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General Information for ___ - speech

J.R. Black

Kankakee River Basin Partnership

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GENERAL INFORMATION FOR [REDACTED] - SPEECH

HISTORY:

THE KANKAKEE RIVER BEGINS NEAR SOUTH BEND, INDIANA RISING OUT OF MUD LAKE. IT FLOWS THROUGH INDIANA AND ILLINOIS ON ITS JOURNEY TO THE ILLINOIS RIVER NEAR WILMINGTON AND MORRIS. THE KANKAKEE RIVER ORIGINALLY FLOWED FOR 309 MILES PRIOR TO BEING CHANNELLIZED. 59 OF THESE MILES WERE IN ILLINOIS AND 250 IN INDIANA. THE 250 MILES IN INDIANA WAS CHANNELLIZED TO DRAIN THE GRAND MARSH FOR FARMING AND THUS THE 90 MILE DITCH WE HAVE TODAY.

THE KANKAKEE RIVER DRAINS APPROXIMATELY 5280 SQUARE MILES OF LAND. PRIOR TO BEING CHANNELLIZED, THE RIVER FORMED THE GRAND MARSH WHICH COVERED BETWEEN 500,000 AND 625,000 ACERS OF LAND. IN 1850 THE MARSH WAS GIVEN TO THE STATE OF INDIANA BY AN ACT OF CONGRESS. THEY IMMEDIATELY BEGAN SELLING THE LAND AND USING THE PROCEEDS TO DRAIN THE LAND. THERE WAS A GREAT DEAL OF HAND DIGGING BEGINNING IN THE 1850'S BUT THE MAJOR PART OF THE WORK ACTUALLY BEGAN IN THE LATE 1890'S AND THE FINAL COMPLETION DATE IS SET AT 1929.

TO AID IN THE DRAINING EFFORTS, INDIANA CONVINCED ILLINOIS TO BLOW 2 1/2 FEET OF ROCK FROM THE ROCK LEDGE NEAR MOMENCE. THIS ROCK WAS REMOVED FROM AN AREA 300 FEET WIDE AND 8649 FEET LONG. THE BOULDERS ABOVE THE ROCK LEDGE WERE STILL CAUSING SLOWER FLOWS AND THE MOMENCE DRAINAGE DISTRICT REMOVED THOSE BOULDERS IN 1927. THE FLOW STILL DID NOT SATISFY INDIANA AND THEY AGAIN REQUESTED TO BLOW MORE ROCK FROM THE ROCK LEDGE. ILLINOIS REFUSED AND THE RIVER YOU SEE TODAY WAS THE DIRECT RESULT OF ALL THESE ACTIONS.

THE POTOWATOMIES NAMED THE KANKAKEE RIVER BY CALLING HER THE AU-KI-KI WHICH MEANT BEAUTIFUL RIVER. THE FINAL VERSION OF THE NAME CAME FROM THE MAP MAKER SIEGNELEY WHO SIMPLY PRONOUNCED THE INDIAN RIVER NAME AS KANKAKEE.

THE GENERAL HISTORY SURROUNDING THE KANKAKEE RIVER IS VERY INTERESTING AND I SUGGEST YOU ALL TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADD THIS TO YOUR READING INTERESTS. SOME SPECIFICS OF HISTORICAL INTEREST WOULD BE TEDDY ROOSEVELT USING THE GRAND MARSH ON A REGULAR BASIS TO ENTERTAIN DIGNITARYS, THE CHICAGO FURNITURE COMPANY CUTTING MAINTNUTS AND OAKS THAT WERE CAUGHT IN THE ICE AND SANK - HISTORIANS CLAIM THESE LOGS ARE PRESERVED UNDER THE MANY LAYERS OF DEPOSITS CAUSED BY DRAINING THE MARSH, THE FIRST IRON BRIDGE WAS BUILT OVER THE RIVER IN 1894 WHICH WAS DUNN'S BRIDGE IN INDIANA - THE MATERIALS FOR THE BRIDGE WAS FROM THE CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR FERRIS WHEEL, THE FACT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL DAMS ON THE RIVER, MANY OF WHICH WERE BLOWN UP BY FARMERS, THERE IS ONLY TWO OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE LEFT TODAY (ONE AT KANKAKEE AND ONE AT WILMINGTON) THERE ARE STILL A MILL RACE AT WILMINGTON AND A SMALL DAM AT MOMENCE.

AT THE SAME TIME ALL OF THIS WAS TAKING PLACE, I SERVED ON GOVERNOR EDGAR'S LAND USE AND WATER RESOURCE TASK FORCE. ONE OF THE MANY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CAME FROM THIS TASK FORCE WAS THE CONSERVATION 2000 CONCEPT. THIS IS A PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM OF 100 MILLION DOLLARS FOR SIX YEARS. THE GOVERNOR LIKED THE PROPOSAL AND THE LEGISLATURE PASSED THIS MEASURE. THE STATE BEGAN ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE STATE AS WATERSHED MANAGERS. 1/3 OF THESE FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE TO THESE PARTNERSHIPS IN A COMPETITIVE GRANT BASIS UNTIL THE YEAR 2000. THERE ARE

THIS STUDY GAVE US THE NECESSARY INFORMATION TO ENCOURAGE THE CONGRESSMEN TO SEEK A ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS STUDY OF THE BASIN. UNDERSTAND THIS IS REQUIRED BY LAW. IT CERTAINLY IS NOT THAT WE WANTED ANOTHER STUDY. THEIR PROGRAM CALLS FOR 3 PHASES - ONE THE RECON STUDY WHICH IS COMPLETED - TWO THE FEASIBILITY STUDY WHICH IS ABOUT TO BEGIN AND FINALLY THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE WHICH IS THE CORRECTIVE MEASURES. THE FEDS PAY PART AND THE STATE AND LOCAL PAY PART OF THESE COSTS.

THE NIAA SET WITH THE USGS ON MANY OCCASIONS TO MAP A STRATEGY TO ADDRESS OUR PROBLEM. WE KNEW THAT IT WOULD BE A COST SHARING STUDY AND WE CERTAINLY WOULD NEED MAJOR FUND RAISING EFFORTS. WE DECIDED TO GIVE BIRTH TO A NEW ORGANIZATION TO BETTER AID OUR CHANGES OF RAISING FUNDS. AS THE NIAA, MANY WOULD SEE US AS ONLY BEING FISHERMEN RATHER THAN CONSERVATIONISTS. THEREFORE WE FORMED AN ALLIANCE TO RESTORE THE KANKAKEE. THIS GROUP ENJOINED WITH THE USGS FOR A THREE PHASE STUDY TO DETERMINE THE SANDBED AND SEDIMENT PROBLEMS IN THE BASIN. THE ALLIANCE HAS RAISED OVER 175 THOUSAND TO FUND HALF OF THE STUDY. THEY STILL NEED APPROXIMATELY 30 THOUSAND TO PAY THEIR FINAL BILLING.

THE ILLINOIS WATER SURVEY UNDER THE DIRECTION OF NANI BOMEICK STUDIED THE RIVER IN THE 70'S AND CONCLUDED THAT THE RIVER WAS SIMPLY AGING AND WOULD REACH EQUILIBRIUM. THIS STUDY HAS CAUSED US A LOT OF PROBLEMS OVER THE YEARS. MANY FEEL THAT THE CONCLUSIONS WERE POLITICALLY STRUCTURED BY A STRONG SENATOR BYE OF INDIANA. THUS EACH TIME A GROUP WOULD SEEK HELP TO CORRECT THE RIVER PROBLEMS, THE AUTHORITIES WOULD REFER TO THIS STUDY AND TURN US DOWN ON ANY EFFORTS. IN THE 80'S NANI BOMEICK HIMSELF WROTE AN ARTICLE IN THE CURRENTS PUBLICATION AND STATED THAT HIS STUDY WAS NOT CONCLUSIVE AND THAT THE STREAM WAS THREATENED. THIS PROVIDED THE WINDOW FOR THE NIAA TO SEEK HELP TO CURE THE PROBLEMS OF THE RIVER.

WE HAVE ALL HEARD THE CLAIM THAT THERE HAS BEEN MANY STUDIES ON THE KANKAKEE AND THIS IS TRUE BUT THERE HAS ONLY BEEN TWO SCIENTIFIC STUDIES DEALING WITH SEDIMENT AND SANDBED LOAD. THE OTHER STUDIES DEALT WITH MANY OTHER TOPICS OR WERE NOT SCIENCE BASED.

THE KANKAKEE RIVER BECAME A NAVIGABLE STREAM IN 1980 AS DESIGNATED BY THE ARMY CORPS AND THUS IS CONTROLLED BY THIS AGENCY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

APPROXIMATELY 25 PARTNERSHIPS LIKE OURS IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS. ALL ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING THIS GRANT MONEY. LAST YEAR THERE WAS 3.2 MILLION DOLLARS AVAILABLE TO THESE PARTNERSHIPS AND OURS WON 1 MILLION OF THE FUNDS. WE HAVE SUBMITTED ANOTHER 4 MILLION IN COMPETITIVE PROPOSALS FOR FY99 FUNDING. AGAIN THERE WILL BE APPROXIMATELY 3 MILLION AVAILABLE FOR 25 PARTNERSHIPS.

OUR KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN PARTNERSHIP WAS ALSO SUCCESSFUL IN HAVING THE GOVERNOR TO PLACE 1 AND 1/2 MILLION DOLLARS IN HIS BUDGET FOR THIS TERM. THIS IS PROPOSED MONEY AND MUST PASS THE LEGISLATURE BUT IT SHOWS THE FOCUS ON OUR GREAT RIVER.

THESE FUNDS NOT ONLY HELP US TO DEVELOP PROJECTS IN THE RIVER BASIN BUT HELPS TO COST SHARE THE ARMY CORPS STUDY AT THE SAME TIME. THE PROJECTS THEY APPROVE ARE ACCEPTED AS COST SHARING EFFORTS SAVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES THESE FUNDS.

OUR RIVER BASIN HAS RECEIVED A LOT OF ATTENTION SINCE THE FORMATION AND HARD WORK OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN PARTNERSHIP. WE HAVE BROADENED OUR BASE AND SEEK THE INPUT FROM LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES.

SUCH THINGS AS: THE ILLINOIS RIVER INITIATIVE

US FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE PROGRAM
GRAND MARSH RESTORATION

IDNR PROGRAM

NATURE CONSERVANCY PROGRAM

THESE AND OTHER PROGRAMS SHOW THE INTEREST IS HERE AND IN SAVING THIS GREAT RESOURCE.

OUR PARTNERSHIP HAS PUT TOGETHER A MASTER STEWARDSHIP PLAN FOR THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN.

HOW

WHAT

SIGN ON

COMMENTS

ALSO WELCOME ATTENDANCE AT OUR MEETINGS
2ND TUE EACH MONTH AT 7:00 (WHERE)

RESOURCE INVENTORY

STEWARDSHIP PLAN