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First Kankakee River Paddlers Overnight Camp now open in LaPorte County

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The Northwest Indiana Paddling Association (NWIPA) in partnership with the LaPorte County Parks Department, the Kankakee River Basin Commission (KBRC), LaPorte County Surveyor's Office, and the LaPorte County Drainage Board, has announced that Kankakee River Paddler's Overnight Camp #1 is now open for public use.

The campsite is located on the north bank of the Kankakee River 1.5 miles downstream of the Yellow River DNR Public Access Site.

The new campsite is intended to be the first of several free overnight campsites planned along the bi-state 133 mile long Kankakee River Water Trail spanning from the headwaters rising near South Bend to where the Kankakee joins the Des

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Plaines River in Will County, Illinois.

The campsite is designed as a primitive paddler's overnight stop accessible only from the river. The campsite is located on levee surrounded by forests, wooded wetlands, and an ancient oxbow of the river which is under lease by the LaPorte Co. Parks Department.

On May 22, members of the LaPorte Co. Parks Department, the KBRC, the LaPorte Co. Surveyor's Office, and NWIPA completed the first phase of the project, which will allow paddlers river access to the site for camping. NWIPA is responsible for maintaining the property and asks that fellow paddlers exercise a "leave no trace" philosophy when using the campsite.

NWIPA President, Dan Plath said, "We are pleased to help make a multi-day paddling trip on the Kankakee possible. NWIPA is delighted by the outstanding partnership that has bloomed between our organization and the Kankakee River Basin Commission, the LaPorte County Drainage Board, the LaPorte County Parks Department, and the LaPorte County Surveyor's Office. We also are very appreciative of the efforts by Indiana District 20

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Representative Tom Dermody, for his efforts downstate to help secure much needed maintenance funding that helps keep the river open for recreational use. We have begun talks with other interested organizations further downstream to establish three or four additional overnight paddling camps. Our goal is to establish a bi-state water trail with National Water Trail recognition.”

KBRC Executive Director Jody Melton says of the project, “The Kankakee River is being discovered for the recreational potential it has.”

For further information, contact Dan Plath at 219-871-9559 or dplath@nwipa.org

Posted 5/31/2013

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