

THE KNRC WATCHMAN

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KNRC COMMITTEE REPORT - Jim Rice

Your Coalition had a busy fall and would like to update you on KNRC activities and offer some possible plans for the future.

First, KNRC lost a valuable Steering Committee member/President, Ken Klemm. Ken had a serious horse accident and with regret resigned his position as KNRC President. We understand he is doing much better and wish Ken well in his recovery. He will be missed as a great knowledge resource and inspiration to KNRC.

In addition to Ken's resignation, Nikki Schwerdfeger has submitted her resignation sighting the lack of time needed to adequately work on KNRC issues. Shawn Tasset - Ford County and Marsha Ewy - Hodgeman County were asked and agreed to serve on the Steering Committee. Additionally, the Committee appointed Commissioner Tasset as interim President. We are looking for interested individuals to fill the vacancy, which will be created in January, when V.P. Mahlon Tuttle retires from the Gove County Commission.

In September, it was good to hear the positive comments offered over the couple of days of KNRC & KLPG meetings in Garden City. There were compliments and encouragement to continue the efforts from several individuals. Congressman Huelskamp made a special effort to stop by and thank KNRC and encouraged the continuation of our efforts. Demonstrating, we have the ear of Washington. During the KLPG meeting on Friday, specific acknowledgement of KNRC and the importance of our work was offered by Stuart Lowery, CEO of Sunflower Electric, as well as, Michael White, Manager of State Government Affairs, ITC Great Plains, Topeka. State Senator Powell with Representatives Hoffman and Ryckman attended and made positive remarks concerning KNRC. These legislators have been a big

help in carrying our message to Topeka and other legislators.

KNRC has become a known commodity in the fight against the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) listing. KNRC has spent thousands of dollars on researching, developing, documenting and preparing the Findings of Fact, to include valuable information on the procedures used or avoided in the determined listing and the effects of the listing. NO one else has taken such an approach and KNRC continues that effort today in documenting harmful and negative effects of the listing to our Kansas economy. Policy Committee attendees were presented a three page impacts report on the negative effects of the LPC listing to member counties. KNRC has become the "go to" organization for information by the press, county commissioners and many other entities.

KNRC has been very busy attending to the business of protecting its members and the environment of Kansas' natural resources. Following the July meeting with Governor Brownback, members of the Steering Committee, in September, met with the Governor's Chief Legal counsel, Brant Laue and Assistant Attorney General, Burke Griggs to discuss the LPC lawsuit the State of Kansas has entered into with Oklahoma and others. KNRC will continue discussions on issues important to our members

During the KNRC Full Member Policy Committee meeting, members voted to have an Amicus Brief prepared and submitted to the court. Research is ongoing to determine, which lawsuit best fits KNRCs work. The Amicus brief will be a fixed cost and funds are available to complete and submit the brief. After the full payment to the Venable law firm for preparation of the Amicus Brief, KNRC has \$52,000 remaining.

In other action, members voted to hire an attorney to prepare the KNRC By-laws.

As your KNRC Steering Committee, we are always interested in hearing from you.

KNRC ACTIVITIES & GOALS

- ⇒ Members voted to file an Amicus Brief with the court.—the research and development of the brief are proceeding.
- ⇒ Completing preparation of by-laws, as members approved.
- ⇒ We have the ear of the State of Kansas - continuing those efforts.
- ⇒ Continuing to inform, encourage and work with State Legislators. Seek their direction to outside funding sources, as well as, keeping an open line of communication.
- ⇒ Prepare and distribute a newsletter regularly.
- ⇒ Search for dedicated individuals to supplement our steadfast Steering Committee.
- ⇒ Supplement plan for research and development of future issues, including finances.
- ⇒ Visit with member counties regularly to update or advise of issues concerning all or specific counties.
- ⇒ Monitor landscape of issues, which may affect member counties, such as BLM, WOTUS, Northern Long-Eared Bat, providing finances permit.
- ⇒ Maintain contact with industry and policy groups that have interest in LPC lawsuits.
- ⇒ Seek out companies small and large that are experiencing harm as a result of the LPC listing and work to build mutually beneficial relationships with each.

KNRC President Shawn Tasset participated in Grass March Cowboy Express, organized by Grant Gerber, an Elko County Nevada Commissioner, Rancher, and attorney. The 'Express' rode out Sept. 26th, from Bodega Bay, California on a 'Coast-to-Coast' Relay Ride with petitions in hand. A few days prior to riding into Colby, they reached out to Tasset offering to deliver KNRCs petition to Congress – riding up Pennsylvania Avenue at the culmination of the 20 day, 2800 mile trip. The Petitions call for relief from Federal Agencies with no stake in local communities not listening. The petitions' pleas regarded Endangered Species, Water, Wildfires, Wetlands and other failures of the Federal Government that destroy families, economies, forests, grasslands and animals, they were meant to protect.

They rode to change the future of those affected by Federal overreach by generating attention and awareness to the plights of ranchers and others having their rights stripped away through regulation. Shawn handed off KNRCs documents October 7th.

Shortly before riding into Colby, Gerber was knocked unconscious for a time, when his horse tripped in a prairie dog hole and fell. A few days later in St. Louis, he was examined and released, so he completed the ride to the D.C. Oct. 16. On his way home, experiencing headaches, he checked into a hospital in Cheyenne, Wyoming — where a brain bleed was diagnosed. Sadly, he died of the injuries, he was 72

Gerber grew up roping & riding before he entered the U.S. Army – achieving the rank of Captain – leading a Special Forces mountain climbing/ski team and was awarded the bronze star in Vietnam.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dear KNRC Member Commissioners,

I would like to thank all of the folks that were able to attend the Full member policy committee meeting Thursday, September 25th. Thanks are also in order for all of those who were unable to attend but continue to support KNRC and our Steering Committee. All of your words of encouragement and concern are inspiring because it demonstrates to me your continued interest in our mission.

After the policy meeting and a couple days reflection I felt it might be time to write to you about some thoughts I have been mulling over for some months now. Some of you will recognize this as you read because I have shared conversation with you on the topic. I believe, most everyone to this date at least has generally agreed.

I believe, we as county commissioners are finding that our scope of responsibilities is expanding well past what has been traditionally understood. I personally believe this to be caused by a combination of several things, among them, political landscape and social environment. The alarming disregard for property rights and ever increasing meddling and attacks on private industry and property by government, special interest groups and individuals bear testament. Perhaps, I am not telling you anything new. This is, after all, why KNRC was formed, was it not?

I hope that you are like me and have families to nurture and that you receive back from them as much as I do. I'm quite sure that you are like me in that we have jobs to perform or businesses to maintain and, of course, the day to day duties of being



Colby Kansas - Grant Gerber Elko County Nevada Commissioner (left) met with KNRC President/Ford County Commissioner Shawn Tasset to accept KNRC documents for delivery to Congress in Washington, D.C.

For 20+ years, Gerber led the fight for private property and states' rights, beginning with the Forest Service protection of the bull trout – restricting access to a road near the Nevada-Idaho line.

commissioner. But what about the extra responsibilities? Is it fair or reasonable that we should be dealing with these issues? The answer to that really matters not, does it? The burden is our duty to bear.

The amount of time required by each individual commissioner to identify, research, and interpret the impact of all of the threats to his or her county would mean all other responsibilities would have to go away. Enter KNRC. The experience and skill demonstrated by our staff are invaluable and have proven to be a great resource for me, as I am sure they have been for all of us.

I know that KNRC was formed because of the proposed LPC listing. However, I believe many of you agree with me that this fight has never been about a singular issue like the LPC. Instead, it has been about an understanding that there will be many issues with a singular objective of destroying our liberties. So while KNRC works on our behalf on the issues of LPC and BLM, let us remember also the added value we get from this organization in research and insight that I dare say none of us could accomplish on our own and available through our coalition at a scant fraction of the cost, if we had to pursue it by other means.

KNRC has direction from the policy committee meeting and I am confident and looking forward to seeing that direction implemented. I believe great things are still ahead for our coalition. I look forward to seeing all of you again soon.

Yours in Liberty,

Shawn Tasset, Ford County Commissioner

Recently, Gerber focused on ranchers' rights - opposing the listing of sage grouse as threatened, arguing Federal limits on grazing fuels wildfires at the peril of wildlife and promoting a "Smoked Bear" campaign.

Immediately apparent, when meeting Gerber, was his passion, selflessness and dedication to God, family and citizens of his county, state and this country. Although, contending with many concerns in his own region, Gerber never failed to draw attention to KNRCs battle against the unjustified Lesser Prairie-Chicken listing and the many issues he encountered, as he rode coast-to-coast. He was a truly dedicated patriot!

Upon his death, the following email was found, titled, "Dangerous Venture," sent to himself, Sept 10th – 16 days before they rode out.

"Dear family and participants... of the GRASS MARCH/COWBOY EXPRESS,

When I volunteered for the Army and went to Vietnam I did not expect the country to stop fighting if I was killed or hurt. And now I do not expect the GRASS MARCH/COWBOY EXPRESS to stop if I am killed or hurt. In both cases I believe the cause of freedom was and is worth the risk. This ride is dangerous and I accept that danger. I believe the risk is worth the danger and hope you also take that approach. Please carry on if I am killed or hurt. And then after the petitions are delivered you can scrape up my old bones and deliver them back to Elko County.

-Grant Gerber"

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Sheila's Statistics

A 2012 Published Study on Economic Impacts of Litigation by WildEarth Guardians (*WEG*) - a litigant in the suit to list the Lesser Prairie Chicken - finds:

- ⇒ Median household income lowered by estimated \$2,503.00
- ⇒ Increased County taxes to provide extra services, change of existing practices, cover new regulatory costs
- ⇒ Could jeopardize Industries [Ag, Oil & Gas, etc] representing over \$3 billion in economic benefits
- ⇒ In 2010 WEG received \$490,000 from government grants
- ⇒ 10% of WEG income from legal settlements

Example Calculations of Potential LPC Listing Impacts to KNRC Counties

	# Households x impact = loss/county/yr
Finney	12,261 x \$2503 = \$30.7 million
Ford	11,019 x \$2503 = \$27.5 million
Gove	1,177 x \$2503 = \$ 2.9 million
Hodgeman	810 x \$2503 = \$ 2.0 million
Morton	1,219 x \$2503 = \$ 3.0 million
Scott	2,065 x \$2503 = \$ 5.1 million
Seward	7,391 x \$2503 = \$18.5 million