

LITTLE CALUMET RIVER FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS MAKING PROGRESS

By October, 2009, the Army Corps of Engineers will have three different contractors working on the combination earthen levy and flood wall along the Little Calumet River. Dyer Construction is finishing the levy and floodwall from Northcote east into Highland and Hammond. One of the most important parts of this project is the construction of the "flow control structure" which is nearly complete. This structure is located just east of the Northcote Bridge, and restricts the amount of water which can flow west. As a result, most of the water in Hart Ditch will flow east through Highland, Hammond, and other communities where the flood protection projects have already been completed, thereby reducing the possibility of flooding in Munster.

Ceres Environmental has been hired to install the floodwall and levy from Northcote to Columbia Avenue. Tree clearing and staking has begun and sheet pile installation will follow. After the sheet pile is in place, a decorative concrete floodwall similar to the wall along Hawthorne and East River Drive will be installed. The contractor will work from east to west on both sides of the river at the same rate. Ceres has until the fall of 2010 to complete their work. At the same time, Munster, Hammond and the Lake County Highway Department are working together to replace the Columbia Avenue Bridge at a higher elevation so it will not be a source of flooding.

The Army Corps of Engineers just awarded a third contract to the Walsh Construction Company for floodwall and levy installation from Columbia to the Illinois state line. Their construction schedule is about two months behind Ceres, so they have until the end of 2010 to complete their work. The sequence and type of construction will be similar to the Ceres project.

At the conclusion of the Walsh Construction project the Little Calumet River Flood Control Project will be completed. In order for this large investment to work properly, the floodwall and levy must be maintained and downed trees and other material must be routinely removed from the river. If blockages are permitted to restrict flow then the water will rise higher than expected behind the blockage. This maintenance effort will be costly and should be shared by all areas which contribute water to the Little Calumet River, whether they are near the river or not. This involves communities south of Munster, and even in Illinois.

If you have questions concerning this project, contact James Mandon, PE, town engineer, at 836-6995.