

IEPA Log No.: **C-0221-14**
CoE appl. #: **2014-569**

Public Notice Beginning Date: **October 17, 2014**
Public Notice Ending Date: **November 17, 2014**

Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
Amendments of 1972

Section 401 Water Quality Certification to Discharge into Waters of the State

Public Notice/Fact Sheet Issued By:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water
Division of Water Pollution Control
Permit Section
1021 North Grand Avenue East
Post Office Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276
217/782-3362

Name and Address of Discharger: RiverStone Group, Inc., 1701 Fifth Avenue, Moline, IL 61265

Discharge Location: Sections 3 and 4, T20N, and Sections 33 and 34, T21N, R2E of the 4th P.M. in Rock Island County near Cordova

Name of Receiving Water: Mississippi River Mile 511

Project Description: Continuation of sand and gravel mining.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has received an application for a Section 401 water quality certification to discharge into the waters of the state associated with a Section 404 permit application received by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Public Notice period will begin and end on the dates indicated in the heading of this Public Notice. The last day comments will be received will be on the Public Notice period ending date unless a commenter demonstrating the need for additional time requests an extension to this comment period and the request is granted by the IEPA. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the project to the IEPA at the above address. Commenters shall provide their names and addresses along with comments on the certification application. Commenters may include a request for public hearing. The certification and notice number(s) must appear on each comment page.

The attached Fact Sheet provides a description of the project and the antidegradation assessment.

The application, Public Notice/Fact Sheet, comments received, and other documents are available for inspection and may be copied at the IEPA at the address shown above between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday when scheduled by the interested person.

If written comments or requests indicate a significant degree of public interest in the certification application, the IEPA may, at its discretion, hold a public hearing. Public notice will be given 30 days before any public hearing. If a Section 401 water quality certification is issued, response to relevant comments will be provided at the time of the certification. For further information, please call Thaddeus Faught at 217/782-3362.

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Fact Sheet for Antidegradation Assessment
RiverStone Group, Inc. – Mississippi River – Rock Island County
COE Log # 2014-569
IEPA Log # C-0221-14
Contact: Diane K. Shasteen (217) 558-2012
October 17, 2014

The RiverStone Group, Inc. (“Applicant”) has applied for a 401 Water Quality Certification for impacts associated with commercial dredging of sand and gravel along the Mississippi River and landward at River Mile 511 in Rock Island County, Illinois. The permit area for this project is located in Sections 3 and 4, Township 20 North, Range 2 East and Sections 33 and 34, Township 21 North, Range 2 East, north of Cordova, Illinois. Dredging activities are currently authorized under the expiring (December 31, 2014) Corps Permit No. CEMVR-OD-P-2004-1487-1. The proposed project is a continuation of this permit and Corps Permit No. CENCR-OD-S-282651 which began in 1995 and expired on December 31, 2004. Hydraulic or mechanical dredging of sand and gravel deposits on the Applicant’s property will be performed by a self-contained barge-mounted unit. Dredging activities under the current permit have depleted the reserves within Zones 1-4 of Area 1 in the slough and on the island. Future dredging will occur in Zone 5 of Area 1 until reserves are depleted and will then proceed to Area 2 located on the south side of Illinois Highway 84. Development of Zone 5 will leave the original Mississippi River shoreline intact while clearing vegetation to insure high quality material extraction and excavating. Overburden will be placed in previously dredged areas to create shallow water wildlife habitat areas and water-land fringe habitat in accordance with the previously approved permit. Access to the area being mined will be gained via a barge with a ramp on each end and dredging will progress from the downstream end of the island upstream along the backwater side of the island. Dredging will include all or portions of the existing sand and gravel deposits above or below surface waters. The dredged material will be placed directly onto barges and transported to land-based terminals for sorting and stockpiling. Upon completion of Zone 5, mining will continue on the south side of Illinois Highway 84 (Area 2) with access via a 12’ diameter tunnel located under the highway. Area 2 will be prepared for excavation and dredged using methods similar to the development of Zone 5. Total acreage of the site is 561 acres and mining will occur over a 25-year period with the time frame dependent on market conditions. The purpose of the dredging project is to provide materials for infrastructure projects including bridge and road construction.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

The Mississippi River (IL_M-02) is a General Use Water with an estimated 13,990 cfs 7Q10 flow at this location. According to the draft 2014 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List, the Mississippi River has been assessed by Illinois EPA and is listed as not supporting Fish Consumption use. Causes for impairment include Mercury and Polychlorinated biphenyls. The Mississippi River, at this location, is listed as fully supporting Aquatic Life, Public and Food Processing Water Supplies, Primary Contact Recreational, Secondary Contact, and Aesthetic Quality uses. The Mississippi River, in the project area, is not listed as a biologically significant stream in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Publication *Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System*; nor is it given an integrity rating in that document. The Mississippi River, at this location, is designated as an enhanced water pursuant to the dissolved oxygen water quality standard.

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

The pollutant load increases that would occur from this project include some possible increases in total suspended solids. This increase, a normal and unavoidable result of dredging, may occur in the river at the point of dredge activity. Approximately 305,000 CY of soil overburden and 600,000 CY of rejected fine material will be redistributed over the project area during the life (25 years) of the project. A portion of the overburden removed will be placed in the previously dredged inlet to gain access to the island; additional overburden will be used to create aquatic and wetland habitats including shallow water wildlife habitat areas and water-land fringe habitat throughout the permit site. The benthic habitat in the project area consists primarily of sand which is considered poor aquatic habitat with low species diversity and abundance. This habitat will be disturbed in the vicinity of the dredging area but should revert to its previous condition of aquatic life support soon after the completion of dredging.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

The increase in suspended solids will be local and temporary. The placement of overburden in the inlet will restrict access to the dredge pit to one downstream location. This will eliminate current through the pit, limit the flow of water into and out of the pit to the rising and falling of river levels, and reduce the increase in suspended solids.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The purpose of this project is to mine alluvial sand and gravel deposits for use as aggregate in construction related projects. The dredging project has been ongoing since 1995; the continuation of the project will maintain the commercial use of the river and provide the raw materials needed for infrastructure construction. The business will continue to provide employment opportunities for residents from the surrounding area and tax revenues for Rock Island County and the State of Illinois.

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

The dredging project will follow conditions set forth by the Agency and USACE. The least intrusive alternative would be to not continue dredging along this stretch of river. However, this is not an acceptable alternative given that this project will maintain a commercial use of the river and provide economic and employment opportunities for the surrounding area.

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

An EcoCAT endangered species consultation submitted on September 8, 2014 to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources resulted in the identification of a protected area, Cordova INAI site, in the vicinity of the project area. IDNR has evaluated the EcoCAT information, set forth provisions for the protection of these natural areas, and terminated consultation for IDNR Project #1503612 on September 22, 2014.

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 the draft 401 Water Quality Certification was written. We tentatively find that the proposed activity will result in the attainment of water quality standards; 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 activity will benefit the community at large by providing employment opportunities for local residents, tax revenues for the county and state, commercial use of the river, and a needed supply of aggregate for infrastructure building and repair. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.