APPENDIX IV

Chronology of Events on the Kankakee River

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Kankakee—Pottowatomi – Ti-yar-ac-ke – "Wonderful land" or "Slow river flowing through a wide marsh"

1679 De LaSalle, Tonti, and Father Hennepin went down the Kankakee River arriving at the mouth where it flows into the Illinois River in January, 1680.

1830's Major floods occurred

1850's Major floods occurred

1850 Congress passed "An act to enable the State of Arkansas and other states to reclaim the swamp lands within their limits."

1852 Illinois General Assembly passed "An act to dispose of the swamp and overflowed lands and to pay the expenses of selecting and surveying the same."

1853 The State of Indiana funded one of the first organized efforts to drain the Beaver Lake—with little effect.

1854 March 1: The title of the swamp lands lying in Kankakee County were vested in that county upon payment of any expenses Iroquois County and Will County had incurred in selecting the same, ...authorized the Auditor of the State to patent such lands to Kankakee County. William C. Richards was on April 27, 1854, appointed Drainage Commissioner. Honorable Orson Beebe was appointed Swamp Land Agent.

1860's Major floods occurred

1860 The Illinois Central Railroad tried to drain portions of the marsh and swamp land - also with minimal effect.

1870's Ice harvesting – 60,000 tons per year.

1871 Kankakee and Iroquois Navigation and Manufacturing Company was formed to build dams and locks for boat traffic.

1878 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted their first study of the River. In 1880, Major Jared A. Smith filed a report to the House of Representatives. Smith makes two points worth noting:
1) He stated that the water was so clear that he was able to see fish swimming in the stream, as well as minute objects on the bottom to a depth of 5 feet.
2) He also commented that although the "rock ledge" near Momence was considered "a great obstacle to the drainage of the lands in Indiana," he believed that due to the greater than average slope of the river for several miles above the rock ledge, the removal of this ledge "would accomplish little or nothing for the drainage of lands so far above..."(This was the first time the "rock ledge" term is used and it has lead to serious misconceptions that has driven much debate over drainage of the Kankakee Swamp. Many have the impression that the "ledge" is a single obstruction, like a dam. The "rock ledge" is actually a 4 mile reach of the river where the water is flowing over natural bedrock.)

1880 "Hunter's Paradise" - Presidents Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt hunted there and Sportsmen's Clubs from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, and Chicago built hunting lodges there for their wealthy members. Tens of thousands of waterfowl and other wildlife were harvested by market hunters to be shipped to Chicago and New York.

1880's Legislation to create drainage districts was passed and the invention of the "stream dredge" paved the way for draining the Grand Kankakee Marsh.

1882 The Indiana Legislature directed Professor John L. Campbell to survey the Kankakee Valley from its source to Momence to determine an effective method of draining the marsh/swamp land. In his report to the House of Representatives in 1916, Campbell made three suggestions:
1) Construct a better main channel for the flow of the river.
2) Straighten and deepen the tributary stream beds that flow into the main channel.
3) Dig a large number of lateral ditches through the marshes and swamps to empty into the improved channels.

1886 Singleton Ditch became one of the first to be constructed under the new drainage authority. Ackerman, Hayden and Brown ditches were also built around this time. Still, these actions were only partially successful in draining the marsh and swamps.

1890's Major floods occurred

1893 The State of Indiana, still convinced that the rock ledge near Momence was the key to their drainage problems, appropriated $65,000 (between 1889-1891) to widen and deepen the channel near Momence. The work was done in 1893 and 66,447 cubic feet of rock was removed.

1906 Encouraged by the work done on "The Momence Rock Ledge", channelization of the upper reaches of the river in Indiana began in earnest. By 1906, 46 miles of the main channel from South Bend to Starke County was straightened. This work was done by private landowners, Kankakee Improvement Company and the Kankakee River Reclamation Company.
But the flooding problem was still not solved. The increased rate of runoff from the straightened reaches caused erosion and flooding down stream. The apparent solution was to continue the straightening of the river and remove more of the rock ledge at Momence (an effort Illinois refused to agree to).

1916 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reported to the House of Representatives that..."the work done on the upper portion of the Kankakee River failed to accomplish the goals adequately and it created some new problems downstream...the improved channel increased the rate of runoff so as to cause problems of increased discharge and flooding downstream of the drainage works...."
The report concluded that the cooperation of the federal government in planned improvements of the Kankakee River for drainage and flood protection could not be justified in terms of benefits to navigation.

1918 Completion of the channelization to the Illinois State line. The old 250 mile meandering river channel had been replaced by a straight, deep, short (82 mile long) drainage ditch. This project affected 400,000 acres of swamp and marshland, 600,000 acres of marginal land at a cost of $1.2 million.

1927 Continued flooding brought renewed attention to the "rock ledge" at Momence. The Yellowhead Drainage District removed boulders there, but this was the only work done on the main channel.

1931 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were asked to assess the benefits of any additional work on the river for improving navigation, flood control, power development, and irrigation. As in the 1916 Corps' report, this report concluded that the federal government could not justify its involvement in terms of making improvements to benefit the areas reviewed.

1934 The Isaack Walton League passed a resolution to restore the Kankakee River.

1941 The Corps of Engineers conducted a study to review the improvements that would be necessary to control flooding along the Kankakee River. The improvements assessed included:
1) Lowering the rock ledge at Momence.
2) Constructing a moveable dam to maintain low flow levels.
3) Cleaning the river of sand bars, opening the outlets of sloughs, and enlarging and straightening portions of the river from Momence to the state line. The Corps analysis concluded that these proposed improvements should not be done, because the cost far exceeded any possible benefit.

1947 The Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Water Resources, investigated the possibility of replacing the collapsed dam at Aroma Park to restore the recreational channel up to Momence. This plan was not acted upon.

1967 Illinois Department of Public Works and Buildings, Division of Waterways, published a report on the Kankakee River Basin that suggested:
1) The rock ledge at Momence be lowered, and
2) A lock and dam be constructed at the confluence of Yellowhead-Singleton Ditch.
The report also stated that the channel work could not be economically justified for the sole purpose of improving drainage and flood control.
Conservation and environmental groups strongly objected to these proposals, and the project was subsequently dropped.

1976 The Indiana DNR and U.S. Soil Conservation Service published a report on the Kankakee River Basin. The report identified problems and needs of the basin, including land use and management for agriculture, flooding, soil erosion, adequate drainage systems, recreational opportunities, protection and maintenance of natural water areas and prime wetlands. The estimated cost to implement - $124,739,000 (1976 dollars).

1977 In response to continued flooding, the Indiana General Assembly created a 24 member Kankakee River Basin Commission (KRBC) to coordinate a comprehensive development plan for the basin. Illinois, in response to public concern over what the Indiana Basin Commission may want to do to the river, formed the Illinois Kankakee River Basin Task Force in June, 1977. This Task Force recommended that the State of Illinois..."maintain the Kankakee River as a low density recreation and scenic river...by keeping it...in the most natural condition possible..."

1979 Major floods occur. The Kankakee River Basin Commission initiated a project for channel and levee improvements in and along the Kankakee River in Indiana.

1983 The project was stopped after a lawsuit was filed by the state of Illinois against the Army Corps of Engineers and the Kankakee River Basin Commission. Judgement on the Illinois lawsuit required federal permits from the Army Corps of Engineers for improvements on the Kankakee River under section 10 of the River and Harbors Act and section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The KRBC applied for and was denied a permit to clear and snag the river.
The stated reason was that the environmental damage would outweigh any flood protection benefits.

1980's Illinois State Water Survey published a series of reports on the hydrology, hydraulics, flow, and sediment transport in the Kankakee River in Illinois.

1983 The KRBC adopted a new set of guidelines entitled "The Kankakee River in Indiana-A Program for the Future." There are five guidelines stated in the resolution that must be accepted by all interests in the basin before any action can take place.

1985 The USDA: Economic Research Service, Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service; Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Committee, Kankakee River Basin Commission, and Ill. Department of Agriculture prepared a special report for land treatment in the Kankakee River Basin.

1989 SEG Engineers and Consultants prepares Kankakee River Master Plan-A guide for flood control and land use alternatives in Indiana. Estimated cost to implement.....$101,013,882.

1992 Kankakee County Board approves a Comprehensive Land Use Plan that includes the creation of a proposed Kankakee River National Park.

1996 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prepares a Preliminary Project Proposal proposing to evaluate the feasibility of developing a new national wildlife refuge in the Kankakee River Basin in Indiana and Illinois.

1997 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers receives $100,000 of Federal funds to conduct a flood control reconnaissance study of the Kankakee River.

1998 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service releases a draft Environmental Assessment on a proposed 30,000 acre in the Kankakee River Basin.

1998 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers receives $400,000 of Federal funds to conduct a Feasibility Study of the Kankakee River.

APPENDIX V

Planning Process and Schedule

GRAND KANKAKEE MARSH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Planning Process and Schedule

1995 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Bloomington Indiana Ecological Services Field Office developed a Preliminary Project Proposal seeking the Director's approval to initiate a national wildlife refuge feasibility study in the Kankakee River Basin.

1996 Service Director approves project proposal.

1997 Service's Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region initiates multi-year planning project.

- √ Assembled interdisciplinary planning team to determine the scope of the study effort, develop project goals, and design a process and schedule for completing the project.
- √ Identified opportunities and issues through extensive public involvement, gathered and analyzed information, developed Conceptual Management Plan.

1998 Published Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) and Conceptual Management Plan for 30-day public review

- √ Due to extensive public interest in the project, the Service extended the DEA public review and comment period to 150 days.

1999 Publish final Environmental Assessment (July of 1999).

1999-2001 Initiate detailed refuge planning through the development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (formally called "Refuge Master Plan")(September 1999). The CCP will.....

1. Provide a clear and comprehensive statement of desired future conditions for the refuge and planning units (focus areas).
2. Provide a forum to promote broader goals and objectives for the landscapes in which the refuge will be located.
3. Provide a forum for determining the type, extent, and compatibility of uses on proposed refuge units, ie. hunting, fishing, biking, boating, environmental education, visitor center, etc.
4. Provide an avenue for effective coordination, interaction, and cooperation with affected parties, including Federal agencies, state conservation agencies, tribal governments, local governments, and private landowners.
5. Provide a mechanism for public involvement in management decisions on the refuge.