

**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Bureau of Water, Permit Section**  
**(IEPA)**

1021 North Grand Avenue East, Post Office Box 19276, Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276, 217/782-3362

The IEPA has issued a Public Notice of a request for a Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification that would allow the issuance of a federal permit for the discharge of pollutants to waters of the State.

**Public Notice Beginning Date:**

Thursday, March 16, 2023

**Public Notice Ending Date:**

Friday, April 14, 2023

**Agency Log No.: C-0192-22**

**Federal Permit Information:** Federal permit/license no. LRC-2021-977 is under the jurisdiction of Chicago District, Regulatory Branch U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**Name and Address of Discharger:** Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, Erik Neidy - Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve, w, Oak Brook, IL 60523

**Discharge Location:** In Section 36 of Township 39-North and Range 11-East of the East 3rd Principal Meridian in DuPage County. Additional project location information includes the following: Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve, Oak Brook, IL 60523

**Name of Receiving Water:** Salt Creek, tributary to W Br Dupage River

**Project Name/Description:** Salt Creek dam removal and stream restoration - Removal of low-head dam on Salt Creek at Graue Mill, ecological restoration/enhancement of 1.5 miles of Salt Creek upstream of the dam location, enhancement of 33.69 acres of forested wetland and non-wetland riparian habitat.

**Construction Schedule:** Undetermined

The Public Notice period will begin and end on the dates indicated in the heading of this Public Notice. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments on the project to the IEPA at the above address. Commenters must provide their name and address along with comments on the certification request. The IEPA Log number must appear on each comment page. Commenters may include a request for public hearing. Only hearing requests and comments that pertain to Clean Water Act Section 401 authority will be considered. This authority provides consideration of whether the permit or license would be consistent with Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, or 307 of the CWA, as well as "any other appropriate requirement of State [or tribal] law". Requests for additional comment period must provide a demonstration of need. The final day of comment acceptance will be on the Public Notice Ending date shown above, unless the IEPA grants an extended notice period. The attached Fact Sheet provides a detailed description of the project and the findings of the IEPA's antidegradation assessment.

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 see the contact information below.

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Post Document. No. C-0192-22-03162023-PublicNoticeAndFactSheet.pdf

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (“Applicant”) has applied for a 401 Water Quality Certification for impacts associated with the removal of Salt Creek Dam at Graue Mill and enhancements and improvements to surrounding areas. The project will replace the concrete dam at Graue Mill, which was constructed in 1933, with a rock riffle structure that will create a safe passage for paddlers and allow fish to travel for 17 miles upstream of the dam for the first time in for nearly 90 years.

The project will involve removal of the low-head dam on Salt Creek at Graue Mill, ecological restoration/enhancement of 1.5 miles of Salt Creek upstream of the dam location, enhancement of 19.61 acres of riparian wetland, enhancement of 14.08 acres (Ac) of non-wetland riparian habitat, and improvements to public access at historic Graue Mill and raceway to accommodate lowered water levels due to dam removal. Approximately 10.97 (Ac) of open water in the dam pool will be converted to vegetated wetland as a result of the dam removal. This project is intended to improve water quality in Salt Creek.

The proposed project site is located in Township 39 North, Range 11 East, Section 36, in DuPage County, Illinois. The concrete dam will be removed and replaced with a rock riffle. A concrete spreadfooting will remain in place as grade control. The rock riffle will be designed so that velocities through the riffle will be low enough to allow for fish passage under normal flow conditions. The former impoundment now occupied by the approximately 70-foot-wide river channel will have an increased area of floodplain wetlands with some area of open water within the existing creek channel/dam pool becoming vegetated wetlands. The existing mill race will be hydraulically disconnected from the impoundment and partially filled in. A system of pumps will allow water to be pumped into the mill race while the rotation of the wheel would continue to be powered by an electric motor. Wiring the controls into the mill building will allow the water wheel to be operated on demand for interpretive programs. This project will maximize fish passage, habitat, and water quality objectives and will minimize future cleaning of the mill race and future sediment management issues for the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC).

Improvements include:

- Removal of the existing 132 linear foot (LF) dam - 198 Cubic Yards (CY) cut
- Filling of existing pool upstream of dam – 52.42 CY fill
- Interplanting of 200 LF of boulder toe – 66.67 CY fill
- Waterproofing of 200 LF of seawall – 140.74 CY fill
- Installation of 40 LF of outcropping shoreline treatment – 28.14 CY fill
- Excavation of pools 1-7 – 2618.66 CY cut
- Mill area improvements – 209.42 CY cut / 98.45 CY fill

The Salt Creek dam removal and stream restoration project will result in 2.08 Ac of stream impacts and 0.3 Ac of wetland impacts. The stream impacts will consist of 1.19 Ac of permanent impacts as a result of fill in the existing Graue Mill raceway, discharge of fill at the base of the Fullersburg Nature Education Center’s existing floodwall for scour protection, and bank restoration/stabilization. Permanent wetland impacts will consist of 0.03 Ac of permanent impacts from discharge of fill at the base of the Fullersburg Nature Education Center’s existing floodwall for scour protection. Temporary impacts in the stream will total 0.89 Ac from the stone ramp construction, and construction matting. Temporary wetland impacts will consist of 0.27 Ac from the stone ramp construction, and construction matting. Expected impacts to wetlands or Waters of the U.S. include wetlands 3, 7, 18-21, 23, and 31, and Water 1.

This project is considered self-mitigating. There are no negative permanent impacts to wetlands or Waters of the US. Temporary impacts for access are offset by the enhancement of approximately 1.5 miles of stream channel, 19.61 acres of riparian wetland, and 14.08 of non-wetland riparian habitat. In addition, approximately 10.97 acres of open water in the dam pool will become vegetated wetland once the dam is removed and plantings are completed.

Information used in this review was obtained from the application documents dated December 2, 2021, December 14, 2021, January 5, 2022, April 13, 2022, June 23, 2022, August 12, 2022, and January 11, 2023.

### **Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.**

Salt Creek has 39 cfs of flow during critical 7Q10 low-flow conditions. Salt Creek is classified as General Use Water. Salt Creek 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*; however, it is given an integrity rating of “D” in that document. Salt Creek, Waterbody Segment IL\_GL-09, is listed on the 2020/2022 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for aquatic life use with potential causes given as aldrin, cause unknown, fish passage barrier, flow regime modification, methoxychlor, nitrogen, total phosphorus, and total suspended solids (TSS); fish consumption use with potential causes given as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs); primary contact use with a potential cause given as fecal coliform (delisted). Fully supporting aesthetic quality use. This segment of Salt Creek is not subject to enhanced dissolved oxygen standards.

This segment of Salt Creek is part of the DuPage River/Salt Creek TMDL for fecal coliform.

A wetland and stream delineation was conducted by Applied Ecological Services, Inc. (AES) on July 8-11, 2019, and revised June 12, 2020.

Thirty-one wetlands and four Waters of the U. S. were delineated by Applied Ecological Services, Inc. (AES) in 2019 within an area that includes the project site. A wetland delineation report for the Salt Creek dam removal and stream restoration site was prepared by AES dated November 11, 2019 and included in the Concept Master Plan for Salt Creek at Fullersburg Woods prepared by AECOM and dated September 17, 2020. AES prepared a revised Wetland Delineation dated June 12, 2020, and a revised Wetland and Waters Summary Table for Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve Wetland Delineation Report dated June 15, 2020. DuPage County Stormwater Management issued a letter dated December 7, 2020, confirming the wetland boundaries based on the AES report revisions. In total, 15.96 Ac of wetland and 34.26 Ac WOUS lie within the project area. Ten wetlands (Wetlands 3, 7, 18-21, 23, 28-29, and 31) and one Waters of the US (Water 1) make up the Wetlands/WOUS occurring in the project area. Water 1 includes the Salt Creek channel and backwaters.

Wetland 3 is a 0.49 Ac floodplain forest wetland associated with Salt Creek located in the southern portion of the project area. It is mapped as a freshwater forested/shrub wetland (PFO1A) by the NWI. Wetland 3 has a Native Mean C and FQI of 3.88 and 16.01, respectively, indicating a HQAR. The DuPage County Flood Plain and Stormwater Ordinance (DuPage County) classifies this wetland as “critical”. Dominant vegetation consisted of common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and sedges (*Carex*).

Wetland 7 is a 0.79 Ac floodplain forest wetland associated with Salt Creek in the center of the project area. It is mapped as a freshwater forested/shrub wetland (PFO1C) by the NWI. Wetland 7 has a Native Mean C and FQI of 3.74 and 21.78, respectively, indicating a high-quality aquatic resource (HQAR).

DuPage County classifies this wetland as “critical”. Dominant vegetation consisted of box elder (*Acer negundo*), common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and creeping Charlie (*Glechoma hederacea*).

Wetlands 18 (5.20 Ac) and 20 (0.98 Ac) are floodplain forest/emergent wetlands located in the floodplain of Salt Creek in the center of the project area. Wetland 18 is mapped as a freshwater emergent wetland (PEM1C) and Wetland 20 is mapped as a freshwater pond (PAB4F) by the NWI. Wetland 18 has a Native Mean C and FQI of 2.85 and 19.31, respectively, indicating a non-high-quality aquatic resource (HQAR). DuPage County classifies this wetland as “critical”. Dominant vegetation consisted of common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), river bulrush (*Scirpus fluviatilis*), and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). Wetland 20 also has a Native Mean C and FQI of 2.85 and 19.31, respectively, indicating a non-HQAR. DuPage County classifies this wetland as “regulatory”. Dominant vegetation consisted of box elder (*Acer negundo*) and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*).

Wetlands 19 (2.39 Ac) and 21 (0.31 Ac) are forested/scrub wetlands located on an island that splits Salt Creek in the center of the project area. Wetland 19 is a shrub/scrub wetland while Wetland 21 is an old oxbow forested/scrub wetland. The northeast portion of Wetland 19 and Wetland 21 are mapped as a freshwater pond (PAB3F) by the NWI. Wetland 19 has a Native Mean C and FQI of 2.93 and 15.78, respectively, indicating a non-HQAR. DuPage County classifies this wetland as “regulatory”. Dominant vegetation consisted of box elder (*Acer negundo*), and common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). Wetland 21 also has a Native Mean C and FQI of 2.93 and 15.78, respectively, indicating a non-HQAR. DuPage County classifies this wetland as “regulatory”. Dominant vegetation consisted of reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), and box elder (*Acer negundo*).

Wetland 23 is a 4.7 Ac forested/scrub/emergent ox-bow wetland located in the floodplain of Salt Creek in the southern portion of the project area. Water also flows into the wetland from two tributaries to the west (Wetlands 24 and 25). A portion of this wetland is mapped as a riverine wetland (R2UBH) and a portion is mapped as a freshwater/forested wetland (PFO1A) by the NWI. Wetland 23 has a Native Mean C and FQI of 3.62 and 16.58, respectively, indicating a high-quality aquatic resource. DuPage County classifies this wetland as “critical”. Dominant vegetation consisted of sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), box elder (*Acer negundo*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), Lizard’s Tail (*Saururus cernuus*), reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), and duckweed (*Lemna minor*).

Wetland 31 is 0.05 Ac palustrine emergent wetland located in the floodplain of Salt Creek in the northeastern portion of the project area. Wetland 31 has a Native Mean C and FQI of 3.27 and 12.65, respectively, indicating a non-high-quality aquatic resource. DuPage County classifies this wetland as “regulatory”. Dominant vegetation consisted of reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), and common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*).

Impacts to the above-listed wetlands/WOUS are outlined in the following table:

Feature	Cowardin Class	Tree Cutting Proposed?*	Impact Type	Acreage in Project Area	Temporary Impacts** (Ac)	Permanent Impacts** (Ac)	HQAR? (Y/N)
Wetland 3	PFO	Yes	Vegetation Enhancements Only	0.49	0	0	Y
Wetland 7	PFO	Yes	Vegetation Enhancements Only	3.29	0	0	Y
Wetland 18	PEM	Yes	Slope Toe Stabilization/Temporary Access Matting	5.20	0.02	0.01	N
Wetland 19	PFO/PSS	Yes	Vegetation Enhancements Only	2.39	0	0	N
Wetland 20	PEM	Yes	Temporary Stone Ramp, Temporary Access Matting, Cut for Pool Enhancements	0.98	0.11	0.01	N
Wetland 21	PFO/PEM	Yes	Vegetation Enhancements Only	0.31	0	0	N
Wetland 23	PFO/PEM	Yes	Temporary Access Matting	4.70	0.14	0	Y
Wetland 31	PEM	Yes	Cut For Pool Enhancement	0.05	0	0.01	N
Water 1	R2	N/A	Riffle Construction, Cut for Pool Enhancements, Temporary Access Matting and Stone Ramps, Bank Toe Stabilization	34.26	0.89	1.19	N
<b>Total</b>				<b>51.67</b>	<b>1.16</b>	<b>1.22</b>	

\*Only non-native/invasive tree species will be cut as part of the habitat enhancements

\*\*Impacts include both cut and fill to create in-stream habitat improvements

### 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 placement of fill in Salt Creek may occur as a result of streambank improvement activities. Discharge will consist of aggregate riprap and native soil. Sediment impacts to downstream water resources during construction are expected to be temporary. Approximately 510 CY of fill is proposed for the improvements.

Due to the existing sources of impairment present in Salt Creek, the proposed action of streambank stabilization will not result in new pollutant discharge and are expected to improve existing impairments that have been identified for Salt Creek, such as bank destabilization.

Based on the results of the comprehensive sampling conducted by the DRSCW and IEPA, the removal of the Graue Mill dam and stream restoration measures being requested will not cause a temporary or

permanent discharge of aldrin and/or methoxychlor to Salt Creek and will not cause or contribute to additional loading of aldrin and/or methoxychlor to Salt Creek.

### **Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.**

The increase in total suspended solids would be local and temporary. The work area will employ various best management practices (BMPs) and erosion control measures. Soil erosion and sediment control measures will be in place per the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan prior to any construction and maintained throughout construction to prevent off-site or downstream impacts. The selected contractor will utilize soil erosion and sediment control measures such as turbidity curtains that will reduce the potential for sediment to leave the project limits during the removal of the dam and the construction of the instream riffles and pools. Soil erosion and sediment control plans will be prepared in accordance with the DuPage County Stormwater Management Ordinance and the NPDES permit conditions. All erosion and sediment control measures will be maintained and will remain in place until construction is completed, and site conditions are stabilized. Overall, the proposed project will have a positive effect on Salt Creek as the streambanks will be stabilized. This project is considered self-mitigating. There are no negative permanent impacts to wetlands or Waters of the US. Temporary impacts for access are offset by the enhancement of approximately 1.5 miles of stream channel, 19.61 acres of riparian wetland, and 14.08 of non-wetland riparian habitat. In addition, approximately 10.97 acres of open water in the dam pool will become vegetated wetland once the dam is removed and plantings are completed.

Through the removal of the Graue Mill dam, fish passage for 17 native species will be restored on Salt Creek and fish diversity in Salt Creek will be increased by 30% in the 17 miles upstream of the dam. By removing the dam, the existing impoundment will be restored to a natural free flowing channel. The conversion of the impoundment into a free-flowing stream will improve dissolved oxygen conditions in Salt Creek. The construction of and enhancement of existing instream pools and riffles will create important habitat for fish and macroinvertebrates. The restoration and enhancement of wetlands and upland areas within the project zone will create essential habitat for dragonflies, birds, amphibians, and other wildlife.

The proposed project is expected to improve conditions in Salt Creek typically associated with elevated instream total phosphorus (TP) concentrations such as nuisance algae and DO concentrations below the Illinois water quality standard. Point source reductions in TP are being evaluated by the DRSCW and will be included in the Nutrient Implementation Plan (NIP) due to the IEPA by December 31, 2023. The proposed project will not contribute additional point sources of water column TP to Salt Creek.

Erosion is one of the main sources of non-point source TP in surface waters. Because phosphorus is attached to soil materials, erosion largely determines the particulate phosphorus movement in the landscape. Sources of particulate phosphorus in streams include eroding surface soil, stream banks, and channel beds. Using the Section 319 Best Management Practice (BMP) spreadsheet developed by the IEPA, the streambank and channel stabilization included in the project is expected to reduce phosphorus loading to Salt Creek by a minimum of 1,056 lbs./year through streambank and channel stabilization practices.

Through the pre- and post-project monitoring at the Preserve at Oak Meadows, the DRSCW has demonstrated that stream restoration and dam removal projects will improve habitat and aquatic life conditions and move streams towards meeting their aquatic life use attainment. Following the completion of the proposed project, similar increases in Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index (QHEI) and Macroinvertebrate Index of Biological Integrity (mIBI) are expected on Salt Creek in Fullersburg Woods. Additionally, Fish Index of Biological Integrity (fIBI) scores are also expected to increase in Salt Creek upstream of York Road including at the Preserve at Oak Meadows following the removal of the Graue

Mill dam. The proposed project is expected to move Salt Creek towards aquatic life attainment and thus address (and not contribute to) the “cause unknown” listing for segment IL\_GL-09.

### **Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.**

The purpose of this project is to improve water quality and recreation on Salt Creek, while preserving the historic Graue Mill. Specific objectives are to remove blockage of fish passage, increase dissolved oxygen levels in Salt Creek, improve in-stream and riparian habitat conditions, provide water quality improvements, provide improved educational and recreational opportunities, and provide responsible investment of public funds.

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

On September 17, 2020, AECOM prepared the document *Concept Master Plan for Salt Creek at Fullersburg Woods* and included it in the application documents. This document includes evaluation of several alternatives.

Alternative A: Complete dam removal: This alternative involves removal of the dam and replacement with a rock riffle. Final dimensions of the rock riffle are estimated to be 70 feet wide by 80-100 feet in length. The riffle will be designed so that velocities through the riffle will be low enough to allow for fish passage under normal flow conditions. The former impoundment now occupied by the approximately 70-foot-wide river channel will become floodplain/wetlands. The existing mill race would be hydraulically disconnected from the impoundment by filling in its upstream end. A system of pumps and weirs would allow water to be placed into and removed from the mill race while the rotation of the wheel would be powered by an electric motor. Wiring the controls into the mill building will allow the water wheel to be operated on demand. As the construction and bid documents are prepared, hydraulic modeling would be finalized to determine the regulatory conveyance and flood impacts of the project. Alternative A will maximize meeting the fish passage, habitat, and water quality objectives and will minimize cleaning of the mill race and future sediment management issues for the FPDDC. This alternative meets all aspects of the project purpose and need.

Alternative B: Partial Dam Removal with Rock Ramp: This alternative involves reduction of the crest of the dam height by approximately 60% to 2.5 feet and addition of a rock ramp to the downstream face and channel for grade transition. The rock ramp includes rock arches. The riffle will be designed so that velocities through the riffle will be low enough for fish passage during normal flows, but it is expected that there will be passage restrictions for more species than in Alternative A since the rock ramp design can often require some level of jumping by fish to pass upstream. This alternative will not significantly alter water levels and sediment accumulation in the existing impoundment proposed in this alternative so the existing dissolved oxygen and habitat issues in the impoundment will likely not improve. The existing mill race is also disconnected from the main channel so the design options for the mill race discussed in Alternative A would also be applicable to Alternative B. The existing dewatering structure would also be removed. There are some long-term maintenance concerns with Alternative B including debris (ex, logs) becoming trapped in the rock arches. Alternative B will partially meet the fish passage goals but will not meet the water quality objectives for the project. The approach used in Alternative B is typically used in locations with high levels of contaminants in the sediment. This design requires less sediments be removed from the impoundment. Alternative B leaves future sediment management issues for the FPDDC such as dredging in the impoundment and maintenance of the mill race. Alternative B did not fully meet the project’s purpose and need; therefore, this alternative was not investigated further.

Alternative C: Partial Dam Removal and Rock Fish Passage Channel: This alternative involves a partial dam removal. A portion of the existing dam will remain in place. A rock ramp fish passage channel can

be either placed on the east or west side of the channel. However, if it were located on the west side of the channel, the dewatering structure would likely need removed, limiting future dam inspection and maintenance capabilities. The remaining half of the existing structure will be modified to lower the dam crest by approximately 1 foot and construct a rock ramp fish passage channel (similar to a fish ladder). A concrete wall would be necessary to divide the fish passage channel from the existing channel. The fish passage channel will be designed to get as close as possible to the velocities needed for fish passage. However, it will be challenging to reach lower velocities with this design. The upstream end of the rock fish passage will be at the same elevation as the dam, therefore, there will be no change in the existing impoundment. The mill race will remain as it is in the existing conditions. Alternative C will have additional maintenance concerns/needs including maintenance of the dividing wall, cleaning out of the mill race, and the need for future dredging of sediments from the impoundment. Alternative C will be unlikely to meet the fish passage goals, water quality, or habitat objectives for the project. Alternative C is typically used in conjunction with hydroelectric dams where the dam must remain in place, but fish passage is a regulatory requirement. Experience has shown mixed to poor results for fish passage with this alternative. The FPDDC would continue to need to clean the race way and support any sediment management. Alternative C did not fully meet the project's purpose and need; therefore, this alternative was not investigated further.

Alternative D: Dam Modification with Rock Fish Passage Channel and Wood Crib Plank Dam: This alternative is identical to Alternative C with the exception that instead of the existing dam to remain (limestone), a crib and plank façade similar to what was on the 1800s dam is added to the remaining portion of the dam. Alternative D will not meet the fish passage, water quality or habitat objectives for the project. The FPDDC would continue to clean the race way and support any sediment management. Alternative C did not fully meet the project's purpose and need; therefore, this alternative was not investigated further.

Alternative E: Keep Existing Conditions (no-build): This alternative involves no dam removal or modification of the existing structure. Under this scenario the water quality and habitat upstream of the dam would remain degraded. Fish populations upstream of the dam would also remain reduced. Upgrade of the wastewater treatment plants discharging to Salt Creek would potentially be required (estimated at \$213,000,000 in capital costs). WWTP upgrades will also increase plant-operating costs by an estimated \$7,100,000 a year. Further, Salt Creek would remain unable to meet its mandated biodiversity goals, potentially prompting further regulatory action from the State. All such regulations have significant capital improvement costs which will ultimately come out of local municipal budgets and individual taxes of those living in the respective service areas. None of these actions will eliminate the aquatic degradation caused by the dam. Some costs will also accrue to the FPDDC. Currently, the impoundment allows neither recreation nor the mill wheel to turn due to the accumulation of sediment behind the dam. The impoundment would require on-going dredging. Based on earlier costs and estimations of disposal costs, it is estimated that immediate dredging of the impoundment will cost between \$3,650,000 to \$8,530,000, with the variability caused by uncertainty in sediment disposal costs. The annual cost of cleaning the mill race and inspection of the dam would add approximately \$20,000 annually to the cost of dredging. Sedimentation of the dam is on-going, and dredging would need to be implemented approximately every 5-6 years. Based on a full dredge in the current year and three more dredges at 5 years intervals capturing half the volume of the current year operation, the 20-year net present cost of this approach is estimated at \$11,266,900 (including the dam inspections and mill race cleanings). It is unclear if this level of dredging would be enough to allow operation of the water wheel on a regular basis but would maintain the aesthetics of the impoundment. This no-build alternative does not fully meet the project's purpose and need.

It was determined that only Alternative A can satisfy the project purpose and need. Further details and documentation of these alternatives is presented within the Master Concept Plan prepared by AECOM.

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

An EcoCAT endangered species consultation was submitted on November 29, 2021 (Project #2207299) to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. On December 2, 2021, the natural resource review provided by EcoCAT identified protected resources that may be in the vicinity of the proposed action. The Department has evaluated this information and concluded that adverse effects are unlikely. Therefore, consultation under 17 Ill. Adm. Code Part 1075 is terminated.

A Section 7 consultation was conducted on November 30, 2021, in order to determine whether any federal or state listed species or habitat are likely to be adversely impacted by the project. It was determined that the following federally listed species may occur within the boundary of the proposed project: Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), Hine's emerald dragonfly (*Somatochlora hineana*), Monarch butterfly-candidate (*Danaus plexippus*), Eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*), Leafy-prairie clover (*Dalea foliosa*), and Prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*). A review of T & E species potentially present in the project area review, USFWS coordination, and the field survey found that there is no habitat in the project area that would support the above-listed species.

- Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) - The northern long-eared bat (NLEB) hibernates in caves and mines, and swarms in surrounding wooded areas in autumn. It commonly roosts and forages in upland forests and woods during the summer. Hey and Associates, Inc., (Hey) is not aware of any caves or mines in the project area. There are no known summer roost trees or known occurrences for the NLEB in the project area (per FPDDC). No trees will be cut between June 1 and July 31 to avoid impacts to any potential roost trees. Therefore, it is our determination that the project will have no effect on the NLEB.
- Hine's emerald dragonfly (*Somatochlora hineana*) - The Hine's emerald dragonfly is a federally endangered species with designated critical habitat. Habitat for this species is spring-fed wetlands, wet meadows, and marshes. Critical Habitat Designated for the Hines Emerald Dragonfly is not located near the project and as such, the proposed action is anticipated to have no effect on this species.
- Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) The monarch butterfly is considered a candidate species by the USFWS. The monarch is a candidate species and not yet listed or proposed for listing. There are generally no section 7 protections or requirements for candidate species all agencies are encouraged by the USFWS to take advantage of any opportunity they may have to conserve the species. Various milkweed species (*Asclepias* spp) may be present in the less shaded portions of the project site. Any disturbance to these areas will be temporary and only as needed to facilitate access to the creek channel for dam removal and in-stream habitat improvements. Any disturbed areas will be seeded with a native species mix that includes appropriate native milkweed species.
- Eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*) - The Eastern prairie fringed orchid is a federally threatened species The eastern prairie fringed orchid occurs in a wide variety of habitats, from mesic prairie to wetlands such as sedge meadows, marsh edges, even bogs. It requires full sun for optimum growth and flowering, and a grassy habitat with little or no woody encroachment. Hey is very familiar with the orchid's known habitat in northern Illinois, and no suitable habitat is present within the project site. The Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid is not likely to be present within the action area and evidence of the Orchid was not found at the time of the field visit. As such, the proposed action is anticipated to have *no effect* on this species.

- Leafy-prairie clover (*Dalea foliosa*) - The leafy-prairie clover is a federally endangered species. Habitat for this species is prairie remnants on thin soil over limestone. Leafy-prairie clover is a federally endangered plant species that inhabits prairie remnants on thin soil over dolomitic limestone. It is very familiar with its habitat in nearby Will County, and no suitable habitat is present within the project corridor and as such, the proposed action is anticipated to have no effect on this species.
- Prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*) – The Prairie bush clover is a federally threatened species. Habitat for this species is dry to mesic prairies with gravelly soil. No suitable habitat is found within the project corridor. and as such, the proposed action is anticipated to have no effect on this species.

### **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 community by improving water quality and recreation on Salt Creek, while preserving the historic Graue Mill. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.

cc: Des Plaines Regional Office – Surface Water Manager