



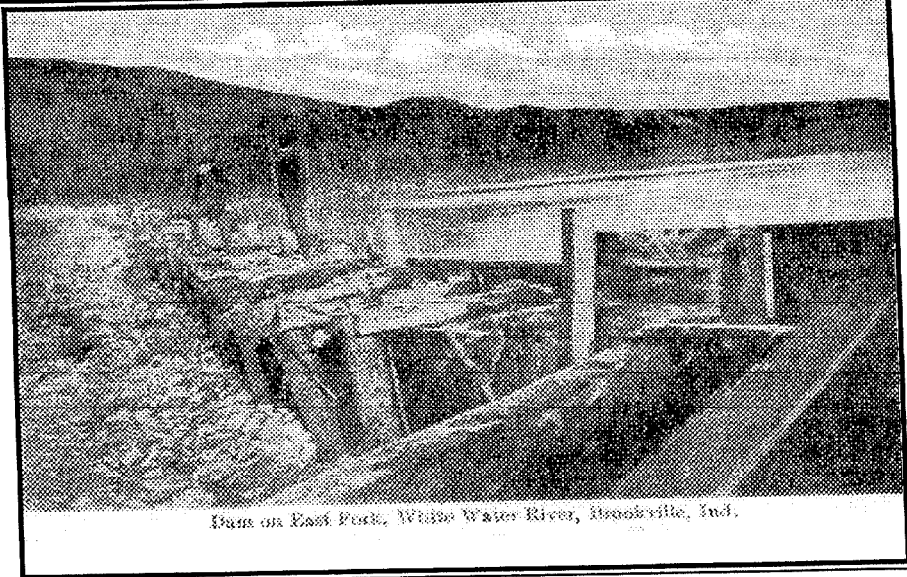
February 6, 2004

CSI Editor:

I read with dismay the article in the February, 2004, issue of The Hoosier Packet about the potential (planned) loss of water in the four and a half miles of the Whitewater Canal between Laurel and Metamora. I'm sure that the summary given, is not the last you will have to do with the issue. But, I regret the potential further loss of watered canal.

However, the issue is larger than just the water in the prism as it affects the very successful tourism operation at Metamora, the views from the Whitewater Railroad, and the long range future of the canal itself. It also affects the future of the Laurel Feeder Dam, a historic canal structure. I am quite certain that if the dam is no longer used to supply the canal, the reason for its maintenance will disappear. It will then soon be regarded as an unacceptable hazard and then the legions of anti-dam folks will cheer its removal. Thus the choices now about water supply will dictate the future of another canal structure.

When I read your article, there appears to be two sources of silt. One is the Haspin Acres off-road facility. From past experience working for a mining company, I know that it is the legal responsibility of landowners to prevent erosion silt from leaving their property. In all sites I am aware of, hay bales, silt fences, and settling ponds and their maintenance are mandatory. There are heavy fines for failure to design, get approval, construct, and maintain such systems. If silt escapes one's property, it is the landowner's (not the state's) responsibility to take and finance all measures necessary to clean it up. If land must be bought or leased for settling ponds, the polluter should pay for it. The claim of heavy rain is not considered an excuse. This is an enforcement responsibility of the state. If the state park people will not lodge the necessary complaint, any citizen may. I know from



Dam on East Fork, White Water River, Brookville, Ind.

This dam on the East Fork of the Whitewater River at Brookville, Indiana, backed up a pool of slackwater to allow canal boats to cross the river. Note how the timber cribs were filled with rock and soil. This dam was approximately 15 miles below the Laurel Feeder Dam, which was originally built like it. The Laurel dam was replaced by a concrete dam, which was later repaired by Rainbow Construction after being washed out by flood waters. From the postcard collection of CSI member, Sue Simerman

experience that the state environmental reaches the river. That's a win-win police must investigate any complaint. situation.

As to silt coming from the river, I suspect that this is a recent phenomenon, not one that has been going on for the last 160 years. Silt into the river results from uncontrolled releases upstream. Not only is it affecting the canal, but also the fish habitat in the river and it should be accumulating behind the dam. It says that someone(s) has not installed or maintained the necessary control measures. This is a violation of federal law. Again, the solution is the federally mandated enforcement.

I love (not) the planned solution of pumping well water into the canal. The non-answer to the neighbor's question about drawing down the water table means that the answer is probably yes. Comparing this plan to the situation at Delphi is absurd. At Delphi, the limestone quarry company has to pump water to maintain their operation. I'm sure that they also take great care to see that it is properly settled of any silt that may be entrained from haul road runoff. After pumping, they have to discharge it somewhere and putting it in the canal both helps the community and provides an additional buffer before the water

I think the fact that the state folks didn't consult with anyone, but just reported their already made conclusions says much. The three options offered by their consultants probably indicate that the consultants were given a restricted scope of investigation. While state employees may be restricted in their options by internal or external pressure, citizens are free to demand broader action. I hope you will continue efforts for a better solution.

Sincerely,
Dave Barber
President
American Canal Society

The Hoosier Packet article of February 2004 and Dave's letter have been sent to the Department of Natural Resources, Indiana State Museum & Historic Sites.

