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Corps seeks opinions of river alternatives

By Bill Byrns, Journal writer

What is the best answer for flood and sediment controls across the Kankakee River basin?

Is it sediment traps, dredging, new wetlands, improved bank stabilization or buffer strip creation?

Those are some of the alternatives under consideration by the Corps of Engineers as they study the feasibility of various proposals for the river.

The Corps is asking for written comments on alternatives according to Phil Bernstein, chief of Planning for the Chicago District.

"I am particularly interested in comments regarding potential conflicts with other land-use plans, location of flooding problems and location of agricultural land rendered unproductive by flooding," Bernstein said in a letter soliciting public comments for the Corp's environmental assessment report.

At this stage many of the proposals offer only generalized locations as the "preliminary array of alternatives for flood control and ecosystem restoration" for the Kankakee basin.

More detailed locations and specifics would come later in the review process if deemed "feasible."

Those feasibility study options include the Kankakee and Iroquois rivers in both Illinois and Indiana and tributaries such as the Yellow River in Indiana.

Here's what's under consideration.

SEDIMENT TRAPS

Possible locations include the state line on the Kankakee and Iroquois rivers and on Singleton Ditch. Other sites are the Kankakee at Aroma Park, Singleton Ditch east of Momence and Spring and Sugar creeks near Watseka in Iroquois County.

In Indiana, sites include the Kankakee and Singleton Ditch at Shelby and the main river at Dunn's Bridge, Ramsey's Landing, State Route 49, English Lake, U.S. Route 30 and North Liberty. A sediment trap is also proposed for the mouth of the Yellow River in Indiana.

WETLANDS RESTORATION

Sites include the state line for both the Kankakee and



Iroquois rivers, the mouth of Singleton Ditch and sites in the Momence and Bourbonnais areas.

On the Iroquois River, wetlands are eyed along Langan, Spring and Sugar creeks and near Watseka.

In Indiana, sites include the same locations considered for sediment traps.

BANK STABILIZATION

Possible locations are the state line, major north-south river bends east of Momence, Momence, Aroma Park, Six-Mile Pool and at Kankakee. Other sites include the mouth of Singleton Ditch and major creek tributaries of the Iroquois River near Watseka.

In Indiana, work is seen at Bremen and Plymouth on the Yellow River, the mouth of the Yellow River and at Schneider and Shelby on the Singleton Ditch.

RESTORATION OF RIVER MEANDERS

Illinois locations include old meanders east of Momence. Indiana may include many of the sites listed above as well as at Bremen and Plymouth on the Yellow River.

SELECTIVE DREDGING

Possible dredging sites include Aroma, Kankakee, Momence, Six-Mile Pool, north-south river bends east of Momence and at the mouth of Singleton Ditch.

Not listed is a pilot project by the Corps' Rock Island District to remove sand from the Kankakee River at the state line as part of a separate aquatic ecosystem restoration project.

In Indiana, dredging sites may include the mouth of the Yellow and Singleton at Schneider and Shelby.

BUFFER STRIPS

Buffer strip options are seen along Langan, Spring and Sugar creeks in Iroquois County, at the state line on the Iroquois and at north-south bends on the Kankakee and at the mouth of Singleton Ditch.

The Corps is also looking at the feasibility of wide setback levees in Indiana along the Kankakee at Shelby and English Lake as well as ways to prevent ice jams in Six Mile Pool and on the lower river near Wilmington.

Comments on any of the alternatives should be addressed before April 24 to: Tim Kelleher, Department of the Army, Chicago District Corps of Engineers, 111 N. Canal St., Chicago, IL 60606-7206. Questions can be directed to Kelleher by phone at (312) 353-6400 ext. 3012 or by e-mail to Timothy.E.Kelleher@usace.army.mil.