IEPA Log No.: **C-0169-20**
CoE appl. #: **2020-0841**

Public Notice Beginning Date: **September 18, 2020**
Public Notice Ending Date: **October 9, 2020**

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

Section 401 Water Quality Certification for Discharge of Dredged or Fill Material

Public Notice/Fact Sheet Issued By:

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

Name and Address of Discharger: Springfield Airport Authority – 1200 Capital Airport Drive, Springfield, IL 62707

Discharge Location: Near Springfield in Section 17 of Township 16-North, Range 5-West of the 3rd P.M. in Sangamon County.

Name of Receiving Water: Unnamed Wetland

Project Description: Fill the entirety of a 0.89 acre wetland to eliminate the associated wildlife attraction and improve drainage in accordance with recommendations of the Federal Aviation Administration.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has received an application for a Section 401 water quality certification to discharge dredged or fill material 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 contact Darren Gove at email darren.gove@illinois.gov or phone no. 217/782-3362.

DRG:C-0169-20_401 PN and FS_22Jun20.docx

Fact Sheet for Antidegradation Assessment
For Springfield Airport Authority
IEPA Log No. C-0169-20
COE Log No. 2020-0841
Contact: Angie Sutton 217/558-2012
Public Notice Start Date: September 18, 2020

Mark Hanna ("Applicant") has applied for a 401 Water Quality Certification for impacts associated with clearing woody vegetation, filling and draining an existing wetland located near the Charlie Ramp at the Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport (ALCA). The construction will take place in Section 17, Township 16 North, Range 5 West, Sangamon County, Illinois, at 1200 Capital Airport Road, Springfield. The project will consist of draining and filling a 0.89-acre wetland that is located south of the Charlie Ramp. This area is a major wildlife attractant which poses hazards to airport safety. There is deep open water that attracts ducks and occasionally, Canada geese. The vegetation also provides habitat for deer, coyote and fox. Removing this area will improve drainage and minimize wildlife attractants in accordance with FAA safety standards by reducing risks to aviation safety and increasing air traffic safety on the ALCA. The proposed project will necessitate grading and filling in the onsite wetland with 1,436 Cubic Yards (CY) of soil fill, permanently impacting the 0.89 acres of wetland. Proposed mitigation is the purchase of 4.895 acres of wetland credits from The Northern Illinois Wetland, LLC Mitigation Bank. The mitigation ratio will be 5.5:1 to offset impacts to the fair to low-quality emergent and scrub/shrub wetlands on the project site.

Information used in this review was obtained from the application documents dated June 12, 2020, July 16, 2020 and August 8, 2020.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

The affected wetland drains to an unnamed tributary to Spring Creek-West which has 0 cfs of flow during critical 7Q10 low-flow conditions. The unnamed tributary to Spring Creek-West is classified as a General Use Water. The unnamed tributary to Spring Creek-West 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 unnamed tributary to Spring Creek-West, a tributary to Waterbody Segment IL_EL-01, is not listed on the draft 2016 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List since it has not been assessed. The unnamed tributary to Spring Creek-West is not subject to enhanced dissolved oxygen standards.

A wetland delineation was performed on the 11-acre project area in the southeast corner of the ALCA. In the project limits, one wetland was identified and characterized as Palustrine, Unconsolidated Bottom, Intermittently Exposed, Diked/Impounded (PUBGh). The wetland was identified as an herbaceous emergent and scrub/shrub wetland that consisted of 0.89 acres with an FQI score of 14.01 and a mean C of 2.52, indicating fair to low floristic quality. The site is an impounded basin with excavated areas, and hydrology is supplied by ground and surface water inputs. The basin contains an exposed 12-inch tile running underneath that has effectively drained it. The outflow of the basin connects to the unnamed tributary of Spring Creek – West. Dominant vegetation consists of Eastern cottonwood, silver maple, black willow, devil's pitchfork, rice cut grass and reed canary grass. Currently the wetland serves as a means of flood and erosion control, water conveyance, sediment control and nutrient uptake, and wildlife habitat.

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. These increases, a normal and unavoidable result of the grading and filling of the wetland, are expected to occur during construction activities. Some solids can be expected to enter the drainage tiles exiting the project area to the southeast and potentially travel downstream but impacts to the waterway are expected to be local and temporary. Impacts to the wetland will be permanent with grading and filling

activities associated with the project. 1,436 cubic yards (CY) of soil fill material will be used to fill the wetland.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

The increase in total suspended solids would be local and temporary in association with the unnamed tributary but impacts to the wetland will be permanent. Due to the location of the proposed project, it is not feasible to mitigate on site. 0.89 acres of fair to low-quality emergent and scrub/shrub wetland in the project area will be impacted but will be mitigated at a ratio of 5.5:1 with the purchase of 4.895 acres of wetland mitigation credits. There are no wetland mitigation banks available in the same watershed as the ALCA, so mitigation credits were purchased from the Northern Illinois Wetland Bank in Winnebago County. The wetland on ACLA property attracts wildlife which can pose a safety threat to aircraft operations. Due to FAA recommended distances between wildlife attractants and aircraft movement areas, the mitigation strategy for the project involved consultation with FAA, USACE, USEPA, IEPA and IDNR. It was determined that mitigation for the impacts to the wetlands could be provided off airport property. Additionally, erosion control measures during construction will be utilized to protect adjacent areas.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The purpose of the proposed improvements is to address open/standing water and other wildlife hazard attractants such as vegetation growth, at the ALCA Charlie ramp. These improvements will safely accommodate existing and future aeronautical demand. The needs for the proposed improvements include meet the FAA's safety standards and minimize wildlife hazard attractants, especially within the runway approaches, reducing risks to aviation safety and increasing air traffic safety on the ALCA.

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

The Applicant has identified and evaluated the following reasonable alternatives:

<u>Alternative 1 – Preferred Alternative:</u>
This alternative includes soil fill for filling the 0.89-acre wetland in the proximity of the Charlie Ramp. Wood vegetation, filling and draining the wetland would occur in the proposed project area in order to reduce wildlife hazard attractants associated with the open water and vegetation.

<u>Alternative 2 – Maintenance Only:</u>
This alternative would involve removal of vegetation in the wetland, leaving open water. The area consists of open water year-round and heavy vegetation during the growing season. These conditions provide an ideal environment for many types of wildlife that could significantly impact aviation safety. The Wildlife Hazard Assessment, referenced in the application documents, discusses this in more detail. Open water areas in the wetland attract gulls, waterfowl, shorebirds, and blackbirds. Removal of this area would reduce the attractiveness of the area to wildlife, and in turn, reduce risks to aviation safety. A maintenance only alternative would perpetuate threats wildlife pose to aircrafts. Because of the continued threat to aviation and that it does not meet the purpose and need for minimization of wildlife, Alternative 2 was not further considered as a viable option.

<u>Alternative 3 - Wire Grid - Avoidance/Minimization Alternative:</u>
This alternative employs the use of various configurations of overhead wires to repel numerous bird species from specific sites. Narrowly spaced parallel lines proved effective at repelling certain species such as Canada geese and gulls from attractive habitats, but a 50-foot grid of wires over some areas have shown an increase in the total number of waterfowl on the pond even when some species have decreased. Additionally, installations of a parallel grid spaced at 15-foot intervals over a narrow stream on an airfield in Illinois showed no notable

difference in total bird use of the stream. Mallard ducks, great blue herons, and great egrets all continued to use the stream under the grid. Reducing and/or eliminating open water will have a greater reduction in wildlife hazards than using overhead grids. Although numbers of certain species such as Canada geese and ring-billed gulls can be reduced by use of overhead wire grid designs, it is unlikely that the large numbers of ducks observed on the ALCA open water habitats would be affected by this alternative. Allowing open water to continue to persist in the area would perpetuate threats wildlife pose to aircraft. Vegetation in the areas where grids would be installed would be difficult to maintain. For these reasons, and because this alternative would not meet the purpose and need of minimizing wildlife hazard attractants, Alternative 3 has been eliminated from further consideration.

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative:
A No Action Alternative does not cause impacts to wetlands, it does not meet the criteria to serve the purpose and need of the ALCA or the purpose and need of minimizing wildlife hazard attractants at the project site. This alternative has been eliminated from further consideration.

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

An expired IDNR EcoCAT consultation request submitted on June 6, 2018 resulted in no threatened and endangered species or natural areas being identified in the vicinity of the project. The USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation provided an official species list of Federal endangered, threatened, proposed and candidate species and proposed and designated critical habitat that may be within or in the vicinity of the project which included the Indiana bat, Northern long-eared bat and Eastern prairie fringed orchid (EPFO). The wetland delineation reported that EPFO habitat is not present within the project area. To ensure any habitat of the Northern long-eared bat or Indiana bat that may be within or in the project area is not adversely affected, trees three inches or more in diameter at breast height will not be cleared between April 1 and September 30.

On August 8, 2020, an IDNR EcoCAT review was initiated for the project area. The preliminary results did not identify any protected resources that may be in the vicinity of the project area and the consultation is expected to yield results similar in content to the June 6, 2018 consultation.

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 assessment was written. We tentatively find that the proposed activity would 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 would benefit the ALCA by improving drainage and reducing wildlife hazard attractants in order to reduce risks to aviation and increase air traffic safety. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.