

Outlooks

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BOATING • FISHING • HUNTING • NATURE • CONSERVATION

A look at the Kankakee

Series to feature different aspects of Kankakee River Basin

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

The three-day APR Homes Kankakee River Valley Regatta Boat Races and River Festival, which begin Saturday, bring a lot of excitement and generate an estimated \$500,000-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, bike and hike along its trails and enjoy the wide diversity of life that it shelters.

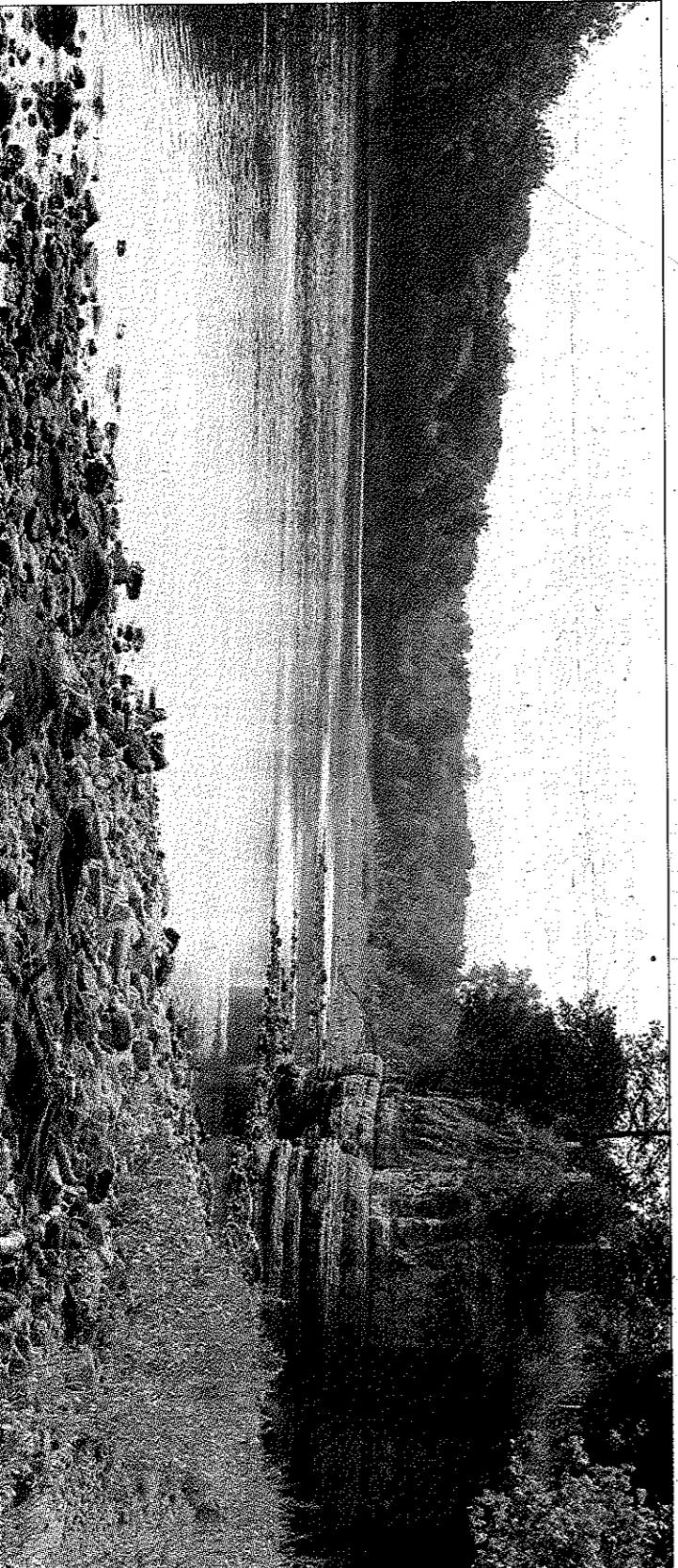
In many ways the Kankakee and its Iroquois tributary are unlike many rivers in the Midwest. Sections of both streams flow northerly as a visible legacy to the last glaciers that swept this land in eons past. Those glaciers formed the valley, carved out the rugged landscapes at Bourbonnais



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.

It has seen the dramatic changes brought by man and still amazingly retains much of its natural character. From its source as a tiny creek near South Bend, Ind., the Kankakee, at places, is a river of marshy wetlands, islands where the main channel widens, rocky riffles, deep pools and craggy limestone bluffs.



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.