



MEETING MINUTES

Agriculture Water Quality Authority

February 6th, 2025 | 9:30 AM

300 Sower Boulevard, # 216

Frankfort, KY 40601

Members In Attendance: Mr. Larry Thomas, Chair, Kentucky Farm Bureau; Mr. Joseph Sisk, Vice Chair, Member-at-Large; Mr. Randy McCallon, Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts; Ms. Megan Bailey-Komar, Member-at-Large; Mr. Fred Sipes, Member-at-Large; Mr. Chuck Taylor, Kentucky Geological Survey; Mr. John Chism, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Ms. Beth Williams, Division of Forestry; Dr. Amanda Gumbert, UK College of Agriculture; Ms. Sarah Gaddis, Division of Water; and Ms. Paulette Akers, Division of Water (representing Division of Conservation).

Others in Attendance: Mr. Jay Nelson, Division of Conservation; Ms. Renee Carrico, Kentucky Farm Bureau; Mr. Steve Beam, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Ms. Kathleen Saunier, Energy and Environment Cabinet; Mr. Jeff Gravitt, Division of Conservation; Ms. Johnna McHugh, Division of Conservation; Ms. Angela Billings, Division of Water; Mr. Pete Cinotto, U.S. Geological Survey; Mr. Josiah Frey, Division of Water; Mr. Ben Koostra, Limestone and Copper; Ms. Michaela Lambert, Division of Water; Mr. Robert Guess, Crittenden County Conservation District; Mr. Eric Allness, Kentucky Natural Resources Conservation Service; Ms. Kristine Whybark, Division of Conservation; and Ms. Kim Barton, Division of Conservation.

Meeting Called to Order: 9:31 am by Mr. Larry Thomas.

Roll Call of Authority Members: Quorum met.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes from November 21st, 2024. A motion to approve was made by Ms. Sarah Gaddis and was seconded by Dr. Amanda Gumbert. **Motion carried.**

Old Business:

- DOW approval of recently passed Streams & Other Waters BMPs: Mr. Jay Nelson informed the Authority regarding the approval of the Best Management Practices (BMPs) by the Division of Water.
- AWQA Business Rules: Mr. Jay Nelson presented the AWQA Business Rules to the Authority. The Authority discussed necessary modifications additional provisions. Mr. Nelson will send an updated draft to the members of the Authority.

New Business:

- Committee Reports:
 - *KASMC*: Mr. Pete Cinotto notified the Authority about KASMC's upcoming meeting scheduled for March 26th, 2025. Mr. Pete Cinotto is currently finalizing the location and will send out invitations by Friday.
 - *Farmstead*: Ms. Kim Barton introduced herself to the Authority as the new Farmstead Committee Chair. She noted that the Farmstead BMPs, noting that they need to be reviewed and updated. Ms. Barton will contact the current members to schedule a meeting.
 - *Pesticides & Fertilizers*: Not attended.
 - *Livestock & Poultry*: Mr. Fred Sipes emphasized the need to schedule another meeting for March of this year. He mentioned that during their last meeting, they addressed adding a BMP on stillage and finalizing the remaining BMPs.
 - *Crops*: Not attended.
 - *Silviculture*: Ms. Beth Williams reported receiving an update from John Reinstette, sourced from Steve Kull, regarding 2024 statistics. The Division of Forestry conducted 3,025 inspections in 2024, including 823 new sites. Of those 823 sites, approximately 300 resulted in enforcement actions. Additionally, there were 10 bad actor designations last year, three of which were repeat offenders. Ms. Williams also mentioned that the BMP board is awaiting action due to four expired terms. She noted that efforts are underway with the EEC Cabinet and other organizations to fill these positions.
 - *Streams & Other Waters*: Ms. Paulette Akers reported that the committee met recently to work on 2 new BMPs. The Pond Maintenance BMP should be ready for next meeting. The Karst Protection BMP will take a little longer.
 - *Education & Outreach*: Dr. Amanda Gumbert mentioned that the team met in mid-November and planned to share information at several winter events. Ms. Johnna McHugh and Ms. Paulette Akers took the lead on presenting at these events, including a Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, FFA professional development event, the Commodity Conference, and Owensboro Ag Day. Thanks to their efforts, the team had a presence at all these events.
In early January, Ms. Paulette Akers and Dr. Amanda Gumbert discussed creating a video to show at Farm Bureau meetings. They're working with the Ag

Communications team to figure out the next steps. They plan to feature a farmer in the video who can talk about how they use their Ag Water Quality Plan. They're still working out schedules and locations for filming.

Dr. Amanda also presented Ag Water Quality information to new farmers in Taylor County, continuing their outreach efforts.

Ms. Paulette Akers mentioned that they added four new success stories to the Ag Success Story Map, bringing the total to 16 stories. These stories are part of their efforts to share information from farmers to other farmers.

- *Quarterly Update of AWQA Related Violations:* Mr. Jay Nelson stated in the last three months of the year (fourth quarter), there were two violations, both in LaRue County and both related to stillage issues. For the entire year, there were a total of 35 violations.
- *New Vacancy (FSA):* Discussed later in meeting.
- *Updates from Members:*
 - Mr. Josiah Frey stated DOW is currently updating the Nutrient Reduction Strategy Biennial Report, which should be ready in about a month. One update already made is to the Gulf Hypoxia webpage this is including an improved online story map tool. This update will help showcase and quantify the progress being made across the state.
 - Dr. Amanda Gumbert discussed the following with the Authority:
 - Shop Talks: Dr. Amanda Gumbert stated the "Good Idea Shop Talks" are wrapping up today at 12:30 PM. These are virtual meetings where farmers discuss conservation practices and troubleshoot challenges. They have had great participation from Kentucky farmers, including both newcomers to conservation and experienced ones.
 - Western Kentucky and West Tennessee Meetings: Dr. Amanda Gumbert met with farmers and non-operating landowners in Western Kentucky and West Tennessee to identify barriers to implementing edge-of-field practices, like vegetative buffers. This was a partnership with The Nature Conservancy.
 - Mr. Jay Nelson stated the Division of Conservation recently finished judging the Jim Claypool Art and Writing Contest and announced the winners. This year's contest had over 41,000 entries statewide with Art having over 32,000 entries from 82 counties and Writing having approximately 11,000 entries from 73 counties. The theme this year was Forest Health, and next year's theme will be Water Quality.
 - Ms. Johnna McHugh stated that there will be three practice dates in Frankfort at the KSU Research Farm on March 14, 24, and April 1 for the Envirothon. The Envirothon regional competitions will be at the West Kentucky 4H Camp on April 11, and at the Lloyd Gates Wildlife Management Area on April 26. The state competition is May 14-15 and will be at the FFA camp in Hardinsburg.

- Mr. Jay Nelson gave an update on the Watershed Conservancy Districts and the ongoing issues with watershed dams. Mr. Jay Nelson reported that the Soil and Water Conservation Commission approved Kentucky State Cost Share Program and Environmental Grant applications.
- Mr. Larry Thomas mentioned that the next AWQA field day meeting is scheduled for May 8th at Eden Shale Farm.
- Mr. Jay Nelson informed the Authority that there is an opening on the Authority since Mr. Dean Schamore has left FSA. Mr. Larry Thomas suggested Mr. Jay Nelson reach out to Mr. Clark Sturgeon to discuss a replacement.
- Ms. Sarah Gaddis stated that she contacted someone on the State Fair Board about hosting the Authority meeting in August at the State Fair. She was given a choice between two rooms, both equipped with streaming capabilities to support a hybrid meeting.
- Mr. Randy McCallon mentioned that the KACD Convention will be held from August 2-5 at the Crowne Plaza in Louisville. This year, it's being held in conjunction with the Southeast Regional NACD Convention, making it a combined event.
- Ms. Beth Williams mentioned the University of Kentucky received a grant to subsidize the cost of logging bridges for loggers. This will make the bridges more affordable. They hope to have many of these bridges installed and in use on creeks within the next few months. By the next meeting, she expects to have a success story or report to share with more details.

Next Meeting: May 8th at Eden Shale Farm Owenton, KY

Adjourn: 10:12 am.