MEETING MINUTES

Kentucky Agricultural Water Quality Authority

February 17, 2026
300 Sower Blvd., Frankfort, KY
Room #216

Authority Members

Name	Organization
Larry Thomas (Chair)	Kentucky Farm Bureau
Jay Nelson	Division of Conservation
Josiah Frey (proxy for Sarah Gaddis)	Division of Water
Beth Williams	Division of Forestry
Joseph Sisk	Farmer at Large
John Chism	Department of Agriculture
Chris Howard	Environmental Organizations
Megan Komar	Farmer at Large
Amanda Gumbert	University of Kentucky
Randy McCallon	Kentucky Association of Conservation Districts

Other Attendees

Name	Organization
Steve Beam	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Johnna McHugh	Division of Conservation
Michaela Lambert	Division of Water, Non-Point Source Section
Kristine Whybark	Division of Conservation
Pete Cinotto	United States Geological Survey
Kimberly Barton	Division of Conservation
John Reinstetle	UK Robinson Forest
Paulette Akers	Division of Water
Kathleen Saunier	Energy and Environment Cabinet
Renee Carrico	Kentucky Farm Bureau
Nat Colton	Woodford County Conservation District

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Larry Thomas called the meeting to order. Attendees introduced themselves and their organizational affiliations. The meeting was conducted in a hybrid format, with some members attending in person and others joining via Zoom.

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes from the November 20th meeting were presented for approval. A motion to approve was made by Josiah Frey and seconded by Beth Williams. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

3. OPERATING GUIDELINES

A draft of the updated *Operating Guidelines* had been distributed to members via email prior to the meeting. All recommendations from previous Authority meetings had been incorporated. No further changes were proposed.

Motion to approve the *Operating Guidelines* was made by Jay Nelson, seconded by Joseph Sisk. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously. Johnna McHugh indicated the finalized guidelines would be posted to the website.

4. NEW BUSINESS – COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The following committee membership changes were discussed. These new committee members were appointed by Larry Thomas:

- Lewis Bradley and Todd Griffin were appointed to the Crops Committee.
- Megan Hill added to the Education & Outreach Committee.
- Josiah Frey and John Chism added to the Livestock Committee.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ag Science Monitoring Committee

Reported by Pete Cinotto, Chair.

- Next meeting: March 12th at 9:30 AM, in person at USGS; Teams virtual option also available.
- Agenda will include: KGS presentation on the Groundwater Monitoring Network; WKU presentations on the Mesonet; potential discussion on nutrient research topics.
- Encouraged Authority members to invite interested parties to the meeting, as it is open to the public.

Farmstead Committee

No report by Kim Barton, Chair.

Pesticides and Fertilizer Committee

Adam Andrews, Chair, not present.

Livestock Committee

Fred Sipes, Chair, not present. Johnna McHugh gave following updates.

- Most livestock BMPs are complete and ready for approval. One BMP requires additional work: *Equine and Poultry Waste Feeding*.
- A new BMP for distillers' grains use is under discussion; no meeting yet held on this topic.

Crops Committee

Adam Andrews, Chair, not present.

Silviculture BMP Board (Forestry)

Reported by John Reinstetle, Chair.

- 2025 KDF compliance statistics: 3,036 site inspections across 771 separate timber harvest sites; 106 written warnings; 12 emergency closings; 12 "bad actor" designations. Written warnings represent less than 1% of site visits—a positive compliance trend.
- BMP Board membership now at 11 of 13—highest membership level under current chair's tenure. Two positions with expired terms are being worked on.
- Matt Crawford (Kentucky Geological Survey) will present to the BMP Board on groundwater mapping tools relevant to BMP planning at the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for mid-April to mid-May (after fire season).
- Beth Williams reported on upcoming scheduled trainings (Kentucky Master Logger and White Oak Sustainability).
- KDF has established 3 BMP demonstration areas statewide. 2026 locations: Pennyrile State Park/Forest and Kentucky Ridge Forest (Catmore area). Demo areas include examples of water crossings, including bridges.

Streams & Other Waters Committee

Reported by Paulette Akers, Chair.

- No meeting held since the last Authority meeting.
- Committee is actively monitoring the legislative session for any proposed changes to the definition of "Waters of the Commonwealth." The committee stands ready to review all BMPs if such changes occur.

Education & Outreach Committee

Reported by Amanda Gumbert, Chair.

- No committee meeting since the last Authority meeting.

- Two tabling/outreach events occurred since last meeting—at the Kentucky Farm Bureau Convention and Kentucky Cattlemen's Convention; Paulette Akers and others staffed the table.

6. QUARTERLY VIOLATIONS REPORT – Q4 2025

Reported by Jay Nelson. Division of Water reported 7 total violations in Q4 2025, distributed as follows:

- Dairy operations (3): Christian County, Monroe County, Todd County
- Beef operations (1): Laurel County
- Swine operations (1): Christian County
- Crop violations (2): Russell County

Primary citation in most cases was failure to maintain an agricultural water quality plan. Additional notes and concerns were displayed on a violation map shared during the meeting.

7. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A nominating committee needs to be formed prior to the next meeting. Jay Nelson agreed to chair; Joseph Sisk and Amanda Gumbert agreed to serve.

8. MEMBER / STAFF UPDATES

Division of Conservation – Jay Nelson

- New DNR Commissioner: Jim Cable (previously Director of Abandoned Mine Lands) has been appointed; has been in the role approximately two weeks. Added to Authority mailing list.
- National Watershed Coalition Spring Workshop: Coming to Kentucky this year on April 7–9 in Bowling Green, KY. DOC assisting with organization; will include site visit to a large watershed structure.
- Special Called Meeting of the Soil and Water Conservation Commission: Scheduled for Thursday of this week to approve state cost-share contracts (delayed due to federal government shutdown).
- Legislative Presentation: Presenting to the Tobacco Oversight Committee the following Monday on funding for state cost-share and conservation districts.
- Conservation District Online Supervisors Training: Recently completed; increasing focus on water quality/science content based on positive feedback.
- KACD Area Meetings: Begin in March; DOC staff will be on the road for several weeks.
- Art & Writing Contest: Judging recently completed. Theme this year was water/wetlands. Approximately 46,000 statewide entries (up slightly from last year). Results posted on social media.
- Envirothon: Season approaching; this year's topic is non-point source pollution. Division of Water is sponsoring two of five competition sections this year.
- Next Authority meeting site: Considering a forestry BMP field visit (location TBD, tentatively Taylor Farm); members encouraged to attend on-site.

Division of Water – Update on Hypoxia Task Force

- Division of Water attended the annual Hypoxia Task Force meeting two weeks prior; reviewed what other states are doing on nutrient management.
- Kentucky assessed as performing comparably or better than peer states; lessons still being identified.
- A regional meeting (organized through USGS/ORSANCO) is planned for March; a follow-up report will be provided at the May meeting.

Division of Forestry – Beth Williams

- UK Extension (Michael Ammerman) secured a 3-year grant to subsidize bridge costs for Kentucky Master Loggers.
- In 2025, 130 bridges were sold (18 to 24 ft, prefabricated/panel style); program expected to significantly improve water quality on logging operations.
- Year 2 funding confirmed. Year 3 pending. Bridges incorporated into BMP demo areas.

University of Kentucky CAFE – Amanda Gumbert

- A new Kentucky Conservation Vendor Services Database is now available (link shared in meeting chat).
- Designed to help landowners and farmers find vendors who can install conservation practices.
- Still being populated; vendors are encouraged to register their services.
- Collaborative effort involving Fish & Wildlife, Division of Forestry, KSU, DOC, and UK.

UK Department of Forestry & Natural Resources – John Reinstetle

- Dr. Steve Price has accepted the position of full-time Department Chair for the UK Department of Forestry & Natural Resources.

Kentucky Farm Bureau – Renee Carrico

- Legislative session is active; KFB is simultaneously planning its next policy advisory committee cycle.
- Members who have served on advisory committees should confirm continued interest via email.
- The Environmental Stewardship committee will be convening; Larry Thomas will be contacted to help schedule the first meeting.
- Key emerging issues expected to come before the committee: data center resource/energy demands, and weather manipulation legislation (KFB has existing policy positions on these topics).
- Some Authority members may be asked to provide subject matter testimony even if not formal committee members.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Thomas thanked all attendees. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting will be held on-site (location TBD) on May 7, 2026.

Minutes prepared from recorded transcript – February 17, 2026