

**MINUTES OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
HELD THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 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	Dennis Estok	Larry Fisher
Rance Glinge	Randy Glinge	Tony Hendricks
Chris Knochel	Jim Lambert	Tom Larson
John Law	Don Lode	Kim Peterson
Russ Pumroy	Ken Purze	Bruce Shepherd
Vince Urbano	James Walstra	

Guests Present

Michael Aylesworth	Siavash Beik
Jim Carter	Steve Engleking
Jim Fahey	Christine Keil
Harvey Nix	Lyle Patchett
Dan Plath	Jim Sweeney
Dick Welsh	David Zack

Staff Present

Jody Melton

Chairman Knochel asked for self-introductions from all guests.

Approval of Minutes

Ken Purze made a motion to approve the February 27, 2014 meeting minutes. Vince Urbano seconded. The minutes were approved.

Finance Report

Jody Melton presented the financial report to date. Very little activity has taken place since last meeting. He did ask the KRBC for a motion to allow staff to destroy all old bank forms with KeyBank since the KRBC voted in February to move its assets to Horizon Bank. Ken Purze made a motion that the staff destroy all unused documents pertaining to the accounts with KeyBank. Kevin Breitzke seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business

Jasper County Surveyor Vince Urbano has scheduled a levee walk with US Fish and Wildlife, US Army Corps of Engineers, IDEM, surveyor's staff, interested landowners, Jody Melton and any other interested KRBC Commissioners for Wednesday April 16. They will begin at 9:30 am at the US 231 bridge north of DeMotte and proceed east. The project is scheduled to go 8 miles to SR 49. It might be a long walk.

Jody Melton reported that the Three I railroad bridge over the Kankakee River near Shelby has been cleaned out by the Norfolk and Southern. The debris did cause a water backup and Alan Cameron's property in Newton County upstream of the bridge suffered damage and had to have some emergency repair to keep from breaking. Access to that site is very difficult. There was discussion about getting access to that area when the work by the Jasper-Newton Joint Drainage Board starts near the DeHaan Ditch.

Tony Hendricks, LaPorte County Surveyor, told the board that LaPorte County Drainage Board will continue to pursue the 319 grant for the Mill Creek watershed in LaPorte County. There are several logjams within the Kankakee F&W area causing problems. LaPorte County will contract to get them out.

Dick Welsh reported to the Board that the Kankakee Fish and Game Area has spillways that let uncontrolled Yellow River water into the Kankakee. When it enters the Kankakee, it backs up the river. Those upstream are affected by Yellow River water. A year ago, several citizens, IDNR, Starke County and St. Rep. Dermody met to discuss the management of the Yellow and Kankakee waters. At that time IDNR agreed to get their engineers to study the problem and come up with a solution to prevent the spillways from raising the Kankakee. There has been no solution provided yet. Ken Purze made a motion, seconded by Tony Hendricks that the Executive Director of the KRBC contact IDNR Executive Office to find out what is being proposed at the Kankakee F&W Area. The motion was approved unanimously.

Marshall County SWCD did not receive their 319 grant request for the upper Yellow River basin either. However they have applied for a LARE grant (Lakes and River Enhancement) and can do the project with that funding, some extra money from the 319 program and any they can raise. Ken Purze made a motion that the KRBC commit \$25,000 toward the project in Marshall County and that Jody Melton will contribute time on the steering committee as in-kind services. Tom Larson seconded the motion. After some discussion, the motion was approved.

Newton County is working to identify public and private ditches within the wetlands of the DeHaan Ditch where it joins the Kankakee. Encroachments in the easements have been identified. There are problems with some access. Chris Knochel has determined on which side of the ditch the work can be done.

Porter County Drainage Board has the permit for work near the Pleasant Township Ditch and the Heimberg Ditch. The river has been high through this time and Kevin Breitzke said they are waiting for water levels to go down this summer.

John Law said the contractor cleaning the upper Dixon-Place Ditch (Kankakee River) on the south side of South Bend has completed about 4 miles of the 6 mile project. There have been issues with pipelines near and under the levees. John also said that he had noticed the south side of several levees had sloughed off and were bare. He suspects snow drifts from the winter had caused this and some protection would probably be made for those spots. Others said they had noticed that in their counties.

Dennis Estok said that more trees have collapsed into the Yellow River and one log had hit a county bridge and caused damage. He is awaiting help from the Silver Jackets to address the greater issue. The house near the county line is not for sale.

Tony Hendricks has been working with the Izaak Walton League to determine a proper model and reference for working on levees. He presented a copy of his proposal. There is a great deal of information to be gained and discussion to be had with landowners, environmentalists, Farm Bureau and Drainage Board members. Can a general model be useful? There was long discussion as to how this can be accomplished. Chris Knochel as Chairman will take the discussion and the model to the drainage board and get some feedback. It is also necessary to get Farm Bureau and the legislators into the discussion. Justin Schneider from Farm Bureau will be invited to attend the next meeting.

Tony has begun a one sheet summary of the issues of the Kankakee. It addresses farming, environment, recreation, water quality, and water supply.

The LaPorte County Drainage Board and the Izaak Walton League project for opening an old river meander is being submitted to the Bicentennial Trust Commission for funding.

The KRBC received an award from the Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association for helping with recreation on the Kankakee.

A wetland mitigation bank on KRBC property was discussed at an earlier meeting. Jody Melton is attempting to learn more about the process. It was discussed and deemed to be a good idea but complicated. More research is needed to bring this into a discussable project.

Jody Melton reported that Roy Harbaugh of North Carolina has offered to donate 8 parcels in Sumava Resorts to the KRBC. They are empty unbuildable lots that his mother owned. Taxes have been paid through 2012 but they want to give them to an organization which will not attempt to develop them in any way. There is a drainage assessment of \$5 per lot which the KRBC would pay. The lots might be useful for recreation. Bruce Shepherd made a motion to accept the lots, Ken Purze seconded. The motion was passed with Dennis Estok voting no.

The next meeting of the KRBC will be June 26, 2014 at the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Headquarters.