

RECOMMENDATION 5-2021

To: Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission
From: Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
Subject: Water control structure planning
Date: September 10, 2021

DESCRIPTION: The Director has identified properties already connected to the Kankakee River that could provide timelier and more effective floodwater storage during flood events. Each property is already enrolled in a wetland program or serves a conservation purpose. Furthermore, they have in common water control structures that either are insufficient or less than optimal for connecting the Kankakee River to manageable sections of its floodplain.

LOCATIONS:

- 1) NEWTON COUNTY – 200+ acre parcel upstream of the DeHaan Ditch owned by Swamped LLC; property enrolled in permanent NRCS easement
- 2) JASPER COUNTY – Aukiki Wetland Conservation Area, a 300+ acre area managed by the Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area
- 3) LAPORTE COUNTY – Dick Blythe Area, a 175+ acre wetland conservation area under Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Area management; property enrolled in permanent NRCS easement

ISSUES: With improved water control structures, each of the properties could absorb more floodwater during a flood event. The properties already provide some floodwater storage, but the amounts are less than the properties could manageably hold.

In each case, analysis to this point shows that none would require any setback flood protection improvements. Furthermore, two are public properties – which are legally expected to absorb floodwater ahead of private properties -- and none would have any acquisition costs. In the case of the Newton County property, increased water pressure from the landward side would be vital for preserving a failing bank and avoiding further costly repairs in that area.

RECOMMENDATION: The properties rank high in the Commission’s criteria for floodplain reconnection. Although two have existing NRCS easements, none carry costs for acquisition or setback flood protection.

The Committee recommends that the Commission pursue agreements with NRCS, the Department of Natural Resources, and landowners for more effective water control structures at these properties. Furthermore, the Committee urges the Commission to make funds available for design, permitting, hydrological modeling, and construction.

ADOPTED BY COMMITTEE 9/10/2021

ADOPTED BY COMMISSION 10/29/2021