

INDIANA SILVER JACKETS NORTH BRANCH ELKHART RIVER WEST LAKES TASK TEAM



Focus Area & Scope Of Report

Background

Multiple flooding events in 2008 and 2009 in portions of Noble, LaGrange, and Elkhart counties, have again raised community interest in understanding and seeking ways to reduce flood-induced risks, especially in the West Lakes Chain Area in Noble County. As a result, a local steering group known as the “Flood Focus Committee of the Elkhart River Alliance” was formed. Members included:

- | Name | Representing |
|-------------------|--|
| • Gene Lightner | Interim Chairman, Flood Focus Committee of the Elkhart River Alliance & member Elkhart River Alliance Steering Committee |
| • Bill Reynolds | West Lakes Marine, Inc. |
| • Dave Abbott | Rome City Conservancy District & President Rome City Town Board |
| • Dave Wick | West Lakes Homeowners Association |
| • Joy LeCount | Noble County Commissioner |
| • Ken Schuman | Ligonier City Council President & member Elkhart River Alliance Steering Committee |
| • Lynn Reynolds | West Lakes Marine, Inc. |
| • Mike Shellman | Member Elkhart River Alliance Steering Committee |
| • Nancy Brown | Elkhart River Restoration Association Board & Elkhart County SWCD |
| • Patty Fisel | Mayor of Ligonier |
| • John Richardson | J.F. New Associates |

The Flood Focus Committee of the Elkhart River Alliance approached the U.S. Geological Survey and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, seeking assistance. These two agencies asked the Indiana Silver Jackets (ISJ) if they could bring a multi-agency focus to this specific basin’s issues. The ISJ volunteered to assist, and the North Branch Elkhart River West Lakes Task Team (Task Team), was formed in July of 2009. The following agencies volunteered to participate in this effort:

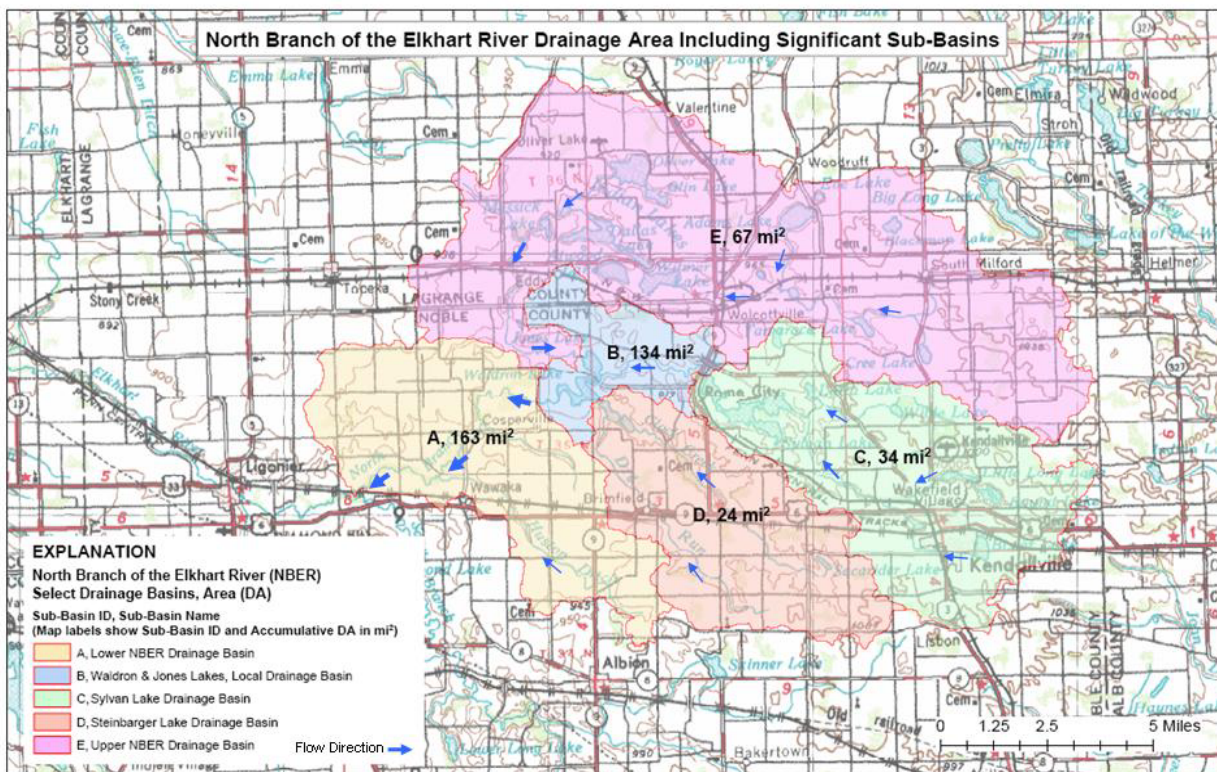
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| • Indiana Dept. of Homeland Security | • National Weather Service |
| • Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources | • Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| • Maumee River Basin Commission | • U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| • IUPUI, Polis Center | • U.S. Geological Survey |

Focus Area:

Because of the critical relationship between a drainage basin's unique geology and its response to precipitation, the Task Team set the scope of this report to look broadly at the watershed/drainage basin of the North Branch Elkhart River (NBR Elkhart River). A broader understanding of this background is needed to better comprehend how the hydrologic cycle and system above and below the West Lakes Chain affects water level in the area of special focus — the West Lakes Chain and the system outlet below Waldron Lake.

The NBR Elkhart River watershed/drainage basin, for purposes of this report, is shown on the map below and consists of the area that:

- Combines with the South Branch Elkhart River drainage basin about three miles east of Ligonier.
- Includes, from the confluence of these two streams, land almost 16 miles east, past Kendallville near the boundary between Noble and DeKalb Counties.
- Extends, from north to south, as much as 12 miles from near Valentine in LaGrange County to just north of Albion in Noble County.
- Includes many tributaries and several series of interconnected lakes.



Report Scope:

Through this report, the Task Team seeks to assist the many stakeholders with an understanding of the science controlling regional relationships between precipitation, geology, stream flow, lake levels, natural resources, and flooding. Further, the Task Team seeks to investigate possible

non-structural and structural actions to reduce flood risks. Lastly, the report identifies financial and planning resources available through Federal and State Agencies.

More specifically, this report provides:

- An understanding of the extensive technical documentation previously created regarding this basin. This information and references are summarized in Chapter 1.
- An understanding of the science controlling regional relationships between precipitations, geology, stream flow, and lake levels. This information and references are summarized in Chapters 2 and 4.
- An overview of the natural resources and their relationship to water quality and flooding is included in Chapter 3.
- An understanding of current basin wide floodplain management activities, which are summarized in Chapter 5.
- A conceptual level technical review of structural considerations to reduce flood induced risks, which is summarized in Chapter 6.
- A review of current opportunities available through existing State and Federal Programs to reduce flood induced risks, which is included in Chapter 7.
- A summary, which includes highlights from the report and the prioritization of various local considerations that may lead to reduced flood risks, is found in Chapter 8.

The work of the Task Team initiative included:

- Participation in local meetings.
- Regular Task Team member meetings.
- A tour of the area of concern by members of the team and local stakeholders.
- Gathering of existing information such as the many previously published reports, historical hydrologic data including precipitation, lake level, stream flow, and flood peak data, topographic data, and structure/infrastructure information.
- Research on existing State and Federal resources for potential flood-loss mitigation.
- Synthesis of all Task Team findings and future local considerations for presentation to stakeholders and for the production of this report.
- Development of written Task Team findings and future local considerations.

Task Team agencies provided non-monetary resources including personnel time, travel costs, and/or data sets. No funding for action item implementation or project construction funding was promised or implied by involvement of the team agencies.

Unless otherwise stated, all elevations used in this report are referenced to the National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929, NGVD '29.