

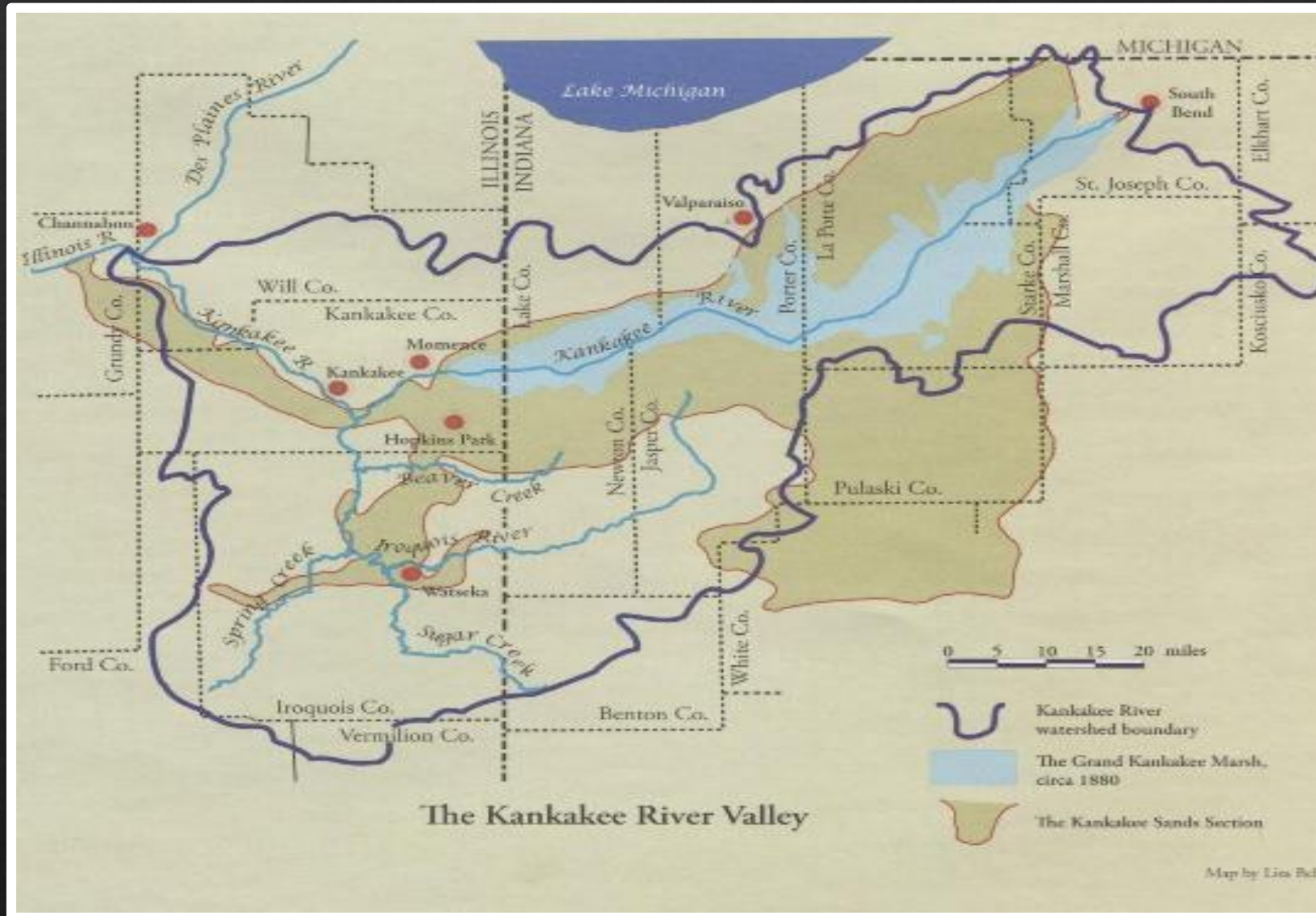
STEWARDSHIP OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN

Scott D. Pelath

Executive Director

Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission

KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN



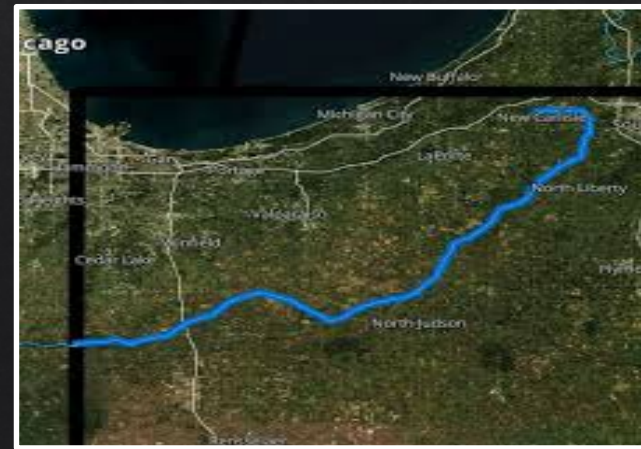
KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN PROFILE

- ◆ Kankakee River extends 133 miles from St. Joseph County to Illinois River
- ◆ Yellow River originating in St. Joseph County is the major Indiana tributary
- ◆ In Indiana alone, the basin covers about 1.3 *million* acres, of which tillable farm ground covers 1.1 million acres.

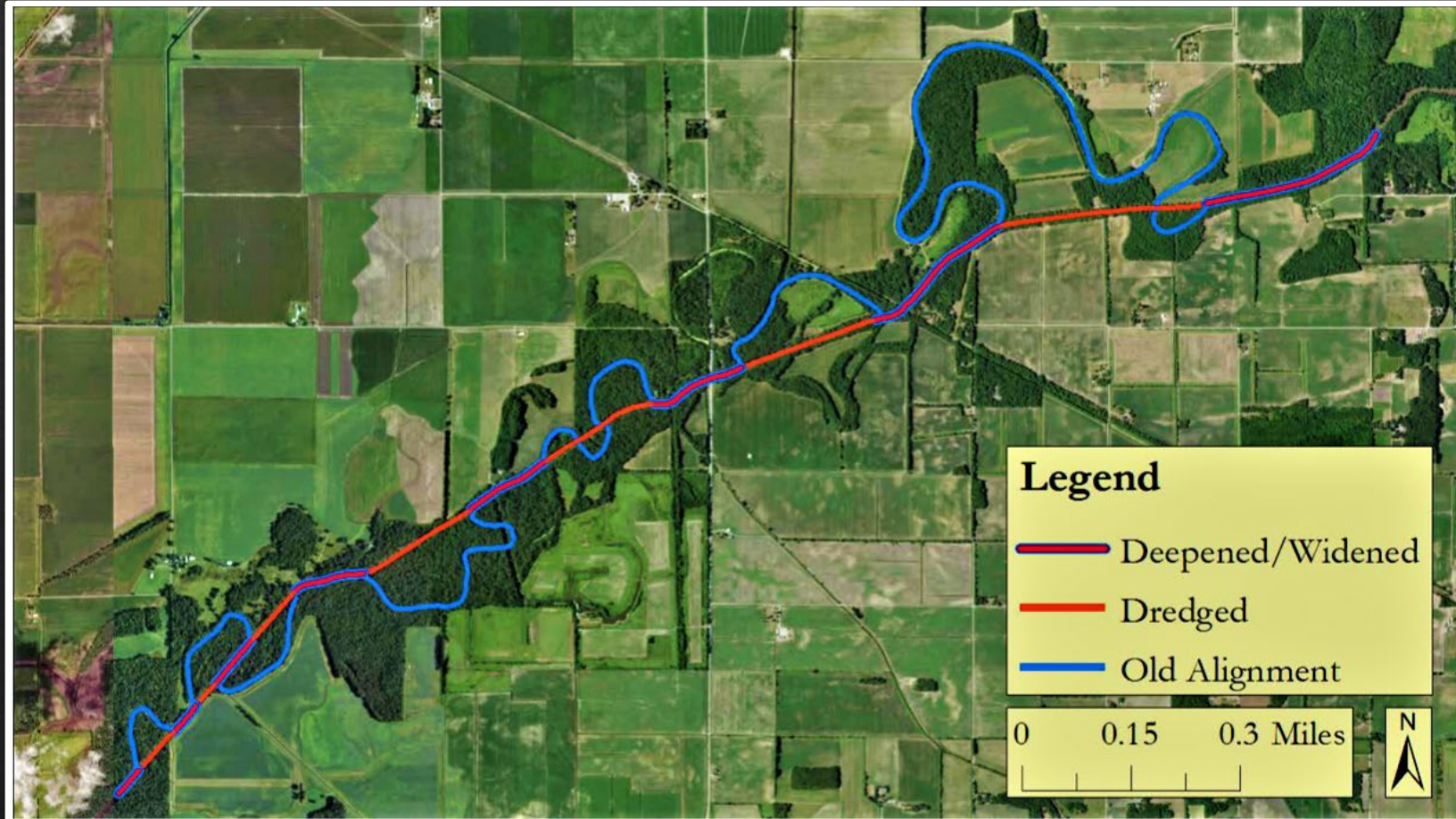
“Everglades of the North”

The Kankakee River
Basin once was home to
the second-largest
freshwater marsh in the
United States.

Drainage Completed during World War I



CHANNEL DREDGED AND MEANDERS CUT



Outcomes and Consequences Remain with Us

- ◆ Some of world's most productive farmland
- ◆ Communities grew and prospered on drier land
- ◆ Land generates wealth for local, regional, and state economies
- ◆ Taxes generated support schools, roads, and public services



Outcomes and Consequences Remain with Us

◆ Drained areas continue to flood and hold water



◆ Relentless sediment and erosion clogs channels



◆ Basin tends to revert to original state



◆ Human activity coupled with increased precipitation quickly adds water to system



Public Law 282 (2019)

- ◆ Creates 9-member Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission
- ◆ Adds two non-voting representatives from Illinois for improved coordination
- ◆ Dedicates resources to long-term and root-cause solutions to problems along the Kankakee and Yellow Rivers
- ◆ Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Newton, Porter, Starke, and St. Joseph Counties represented

THE COMMISSION

Jasper Co.
Member

Lake Co.
Member

LaPorte Co.
Member

Marshall Co.
Member

Newton Co.
Member

Porter Co.
Member

St. Joseph Co.
Member

Starke Co.
Member

IN DNR
Member

Executive
Director

Technical
Advisory
Committee

Financial
Services
(NIRPC)

Legal Services
(Atty. Gen.)

Public Law 282 (cont.)

- ◆ Commission's powers include:
 - ◆ Bank stabilization
 - ◆ Channel reconstruction
 - ◆ Acquisition of land for flood storage
 - ◆ Construction of levies
 - ◆ Sediment removal and sand traps
 - ◆ Tree removal and construction of access roads

Public Law 282 (cont.)

- ◇ Over \$2 million per year is derived from annual assessments on parcels within the basin:
 - ◇ \$1 per farm acre
 - ◇ \$7 per residential parcel
 - ◇ \$50 per commercial parcel
 - ◇ \$360 per utility or industrial parcel

Counties may supplant or offset the assessments with other funds.

Public Law 282 (cont.)

- ◇ Regulating agencies (DNR, IDEM) are directed to coordinate and streamline permitting
- ◇ Preferences for Indiana workers and contractors on Commission projects
- ◇ Commission maintains the 75-foot easement on the Kankakee and Yellow River channels only; counties retain full rights for emergencies
- ◇ NO eminent domain powers

MISSION

The Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission advances Northwest Indiana's safety, economic prosperity, and quality of its natural resources.

VISION

The Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission is building a region where its residents, farms, and communities prosper in concert with one of the nation's most unique natural environments.

BANK RECONSTRUCTION



*YELLOW
RIVER*

UPSTREAM LOGJAM MANAGEMENT



DOWNSTREAM LOGJAM MANAGEMENT



PLANNED FLOODPLAIN RECONNECTION



Newton County

FLOOD CONDITION RESPONSES

Porter County Highway Coordination



LONG-TERM GOALS

- ◇ Reduce sediment entering the river system
- ◇ Stabilize banks
- ◇ Create manageable storage for greater volumes of water
- ◇ Protect vital economic assets
- ◇ Reduce human-made barriers

PURSUED OUTCOMES

- ◆ Safety and predictability for the region's residents and businesses
- ◆ Successful agricultural sector
- ◆ Improved water quality
- ◆ Development of both economic and natural resources

QUESTIONS?

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