

South Fork Republican River Water User's Forum
St. Francis
June 24, 2014

Approx. 65 attendees

Media: Rural Radio Network, KRVN- Dean Erickson. (Covers NE, NE CO & central KS)

Layout of the meeting:

- Jake Worcester, KDA, did welcome and shared three questions the agencies were hoping to have answered from the locals
- David Barfield, KDA-DWR, gave a presentation
- Matt Unruh, KWO, gave a presentation on the study information from the upper Republican River Basin Conservation Projects Alliance Committee
- JJ Jones, KDA, facilitated the discussion

Questions/Comments

1. Has Colorado complied at all in giving water to Kansas?
2. If Colorado were to pump to the S. Fork instead of the N. Fork, how much would it cost them?
3. What was the effect of taking the trees out near the state line a couple years ago? Did it result in using less water?
4. (Rick Rogers, N. Sherman Co.) Pumping water out of the Ogallala near the N. Forks hurts us here doesn't it?
5. Over time if Colorado shuts off their pumping we will see the benefits, right?
6. Will their pumping onto the ground ever make it to KS?
7. Why would Colorado comply now? They never have before.
8. The chart you showed says we are using less water now. That is true because the water isn't there anymore. It is getting really hard to pump along the stream. Our well yields have declined 20-30% in the last 5 years.
9. It is clear the wells are nozzling at lower levels in the spring because by August there is no water available.
10. How smart is it to pump from the Ogallala to satisfy these water compacts since it is a finite resource? Bonny dam should be there for flood control to protect St. Francis.
11. Is KS expecting CO to put water into the S. Fork? If so, where will that come from? If CO water is coming from the Ogallala and it is dried up, how can they give us more water?

12. (Live 4 mi. N. of St. Francis) It is hard to water cattle when there isn't water in the stream. For the first time in 30 years that I can remember there is no water and we had to dig a well to water the cattle.
13. (6 mi. from the river) This is the first time in my life time that we have had no flow (70 yrs old?)
14. In the last 15 years the river has only run about two times, as a kid it only stopped running two times.
15. Is it a possibility that CO will ever retire their water rights to send water to us since they owe us the water?
16. So I understand that Colorado wants to change the rules so they can be in compliance? Is that right?
17. What are the chances of the S. Fork ever running again? How long would it take? I mean aside from rainfall, will it ever get flows again?
18. Are CO water wells monitored like ours?
19. How much increase in the flow would we get if we kill all the trees along the river?
20. If we put a reservoir in as mentioned in the study, how would we maintain it?
21. On my farm two years ago we were sucking so much air we had to put in a large casing to be able to maintain what we had.
22. Our neighbor pumps for 24 hours and then shuts off for 24 hours to allow for recharge.
23. I heard two years ago Colorado wanted KS to take over the management of Bonny Reservoir, is that true?
24. One time when I drove by Bonny Reservoir, the dam was blowing dust
25. I want your opinion; do you think we will ever have the amount of water we used to? We trash farmers do so much to keep runoff on my farm with the practices implemented, such as no till, terracing, etc. I'm my own worst enemy. Because of my practices, we will see less water.
26. We now practice rotational grazing because less grass these days.
27. (Kate Wilkin-Wells, GMD4) We have heard wells dropping off 15-20% in the last 15 years. This can directly correlate with the compact issues and less water. We need the water. Population is less in St. Francis; growth is not the reason for the decline in wells.
28. What was KS thinking to agree to the pipelines and give the credit to CO? Why did we approve the augmentation plans?
29. Heard about the pipeline project from northeast KS to Cedar Bluff (*Kansas Aqueduct Study*), we need to send water to us from South Dakota to the Republican River instead of from northeast KS.
30. Cheyenne Co. was hurt tremendously when Bonny was drained. We used it too. It helped our economy.

31. We are now losing recreation money.
32. Need to pump water to Bonny so can get water to the river again and then forgive the evaporation.
33. What were the relative numbers we would have received if not for Bonny evaporation losses?
34. Wasn't Bonny going to eventually dry up anyway?
35. Maybe the day is closer than we think for no longer using river irrigation. It isn't economical and can't be sustained. It is just the reality.
36. Question asked by KDA:
How many of you have seen a reduction in your yields? Answer- Yes (all)
How many of you have seen stable yields – answer no
How many of you have seen better yields – answer none!
37. We have stayed consistent but are not planting half the amount of corn.
38. We are trying to conserve what we have and go to alternative crops.
39. I hear that we get punished if we don't comply on our water usage/water meters, but Colorado doesn't?
40. Question asked by KDA – If were to get increased water flow would you go back to the same crops you used to plant? Would you continue with your conservation practices you have implemented
Answer - We will use every drop we can get!
41. We all know this makes a huge difference in the economy, - you make a dollar, you spend a dollar. We all cut back in tighter times.
42. Why do we need this water? What would I say if seated across from Dick Wolf? Bring us the water so we can irrigate, we need it for the same reasons you want it. If can't comply then offer money.
43. We had to drill a second well for our house because it was only pumping 4 gal/min. We couldn't even run the washer. We still can't do anything else when someone is showering.
44. (Adam Smith-a Wallace Co. Commissioner running for state office) Need to remember that while we lose water for irrigation, also losing evaluation for property taxes, you won't be able to afford your taxes
45. I heard a rumor, KS didn't want any more water because Milford can't hold anymore water
46. Is CO going back to court?
47. (From Sherman Co.) You touched on economics and crop yields – Now having 20-30% less yields and when do that it is less seed bought, chemicals purchased, and less money spent at the dealers, etc. This is huge to all of our communities. We have to learn how to do more with less now. We have to address this water problem or we won't have water to support our houses. We have to address it now!

48. The S. Fork enters into Cheyenne Co., so anything that impacts the river, affects Cheyenne Co. drastically and it's people.

49. Can you put a timeline to this process what is the next step?