

RECOMMENDATION 2-2025

To: Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission

From: Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Subject: Newton County Bank Stabilization

Date: August 21, 2025

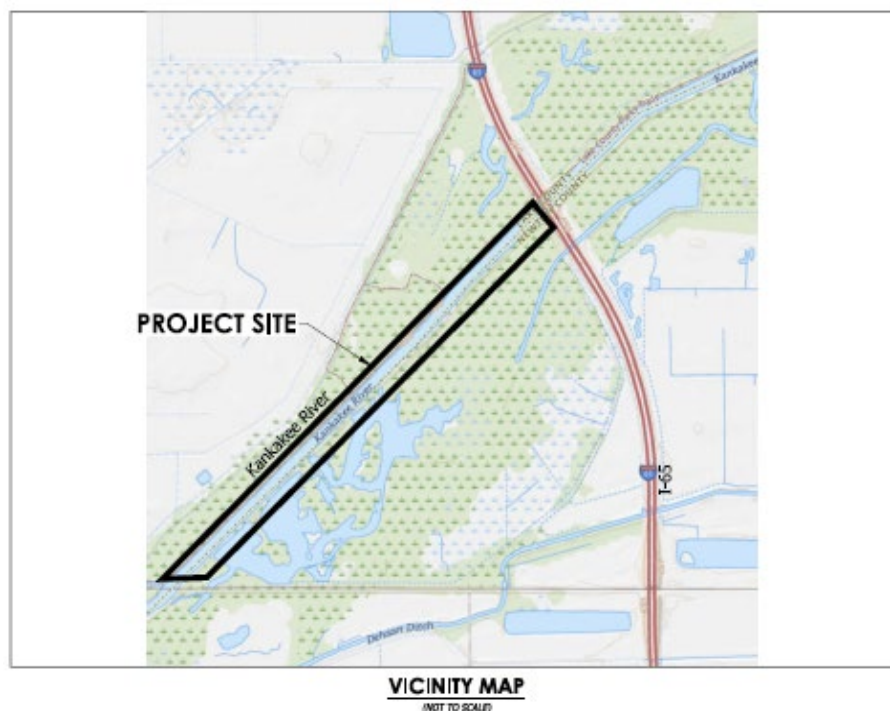
DESCRIPTION: The south bank of the Kankakee River from I-65 downstream to the Norfolk Southern Bridge (“3I Bridge”) was considered for stabilization since the old Kankakee River Basin Commission was still in existence. The bank is highly degraded in sections, particularly near the logjam-prone railroad bridge. Not only does the bank release sediment into the Kankakee River, but some of it can no longer accommodate heavy equipment, especially during a flood event.

Beginning in 2024, the Commission engaged Abonmarche in Valparaiso to make technical recommendations for improvement of the bank. Proposed goals were to 1) reduce erosion and transportation of sediment; 2) improve bank stability; and 3) most importantly, provide a safe platform for heavy equipment to remove railroad bridge obstructions during a flood event.

The Norfolk Southern Bridge, which lies at the far downstream end of the targeted area, is particularly prone to major logjam blockages that necessitate frequent removal.

A copy of the preliminary plan is included with this recommendation as an ATTACHMENT.

LOCATION: *See following map.*



ISSUE: The Kankakee River Flood and Sediment Management Work Plan Recommendation 5.1.2 (“Reduce Sediment Supply from Severely Eroded Kankakee Slopes”) on Page 41 states, *“Several locations along the Kankakee are currently severely eroded and appear to be contributing a significant amount of sediment to the river. Future berm/slope failures and erosion are also anticipated as a result of the over-steepened slopes, bank and berm height, and highly erodible materials. The eroded sediments should be stabilized using bioengineering techniques in most cases. Some particularly severe slope failures may require additional remediation; site specific improvements should be developed on a case-by-case basis.”*

With respect to the flood hazard posed by the railroad bridge, the Work Plan recognizes that certain bridges – with specific mention of the 3I Bridge – impede the flow of water.

Recommendation 5.1.8 (“Bridge Removal/Replacement”) on Page 46 of the Work Plan reads, *“Several problematic bridges that impede the transport of flow and sediment during flooding events were identified during field observations of the river corridor. Bridges that still serve a purpose should be removed and replaced to better align the bridge supports to minimize flow interference, most notably the State Line Bridge, the railroad bridge upstream of the mouth of Dehaan Ditch [the 3I Bridge], and the railroad downstream of US Highway 30.”*

RECOMMENDATION: Because the 3I Bridge remains operational, removal or replacement of the bridge is not presently feasible. Furthermore, although the Commission removes debris and obstructions from the bridge multiple times per year, it is not safe to do so from either the Lake or Newton County banks during a flood event.

In order to stabilize the bank against erosion and provide a safe work platform for heavy equipment, the Committee recommends that the Commission improve the affected Newton County bank through a combination of targeted, remedial repairs and more substantial bank reconstruction. In light of the Commission’s other project priorities, the Committee further suggests that the work be broken into phases with priority given to rehabilitating the bank nearest to the 3I Bridge.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE 08/21/2025.

ADOPTED BY COMMISSION 9/25/2025.

Signed by:

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 Craig D. Cultice, Secretary 9/30/2025