 6 year District Wide LEMA with a 20 % conservation factor based on the average amount of water used over the past 5 years (2008 - 2012). A majority of the people were against transferring water between wells except for the Rules and Regulations already in place. They liked the idea of the irrigation unit consisting of the wells currently tied together to specific pivots. **The next Wichita County meeting will be held August 6th, 2013 at 9 a.m. CDST.**

Scott County June 12, 2013 — There were 48 people in the audience. The first topic to be discussed was the voting process. Some thought that each water right owner should have one vote per water right, some said that domestic water users should also have a vote (domestic wells are not required to have a water right), one person asked if they could vote in each of the two counties where they own land. The discussion also included whether or not a mail ballot to owners of land within the District would be the way to proceed or to allow those present to vote by a show of hands. A voting procedure for the finalization of a LEMA plan will need to be further discussed at future meetings. At this meeting, the majority favored a 6 year District Wide LEMA with a 20 % conservation factor based on the average amount of water used over the past 5 years (2008 - 2012). The majority wanted to have defined irrigation units for transfer of water between wells. **The next Scott County Meeting will be held August 7th, 2013 at 9 a.m. CDST.**

Greeley County and Wallace County June 13, 2013 — There was 67 people in the audience. The discussion included a basic history of water in the area. There was concern on how to explain conservation measures to landlords. The fear was that the landlords would get a different tenant. It was noted that the new tenant would also have to adhere to the same LEMA conservation factors. There was also concern that the "big pumpers" were getting rewarded for their past usage if the conservation factor is based on the past 5 years' average. It was the general consensus to have a 6 year District Wide LEMA with a review during the LEMA, and to have a 20% conservation factor based on the average amount of water usage during the past five years (2008 - 2012). The audience was not in favor of transferring water but did like the idea of having irrigation units. **The next meeting is planned to take place in Tribune on August 8, 2013 at 1 p.m. MDST.**

	LANE COUNTY	WICHITA COUNTY	SCOTT COUNTY	WALLACE CO/GREELEY CO
ATTENDANCE	16	56	48	67
VOTING	SHOW OF HANDS	SHOW OF HANDS	SHOW OF HANDS AS FOR TODAY	USED SHOW OF HANDS
LEMA SIZE	DISTRICT WIDE (MAYBE LEMA within a LEMA)	DISTRICT WIDE	DISTRICT WIDE	DISTRICT WIDE
CONSERVATION FACTOR	20 %	20 %	20 %	20 %
YEARS FOR LEMA	5 YRS	6 YRS AND REVIEW IN COUPLE YRS	6 YRS	6 YRS AND REVIEW DURING LEMA
YEARS FOR COMPARISON	LAST 10 YRS 2003-2012	LAST 5 YRS 2008-2012	LAST 5 YRS 2008-20012	LAST 5 YRS 2008 - 2012
TRANSFER OF WATER	ADHERE TO CURRENT RULES	ADHERE TO CURRENT RULES- LIKED TRANSFER BETWEEN WELLS TIED TO SPECIFIC PIVOT	DEFINED IRRIGATION UNITS	DEFINED IRRIGATION UNITS
DATE FOR NEXT MEETING	AUG 5TH 9 AM DIGHTON	AUG 6TH 9 AM LEOTI	AUG 7TH 9 AM SCOTT CITY	AUG 8TH 1 PM MIDST TRIBUNE