

July 7, 2016

Mr. Dave Navecky
Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington DC 20423-0001
Docket No. FD-35952

Dear Mr. Navecky,

We are opposed to the Great Lakes Basin Railway (GLB) for the various reasons outlined in this document. The proposed GLB is set to run through what was once known as the Grand Kankakee Marsh aka The Everglades of the North until man came through in the name of progress, began draining it and developed it into highly productive farmland. **You can learn more about the dredging of the Kankakee Marsh by visiting this website: <http://www.thekankakeeriver.com/>**

Our property is located in Porter Township in Porter County and will be approximately one-quarter (1/4) mile from the proposed railway route.

Cultural and Historic Resources

Northwest Indiana is home to numerous historic, cultural, and natural sites that are significantly important to the identity of its people. The interjection of a high-speed railway system would negatively impact these sites by adding noise, air and ground pollution, as well as drainage problems.

The Kankakee Valley Historical Society has done several archaeological digs in conjunction with Notre Dame University in southern Porter County. The Collier Lodge located near Kouts, Indiana is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as #0900113. Although the current proposed railway route does not go through the grounds of the Collier Lodge, it would still be in the area of a possible alternative route.

Mark R. Schurr is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Notre Dame. According to his biography on the college website <http://anthropology.nd.edu/faculty-and-staff/faculty-by-alpha/mark-schurr/>: Since 2003, Schurr has led archeological digs on the grounds of the Collier Lodge, a 19th-century hunting lodge located on the banks of the Kankakee River in northwestern Indiana. With the help of Notre Dame anthropology students and volunteers from the Kankakee Valley Historical Society, Schurr has unearthed hundreds of clues to the area's rich past, including a prehistoric tool dating to 7,000 B.C., beads, tools and dishes of prehistoric Native American tribes, parts of a rare flintlock rifle, a spear point that dates back to 300 B.C., and prehistoric pottery from every known time period, spanning 800 B.C. to imported English pottery of the early 19th century. "Because the site had never been plowed, layers of earth were sealed, revealing centuries of artifacts," Schurr said. "I have never seen another site like this."

More information can be found at <http://www.kankakeevalleyhistoricalsociety.org/index.htm>

On June 3, 2016, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis announced addition of the Kankakee River Water Trail to the National Water Trails System. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-jewell-national-park-service-director-jarvis-announce-new-national> The subheadline was “New Trails Help Promote Obama Administration’s Effort to Increase Outdoor Recreational Opportunities, Connection to Nature.” A railway just miles from the Kankakee River does not seem to support this notion of the Obama Administration. The water trail’s website <http://www.kankakeeriverwatertrail.org/index.php> covers the criteria for the designation and management of the trail system. None of which seem to be in sync with the addition of 110 trains a day.

Another historic site that would be impacted by the GLB, is the Clinton D. Gilson Barn aka The Gilson Barn located at 522 W. 650 S., Hebron, Indiana listed on the National Register of Historic Places as #84001229 is just a few miles south of the proposed railway route.

For details and a list of other sites that are within the 30-mile range of any alternative routes, of the Porter County sites visit, <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/in/porter/state.html>

The Buckley Homestead in Lake County, Indiana is part of the National Register of Historic Places and is within a few miles of the proposed railway: Buckley Homestead #84000503, 3606 Belshaw Rd., Lowell, Indiana. The Buckley Homestead is a living history farm. The historic traditions, culture and heritage of farming life during the 19th and early 20th centuries are re-created on this living history farm, where visitors learn about local history and farming. A train coming near the homestead would adversely affect the educational and learning experiences of children and adults alike with just the noise pollution. Visit http://www.lakecountyparks.com/parks/buckley_homestead.html

Other Lake County sites on the National Register of Historic Places in the vicinity of the proposed railway include:

Halsted, Melvin A., House, #78000037, 201 E. Main St. , Lowell, Indiana

Kingsbury--Doak Farmhouse #05001013, aka the Steele Farmhouse, 4411 E 153rd Ave. Hebron, Indiana

Lowell Commercial Historic District - - #03000144, 305-519 Commercial Ave. and 108-110 Clark St. , Lowell, Indiana

Nichols, Charles E., House #10000375, 231 W Commercial Ave , Lowell, Indiana

For details and a list of other sites that are within the 30-mile range of any alternative routes in Lake County, visit: <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/in/lake/state.html>

Historic sites impacted in LaPorte County, Indiana that are on the National Register of Historic Places include:

Orr, William, House #84001063, aka Orr-Richter House, 4076 W. Small Rd. , LaPorte, Indiana

Pinhook Methodist Church and Cemetery #09000759, 8001 IN 2 , LaPorte, Indiana

Everal S Smith House #90001794, 56 W. Jefferson St. , Westville, Indiana

For details and a list of other sites that are within the 30-mile range of any alternative routes in LaPorte County, visit <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/in/la+porte/state.html>

Other areas of historic and cultural importance that are in the area of the proposed railway are Stoney Run County Park, 9230 E. 142nd Avenue, Hebron, IN 46341, Grand Kankakee Marsh, 21690 Range Line Road - Hebron, Indiana 46341. Visit <http://www.lakecountyparks.com/parks.html> for details of the features and significance of these parks.

Pinhook Bog, which is part of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, is located near the proposed railway route. Pinhook Bog is on the National Natural Landmark list.

<https://www.nps.gov/indu/planyourvisit/pb16.htm> The trailhead is located at 946 North Wozniak Road, LaPorte, IN 46360.

Kingsbury Fish and Wildlife Area, 5344 S. Hupp Road, LaPorte, IN 46350, is operated by the Indiana Department of National Resources and is within very close proximity to the location of the Kingsbury Subdivision interchange point. It contains 7 280 acres of grasslands, crop fields, thick brush, marsh areas and a 30-acre lake. The Kankakee River forms the south boundary. For details, visit

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/3089.htm>

The construction of a 278-mile rail line running up to 110 trains a day would absolutely be devastating to the people, animals, communities and natural resources along the line. The decision of allowing the GLB to construct this giant railway would be a mistake that would be nearly impossible to undo. Decisions from more than a century ago forever changed the land; let's not go down the same path again.

Sincerely,

Miranda & Richard Serletic

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