

Kankakee County
Waterways Advisory Subcommittee
August 7, 2025

The meeting of the Kankakee County Waterway Advisory Subcommittee was held on August 7, 2025, and was called to order by Mr. O'Brien at 8:30 am. The following members were present:

Mr. Hodak, Mr. Frogge, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Surprenant, Ms. Crosby, Mr. Huntley & Mr. O'Brien.

Members Absent –Mr. Koehler, Mr. Munjoy, Mr. Schultz & Mr. Carrico.

Quorum – Present

Kankakee County Board Members Present – Mr. Long & Mr. Fetherling. Also in attendance were Mr. Louis Farber (IDNR), Mr. Greg Heiden, Mr. Benjamin Wilson, Mr. Delbert Skimerhorn & Mr. Eric Cavender.

Public Commentary - None

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the June 5, 2025, meeting were not presented and will be available for approval at the next scheduled meeting.

Education – IDNR Conservation Police Officer Mr. Louie Farber was introduced and was pleased to be asked to attend. He expressed his appreciation of the excellent cooperation between IDNR & the Kankakee County Sheriffs Office. He also expressed the importance of shore access. Mr. Johnson discussed the need for river mitigation public awareness, especially the landowners along the waterways.

Safety - The Boating Safety Course will be rescheduled, and Vessel Safety Inspection program will be discussed in the future. The map & signage project is in progress with identification of the ramps and mapping.

Restoration – Mr. Wilson provided an update for the Aroma Park Dredging Project. Mr. Huntley provided an update on the Kankakee & Yellow River Basin's progress and an update on the state line bridge removal project.

Old Business – Mr. Wilson provided an update of the River Restoration Equipment expressing frustration with the lack of reliability of the aerial crane.

New Business –Mr. O’Brien reviewed Code Red (supported by Kancomm and utilized by the municipalities) & the Kankakee County Sheriffs app as two modes of emergency communication in our county. These are important for all hazard communication, especially if there are flooding concerns. Residents are encouraged to add an additional mode for a total of three to be prepared.

Mr. Tim Morris from Aqua Illinois could not attend and is expected at the next scheduled meeting.

Mr. Skimerhorn provided a visual overview of the completed Bathymetric Project and expects it to be available online soon.

As our subcommittee was developed to assist the Waterway committee with prioritized suggestions, we need to be able to review the possible projects for river mitigation. Members are asked to identify projects (such as log jams, bank stabilization, inaccessible access) and bring them to the next meeting for discussion. A prioritized list to provide the committee is the goal.

It was also requested of the members to bring topics to create a focused public awareness campaign for the river mitigation program, especially the need of access permission. In addition, please gather contact information about the landowners each member may know along the waterways for future contact in the mitigation process.

As the biggest obstacle for addressing the issues facing our county’s waterways is funding. Our task is to assist the Waterway committee, so we need to bring funding suggestions for discussion and consideration. The Kankakee & Yellow River Basin Commission (Indiana) has a large funding source created through legislation, and it contributed to their success as they are 10-15 years ahead of Illinois in the river mitigation.

The next meeting will be held on October 2, 2025, at 8:30 am.

Adjournment – Ms. Crosby made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 am. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnson. All subcommittee members in attendance were in favor of the motion.