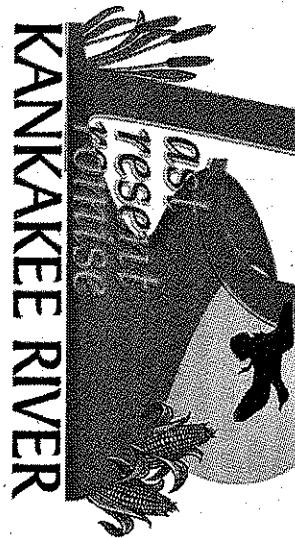


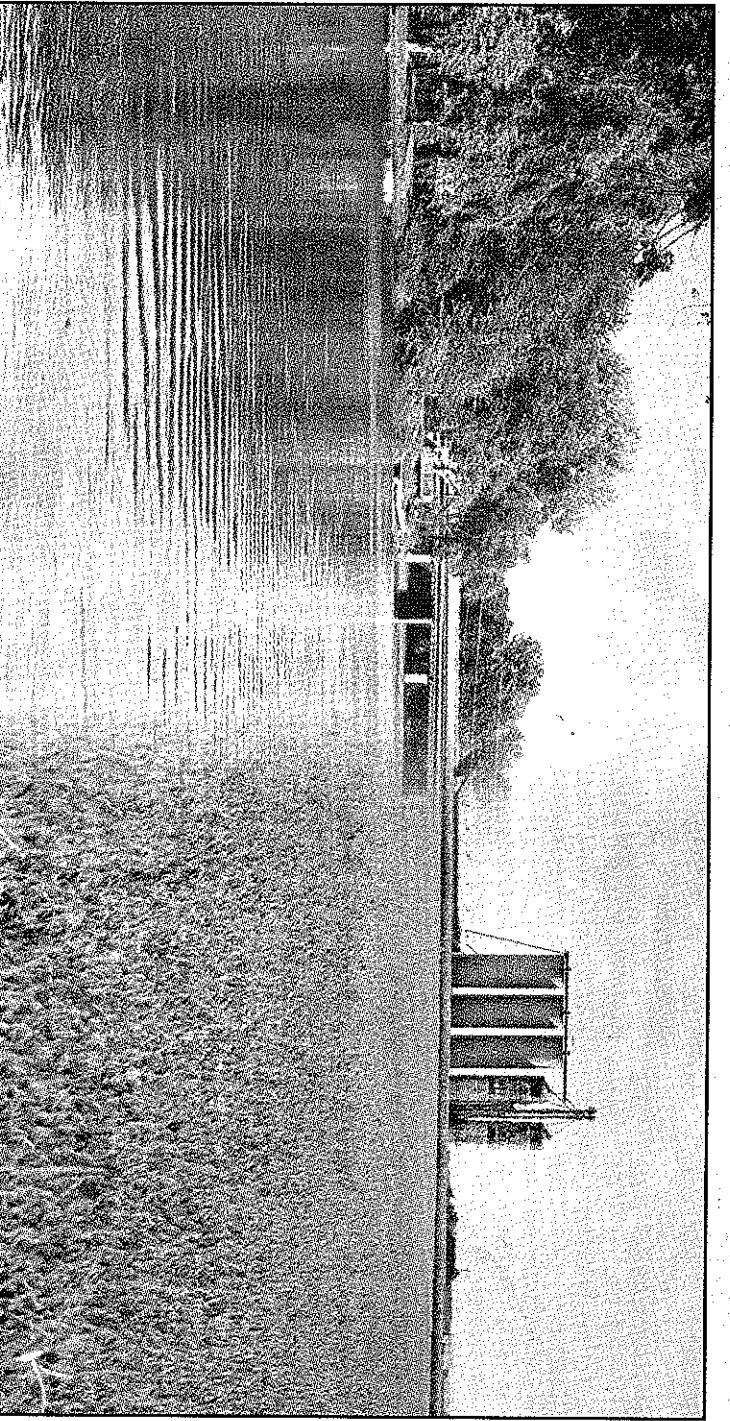
# THE KANKAKEE

## An abused

## resource



Today the river itself is a paradox: "The Kankakee Ditch" in Indiana; and a sand-plagued stream in Illinois that still supports one of the top smallmouth bass fisheries.



**Composite by Nancy Burgan**

A treasure often taken for granted, the Kankakee is an outdoors person's paradise, an aesthetic resource and the lifeblood of many farms along its banks.

*You all live in my basin but know me not.*

*I am the spirit of the stream Kankakee although others have called me by many names in ages past. Birthed by ice and cataclysmic flood, my basin shelters thousands, all seeking different rewards from the treasures I offer.*

*My heritage is the life of the earth. My nature is*

*ever changing.*

*In elder days — before you altered Nature's design — my waters were a wildlife refuge, a paradise for creatures of fen, forest and field.*

*In these days, my waters embrace the crops of your field, bring life and power to your cities and offer a playground for all to enjoy.*

*A century ago, in the name of progress, you altered my flow and destroyed my grand marsh.*

*Today, in the name of conservation, you seek to restore part of that marsh, clear my sands and change again the bed of my waters.*

*Sand, you rightly say, kills my fish by blanketing the rocks where lies the food of the river.*

*But life and death is a balance and even sand is part of my ancient heritage.*

*Tampering with that balance has led to the burden I carry today.*

*Rivers do not mark time by the tick of a clock or by the pages of a calendar. Decades, centuries, even millennia have flown by as I con-*

### THE KANKAKEE RIVER:

Today The daily Journal begins a five-part series on the Kankakee River.

■ Monday, the river's history and its impact on both rural and urban environments.

■ Tuesday, what the latest

studies are saying.

■ Wednesday, how the

Kankakee River became our

playground.

■ Thursday what should be done to preserve the Kankakee River.

*time to shape my course to the sea.*

*My marsh has faded as the surrounding landscape has changed. I, too, continue to change, my channel slowly cuts deeper into bedrock on its long, slow fall to join the stream called Illinois.*

*Look now into my eyes and see the faces of the Kankakee. Learn that my wild places share a place*

## River

Continued from Page A1

with your cities and homes. Behold the rich fields where crops rise across my basin. Learn the plans for my future and then consider the balance that all must share.

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**By Bill Byrns**  
Journal writer

Today the Kankakee River valley is "a good example of a practical Illinois landscape," Department of Natural Resources biologists say in a recent report. Nearly 90 percent of the basin in Illinois and Indiana is crop-land. Urban areas occupy less than 5 percent with grasslands, woodlands and wetlands ac-counting for the remainder. In Illinois only 236 acres of pre-sen-ted wetlands survive.

Those plans include a 30,000-mile network of trails, 100 miles in Illinois but nearly 200,000 live in the watershed. Cities, suburbs and industry all use the river's resources. Most of the problems of pollution begin in these urbanized areas. Here too are often found the greatest demand for more public lands and the most recreational use — and abuse — of the streams and themselves.

Once ignored by state and federal agencies, the threat of urban sprawl has turned the river basin into a chessboard of competing

cropland, agriculture becomes a tempting target for the problems of sedimentation and erosion. But improved farming practices and regulations have curbed many of the abuses of the past.

And, farmers are not alone here.

Together the Kankakee and Iroquois rivers flow across 100 miles in Illinois but nearly 200,000 live in the watershed. Cities, suburbs and industry all use the river's resources. Most of the problems of pollution begin in these urbanized areas. Here too are often found the greatest demand for more public lands and the most recreational use — and abuse — of the streams and themselves.

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conservation plans.

Those plans include a 30,000-

acre federal wildlife refuge and

the possibility of flood and sediment controls by the Corps of Engineers. The Corps is also

planning an ecosystem restora-

tion project near the state line

that includes limited sand re-

moval from the river.

State agencies in both Illinois

and Indiana continue to pursue

land acquisitions and easements

for conservation and flood con-

trol and the Nature Conservancy

is turning ag land back into wet-

lands on 7,209 acres in Newton

County, Ind.

In addition, a number of local

groups, the Kankakee River Ba-

sin Partnership in Illinois and the

Kankakee River Basin Com-

mission and Grand Marsh Resto-

ration Project in Indiana each

have their own plans for the riv-

er.

Over the next four days The

Daily Journal will examine the

different aspects of the Kanka-

kee River; its past, present and

promise.

## THE ALMANAC

Today is Sunday, Sept. 24, the 268th day of 2000. There are 98 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 24, 1789, Congress passed the First Judiciary Act, which provided for an attorney general and a Supreme Court.

### On this date:

## Manteno

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But all is not perfect in para-dise. Hebel said high taxes are drawing commuters, and the

### NEW HOMES AND new streets for new residents the commun-

