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www.kankakeeriverbasin.org

KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

6100 Southport Road Portage, Indiana 46368

January 7, 2015

Ms. Corita Waters
National Park Service
National Recreation Trail Coordinator

Dear Ms. Waters,

The Kankakee River Basin Commission was created by the Indiana General Assembly in 1977. The Commission has responsibility for eight counties in Northern Indiana; Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Marshall, Newton, Porter, Starke, and St. Joseph. The Commission is composed of 24 members: a representative from each of the eight board of county commissioners, the eight county surveyors or their designated employee, and a supervisor of the eight Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Commission was established to coordinate development in the Basin and has, since established, sought to plan and coordinate the many environmental demands placed upon the Kankakee River, its tributaries, and all the land around it. This includes flood control and drainage, as well as recreation, water quality and supply, hunting and fishing, wetlands preservation, and upland soil erosion. The Kankakee Basin in Indiana comprises 1.9 million acres of which almost 1.6 million has been used as cropland.

On behalf of the Kankakee River Basin Commission, I am writing to express our support for designation of the Kankakee River Water Trail as a National Water Trail. We support the designation of a National Water Trail for the entire 133 miles of the Kankakee River from the headwaters of the Kankakee River in rural St. Joseph County, Indiana, to the Des Plaines River in Illinois, based on the benefits of designation including increasing community-based recreational opportunities, increased public access, tourism, economic growth, public health improvements, and environmental education.

The Kankakee River Basin Commission supports the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association and the Illinois representatives who are working together to apply for National Water Trail designation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jody Melton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Mr. Jody Melton
Executive Director