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youths were given \$100 dollars to buy Christmas presents for themselves and their families. Donations by the Fraternal Order of Police throughout the year paid for the shopping spree.

# Canal plan unveiled to Metamora resident

BY AMY GRIFFITH  
Staff Writer

METAMORA — A feeder dam operation that has kept the Whitewater Canal State Historic Site running since the 1840s will be replaced with a system of groundwater pumps near Metamora, state officials said Monday in a public meeting.

The change involves abandoning a stretch of canal about 4½ miles long, running from the Laurel feeder dam to a point just north of Metamora.

"Sometimes we have to be creative in our preservation," said John Goss, director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

State officials, environmental experts, canal historians, business owners and nearby residents discussed the problem of silt build-up in the Laurel feeder dam at a meeting held in the Metamora Firehouse.

The Whitewater Canal has been

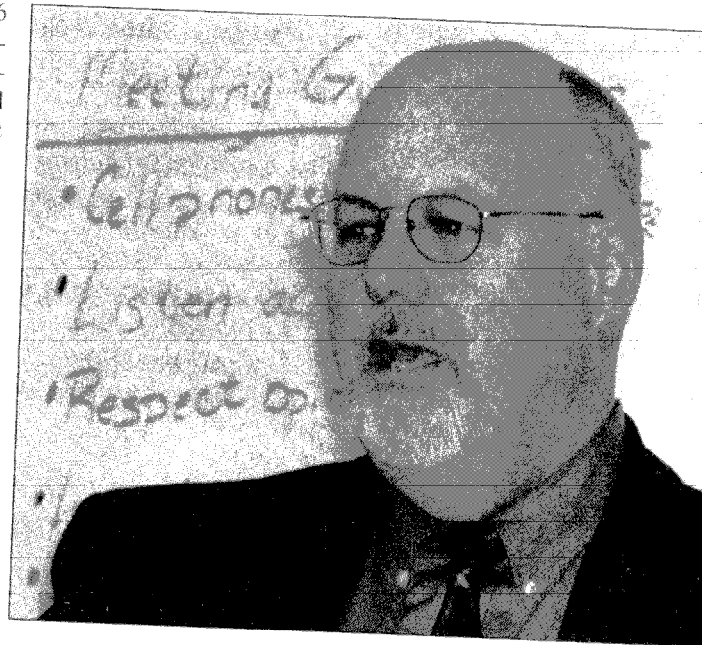
administered by the state since 1946 and, according to officials responsible for making all canal-related decisions, preservation of the canal requires elimination of the historic feeder system.

Water currently runs through the Whitewater Canal, as it has since its construction in 1843: five gates of the Laurel feeder dam regulate water flow from the Whitewater River.

Over the years, officials said, water sources along the canal were eliminated as the canal system was abandoned for other means of transportation.

But in recent years, according to Jay Dishman, Whitewater Canal site property manager, the more serious problem has been a build-up of silt in the feeder dam.

"Our biggest problem is getting the sediment out of here," said Dishman.



AMY GRIFFITH / News-Examiner

John Goss, director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, speaks Monday at an informational meeting in Metamora.

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It's!  
YOUR TURN

Cambridge City, Ind.

# Canal: Plan raises questions

Sediment build-up has decreased the water volume flowing from the dam to the point that the canal is now only 14 to 16 inches deep in Metamora. Dishman said it is barely enough to keep the canal boat rides in operation.

Officials said Monday that Haspin Acres motorcycle park, located near the feeder dam, is partially responsible for the problem.

Increased silt in the river, resulting from development as far north as Hagerstown, is also to blame, they added.

"There's a lot of volume from both," said Mark Goldsmith, DNR stormwater specialist.

Water will be pumped through Metamora by a system of groundwater pumps installed in a wooded area between the canal and U.S. 52.

A report written by Goldsmith detailing the plan calls for pumps to run only during tourist season, leaving the canal empty the rest of the year.

Dishman, however, said the canal will only be empty during January, February and March of each year for maintenance.

Laura Minzes, DNR deputy director of historic sites, said the only changes in Metamora after the system is in place is a possibly higher water level during tourist season and a lower water level during the rest of the year.

The portion of the canal running from Metamora to the feeder dam will gradually decrease in water level, but continue to hold water, Minzes said.

Still, Goldsmith's report said the new plan would cause "potential negative economic impacts to the Whitewater Valley Railroad and other local organizations" by diminishing scenic qualities of the canal.

Area residents on Monday expressed fears of other negative effects of the plan.

Candy Yutzak, a store owner who lives near Metamora, said she worries about her family's well.

Goss said the state will pay to replace wells proven to have been negatively affected.

Another resident said flooding might be caused by a build-up of silt normally running through the canal.

Goldsmith said the Whitewater River carries such a large volume of water compared to the canal that it would not be as affected by sediments.

"That river moves rocks bigger than me," Goldsmith said.

Canal historian Paul Barendtistel said he fears life in Metamora will

change because having the canal filled only during tourist season would turn the town into "a little Dollywood park," existing primarily for tourists.

He also said the canal might fill with silt and eventually be abandoned.

In response, Dishman expressed his office's commitment to the historical site.

"We have an obligation to keep it," he said.

The plan was selected by a team of representatives from the DNR, Whitewater Canal State Historical Society, Indiana Division of Soil Conservation and Indiana Division of Engineering.

Minzes said the system should be fully installed by 2005.

Installation costs will probably be at least \$120,000 initially, with a possible secondary cost of \$260,000, Minzes said. Keeping the system running will cost \$1,500 to \$3,000 each year.

Minzes said the cost estimates were calculated by a professional estimate. All costs associated with the project will be paid by the state capital fund.

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