

Kings River Watershed representatives defend purposes of the group

Quorum Court appearance was in response to questions from JP

By Mike Ellis
Carroll County News

CARROLL COUNTY — Representatives of the Kings River Watershed Partnership addressed the quorum court Friday.

Shawna Miller, executive director of the KRWP, had delivered an update on the activities of the organization at the September meeting, but she was asked to return to address some questions submitted by Anne Lichti, who had approached the quorum court in August to ask for more county supervision of the KRWP. James Sanders, chairman of the KRWP's board of directors, also attended.

In response to Lichti's questions, Miller said the KRWP was formed in 2001, and she has worked as contract labor with the organization since August 2004. The funding comes from a variety of sources, including the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the Carroll County Community Foundation, and private donations.

Miller said membership in the organization is open to anyone, not just those who live in the watershed. Sanders said, "You don't have to live here, but most of our members do." Describing his family's history in this area, he added, "My roots run deep here, and it's a personal affront to me to have people think that I would do anything to take away property rights."

Sanders said he got involved with the KRWP in 2003, after hearing of watershed issues focused on the Illinois River, where Oklahoma and Arkansas are fighting over sources of pollution. Sanders said he foresaw a similar situation between Arkansas and Missouri.

"I saw this as an opportunity to get out in front with water quality monitoring," he said. "We have proof of our high water quality."

Miller and Sanders both characterized the KRWP as a "proactive, non-governmental" agency. "I'm passionate about the fact that we are taking proactive steps to protect this resource that flows through Madison and Carroll counties," Sanders said.

Miller also answered questions about membership procedures, and the difference between public meetings and membership meetings. A meeting in July was for members only, she said, and the by-

'My roots run deep here, and it's a personal affront to me to have people think that I would do anything to take away property rights.'

*KRWP Chairman
James Sanders*

Quorum Court

laws were changed at that meeting to allow an expanded board.

Members of the quorum court suggested an annual update from the group, perhaps each spring. Miller said the KRWP's next project will be working with the City of Berryville on a stream restoration project. "We're going to need volunteers," she said.