

KANKAKEE RIVER

YELLOW RIVER



**BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

\*\*\* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE \*\*\*

August 23, 2021

## **YELLOW RIVER BANK IMPROVEMENTS SCHEDULED FOR MARSHALL COUNTY**

PLYMOUTH — At its August 19 meeting, the Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission selected The Stanger Group in Goshen to reconstruct nearly a half-mile of Yellow River banks in Marshall County. The approximately \$700,000 project, funded through a mix of state, regional, and county dollars, is expected to commence in early September and finish this November.

“We did not pick this site to begin long-term work on the Yellow River because it was low-hanging fruit,” said Commission Executive Director Scott Pelath. “We’re starting where the challenge – and the potential value -- are the greatest. It also serves as an immediate return-on-investment for Marshall County and the entire watershed.”

Controlling eroded sediment from the banks of the Yellow River is a top priority within the Commission’s long-term flood mitigation mission. Over decades, the straightening of the Kankakee River before World War I and the increased water velocities have eroded Yellow River banks at an accelerated rate.

“I couldn’t be more pleased that the Commission’s efforts are starting right here in Marshall County,” said Commission member and Marshall County Surveyor Craig Cultice. “There are years of work ahead, but it is gratifying to begin here.”

The Commission intends to increase channel capacity for Marshall County while preventing channel-clogging sediment from being carried downstream. Last year, the Commission enlisted Cardno from Walkerton to redesign the Yellow River immediately upstream of the Starke County Line, where sand banks are nearly vertical, cascading into the river, and approaching fifty-feet high. The plan entails substantially reducing the grade, planting erosion control vegetation, and using a combination of on-site rock and wood resources to protect the banks from streamflow.

“We have tested this method, and have seen its potential,” said Cultice. “Not only will it increase the Yellow River’s capacity, but as water runs downhill, the sand that gets in the way of it will be reduced.”

The mitigation of Yellow River sediment is a fundamental component of the Commission’s forty-year work plan, which was funded by the State of Indiana and formally adopted in 2019. Next year, the Commission intends to extend the first phase of bank reconstruction into Starke County. Another bank reconstruction in partnership with Marshall County Soil and Water Conservation District is slated for Bremen in the coming months.

“It has been over a century since previous generations configured the Kankakee and Yellow Rivers as we currently know them,” said Pelath. “But with several major projects already completed or in the works, the next phase of their histories is already underway.”

For further information regarding the Commission, please contact Executive Director Scott Pelath at [sdpelath@gmail.com](mailto:sdpelath@gmail.com), [kankakeeriverbasin@gmail.com](mailto:kankakeeriverbasin@gmail.com), or (219) 861-7999.

\*\*\*