

Fact Sheet for Antidegradation Assessment
Illinois Department of Transportation / BNSF Railway – Unnamed Tributary to Indian Creek and
Unnamed Wetlands – Kane and Dupage Counties
IEPA Log #C-0165-14
COE Log# 2013-00540 (Chicago District)
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BNSF Railway (BSNF) and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) (applicants) are proposing to construct capacity improvements on railroad property to increase operational efficiency at Eola Yard between Milepost (MP) 33 and MP 37.1 in Aurora, Illinois. Construction will include a new lead track entering the yard from the east, the addition and realignment of five railroads tracks (with one being a new ladder track), realignment of an existing service access road and railroad signal system improvements within the yard. The BNSF Eola Yard Project is part of the Chicago to Quad Cities Corridor Expansion Program which will implement intercity passenger rail service (currently proposed as two daily round trips) between Chicago Union Station and the new Moline multimodal station. A small tributary must be relocated to accommodate the project. Wetlands totaling 0.16 acres must be filled. The comprehensive project crosses county borders (Kane and Dupage).

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

The unnamed tributary (no Segment Code) of Indian Creek (no Segment Code), is considered a General Use water and has a 0 cfs 7Q10 flow at this location. The segment is not listed in the Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List 2014. The segment is not listed as biologically significant and has not been given an integrity rating in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Publication *Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System*. The segment is not enhanced in regards to the dissolved oxygen water quality standard. This segment has a watershed of approximately 0.39 square miles

Identification of Proposed Pollutant Load Increases or Potential Impacts on Uses.

The pollutant load increases that would occur from this project include possible increases in suspended solids locally along the relocated section of the unnamed tributary. Existing benthos directly beneath where approximately 531 feet of stream is proposed to be relocated would be permanently removed. Approximately 0.16 acres of wetland meadows will be permanently removed.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

The increase in suspended solids will be local and temporary. The existing tributary is of low quality and is located in a heavy industrial area. The realignment would consist of 479 feet of new tributary with a 3:1 bank slope. Stream enhancements in the relocated portion of the unnamed tributary (e.g., meandering) would adversely affect a large wetland, not impacted by the project, just south of the proposed area. The 0.16 acres of wetlands to be impacted are proposed to be compensated at a ratio of 1:1.5 using a certified mitigation bank. USACE will make the final determination on the necessary mitigation ratio.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The purpose of the project is to allow for the addition of two daily Amtrak round trips for the proposed Chicago to Quad Cities passenger rail service program. The proposed improvements to the Eola Yard facility are need to increase rail operational efficiency of the yard and the main lines to allow the new passenger rail service to operate with the proposed time schedules and to accommodate the freight, Metra commuter and Amtrak passenger operation in an efficient manner.

Assessments of Alternatives for Less Increase in Loading or Minimal Environmental Degradation.

An alternate layout for the extension of the five existing yard tracks was evaluated. However this alternate layout was eliminated from further consideration because the spacing of the five new tracks needs to match the spacing of the existing tracks, the tracks need to be tangent and match existing track spacing for rail operations and the safety of BNSF personnel, and it would be cost prohibitive to relocate the existing five tracks.

Summary Comments of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Regional Planning Commissions, Zoning Boards or Other Entities

An internal Biological Resources Review was completed on July 25, 2013 by IDOT and concluded that adverse effects to Federal and State-listed threatened or endangered species are unlikely from the project.

Agency Conclusion.

This preliminary assessment was conducted pursuant to the Illinois Pollution Control Board regulation for Antidegradation found at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.105 (antidegradation standard) and was based on the information available to the Agency at the time this antidegradation review summary was written. We tentatively find that the proposed activity will result in the attainment of water quality standards; that all existing uses of the impacted waters will be maintained; that all technically and economically reasonable measures to avoid or minimize the extent of the proposed increase in pollutant loading have been incorporated into the proposed activity; and that this project will improve use and safety of the railroad yard. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.