

DRAFT
Illinois River Coordinating Council
December 8, 2004 Meeting Minutes
Bradley-Bourbonnais Sportsmen's, Bourbonnais

Call to Order: Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

Roll Call: Marc Miller, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, called the roll: Citizen members present were: Lee Bunting, Richard Worthen, Michael Reuter, Brad McMillan, Daphne Mitchell, Nancy Erickson (for Wendell Shauman, she arrived after roll was taken), and Cynthia Fox (for Laurene von Klan). State Agency Members present were: Mike Beatty (Agriculture), Terry Weldin-Frisch (DCEO), Debbie Bruce (DNR), Michael Hine (IDOT), and Ron Burke (IEPA). Ex-Officio Members present were: Ross Adams (US FWS), Chuck Shea (for Colonel William Bayles, US ACE), Teresa Kinkaid (for Philip Bernstein, US ACE), Wes Jarrell (for Dean Robert Easter, U of I Cooperative Extension Service), Chris Urban (for Tim Henry, US EPA), Robert Holmes (USGS), William Gradle (USDA – NRCS), Sue Maraccini (for William Graff, USDA - FSA), and Michael Spence (for Captain Raymond Seebald, US Coast Guard). John Rogner (US FWS) and Doug Wilson (USDA – Rural Development) were absent.

Approval of Minutes: Chairman Quinn asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 23, 2004 IRCC Meeting held at Wildlife Prairie State Park. Mike Beatty moved to accept and Mike Hine seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by the Council.

Opening Remarks: Chairman Quinn thanked J.R. Black, from Bradley-Bourbonnais Sportsmen's Club and Northern Illinois Anglers Association for helping make the meeting possible and also for his lifetime commitment to conservation both in the Illinois Watershed and throughout the State. Quinn mentioned that there is a provision in the Illinois Constitution that states that it is the duty of every person to provide for a healthful environment and that J.R. has made it his mission to follow this provision.

Member Comment Period:

Bill Gradle from USDA – NRCS spoke about the USDA *Conservation Security Program*. He mentioned that this program, which recognizes good land stewardship, is not currently approved for the Illinois River Watershed. There is an 8-year cycle roll out for the program. This year the Lower Kaskaskia and the Middle Wabash watersheds will be added, and the Kishwaukee is already underway.

Brad McMillan-Office of Congressman Ray LaHood gave an update on the Federal Scenic Byway. \$60,000 is needed to submit the application for the Federal designation; they have raised all but \$8,500 dollars. This designation would bring nature-based tourism to eight counties in Central Illinois, along the Illinois River, and allows the area to tap into a stream of Federal grant monies.

Chairman Quinn thanked Brad and Congressman LaHood for their steadfast support of the IRCC and the Illinois River.

Daphne Mitchell-Citizen Member spoke about Starved Rock - Flock to the Rock Eagle Days in January. Thousands of people come to Illinois River and the visitor's center and Starved Rock to see bald eagles and also Plum Island. She thanked Lieutenant Governor Quinn for his efforts in saving Plum Island. She mentioned that the best bald eagle viewing is from late December through late February, early March.

Chairman Quinn recognized Chad Pregrecke and this Living Lands and Waters organization for the efforts in cleaning up Plum Island.

Richard Worthen-Citizen Member talked about eagle viewing in Calhoun County, especially at the Chain of Rocks Bridge. The Bridge was part of Route 66 and now is only used for pedestrians and bicyclists. Thousands of people come for eagle days.

Chairman Quinn mentioned that Illinois is home to more bald eagles than any other State in the Continental United States.

Michael Reuter-Citizen Member gave an update on the Emiquon Project. The area is about 14,000 acres of conservation lands along the confluence of the Illinois River and the Spoon River. For the first times in the about 8 decades, they are allowing a lake to reform, it currently has about 400 acres of water. The newly formed lake has brought in a lot of waterfowl and hunters. Joanne Skoglund discussed 2005 events for the Emiquon area. She mentioned Emiquon Spring Gathering in May and Pedal the Levee in September. Mr. Reuter added that on March 15th the Peoria Symphony is dedicating a concert to the restoration (tickets are still available). 2005 is Emiquon: The Year of Reawakening.

Topic: Kankakee River

Chairman Quinn recognized several representatives from Indiana in the audience.

Jody Melton from Indiana Kankakee River Basin Commission- spoke on Indiana's role in Kankakee River restoration. Jody spoke of the Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration Council. They have plans to restore 20,000 acres of the Grand Kankakee Marsh. To date, they have restored 6,000 acres.

Jack Nelson – one of the Commissioners of the Kankakee River Basin Commission spoke of the Kankakee in Indiana. Mr. Nelson who is also a farmer from Indiana talked about how he has used no till practices since 1975 and has noticed a significant decrease in soil loss per acre. He also mentioned that about 80% of the sediment entering Illinois from Indiana is from the Yellow River. To help reduce the sediment load in the river, Mr. Nelson sold a 40-acre plot to be used for the deposition of sand pumped out of the Kankakee. He said that several people get 50 to 60 truckloads of the sand a day.

Dr. Nani Bhowmik -Science Advisory Committee gave a presentation on the Kankakee River Basin. Dr. Bhowmik has been studying the Kankakee since 1977. He agreed with Jack Nelson that the Yellow River in Indiana is a major contributor of sediment in the Kankakee River. He mentioned that the Kankakee River was shortened in Indiana from 250 miles down to about 82 miles. Of the areas studied, about 41.6% of the riverbank is stable. 4.6% of the bank has severe erosion, 17.6% of the bank has moderate bank erosion, and about 31.7% of the bank has minor erosion. In addition to bank erosion, Dr. Bhowmik spoke about deposition of the sediment in the river. He gave the example of the Six Mile Pool. From 1978 to 1999, the pool has lost 13.4% of its capacity due to deposition. From 1980 to 1999, Momence Wetlands lost 10% of its capacity. He made the point of saying that we are never going to be able to stop sedimentation of the river. However, he believes with Best Management Practices, including removal of sediment and filtration or buffer zones will help reduce the impacts of the sediment in the river.

Bill White-Illinois State Water Survey gave a presentation on the loss of habitat due to sedimentation of the main stem of the Kankakee and its tributaries, backwaters and side channels. Mr. White says that we need programs to target channel and near channel sources of sediment. He also showed aerial footage of bank erosion and sedimentation in the Kankakee River Basin. These flights are used to locate potential restoration sites. Data is also collected at specific sites to be sure that projects will not cause damage. In the main stem of the Kankakee, in Illinois, about 22 sites have been identified for potential restoration projects. According to Mr. White, the Kankakee River is not the largest contributor of sediment to the Illinois River but it is a significant contributor, depositing 847,000 tons of sediment annually.

Dr. John Marlin – Waste Management Research Center spoke about what to do with sediment once it is removed from rivers or lakes. As an example, he talked about the Mud-to-Parks program that revived the Old U.S. Steel site in Chicago. This area was once a 500-acre slag covered site. During the course of the project 104,000 tons of mud was moved from Peoria Lake to Chicago. Dr. Marlin mentioned that this project was very successful, stating that around 80 species of plants are volunteering in the sediment and the grass they planted is about 3 inches high. He also mentioned the prospects of Louisiana wanting some Illinois River mud to restore wetlands. Dr. Marlin discussed the prospects of a sand project in the Kankakee River. Ideas for beneficial use of sediment include commercial uses such as construction material, beach nourishments, and fill material.

Topic: Green Lands, Blue Waters

Steven Morse-Green Lands Blue Waters spoke about Green Lands, Blue Waters vision and road map for agricultural, improved water quality, increased economic options, and the protection of wildlife habitat and human health. Mr. Morse talked about changing the agricultural landscape of our country so that it has green cover all year round. He emphasized keeping working lands working by using perennial plants and continuous living cover that have an economic value. Examples of these are plants that can be used for biomass energy such as willows and alfalfa, and trees and shrubs that provide buffer zones but also can be harvested. Mr. Morse spoke of the possible ten-year outcomes associated with this idea they include: Development of new crops, products, and associated markets, Increased continuous living cover on the agricultural landscape, Reduced nitrogen loading from agricultural production, Reduced number of impaired waters, Increased migratory waterfowl and neo-tropical songbird populations, and shrinkage of the hypoxic zone.

Topic: Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Debbie Bruce - IDNR gave an update on CREP. CREP has not had open enrollment since November 2001. At the Federal level, Illinois has been allotted 120,000 more acres and \$242 Million in Federal dollars. CREP has a 4 to 1 Federal to State match. To receive the funding and acreage, the State needs to come up with \$58 Million. Ms. Bruce mentioned that the Governor proposed \$10 Million in the capital budget for 2005. This would not get the State all of the Federal dollars but would be a step in the right direction.

Sue Maraccini mentioned that if the state doesn't act, the federal money and allotted acres could be taken away.

Brad McMillan emphasized that legislators should be contacted to support CREP.

Chairman Quinn suggested the idea of bonding to get State funding for CREP.

Nancy Erickson stated that the Farm Bureau supports CREP.

Public Comment Period:

Darrell B. spoke about two proposed landfill. The proposed landfills would be 540 acres and 200 feet high. It is estimated that 600 semi loads a day would bring garbage from Chicago and western Indiana to the dumps. The site where it is being proposed is near the river and aquifers. The Illinois State Geological Survey says that the proposed site is not the best location for a landfill in Kankakee County. He asked that the IRCC put political pressure to get the dumps relocated to a more conducive site.

Ron Burke (IEPA) responded that IEPA has no saying as to where a landfill is going to be located; this is strictly a local decision.

Dick Ladzinski expressed concerns over the quality of the water in the Illinois River. He mentioned problems he has been having with his steel fishing hooks eroding away and snapping off. He asked who monitors the quality of water in Illinois rivers?

Chairman Quinn suggested Mr. Ladzinski's concerns could be a topic at the next IRCC meeting.

Dick Worthen encouraged Mr. Ladzinski to write letters and Ron Burke offered to talk with him after the meeting.

Andrea Taylor made several remarks on the high level of mercury that is being found in the DeKalb area. She was concerned about the water quality and the health problems with water quality. Ms. Taylor also encouraged the IRCC to look into the garbage dump situation mentioned by Darrell B.

Ed Mullady, from Kankakee, presented his concerns against dredging and the threats this presents to the river. He mentioned that dredging and channelization are how many of the problems started on the Kankakee River and that dredging disrupts aquatic habitats. He wanted the Council to keep this in mind.

Then next Illinois River Coordinating Council meeting will be held January 27, 2005 at Starved Rock State Park.

Meeting Adjournment: Chairman Quinn adjourned the meeting at 3:58 p.m.