

Sunflower H2O Initiative
December 20, 2011
Planning Assistance to States (PAS) Program
Kick-Off Meeting

A large number of the Sunflower H2O Initiative stakeholders were present at a Kick-Off meeting called by the consulting firm, C.H. Guernsey & Company, OKC. Ken Senour, with Guernsey, was spokesperson for the team of partners also attending the meeting on Tuesday, December 20, 2011 at the Community Bible Fellowship Church, 2853 NE Curry Lane, Medicine Lodge, KS. Others present that will be working with the project were Michael Dewings and Angela Aikman, C.H. Guernsey & Company, OKC; Bryan Taylor, US Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District (USACE); Margaret Fast, Kansas Water Office (KWO), Topeka; Jeff Shamburg and Bryan Ford, Bartlett and West, Topeka.

Ken Senour, called the meeting to order by stating that this was not a public meeting, but a forum to meet the partners and explain what everyone's roles will be over the next few months during the completion of Phase II of the project. Guernsey will be working with Bartlett and West on evaluating and identifying potential surface water and ground water sources.

The Corps of Engineers has a contract with Guernsey to work together. The Corp (USACE) will be looking at the recreational value to the area if it is determined that a body of water would be the water source for the H2O Initiative. Margaret Fast and the Kansas Water Office will provide the in-kind service to connect with the Corp (USACE), Guernsey, Bartlett & West and the Local Initiative.

Mr. Senour gave a history of the project. Jan. 2008 - Phase I was the Water Story; all participating local water districts, cities and Counties provided a story about their water coverage area. A preliminary Engineering report with Bartlett and West was completed.

April 2009 – Regional meetings were held with Sunflower H2O possible stakeholders.

June 25, 2010 – Planning Assistance to States (PAS)

January 18, 2011 – Signed with the State

May 17 – USACE received non-Federal Funds to assist with the project.

Sept. 16, 2011 – Task order awarded to Guernsey

November 2011 – Guernsey received final Needs Assessment from KWO

This initiative started with 9 counties and is down to five remaining Counties.

Bryan Taylor, USACE, shared that they were able to get Federal funding to do the \$200,000 study. He also stated that they would be using the Needs Assessment to help with their portion of the report. Guernsey will be responsible for the Potential Surface Water Sources and the Potential Groundwater Sources. His office will be working on the Preliminary Recreation Analysis and some Cost Estimates. Once everyone does their portion, a comprehensive report will be done by Maya Dehner.

Mr. Taylor stated that they are not authorizing any construction; this report will be a tool to look at all of the possibilities of providing water resources to the stakeholders.

Margaret Fast, KS Water Office, stated that her office along with the Kansas Rural Water Districts' staff, looked at the 5 year records for use and operational water use. Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment (KDHE) data was also obtained. The Oklahoma Water Resources board also gave information to help with the Needs Assessment for the Oklahoma stakeholders participating in the Initiative. The Rural Water District played a major role in getting the Needs Assessment completed. Ms. Fast shared that the State may want to eventually participate in the development of a recreational lake to provide a water supply source.

She also shared that several “Emerging Issues” were added to the Needs Assessment before it was finalized. One of those issues was the fact that high temperatures and the lack of rainfall throughout the summer created a statewide drought especially having a huge effect upon the south Central Kansas area. Also, the oil and gas industry is booming currently that is impacting water demands in the stakeholder counties. Small cities and RWD’s are not facing any current water supply constraints or shortages in the foreseeable future; but many years down the road may see a problem.

Various concerns were discussed during the Question and Answer segment with Margaret Fast. Sunflower H2O committee needs to keep those who are working with the project updated on other emerging issues. Every community needs to have a back-up source for most of its services and water is one that is not easily refillable.

Ken Senour shared that in Oklahoma, back in the ‘40s, ‘50s and ‘60s a survey was done to map out 125 reservoirs that were never built. In recent years, they were able to relook at those 125 and find 39 reservoirs that were viable to be built or that had the best opportunity to develop. Eastern Oklahoma is water rich and Western Oklahoma is water poor. Guernsey was hired to look at a pipeline to transport water from one side of the state to the other; what they found was that Western Oklahoma should look at a regional water system.

Mr. Senour explained what kind of background it takes to carry out a project of this magnitude. He gave his background and shared what the other representatives brought to the table as far as their background. All very well qualified to carry out this project.

In their study, they will also be looking at the “fatal flaws” that could keep the project from moving forward. Those things could be endangered species, cultural resources, wetlands, etc. He stated that mitigation can be done in most cases.

The group had taken a tour of three different sites on Monday (day before the meeting) in order to get the visual on the three sites that have been mentioned. Mr. Senour shared that they had received from the H2O steering committee an earlier study done many years ago by the Bureau of Reclamation. This study included a site on Turkey Creek; Elm Creek which intersects with Amber Creek and is known by the latter in the earlier study; and Sandy Creek is N.E. of Medicine Lodge. The Elm Creek/Amber Creek site has been studied the most over the years. There are some closed water sites in Kiowa County and northern Pratt County. There are sites in Kingman and Greensburg areas that weren’t in the closed sites shown on a map presented to the group.

There was no good water quality data on these sites. Mike Mayberry volunteered to get water quality samples from these three creeks at a couple of specific locations.

Mr. Senour shared a schedule:

March, 2012 – Guernsey to submit a draft report.

August 2012 – the USACE will present their document

By the end of April, Guernsey will have the final report completed with public review and then the Corp will look at the recreational study on the project.

Opportunity was given to ask questions and make comments.

A question was asked about the Amber Creek Reconnaissance Study – Mike can e-mail it out to whoever wants to see it.

At the time the Amber Creek study was done an Environmental study was not a part of this study. Whoever is called in to look at the Sec. 404 permit has a lot of items that need to be reviewed to do an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Those that have the most scrutiny are KS Dept. of Wildlife and Parks and the Cultural Resources (Native American Indian related).

A Cumulative Impact Study will be done by the Corp of Engineers to look at the impact of other creeks downstream from a reservoir or other impacts that might be caused.

There is a good chance that the folks from Guernsey and from the Corp will not be returning to the area to collect more information. And the next step in the Sunflower H2O Initiative would be determined later after the final report is completed.

The group took a break for a delicious lunch served by Six-L Catering from Medicine Lodge.

After lunch there was more open discussion:

- Cost Analysis – would be done but would not include the cost of getting a water supply to communities.
- Amber Creek in the study done earlier had an 1800 square foot surface area
- We have another phase that we need to be looking at getting money for. Ken Senour shared that one large community they were working with was putting up \$750,000 to look at other avenues of water sources.
- Through the Bureau of Reclamation there are funding opportunities for use and reuse of water.
- The Corp will provide a report to us with the water resources identified.
- The PAS program provides Legislators with something that is understandable to justify the grant dollars.
- With groundwater there really isn't any environmental that needs to be done. Only on surface water is there a need for an environmental.
- Harold Kline talked to the group about the "Supplement" that everyone received at the registration table. The H2O Steering Committee created the supplement to address the water quality issues that aren't covered in the Needs Assessment.
- Mark Watts mentioned that the stakeholders need to be diligent in their efforts to seek out all that we can about the emerging water issues in our communities and let Mike Mayberry or him know about them so that it can be passed on to the Consultants.
- It was suggested to get the Needs Assessment and the Supplement posted to the websites of BA County Development Inc. and for the Sunflower RC&D Area, Inc.

Ken Senour wrapped up the meeting by stating that "The process works. We are getting some federal and state help. We have their attention, which is a good thing."

The meeting adjourned around 1:30 pm.