Kansas Water Program Task Force

July 21, 2025

Task Force Charges

- **Evaluating major risks to the quality and quantity of the state's water supply, including any impact on current and future economic growth and population stability;**

← **We will begin here today.**

- Evaluating steps that the state must take to define and achieve a future supply of water for Kansans; and

- Evaluating current funding for water in the state and determine whether such funding is sufficient to address the water issues included in the state water plan, including the state's current and future water infrastructure needs.

Agenda for the next two meetings:

Today

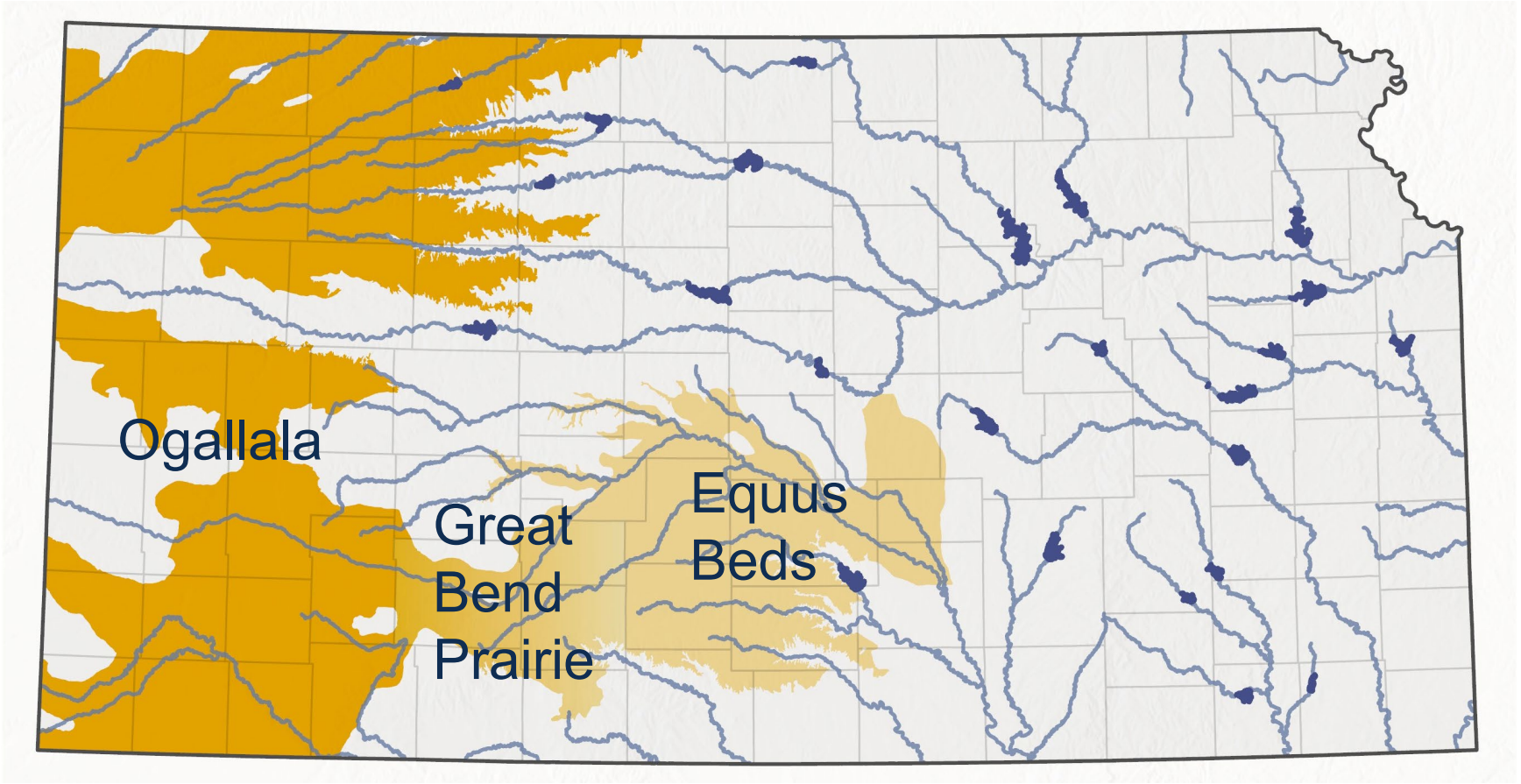
- An **overview** of water management, funding, and planning in Kansas (30 mins)
- Evaluate current and future risks to **Groundwater Quantity**, including current interventions (1 hour)
- Evaluate current and future risks to **Surface Water Quantity,** including current interventions (1 hour)

Next Time

- Evaluate current and future risks to **Surface and Groundwater Quality**, including current interventions (1 hour)
- Evaluate current and future risks to **Water System Resiliency and Infrastructure**, including current interventions (1 hour)
- Evaluate **other risks** to water supply including management improvements, educational needs, and more (30 mins)

A (Brief) Overview of Water Management, Funding, and Planning

Where does your water come from?



High Plains Aquifer

24 Reservoirs

Rivers

Water Management: Statutes

- Water Appropriations Act
- Obstructions in Streams
- Clean Water Drinking Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- State Water Resource Planning Act
- State Water Plan Storage Act

Water Management: State Agencies*

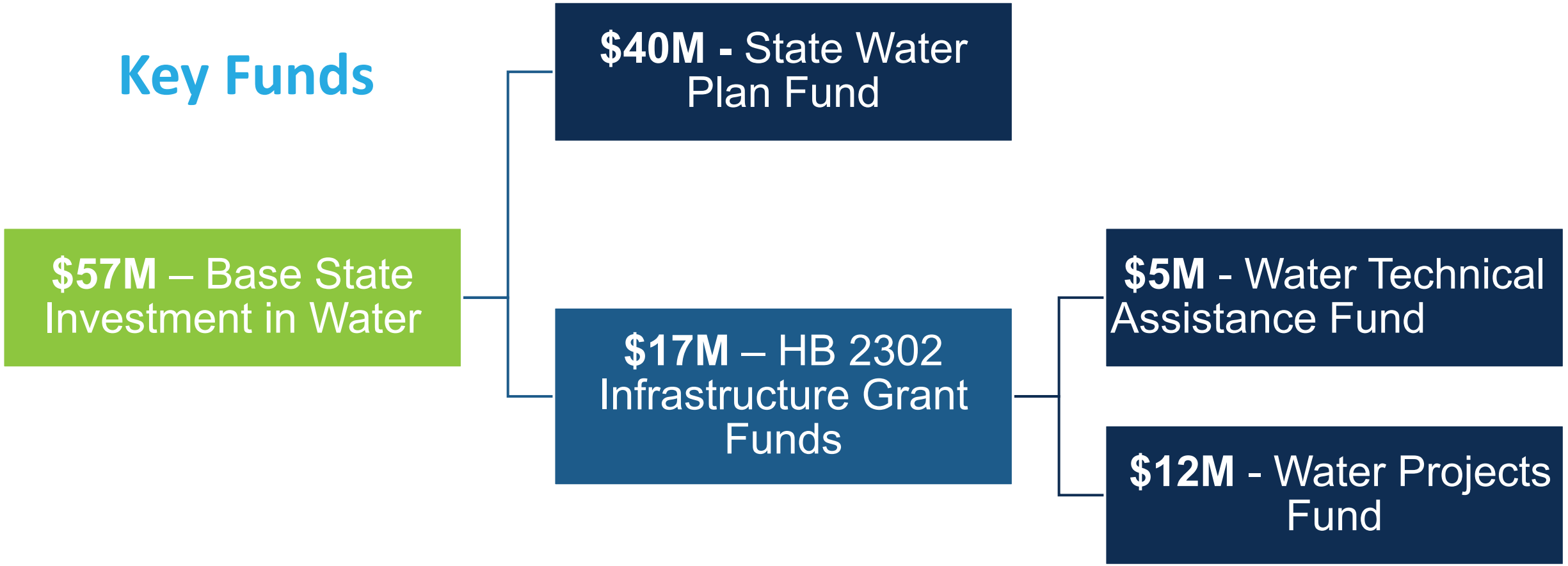
Primary Water Agencies and Functions

KDA-DOC	KDA-DWR	KDHE-E	KWO
Conservation Program Implementation	Water Quantity Management	Water Quality Management	Water Policy and Planning
Conservation District Coordination	Water Appropriations	Public Water Supply	State Water Plan Development
Landowner Programs	Water Structures	Contamination Remediation	Reservoir Operations
Watershed Dam Construction	Interstate Compact Coordination	Watershed Health Initiatives	Education and Outreach

*Other partner agencies include Kansas Geological Survey, Kansas Biological Survey, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Kansas Corporation Commission, Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas State University

State Funding for Water

Key Funds



State Water Plan Fund

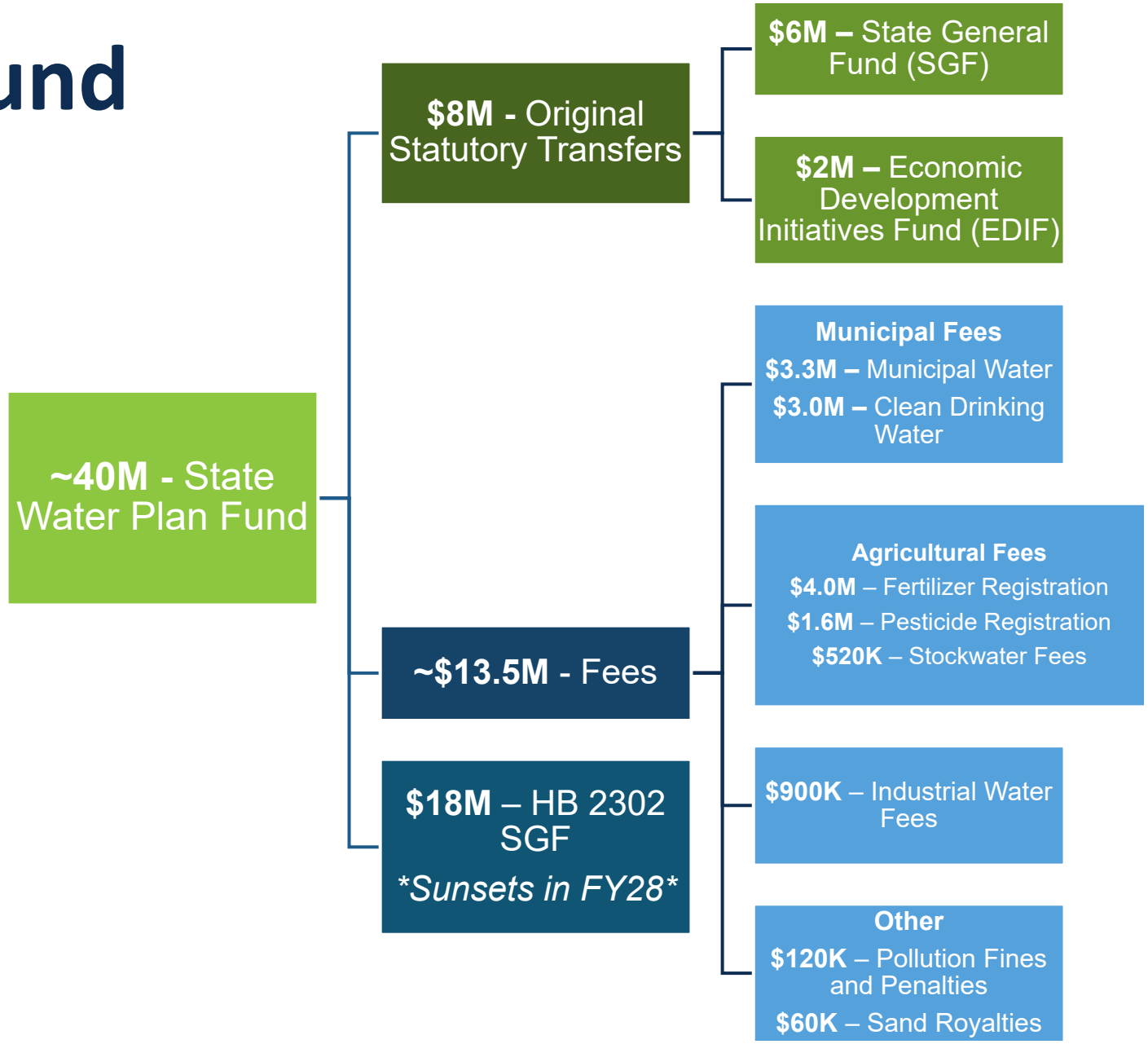
- Created in 1989 (KSA 82a-95)
- Funds used for implementing the Kansas Water Plan
- Funded by fees and transfers
- Shared between multiple agencies.

State Water Plan Fund - Kansas Water Authority FY2026 Budget Recommendations

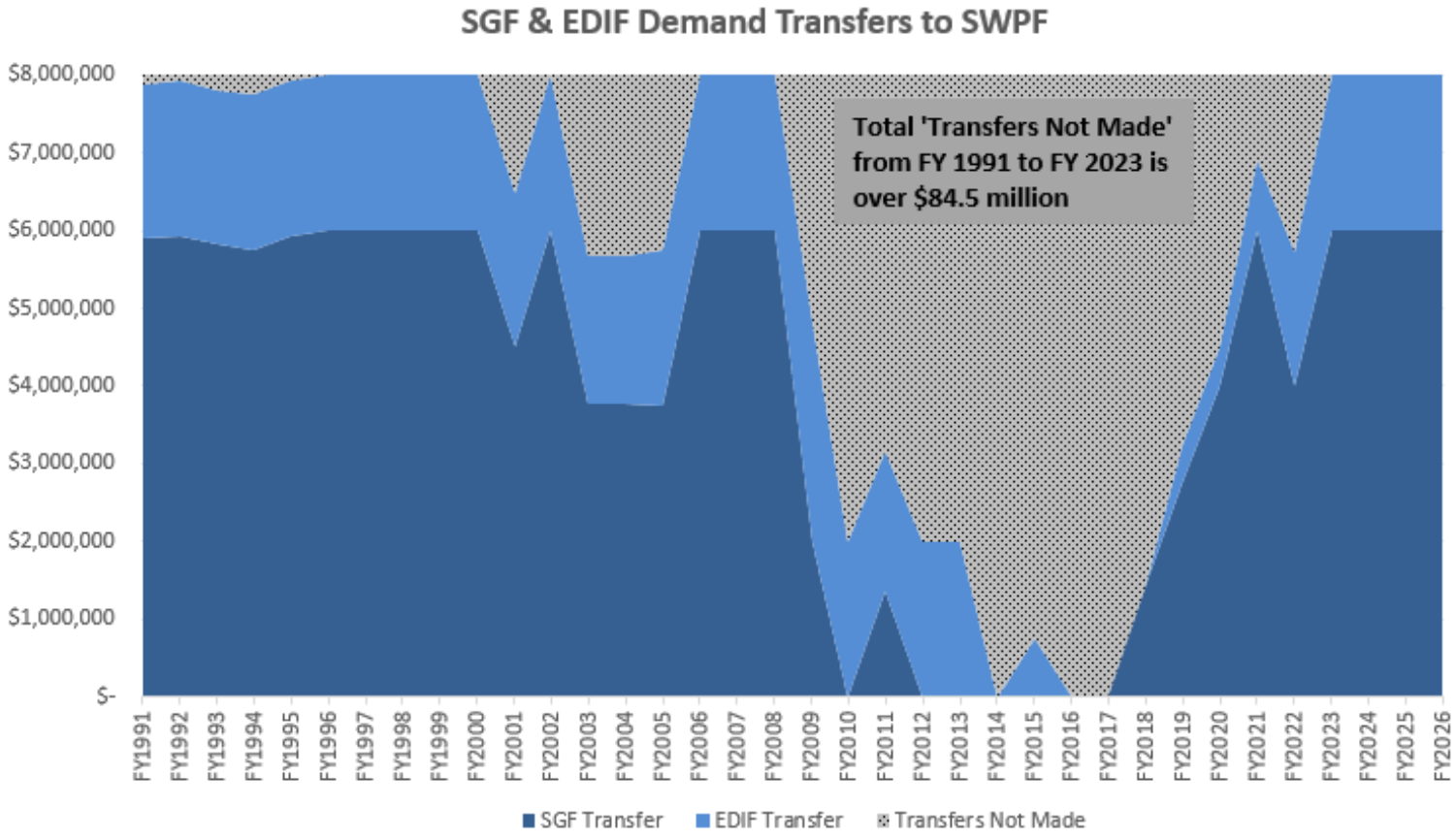
EXPENDITURES	FY26 KWA/Agency Budget Recs	FY26 Legislature
Department of Health and Environment		
Contamination Remediation	$ 2,117,220	$ 3,117,220
Local Environment Protection Program	$ 650,000	$ 800,000
Nonpoint Source Program	$ 446,213	$ 446,213
TMDL Initiatives	$ 395,942	$ 395,942
Drinking Water Protection Program	$ 800,000	$ 800,000
Watershed Restoration/Protection (WRAPS)	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,000,000
Aquifer Recharge Basin	$ -	$ -
Equus Beds	$ 75,000	$ 75,000
NEW - District Engineer Program	$ -	$ -
Harmful Algae Bloom Pilot	$ 155,934	$ 155,934
Surface Water Trash Removal	$ -	$ -
Small Town Infrastructure Support	$ -	$ -
SUBTOTAL- KDHE	**$ 5,640,309**	**$ 6,790,309**
Department of Agriculture		
NEW - Domestic Water Rights Quantification Project	$ -	$ -
Interstate Water Issues	$ 541,029	$ 541,029
Water Use Database Modernization	$ 250,000	$ 250,000
Subbasin Water Resources Management	$ 704,740	$ 704,740
Irrigation Technology	$ 2,550,000	$ 2,550,000
Crop and Livestock Research	$ 450,000	$ 450,000
NEW - Sorghum Research	$ -	$ 1,000,000
Soil Health	$ 400,000	$ 400,000
Water Resources Cost Share	$ 3,500,000	$ 3,500,000
NEW - Stockwatering Efficiency Program	$ 500,000	$ 500,000
Nonpoint Source Pollution Asst.	$ 1,871,401	$ 1,871,401
Aid to Conservation Districts	$ 3,502,706	$ 5,252,706
Water Transition Assistance Program/CREP	$ 1,554,142	$ 1,250,000
Dam Construction Rehabilitation	$ 3,000,000	$ 3,000,000
Water Quality Buffer Initiative	$ -	$ -
Riparian and Wetland Program	$ 154,024	$ 154,024
Streambank Stabilization	$ 2,000,000	$ 2,000,000
Kansas Reservoir Protection Initiative	$ 2,000,000	$ 2,000,000
SUBTOTAL- KDA	**$ 22,978,042**	**$ 25,423,900**
Kansas Water Office		
Assessment and Evaluation	$ 1,231,255	$ 1,500,000
Aquifer Modeling/AEM Project	$ -	$ -
NEW - Water Planning & Project Development	$ 1,000,000	$ 1,500,000
NEW - In-Lake Sediment Management Initiative	$ -	$ -
NEW - Independent Program Evaluation	$ 360,000	$ 450,000
MOU - Storage Operations & Maintenance	$ 778,711	$ 778,711
Stream Gaging	$ 698,708	$ 698,708
Conservation Assistance for Water Users	$ 500,000	$ 500,000
Reservoir and Water Quality Research	$ 500,000	$ 500,000
Water Quality Partnerships	$ 1,464,890	$ 1,464,890
KS Water Plan Education & Outreach Strategy	$ 400,000	$ 400,000
High Plains Aquifer Partnerships	$ 2,000,000	$ 2,000,000
Kansas Reservoir Protection Initiative	$ -	$ -
KRPI Transfer to KDA	$ -	$ -
Equus Beds Chloride Plume Remediation Project	$ -	$ -
Flood Response Study	$ -	$ -
Arbuckle Study	$ 300,000	$ 300,000
Water Injection Dredging (WID)	$ -	$ -
John Redmond Reservoir Dredging Project		$ 1,500,000
HB 2302	$ 850,000	$ 850,000
SUBTOTAL- KWO	**$ 10,083,564**	**$ 12,442,309**
Department of Wildlife & Parks		
Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Program	$ 224,457	$ 224,457
University of Kansas - Geological Survey	**$ 1,740,000**	**$ 1,740,000**
State Employee Pay		$ 65,197
Total State Water Plan Expenditures	**$ 40,666,372**	**$ 46,686,172**

State Water Plan Fund

How is the SWPF Funded?



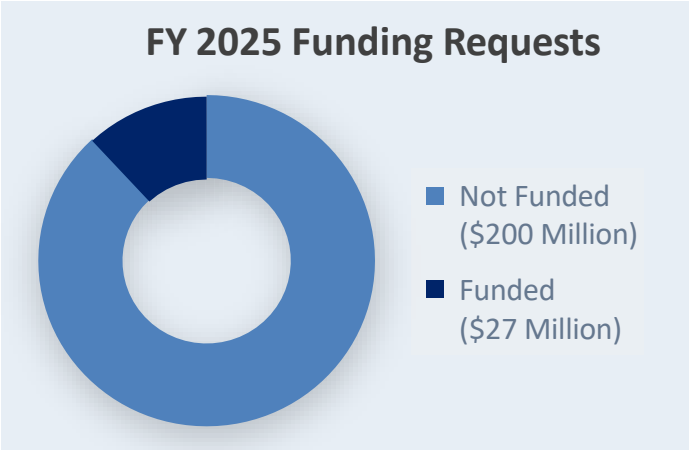
State Water Plan Fund

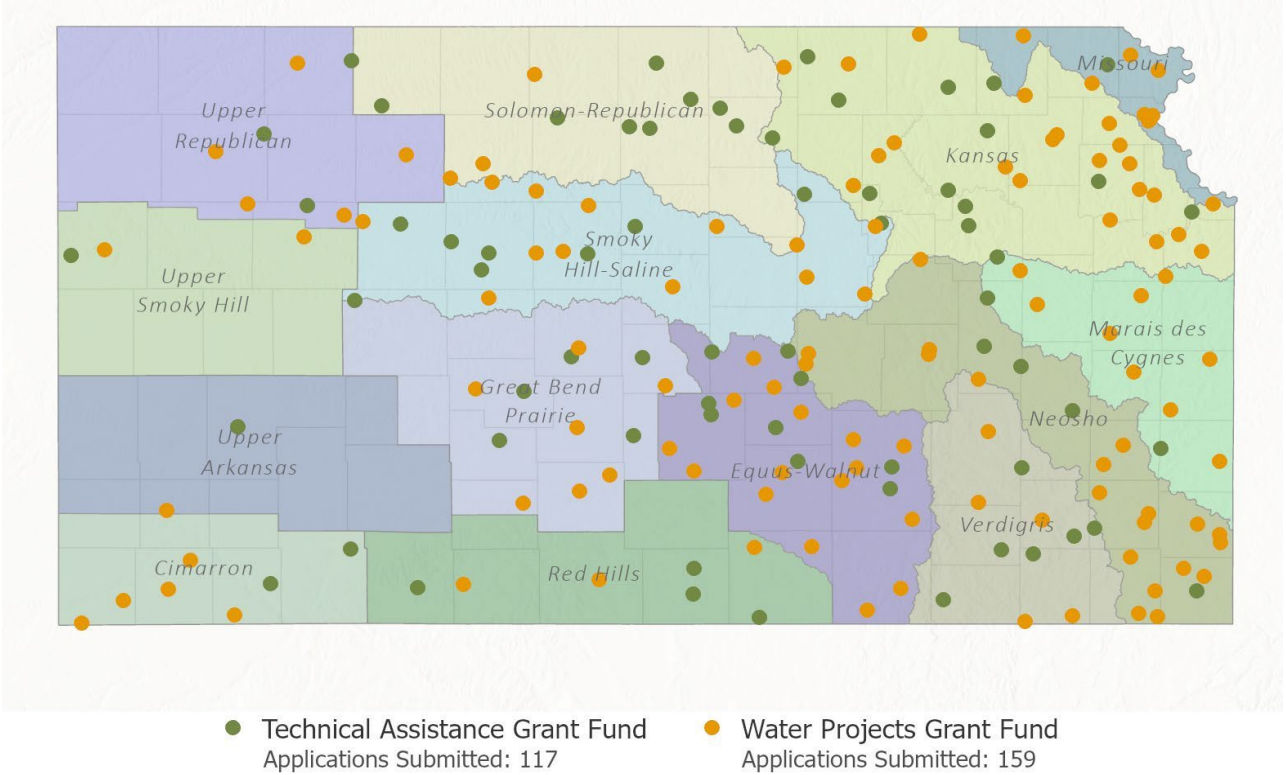


History of SGF and EDIF Transfer				
	SGF Transfer	HB2302 Transfer	EDIF Transfer	Transfers Not Made
FY1991	$ 5,895,000		$ 2,000,000	$ 105,000
FY1992	$ 5,940,000		$ 2,000,000	$ 60,000
FY1993	$ 5,820,000		$ 2,000,000	$ 180,000
FY1994	$ 5,760,000		$ 2,000,000	$ 240,000
FY1995	$ 5,932,800		$ 2,000,000	$ 67,200
FY1996	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY1997	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY1998	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY1999	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY2000	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY2001	$ 4,500,000		$ 2,000,000	$ 1,500,000
FY2002	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY2003	$ 3,773,949		$ 1,900,000	$ 2,326,051
FY2004	$ 3,773,949		$ 1,900,000	$ 2,326,051
FY2005	$ 3,748,839		$ 2,000,000	$ 2,251,161
FY2006	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY2007	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY2008	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY2009	$ 2,000,000		$ 2,846,126	$ 3,153,874
FY2010	$ -		$ 2,000,000	$ 6,000,000
FY2011	$ 1,348,245		$ 1,802,141	$ 4,849,614
FY2012	$ -		$ 2,000,000	$ 6,000,000
FY2013	$ -		$ 2,000,000	$ 6,000,000
FY2014	$ -		$ -	$ 8,000,000
FY2015	$ -		$ 750,000	$ 7,250,000
FY2016	$ -		$ -	$ 8,000,000
FY2017	$ -		$ -	$ 8,000,000
FY2018	$ 1,400,000		$ -	$ 6,600,000
FY2019	$ 2,750,000		$ 500,000	$ 4,750,000
FY2020	$ 4,005,632		$ 500,000	$ 3,494,368
FY2021	$ 6,000,000		$ 913,325	$ 1,086,675
FY2022	$ 4,005,632		$ 1,719,264	$ 2,275,104
FY2023	$ 6,000,000		$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY2024	$ 6,000,000	$ 35,000,000	$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY2025	$ 6,000,000	$ 45,000,000	$ 2,000,000	$ -
FY2026	$ 6,000,000	$ 35,000,000	$ 2,000,000	$ -
Total				$ 84,515,098

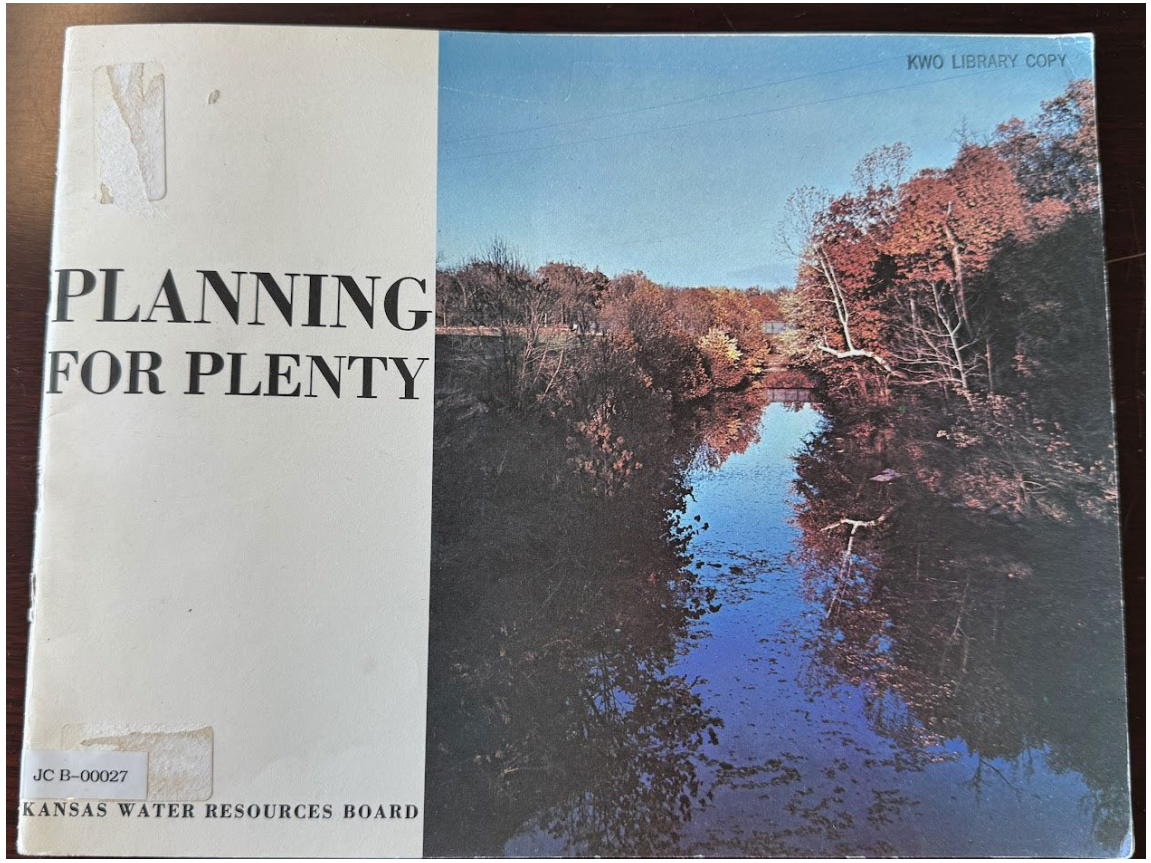
HB 2302 Grant Program

- Water Projects and Technical Assistance Funds created by HB 2302
- Statutorily funded at **$17M** per year; **$12M** for Projects and **$5M** for Technical Assistance
- Ongoing grant program managed by **KWO**; Sunsets with HB 2302 in FY28





History of Water Planning



"While western Kansas has extensive ground-water reserves, the recharge. . .is generally quite small. In several areas, the current use, mostly for irrigation, is many times the amount of annual recharge and water levels are declining. In some local areas, the decline has been great enough to require the lowering of pumps. Although the problem is not generally critical at present, it will intensify as irrigation increases."

- Planning for Plenty, 1966

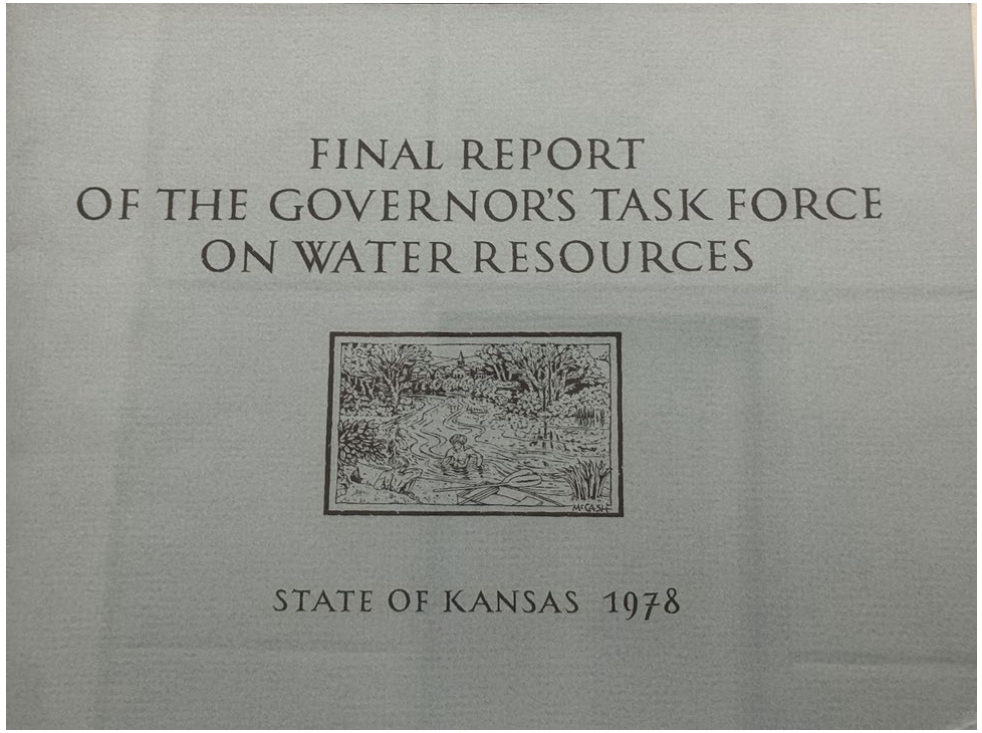
History of Water Planning

“New problems keep arising as the state continues to intensify agriculture and industry. The new hazards will be associated largely with the new chemical environment in which we live. The growing use of insecticides, new products from the petro-chemical industry, and the wastes of livestock feedlots will cause problems which will require changed methods of waste handling and treatment.”

- Planning for Plenty, 1966



History of Water Planning



Annual measurements in **January 1978** on depth to water in the Ogallala Aquifer:

- Overall, Water table ***continued to decline*** overall despite 1977 being a "wet" year.
- Northwest KS: precipitation 10% above normal; water table decline of almost ***2 feet in 1977*** (more decline than past average).
- West-Central KS: precipitation normal; water table decline of ***1.7 feet in 1977*** (more decline than past average).
- Southwest KS: precipitation 10% below normal; water table decline of ***"rather startling four feet" in 1977*** (double the past average).

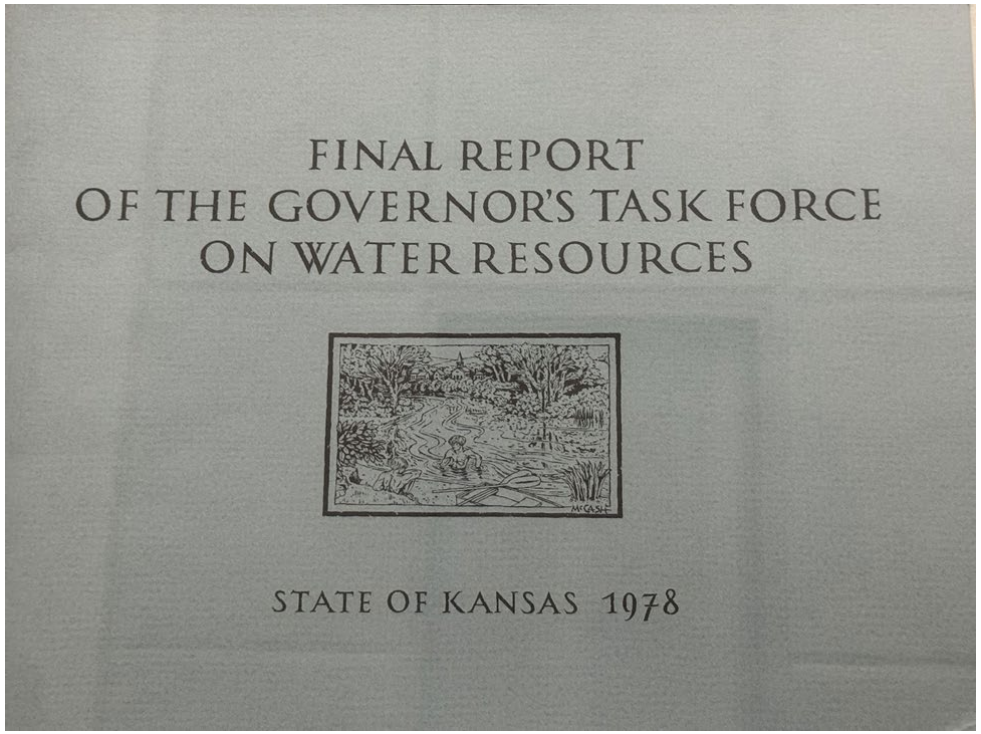
History of Water Planning

"[s]ome irrigators are already experiencing water shortages, giving clear warning of the possible consequences of *continued mining* of the groundwater" (Italics added.)

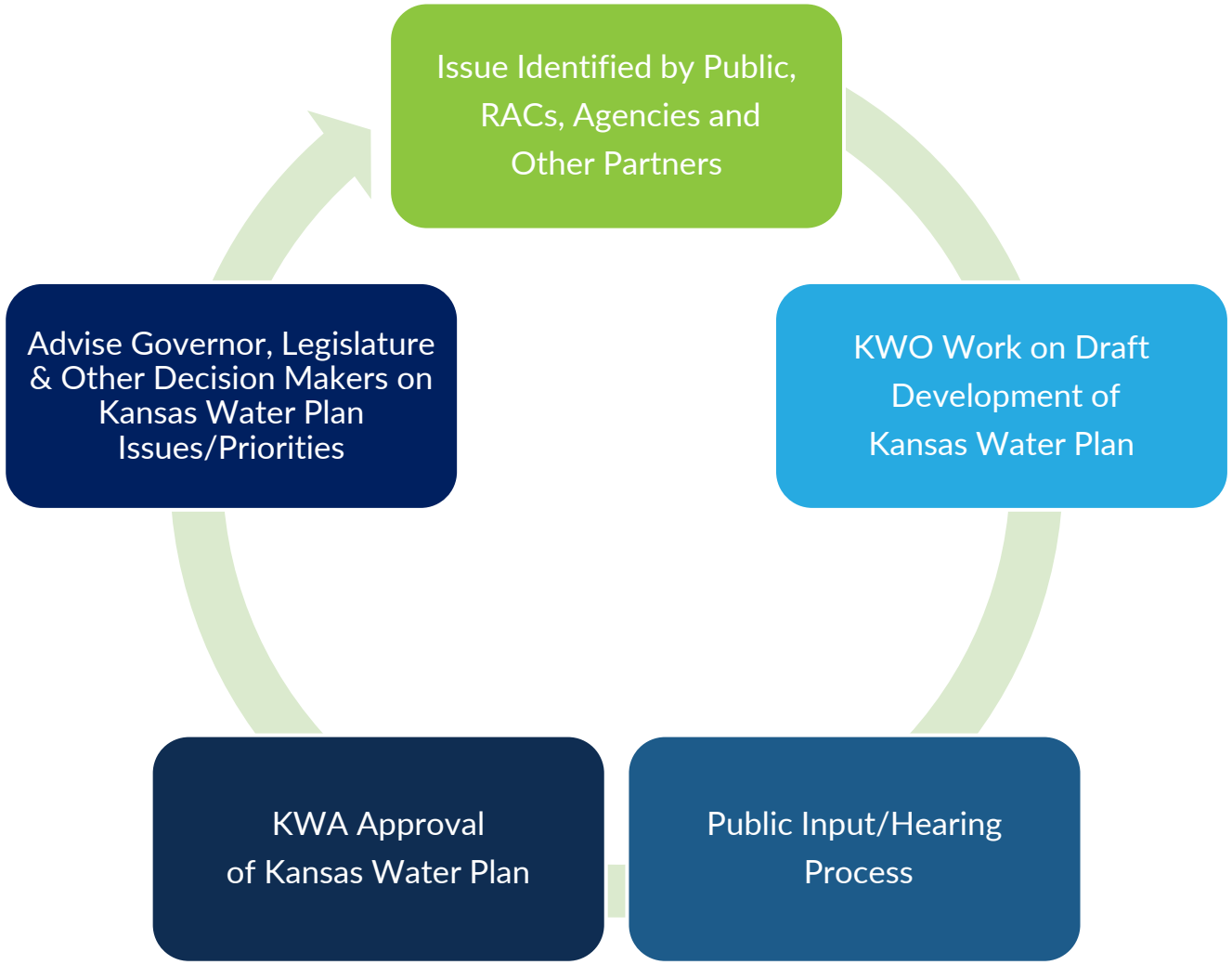
Recommended actions included:

- Metering [DWR has required this];
- Education about conservation techniques; and
- Aquifer recharge pilot projects, although

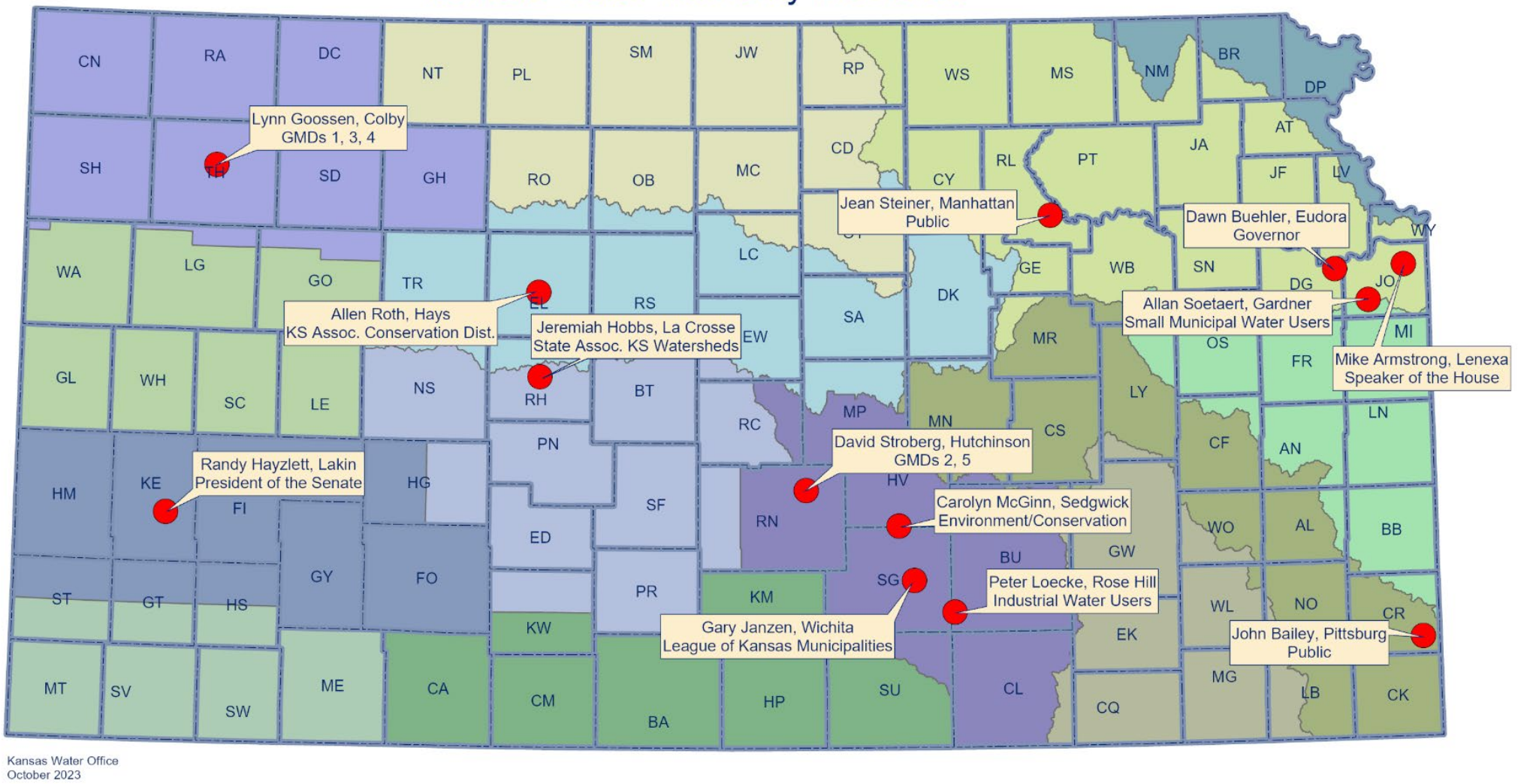
"recharge has more limited benefits than reduction in water use" and the principle factor to "limit the success of artificial recharge in western Kansas is whether or not enough surface water can ever be found. . . [statistics] were not very encouraging."



Current State Water Planning Process

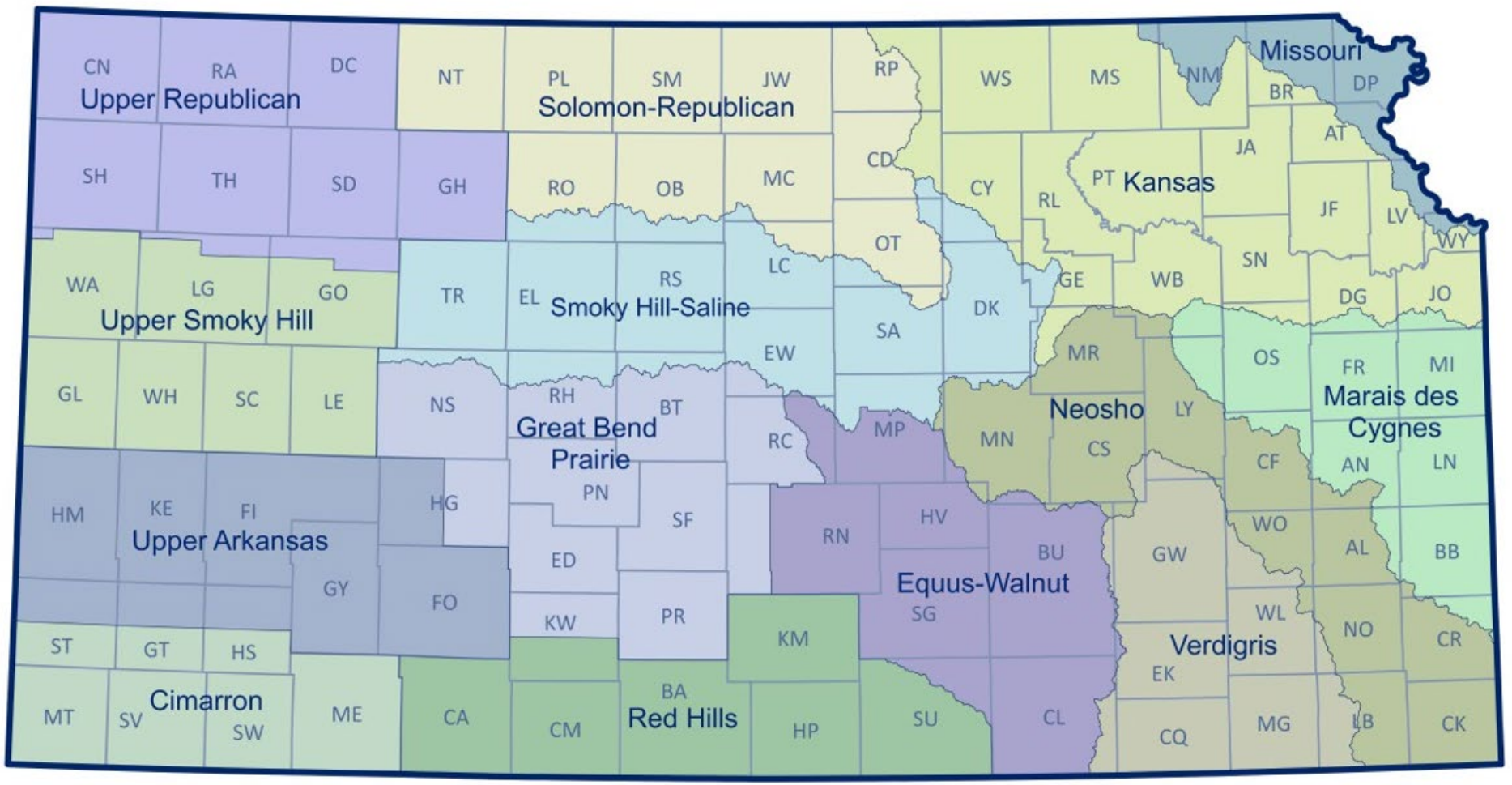


Kansas Water Authority Members



The Kansas Water Authority consists of 13 voting members who are appointed by the Governor or Legislative Leadership. State agency directors serve as ex-officio members.

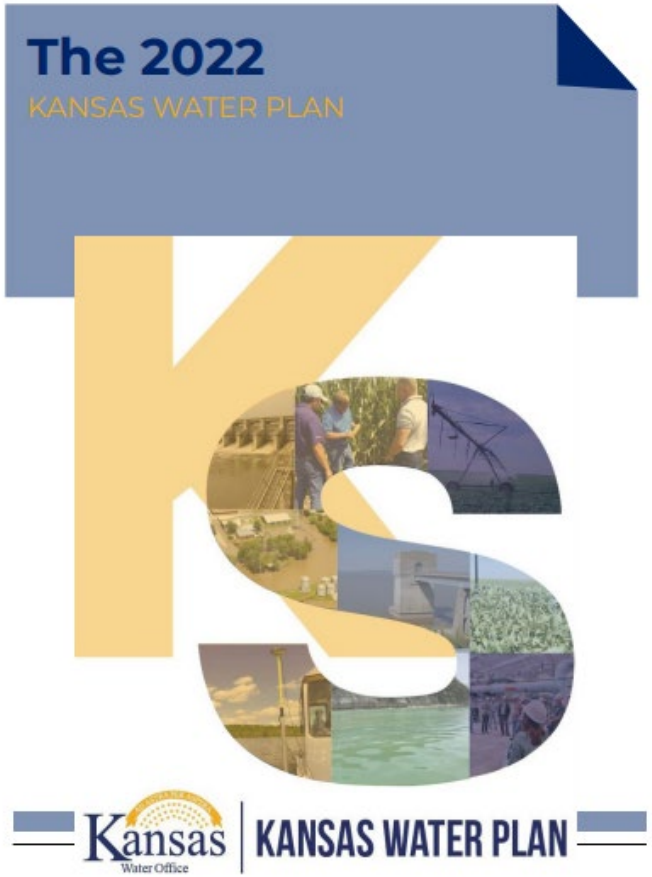
Regional Advisory Committees



Kansas Water Plan

Kansas Water Plan Update

- Completed in 2022
- 2 Live Public Comment Meetings
- 300+ Public Comments Received



Kansas Water Plan: 5 Guiding Principles



1. Conserve and Extend the High Plains **Aquifer**



2. Secure, Protect, & Restore our Kansas **Reservoirs**



3. Improve our State's Water **Quality**



4. Reduce our **Vulnerability** to Extreme Events

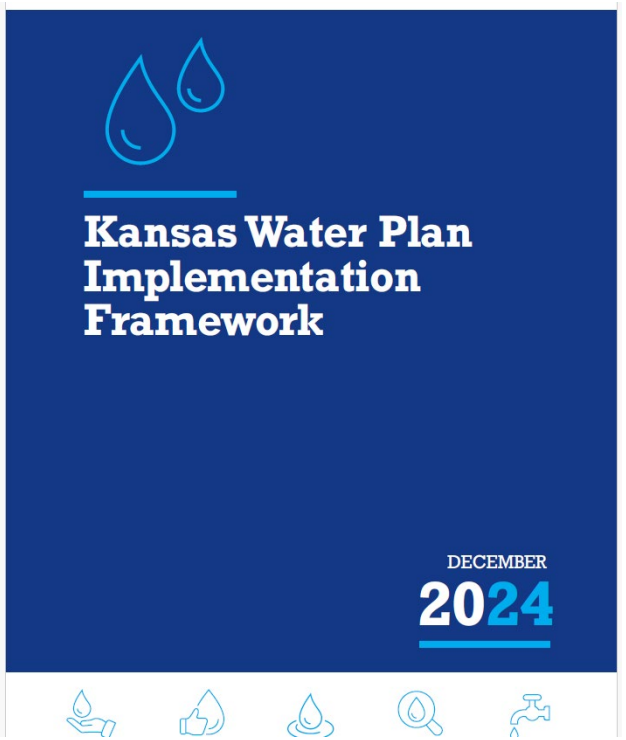


5. Increased **Awareness** of Kansas Water Resources

Recent Effort: Strategic Implementation Framework

- Craft a **long-term framework** around the 5 Guiding Principles to ensure the availability and quality of water for future generations of Kansans.

- Recommendations should include:
  - ❑ Policy changes
  - ❑ Ways to improve state capacity and water management
  - ❑ Identifying a stable funding source
  - ❑ Measurable goals and timelines
  - ❑ **Input from state and local stakeholders**



Extensive Stakeholder Outreach Informed Process

1,500+

Kansans informed the process

50+

Meetings held with **key stakeholders**:

- KWA
- RACs
- Local Consult
- GMDs

43

Clearly defined **outcomes** to achieve in the next 2 years

8

Recommendations on how to fully implement the vision of the Kansas Water Plan

Related Key Takeaways from Kansans

Kansans are supportive of increased funding given the demonstrated need and historic underfunding.

Urgency of Kansas water crisis demands we **act now.**

Thank You

Questions?