

1-31-83

Momence wetlands project not eliminated by Corps

By Bill Byrns
Journal writer

It seems that a Corps of Engineers manager in Chicago mis-spoke Thursday when she included a small state line wetland restoration project near Momence in the demise of the Corps' Kankakee River Basin Study.

It now seems that planning for the 200-plus acre wetland restoration is still alive and being managed by the Corps' Rock Island District.

"We are recommending closing out the (overall) feasibility study and wrapping it up," confirmed Jenni Smith, who is managing the bi-state river basin study for the Corps' Chicago

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District.

What engineers found failing their cost-benefit test was sand removal from the main channel of the river at the state line.

Camie Knollenberg, manager

of the state line restoration, confirmed late Thursday that Rock Island is still exploring the feasibility of that project.

The Momence Wetlands site is still seen as a strategic beach-head for a new wetland that would help alleviate flooding and curb some sediment entering Illinois.

A year ago the Kankakee River Conservation District used \$445,050 in state Conservation 2000 funds to purchase 215 acres of land from Jack Nelson. The district had previously acquired 67 acres nearby for the wetland project.

The property is located on the north bank of the river just west of Lazy Living Resort.

Plans call for an open channel to allow flood water to enter the wetland, gradually deposit its load of sediment and return to the main channel via an outflow farther downstream.

Fishery Biologist Jim Mick says the project will create additional wildlife habitat and help control flooding.

In part Smith's confusion Thursday stems from the fact that three different offices of the Corps of Engineers share responsibilities for the Kankakee River Basin. The Rock Island District includes most of the river in Illinois while the Detroit, Mich., District includes the upper watershed in Indiana. The Chicago office, mostly a planning division, has been involved in flooding and feasibility studies for the region near the state line.

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Town & Country Editor
Robert Themer takes a break from his long-running Pembroke series to speculate about an Eagle Festival for Kankakee.

SEE OUTDOORS, D1

Weekend warm-up

Tonight: Partly cloudy. Middle 20s. **Saturday:** Partly cloudy. High in the upper 30s. **Saturday night:** Partly cloudy. Upper 30s. **Sunday:** Partly cloudy. Windy and warmer. High near 50.

WEATHER, B4

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