

*KANKAKEE RIVER*

*YELLOW RIVER*



**BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

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

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### **BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TOUTS 2023 PROJECTS**

PLYMOUTH — At its final scheduled meeting of 2023, the Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission received a report highlighting the year’s flood mitigation projects.

“As a retired county surveyor, I’m truly amazed at what we do,” said St. Joseph County member and Commission Chair John McNamara at November’s meeting. “I’m totally impressed with the amount of work we’re getting done, and the quality of work we’re getting done.”

First on the list of completed projects was Phase II of the Yellow River Bank Reconstruction, which reshaped three miles of severely eroding river banks in Starke County. Workers completed the long-term sediment reduction initiative ahead of schedule while saving over \$300,000 within the project’s budget.

“For the third straight year, the Commission stopped channel-clogging sediment at its source while finding savings along the way,” said Commission Executive Director Scott Pelath. “Even better, these projects are physical assets that add value throughout the watershed for years to come.”

Commission Secretary Bill Crase of Starke County strongly agreed.

“When we reshape severely eroding river banks, we reduce the buildup of sand that blocks the water during a flood,” said Crase. “Mitigating floods requires work on many fronts, but attacking erosion is essential to any long-term improvements.”

Throughout 2023, the Commission also:

- Added over 200 acres of contained floodwater storage upstream of IN-49 in Jasper County through construction of a spillway;
- Removed and prevented logjams along various Kankakee River sections from County Road 1500 South in LaPorte County to the Illinois state line;

- Cleared Yellow River logjams between IN-17 in Marshall County and Range Road in Starke County;
- Removed heavy debris and obstructions at major Kankakee River bridges including US 231, US 41, Baum's Bridge, State Line Bridge, and various railroad crossings;
- Reseeded over eleven miles of Kankakee River banks with locally native grasses;
- Maintained a Kankakee River sediment trap downstream of the Robbins Ditch confluence;
- Completed designs and permits for Phase III of the Yellow River reconstruction and started regulatory permitting for Jasper County bank repair;
- Commenced a hydraulic study of flood mitigation impacts at the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Area; and
- In partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local officials, developed the template for a formal, multi-county flood response plan.

“Despite these accomplishments, I expect the coming year will include further efforts to remove antiquated, out-of-service bridges that catch heavy debris during flood events,” said Pelath. “We are four years into a forty-year work plan. Much work remains.”

Anyone seeking video footage of the Yellow River projects and other work may view it on the Commission's official website at <https://kankakeeandyellowrivers.org/media-gallery>.

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*PHOTOS ATTACHED*