



Policy Title: Commercial Sand Dredging Policy Statement

Date Last Updated: March 8, 2021

**Friends of the Kaw Position on Commercial Sand Dredging:**

Friends of the Kaw opposes all sand and gravel dredging from the bed and banks of the Kansas River. Dredging is harmful to the ecological integrity of the river and less harmful alternatives (e.g., floodplain dredging) are available. The Kansas River is a public river and as such, this is taking sand from a public resource. The people of Kansas deserve to have their public river protected and preserved. We advocate that dredging operations be removed from the Kansas River, but until that happens, we will advocate for an increase in the sand dredging royalty fee to the State of Kansas so that the people of Kansas are fairly compensated for the taking of their public resource. We favor economic disincentives to dredging.

- Friends of the Kaw advocates against any proposed new permits for commercial sand dredging from the bed and banks of the Kansas River.
- Friends of the Kaw advocates for the removal of any existing commercial sand dredging permits and activity from the bed and banks of the Kansas River.
- Friends of the Kaw advocates for riparian restoration and removal of all in-river equipment at the end of the operation of the in-river sand dredging operation.
- Friends of the Kaw advocates for bonding of in-river operators to ensure restoration takes place.
- Friends of the Kaw monitors sand dredging activity and advocates that wastewater discharge permits be required for sand dredging activity.

**Economics:**

Friends of the Kaw recognizes that there is substantial economic disparity between the sand dredging in the river versus in the floodplain. We advocate that dredging operations be removed from the Kansas River, but until that happens, we will advocate for an increase in the sand dredging royalty fee to the State of Kansas so that the people of Kansas are fairly compensated for the taking of their public resource. We favor economic disincentives to dredging.

- Friends of the Kaw advocates that the \$0.15/ton sand dredging royalty fee needs to be increased to \$.50/ton.

**Alternatives:**

Friends of the Kaw advocates for sand dredging in the Kaw valley to be limited to what can be produced sustainably and with limited environmental impacts. Friends of the Kaw supports moving sand dredging from in-channel dredging, which impacts bank stabilization, bed elevation, and aquatic habitat, to appropriately sited pit mines in the floodplain. Factors to consider in siting a pit mine:

- Friend of the Kaw advocates that pit mines must be a sufficient distance from the river based on location, projected meander evolution, local soils and land use, and riparian protection (areas with intact riparian vegetation will be less prone to bank erosion and potential pit capture).
- Friends of the Kaw advocates that a pit mine must be located to avoid capture by the river. Areas such as the inside of meander bends are vulnerable to capture. Bank hardening (rip-rap) might provide temporary protection, but it will also constrain the natural channel evolution of the river and will fail in the long-term.
- Friends of the Kaw advocates for pit mines to be designed for minimal environmental impacts, including siting the mine sufficiently far away from sensitive nesting areas for birds and reptiles, preserving healthy, intact vegetation in riparian areas, and protecting water quality both in the sandpit lake and in the river channel.
- Friends of the Kaw advocates long-term restoration planning for every sand pit mine, including restoration to wetland habitat at the end of the operation of the sand pit.
- Friends of the Kaw advocates for the siting of pit mines in consultation with local communities, including measures to mitigate noise pollution, aesthetic impacts, truck traffic disturbances, and other issues.