

**MINUTES OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION  
HELD THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2014 AT  
9:30 AM CDT  
KANKAKEE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA HEADQUARTERS  
4320 W. TOTO ROAD  
NORTH JUDSON, IN 46366**

Chairman Chris Knochel called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Secretary Jim Lambert called the roll.

*Members present*

Kevin Breitzke	Larry Fisher	
Myrna Harder	Tony Hendricks	Chris Knochel
Jim Lambert	Tom Larson	Kim Peterson
Russ Pumroy	Ken Purze	Gerry Scheub
Vince Urbano		

*Guests Present*

Jerry Cannon	Jim Carter	Kerry Daily
Don Lode	Harvey Nix	Lyle Patchett
Dan Plath	Joe Skelton	Joe Toth
Christine Keil		

*Staff Present*

Jody Melton

Ken Purze asked to add Lomax Station to the Old Business Agenda.

Chairman Knochel asked for self-introductions from all guests.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Gerry Scheub made a motion to approve the September 4, 2014 meeting minutes. Kevin Breitzke seconded. The minutes were approved.

## **Finance Report**

The finance report is divided into administration and county work money. There was discussion about county amounts and funding not yet released from the state. The publication for the next Biennium will be ready before Thanksgiving. On a motion by Ken Purze, seconded by Myrna Harder, the KRBC finance report was accepted.

## **Special Business**

Dan Plath representing the Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association was present with Paul Labovitz of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to discuss a proposal to have the Kankakee River in Indiana and Illinois designated as a National Water Trail. Mr. Labovitz was formerly superintendent of the Mississippi River National Park. A designation would help bring in tourists and show off the Kankakee River as a recreational area and a destination. There are no regulations involved. There is no right of use other than that which exists. It is a label and a marketing tool. The Paddlers are working with individuals on the Illinois side to make this a two state designation and they are looking for support from the KRBC.

Vince Urbano said he would have trouble supporting this without input from the landowners along the Kankakee in Jasper County. Dan Plath said that there is no right to enter private lands, no right to establish launching areas, no change to the present usage. The NWIPA is seeking letters of support from each entity that has boat launching sites along the Kankakee as well as any private owners who might want to support it. Ken Purze stated the benefit that the KRBC has received by working on recreational uses for the Kankakee. He says it has helped immensely in selling our drainage needs because the paddlers need clean water channels too. He absolutely supports this. Paul Lebovitz reiterated that in his experience in the Mississippi River Park there were no changes in any regulations on any account. Russell Pumroy asked if this just speaks to the actual water and not the banks. Mr. Plath responded that the situation would not change from present day uses;

designation would just give the Kankakee an additional label and might help get some recreational grants to provide additional services, such as additional launches and signs. Ken Purze made a motion that the KRBC continue our partnership with NWIPA and endorse the National Water Trail designation request with an official letter. Tom Larson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Old Business**

Jasper County Surveyor Vince Urbano reported that Jasper County has received its permits for levee work from US 231 to SR 49. Work begins third week of November. There will be a path created to allow access and to repair existing damages.

Lake County Commissioner Gerry Scheub said the Lake County Drainage Board is undertaking a project to clean and repair the Niemeyer Levee from US 41 to the State Line. Range Line Road will hopefully reopen with a new bridge in August 2015. The State Line Bridge is still being designed around environmental issues. Mr. Scheub said water trails and hiking trails give more eyes to watch the issues along the Kankakee. It provides extra safety and security. Kim Peterson said Gerry Scheub has done a great job representing the Kankakee area of Lake County. Jody Melton said that he presented testimony to the IDNR concerning the proposed quarry near the Singleton Ditch. Mr. Melton said that the quarry will send more sediment into the Singleton Ditch which will enter the Kankakee in Illinois which we have been working to stop. IDNR will rule in the future on the quarry.

Tony Hendricks, LaPorte County Surveyor, said the 319 planning grant on Mill Creek is temporarily suspended until the new Drainage Board is in place. He also said IDNR has done a fantastic job of keeping the Kankakee F&W area clean along the 10 mile road.

He is working with Notre Dame in a system wide watershed study and would like to use \$30,000 of the KRBC's funds designated for the Bancroft property to use with Notre Dame instead. Ken Purze made a motion that the \$30,000 be approved, Myrna Harder seconded. The motion passed with Larry Fisher voting no.

Newton County Surveyor Chris Knochel said the DeHaan project at the Kankakee River requires coordination with Vince Urbano of Jasper County and he has applied for permits on the Kankakee River levee near the

Cameron property. The Nature Conservancy and Bob Barr will be consulted about the revegetation needed after the levee is rebuilt.

Kevin Breitzke, Porter County Surveyor, renewed several DNR permits as he revises some projects.

Jody Melton reported for Starke County that the CBBEL team and Bob Barr are working on the Yellow River project. Ken Purze made a motion seconded by Tony Hendricks that the KRBC send Jody Melton to Starke County to ask them to send a representative to the meetings if they don't respond to an additional letter.

The KRBC held a special meeting on October 1, 2014 at 4:30 pm to hear a presentation on the Waters of the United State (WOTUS) by Indiana Farm Bureau's legislative liaison, Justin Schneider. The meeting was held at NIRPC in Portage. The Corps of Engineers and the EPA are proposing changes to the Clean Water Act that have created controversy. Chris Knochel as KRBC Chairman sent a letter on behalf of the KRBC to USCOE and EPA and the Congressional delegation stating our opposition to the new language changes.

Ken Purze introduced Jerry Cannon, owner of the Lomax Station site, appearing before the KRBC to discuss the Lomax site. There have been several organizations interested in partnering with the KRBC on this site but interest waned when we could not agree on a selling price a year ago. It has been reappraised since last year. To submit to Bicentennial Commission for matching funding, there needs to be a game plan; on purchase, on maintenance, on restoration, on use, and on management. We are not there yet. Jody will begin to list partners and try to find how this plan could be prepared. Kevin Breitzke said that this is an ongoing process and we should get things together before we proceed. Jerry Cannon expressed his interest in selling Lomax Station to be preserved for historical reasons at a price he thinks is fair. The first attempt was underappraised in his thought and the second appraisal was closer to market value since sewer and water and renovations had been performed. He has been waiting for almost a year for the KRBC to proceed. He is interested in selling and if the KRBC doesn't buy, he will probably sell to someone else and the historical and situational value would be lost to the public. Ken Purze pointed out that an approved septic system is there and Kevin Breitzke mentioned the former use as a

kerosene pumping station would require environmental assessment. Chris Knochel will appoint a committee to pursue the project.

### **Election of Officers**

Gerry Scheub made a motion that Chris Knochel be elected Chairman, Ken Purze be elected Vice Chairman, Kevin Breitzke be elected Treasurer and Jim Lambert be elected Secretary for 2015. Vince Urbano seconded the motion and the election was unanimous.

### **New Business**

Jody Melton is preparing the chart for the \$2.5 million dollar request for the next Biennium. He needs some help in pinning down approximate costs for some of the projects submitted for funding. If there is a number for the Yellow River projects in Starke and Marshall County, he can figure that into the graph page. There are a couple of other projects to be defined. The booklet will be ready to distribute to members of the General Assembly before Thanksgiving. Any specific information can be forwarded to the KRBC office. Any pictures of work along the Kankakee, either completed or needing to be done, help illustrate the booklet request.

Don Lode asked if the KRBC would sponsor the 319 project in the Mill Creek watershed of LaPorte County. The KRBC members are not interested in being the sponsoring agency since it is a county watershed but the KRBC is interested in supporting the effort.

Lake County Highway Department has not cleaned out the log jam at the State Line Bridge.

The next regular meeting of the KRBC will be January 8, 2015 at 9:30 am CST at the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Headquarters.