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## COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS

July 10, 2023

Commissioners Scott Blain and Bill Bullock; Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) Coordinator Cyrina Allen, Lt. Governor Kristen Juras, Fish Wild Life and Parks Regional Supervisor Mike Ruggles, and Administrative Officer Angela Newell were present.

9:00 Ruggles noted permits were suspended because of the volume of material being removed and the movement within the waterway that FWP did not believe was authorized in the original blanket permit.

Allen noted the County's involvement in helping the State gain the right of entry, and noted it was clear in initial meetings with the State and USACE Debris removal task force meetings that there would be work within the waterway. Ruggles noted the Department had a change in staff and he does not believe FWP was invited to debris removal meetings.

Bullock asked why sites were not visited prior to the Department issuing the permit. Ruggles noted they typically look at permits and do an initial site visit but do not typically do additional visits unless there are changes or complaints.

Blain discussed CY estimates; Allen confirmed that the contract was for 100,000 CY. Ruggles stated that the permitted volume has already been exceeded.

Bullock noted approach from local FWP staff has been confrontational from the get-go. Bullock noted the water in Rock Creek is fully obligated by water rights and for many years the water does not make it to the confluence. Ruggles stated that Bullock initiated the hostility with Staff and that FWP has significantly expedited its permitting process to better accommodate the emergency situation. Ruggles noted the economic benefit of fishing on Rock Creek.

Juras noted the Administration's efforts to get all parties to work more collaboratively and noted that State DES has admitted to moving outside of the permit. Noted doing everything at the State level to address issues and to make sure the State does not lose funding by not complying with permits.

Blain noted historic tensions with NRCS and Conservation District with FWP and the history of debris issues related to the 2011 flooding in Joliet.

Allen asked why FWP appears to continue to work through day-to-day procedures instead of working through emergency/disaster provisions.

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Allen noted the project's focus is on debris that on or that could affect public infrastructure. Allen noted concerns received from private property owners about why things are not being done. Allen noted that private property debris removal was approved by FEMA.

9:30 Juras departed.

Allen noted there is significant infrastructure on the two remaining sites including gas utilities, wastewater facilities, and the adjacent critical access hospital.

Ruggles stated that woody debris reduces erosion and helps preserve the stream bed and is not concerned that much of the debris is going to move in a typical high-water year. Bullock noted the volume of debris is not comparable to typical levels of woody debris.

Blain noted historically the Conservation District has kind of let FWP run the show on 310 permits and that process has changed in the last several months. Noted one of the pictures that FWP used for their habitat argument was on Granite Road; the debris that is depicted in the picture was a contributing factor to losing the road in the 2022 flood. Blain noted the Joliet Bridge is on grade; public utilities hang from the bottom of the bridge and any debris that moves and hangs up on the bridge is very concerning for the Town of Joliet.

Ruggles asked about work in Joliet. Allen noted there is debris on both the east and west sides of the bridge off Granite Road; discussion about the debris' potential to move. Allen showed pictures of the debris moving in a regular high-water event this year and reiterated concerns that it could impact the utilities and bridge. Also discussed woody debris at 2-Mile Bridge across from the Hospital and at the Turkey Creek Subdivision on the East Rosebud River site in Roscoe.

Blain noted the total area under discussion is a very small percentage of the total fish habitat in Rock Creek. Ruggles countered that area of work is significantly in the spawning area; concerned that continued work will affect fish populations.

Blain noted the calls the County is receiving are coming from constituents with concerns about their property.

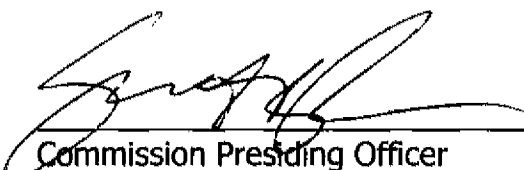
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Bullock noted concerns about property rights and landowners getting water to their fields and keeping it out of their houses. Ruggles noted the complaints he has received have come from taxpayers who want a natural river. Discussion about changes in river topography and potential hazards to adjacent landowners. Ruggles noted benefits of "dynamic" river and channel migration zones.

12:00 Adjourned.

ATTEST:

  
Clerk  
Commission Presiding Officer

Respectfully submitted: Angela Newell, Administrative Officer