

**MINUTES OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION  
HELD THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2015 AT  
9:30 AM CST  
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.

Ken Purze asked for a moment of silence in memory of Greg Main, a friend from the IDNR Division of Water who passed away last month.

Secretary Jim Lambert called the roll.

*Members present*

Kevin Breitzke	Dennis Estok	
Mark Kingma	Chris Knochel	Jim Lambert
Tom Larson	John Law	Kim Peterson
Ken Porter	Russ Pumroy	Ken Purze
Gerry Scheub	Vince Urbano	James Walstra

*Guests Present*

Mike Aylesworth	Robert Barr	Siavash Beik
Kathe Brunnick	Allan Cameron Jr.	Allan Cameron III
Jim Carter	Eric Courtright	Jim Fahey
Sheila Martin	Brian Meunier	Harvey Nix
Joe Skelton	Joe Toth	Mark Wunderink
David Zack		

*Staff Present*

Jody Melton

Ken Purze asked that the agenda be amended to add a report on the rental properties.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Gerry Scheub made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2015 meeting. Ken Purze seconded and the minutes were approved.

### **Finance Report**

Jody Melton said the packet shows some expenditure for the Three County Drainage Board and for Newton County. All counties have paid their 2015 share for administration. Ken Purze made a motion to accept the finance report, Tom Larson seconded and the finance report was accepted.

Chairman Chris Knochel asked for self-introductions from all guests.

### **Old Business**

Marshall County Surveyor Larry Fisher said that he had just finished cleaning the 4<sup>th</sup> sediment trap created in 2006. That work is paid out of funds created by a ditch assessment.

Kevin Breitzke, Porter County Surveyor, is still awaiting Corps permits on his Kankakee River project near the Heimberg Ditch. He is working with the Corps on a project for a culvert at the Cornell Ditch. He also has a project just east of Baums Bridge Road. Ramsey's Landing Bridge had to be cleaned of debris and trees again.

Jody Melton reported that the outlet pipe downstream of the bayou in Shady Shores in Lake County was stuck open: if a flood came there could be water backing up into the neighborhood. Gerry Scheub and Jody Melton asked Mark Wunderink to take a look at it. Mark Wunderink used a jet pressure washer and cleaned the opening out. It can now be opened and closed.

Wilderness Inquiry and the LaPorte County SWCD sponsored canoe trips and river education for schoolchildren at the end of September. The KRBC contributed \$25,000 toward the project. It was an amazing success. Much information about the Kankakee was shared. Myrna Harder said the entire

event was very professional. Ken Purze made a motion that if the event is held next year, the KRBC contribute another \$25,000. Kevin Breitzke seconded and the motion was approved.

Newton County is continuing engineering work within the DeHaan Ditch wetland areas. The Kankakee riverbank is also under review there.

John Law of the St. Joseph County Surveyor's Office said the beaver population has really been a problem this year. There is no market for the pelts and therefore no reason to hunt them.

The KRBC property known as Rivers Edge Farm has an easement that lasts for 10 years. It is in the name of Robert Klemp, the farmer with the current lease. That will be reviewed when the easements end in a couple of years. The Thayer Farm is wet and produced no crop this past year. There is discussion about wetland creation in that area. The KRBC also accepted ownership of 9 lots in Sumava Resorts in Newton County. They are vacant and wet and small.

### **New Business**

CBBEL has finished the final copy of their Yellow River report and presented a copy to Starke County Drainage Board and the KRBC. They are prepared to create a contract between CBBEL and Starke County Drainage Board to engineer a pilot project on the Yellow River. Ken Purze made a motion to approve \$200,000 of KRBC funds to allow Starke County to enter into a contract with CBBEL for this work. Tom Larson seconded.

Discussion began as to what this money would be creating? Siavash Beik from CBBEL explained that the work will consist of locating a site for a pilot project, determining what permits will be needed, what construction practices will need to be utilized, how does stream geometry factor into the conveyance of the sand and what should be expected to be accomplished. Their work will also consist of finding funding sources and interested parties and programs to achieve a complete Yellow River project. At the outset of this first phase, surveying of the entire Yellow Basin will need to be included but that will not have to be duplicated in any further work on the Yellow. A hydrologic model will also need to be created. They will also work with permitting agencies for not only this permit but future permits. Bob Barr said it is crucial to bring the regulatory agencies to join in this work and the Silver Jackets have the expertise to bring the agencies along.

This will build a model for river maintenance for all counties starting with the Yellow River.

This will be a project of national significance.

Gerry Scheub called the question, the vote was taken and the motion was approved.

*Information from the September meeting minutes as to how we got here:*

Siavash Beik for CBBEL spoke of the work they have been performing on the Yellow River and the erosion issue they are addressing. CBBEL has been contracted by Starke County to seek solutions for the sediment problem. Sand is a major problem in the Kankakee River channel and studies have shown much of it is Yellow River based.

Robert Barr from IUPUI working with CBBEL explained the complexity of the Yellow. Field studies throughout the Yellow River Basin began to narrow down the areas of erosion. USGS stream gages have quantified the erosion amounts. They have divided the Yellow into 4 sections. The upper part of the Yellow in Marshall County show that sand is being transported through the system; the banks are stable, the channel is stable. At the

Starke/Marshall County line the Yellow begins to erode and move sand from one side to the other. The channel is trying to narrow itself to carry sediment through. The Yellow River has high banks with trees being undercut by the water. The trees fall in. The geology of the Yellow River changes in Starke County. It becomes very sandy. The section between the county line and Knox is Section 3 and seems to be the main source of sand.

Brian Meunier from CBBEL explained how the gages at the county line, at Knox, and at Brems Road show what happens to the sand. Section 3 deposits large piles of sand just upstream of the Knox gage which is just upstream of the channelized portion of the Yellow. Large flood events with heavy flow cause the piles of sand above Knox to flush into the Kankakee River downstream. The channel cannot transport sediment naturally; it takes a heavy flow to push large amounts downstream. While there has been speculation for years, the USGS gages have provided data for proof.

Bob Barr said their recommendation is that conservation practices, such as cover crops should be encouraged in the headwater, flattening side slope/2 stage ditching be implemented in tributaries, design and estimate cost of an initial pilot channel for the problem areas by creating a low flow inset channel by narrowing the width at bank full depth through addition of stable shelves by using tree trunks and root systems at the toe of the banks, continue with sediment gages, and look to the Kankakee for similar assessments.

Discussion among the members talked about permitting problems of working in the floodway and the departure from usual procedures. Would a project like this be practical? It has been used in Colorado. This type of management practice would need to receive support from a group such as the Indiana Silver Jackets. Funding of a large scale project could be a challenge but a pilot project needs to be constructed to test the approach.

Russ Pumroy made a motion that CBBEL prepare a proposal for Starke County to create such a pilot project, Tom Larson seconded. The motion was clarified to state that the proposal to be created would be a cost estimate and an engineering proposal for a pilot project within the Yellow River. The proposal would be to the Starke County Drainage Board who in turn would seek funding from the KRBC. Motion was approved unanimously.

There was general discussion about the macro effects of how all this work may change the basin for the better. The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be a major player.

Chris Knochel appointed a nominating committee of Russell Pumroy, Tom Larson and Jim Lambert to prepare a slate of officers for 2016 at the first meeting of 2016.

Eric Courtright from Thayer said his area gets water from the river because Thayer has no protective banks. He has had several trees and bushes die around his home.

Allan Cameron asked if the I 65 Bridge widening project was back on schedule. He has seen several surveyors out and about. Jody Melton will check again to make sure that the south underpass is created to access the riverbank west of I 65 when that project does happen. Tom Larson asked about that section of bank west of I 65. Newton County has an engineer preparing permit applications.

The next KRBC meeting will be held on February 18, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned.