

## MINUTES

### WATER MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

### KENTUCKY FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

January 24, 2017

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The Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group met at the United States Geological Survey Kentucky Water Science Center in Louisville, Kentucky on Tuesday, January 24, 2017.

Working Group members present were: Steve Coleman, Chair; Warren Beeler; Sharon Furches; Pat Henderson; Kenneth Imel; Kevin Jeffries; David Rowlett; and Larry Thomas. Working Group members absent were: Todd Clark; Nancy Cox; Rusty Cress; Terry Gilbert; Pete Goodmann; Gary Larimore and Keith Rogers. Ex-officio members present were: Michael Griffin, State Director, U.S. Geological Survey; and Kim Richardson, Director, Kentucky Division of Conservation. Ex-officio members absent were: Tom Fern, State Director, USDA Rural Development; and Karen Woodrich, State Conservationist, NRCS. Others in attendance were: Bill Caldwell, KDOW; Dale Booth, KDOW; Steve Higgins, UK; Biff Baker, GOAP; Pete Cinotto, USGS; Randy Bayles, USGS; John McCauley, KDA; Sarah Love, KDA; Amala Ankem, KDA; Stuart Foster, KY Climate Center; Mark Ferguson, NRCS; Steve Blandford, NRCS; Amanda Robertson, FSA; Mark Lord, Congressman Brett Guthrie's District Director; David Chinn, Monty's Plant Food Company. This meeting was staffed by Joe Cain.

This meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m., EDT by Chairman Steve Coleman, who welcomed and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. Introductions were made. Chairman Coleman thanked USGS for hosting the WMWG meeting.

Chairman Coleman asked the Working Group to consider the minutes of the December 14, 2016 meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Kenny Imel, and seconded by Mr. Kevin Jeffries second that:

**"We approve the minutes of the December 14, 2016 meeting."**

Motion passed.

Chairman Coleman reminded the Working Group that a depository of meeting information (presentations, useful links, supporting literature and minutes) is located on Kentucky Farm Bureau's website at [www.kyfb.com/water](http://www.kyfb.com/water).

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Dr. Stuart Foster, KY Climate Center, summarized the 2016 climate conditions for Kentucky. He noted there were several significant rainfall events last year that was followed by drought and wildfires. The climate went from extremely wet to extremely dry last year, but ended up pretty much on average for the year. 2016 was the 4<sup>th</sup> warmest year and the 44<sup>th</sup> wettest year. He noted Kentucky has a young stream gauge network and that it takes 30 years of data to be able to establish trends. The other models suggest 2017 will be a normal weather pattern, not la Nina or el Niño. There are not clear signals what our weather pattern will be this year for temperature or rainfall; some think we may see slightly higher precipitation levels. Extremes are likely to continue and he recommended Kentucky needs to continue to prepare and adapt to these extremes.

Mr. Pete Cinotto, USGS, previewed USGS' Eco Mapper Sonar to the Working Group. The Eco Mapper is a self-propelled, self-navigating device that generates high-resolution maps of water quality, water currents, bathymetry, and sonar imagery. He discussed their new water visual mapping site. Mr. Cinotto noted that aquifers are declining unevenly around populated areas and used the Mississippi River deep aquifer as an example. The aquifer edges are being recharged by rainfall creating "young" water while the more reliable resource of "old" water, more than 100 years old, doesn't recharge readily from rainfall.

Mr. Randy Bayles, USGS, discussed where Kentucky is with USGS water levels. The Climate Response Network consists of about 130 wells monitored as part of the Groundwater Resources Program, supplemented by wells in some States monitored as part of the Cooperative Water Program. The water-level changes in the Climate Response Network should primarily reflect climatic variability and not human influences. The climate variations of interest are those that affect recharge on monthly and longer time scales; not barometric or tidal influences. He said they usually need about 10 years' worth of data collected before the results can be published as reliable. The Climate Response Network is adding a few wells to monitor impacts of climate changes in each state each year. In Kentucky, USGS is considering putting some old monitor wells back online and making them real-time continuous measurements. Kentucky's four Climate Response Network wells are located in Middlesboro, Lexington, Elizabethtown, and Viola. In addition, Mr. Bayles briefly discussed the 2015 HB 1319 "Volunteer Monitoring Network" in Indiana where the department of natural resource is require to cooperate with USGS to establish a program under which agricultural producers voluntarily report water use by their agricultural operations (includes both ground and surface water) and provide monitoring data to the natural resources commission, the department, and the USGS. The WMWG noted that this would be a topic they would like to learn more about at a future meeting.

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Mr. Bill Caldwell, Kentucky Division of Water reported the next Kentucky Water Resources Board will be held on February 2. Colonel Beck, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will present at the meeting on farm water storage and Section 6 items dealing with surplus water. He noted agriculture can irrigate from Corps controlled waters. The KWRB is finalizing prioritization of recommendations and noted several things the WMWG developed will likely be part of developing the state water plan. Mr. Caldwell mentioned that the Water Board has established several smaller working groups to focus on specific issues.

Ms. Dale Booth, Kentucky Division of Water, discussed the Floyds Fork Stockholder meeting and how they are developing a strategy to improve producer participation in the Ag Water Land component of the Ag Water Quality Act. Goals include getting more ag water plans completed and raising public awareness of what positive steps are taking place in the Floyds Fork Watershed and how those steps benefit water health within the watershed. She noted currently they are looking to develop a website that would centralize information, available resources and allow farmers to interact and discuss what BMPs worked best on their farm.

Mr. Mark Lord, District Director for Congressman Brett Guthrie, discussed Green River Locks and Dams issues relative to the Corps relinquishing control of locks and dams on the Green and Barren Rivers. He noted the Rochester Lock and Dam has been transferred to a tri-county group as a continued water supply for the region. He noted the likelihood that the dams will be removed would be slight due to the \$3 million dollar price tag for removal.

Chairman Coleman opened up for discussion the potential for on-farm water resource pilot projects and BMP development the WMWG could recommend to land owners. Dr. Steve Higgins, UK, and Mr. Steve Blandford, NRCS, discussed possible BMP ideas involving cover-crops, crop residue, no-till crops and building soil organic matter to improve soil health. They also talked about water harvesting techniques such as water bladder, irrigation wells, and surface water structures. The WMWG was encouraged to look at the Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) Program as a possible funding source for some projects. Chairman Coleman reminded the Working Group it needs to have a plan developed of what projects they want to accomplish in hand and work with the right partners to go after the grant opportunities when available. He would like to have a state wide project plan where each Congressional District can develop examples of BMPs that can impact their community. It was noted the deadline for CIG Grants is March 10, 2017.

Chairman Coleman opened the floor for additional comments or suggestions by the Working Group. Dr. Stuart Foster, KY Climate Center, announced Ms. Courtney Black, Project Manager, Midwest DEWS, is drafting sections on strategies to submit to stakeholder groups. The strategies include vulnerability assessment

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section that looks at aquifers and the increasing demand from municipals and agriculture and also looks closely at transportation needs of river basins and watersheds.

Chairman Coleman announced the next Kentucky Farm Bureau Water Management Working Group meeting will be held Wednesday, March 29, 2017 at 10:00 AM, CST, at the UK Grain and Forage Center of Excellence located at 1205 Hopkinsville Street in Princeton. The next meeting date scheduled is Wednesday, April 26, 2017 at the Eden Shale Research Farm near Owenton, KY.

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned.

**Recorded by: Katie Weatherholt  
Administrative Assistant**

**Approved by: L. Joe Cain, Director  
Commodity Division**