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Outdoors

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BOATING • FISHING • HUNTING • NATURE • CONSERVATION

Kankakee River

A look at the Kankakee

Series to feature different aspects of Kankakee River Basin

By Bill Byrns
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This is the weekend when the Kankakee River becomes the star attraction for thousands of visitors.

The three-day APF Homes Kankakee River Valley Regatta Boat Races and River Festival, which begin Saturday, bring a lot of excitement and generate an estimated \$600,000-plus in economic benefit for the area.

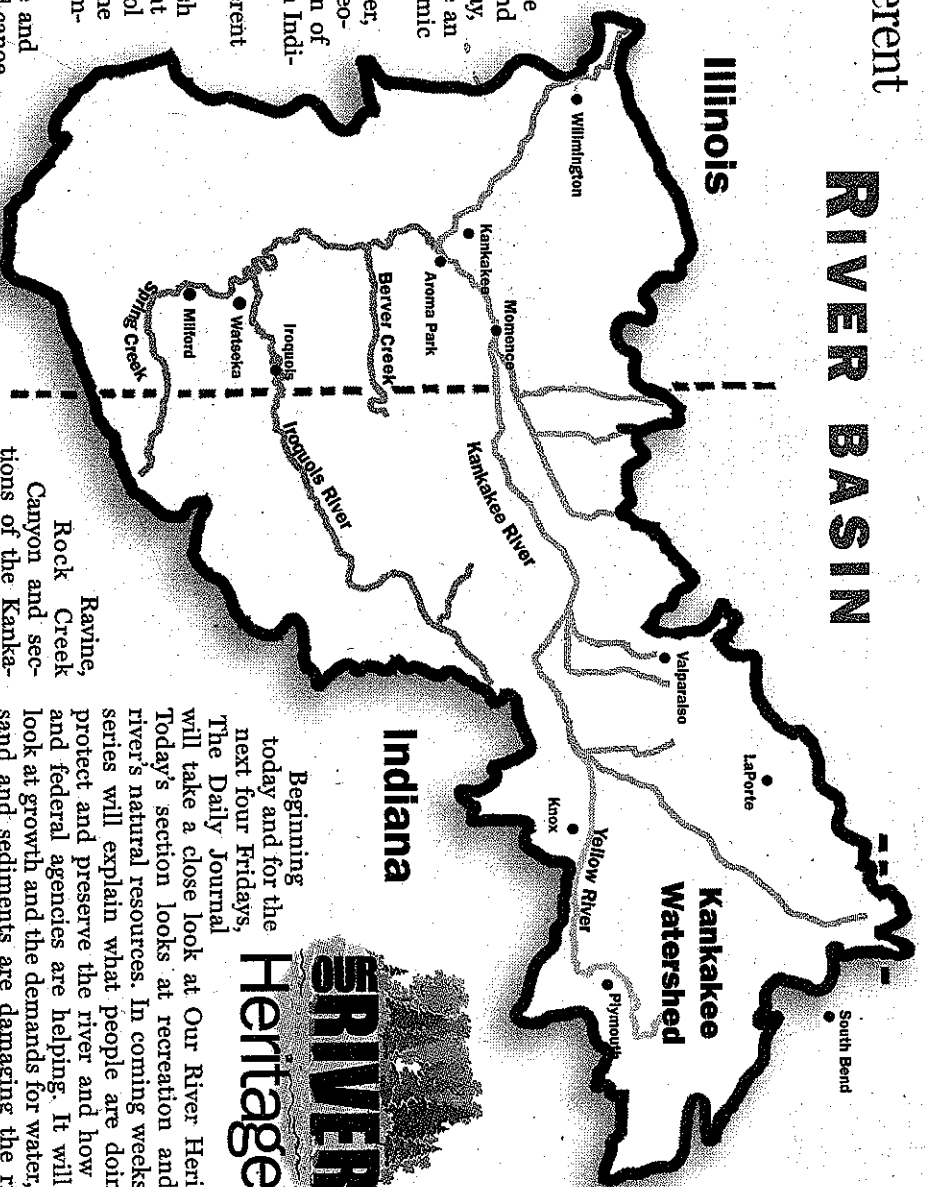
But our river heritage is far greater, affecting several hundred thousand people living in a 5,165 square mile basin of northeastern Illinois and northwestern Indiana.

The river itself has adopted different faces for the diverse lives it touches.

In Indiana, where once a grand marsh stood, the river now runs straight through a man-made channel to control drainage and flooding. In both states the river provides water for drinking, commerce and crops.

It is our playground, our namesake and our identity. We fish its water, boat and canoe its winding channels, hike and bike along its trails and enjoy the wide diversity of life that it shelters.

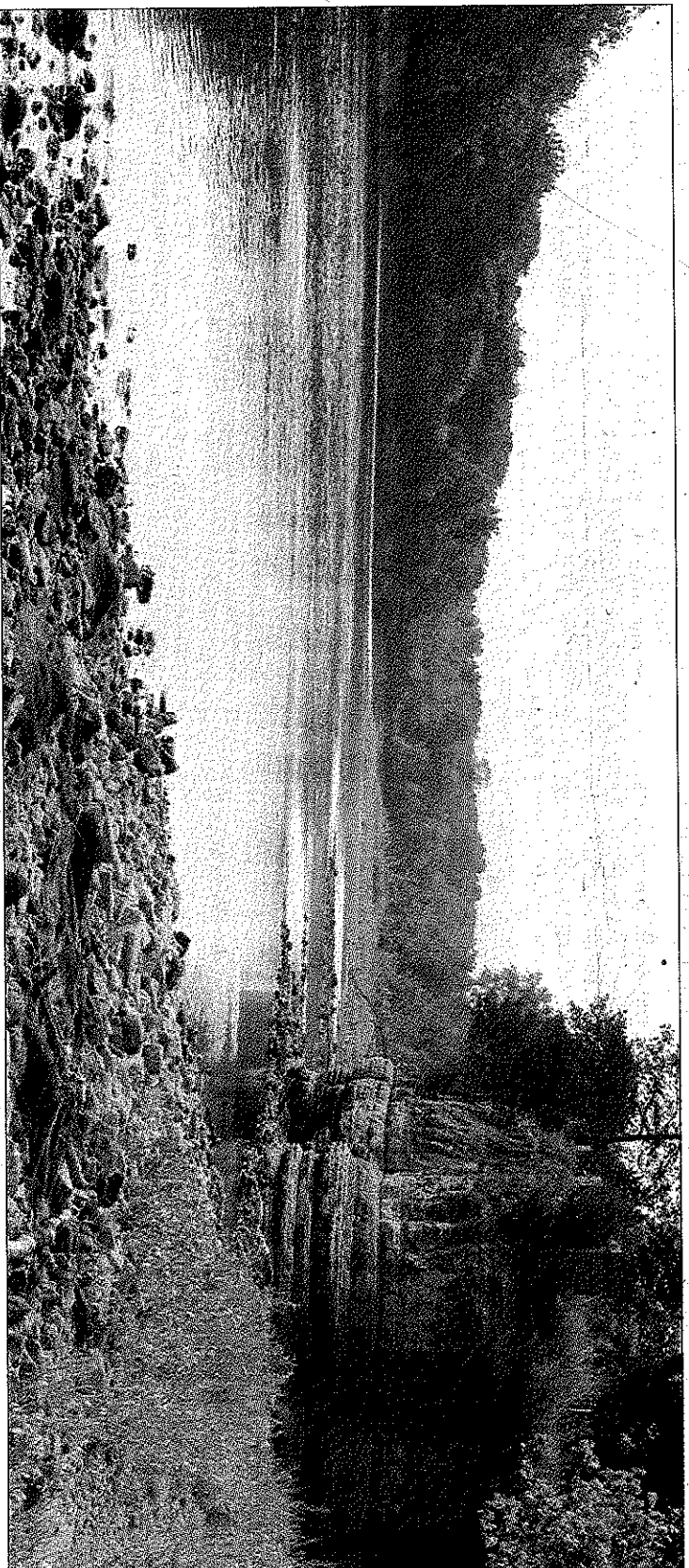
In many ways the Kankakee and its Iroquois tributary are unlike many rivers in the Midwest. Sections of both streams flow northerly as a visible legacy to the last glaciers that swept this land in eons past. Those glaciers formed the valley, carved out the rugged landscapes at Bourbonnais



RIVER
Heritage

Beginning today and for the next four Fridays, The Daily Journal will take a close look at Our River Heritage. Today's section looks at recreation and the river's natural resources. In coming weeks this series will explain what people are doing to protect and preserve the river and how state and federal agencies are helping. It will also look at growth and the demands for water, how sand and sediments are damaging the river's ecology and what is being done to restore the river.

We also want to hear your stories, the voices of the Kankakee River. Many readers have grown up along the Kankakee and Iroquois rivers and have seen the changes that time has brought. We want to hear from you. Call 468-7349 or e-mail bbyrns@daily-journal.com and let us hear your story.



The bedrock and rocky riffle bottom of the Kankakee River downstream from Kankakee to Wilmington provides a rich habitat for some of the best fishing in the entire basin.