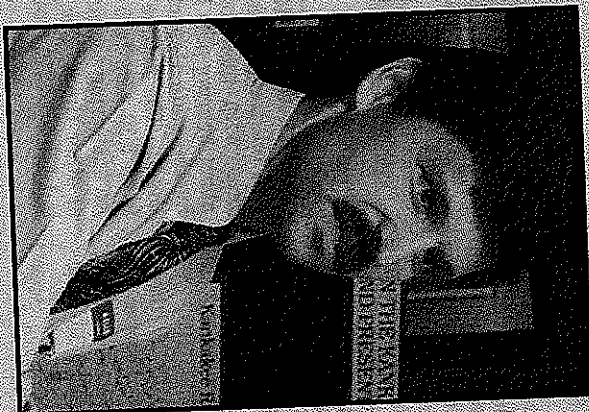


River sediment Serious — U.S.

Indiana channelization key to problem



PAUL TERRIO
... U.S. Geological Survey

Studies showed "significant deposits" of sand and sediment between 1978 and 1994 from samplings in the Mokena Wetlands and in the "Six-Mile Pool."

By Bill Byrns
Journal writer

Armed with a barrage of charts and graphs, a spokesman for the United States Geological Survey Thursday said that sedimentation in the Kankakee River is becoming serious.

"We've documented loss in both channel capacity and loss of channel in two sections of the river," said Paul Terrio, hydrologist and project director for the USGS's Kankakee River Study.

When asked pointedly by members of The Alliance to Restore the Kankakee River how he would describe the problem, Terrio replied grimly, "It's serious."

Terrio told ARK that USGS studies showed significant deposits of sand and sediment between 1978 and 1994. Sites in the Mokena Wetlands, between the mouth of Singleton Ditch and the state line, and in "Six-Mile Pool," between the Iroquois River and the Kankakee dam, were studied.

In one two-mile reach, roughly at the mid-point of "Six-Mile Pool," researchers documented over 193,000 tons of deposited sediment within a 200 foot cross section of the river.

At a site in the Mokena Wetlands, 148,280 tons of deposited sediment was reported compared to 142,000 tons of suspended sediment passing the gaging station on the west side of Mokena.

Overall, USGS sampled 64 cross sections of the river in 1994 and compared those results with similar studies conducted by the Illinois State Water Survey in 1980 and 1978. At certain locations, researchers were able to

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compare 1994 data with state studies going back as far as 1959.

At most stations, mixed results were obtained with some areas showing increased sediment deposit and others showing reduced amounts compared to earlier studies. The heaviest concentration of sediment in the Moccasin Wetlands, Terrio said, occurs in the section of the river nearest the state line. "We saw aggradation (sediment deposit) at every cross section with a related decrease in stream flow."

The USGS findings are the strongest evidence to date that channelization of the Kankakee River in Indiana has increased sedimentation in Illinois. Over 90 miles of the river in Indiana was channelized between 1860 and 1918, reducing its length to roughly 100 miles today. The channelization also drained the 400,000 acre Grand Kankakee Marsh which spanned both states. Draining the marsh and channelizing the river nearly doubled the gradient (fall) of the river channel in Indiana according to an earlier report published by USGS. In Illinois, the river returns to its natural meandering course.

The cross sectional study is one of three studies commissioned by ARK that is attempting to provide

information on sedimentation of the river within a historical context of earlier river studies.

Terrio advised ARK that this is merely a preliminary report and that the full scope of the studies is not yet completed. Still to come are the results of the three year long suspended sediment study where USGS and ARK volunteers monitored six gaging stations on the Kankakee and Iroquois Rivers in Illinois and Indiana. "We feel confident in our results," Terrio said in making his preliminary report.

ARK Treasurer Gregg Outsen reported that the Alliance has raised and paid \$158,000 since December 1992 toward the USGS studies. Outsen also reported \$49,000 in bills on hand from USGS with a estimated \$24,000 still to come for the remaining three quarters of fiscal 1996. Thursday the Alliance paid an additional \$2,000 toward the existing bills.

ARK also honored 22 volunteers who helped save over \$9,000 on the three year suspended sediment study. Those volunteers include: Elita and Tom Aubertine, J.R. and Mike Black, Bill Byrns, Alan Clifton, Donna Cochran, Robert Gray, Jack Hoyt, Shan Hyde, Louis Lane, Eric Prather, Dale Roy, Laverne and Linda Sadler, Gerhard Schultz, Cliff Stein, Aaron Taylor, Mark Viecelli, Jim Wasser, Verlyn Webster and Don Zens.

The ARK volunteers also received a copy of a resolution from the Kankakee County Board recognizing their efforts.