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:	**Public Notice Ending Date:**
Wednesday, November 27, 2024	Tuesday, December 17, 2024

Agency Log No.: C-0086-24

Federal Permit Information: Federal permit/license no. MVS-2024-270 is under the jurisdiction of St. Louis District, Regulatory Branch U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Name and Address of Discharger: Illinois Department of Transportation, Kirk Brown - PO Box 100, Carbondale, IL 62903-0100

Discharge Location: In Section 19 of Township 8-South and Range 1-East of the West 3rd & East 3rd Principal Meridian in Williamson County. Additional project location information includes the following: Blairsville, Blairsville, IL 62918

Name of Receiving Water: Big Muddy River

Project Name/Description: Herrin Road 1.66 mile Extension - proposed extension of Herrin Road 1.66 miles southwesterly from current terminus at Cambria Road

Construction Schedule: Immediate (Planned project duration is approximately 729 days)

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-0086-24-11272024-PublicNoticeAndFactSheet.pdf

IDOT ("Applicant") has applied for a 401 Water Quality Certification for impacts associated with the extension and new alignment of Herrin Road to Walker's Bluff to alleviate congestion on IL 13 and provide better service to areas that do not have efficient connection to IL 13. The project is located at the Herrin Road/Cambria Road intersection in Blairsville, westerly to County Line Road at Walker's Bluff in Township 8 South, Range 1 East, Sections 19, 20 and 30, Williamson County, Illinois. The project generally consists of the extension of Herrin Road approximately 1.66 miles southwesterly from its current terminus at Cambria Road through the undeveloped floodplain of the Big Muddy River to just east of the Jackson County line. The western terminus is the new roundabout constructed as part of the Walker's Bluff casino development and Reed Station Road extension in 2022. The typical section consists of a two-lane road with shoulders and open ditches in the west segment and a two-lane road with on-road bicycle lanes and curb and gutter in the east segment. The shoulders will accommodate bicycles in the west segment which will transition to a separated 10-foot-wide shared use path at the roundabout. A 208-foot land, three-span bridge is proposed to span the waterway.

The proposed action will include the construction of bridges, culverts, and raised embankments through jurisdictional waters and floodplain. The activities associated with the proposed construction include excavation, dredging, grading, and filling. Piers will not be placed within the main channel of the unnamed tributary to the Big Muddy River. The proposed bridge structure will be a three-span with 62' outer spans and an 80'center span. Bridge approaches will consist of raised embankments constructed on fill material. Two piers will be constructed within the floodway/floodplain of the unnamed tributary to the Big Muddy River, but no piers will be placed in the main channel. The tributary will be impacted by temporary sedimentation from the pier excavations, bridge abutment excavations, and the placing of riprap beds for slope wall protection underneath the bridge.

The construction of the Herrin Road Extension will require crossing jurisdictional wetlands and an unnamed tributary of the Big Muddy River. The proposed embankment will require 31,020 CY of fill in Wetland Site 3 and 7425 CY of fill in Wetland Site 4, permanently impacting a total of 1.571 acres (Ac) of wetlands in the project area. The applicant is proposing to mitigate the wetland impacts by purchasing 7.5405 Ac of wetland bank credits from the Crab Orchard Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank.

Information used in this review was obtained from the application documents dated February 17, 2021, December 2021, March 31, 2023, January 2024, and May 6, 2024.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

On September 29, 30, October 1, 20, and 21, 2020, the Illinois Natural History Survey performed a wetland survey for the project area. Fourteen wetlands (Sites 1-28) and one surface water were identified within the survey area. Of note, the project site was under abnormally dry conditions during the October 20 and 21 sampling dates based on the U.S. Drought Monitor map (Riganti 2020). Four wetlands (Sites 3, 4, 18, and 27) were found to lie within the proposed project area however, Wetland Site 27 will not be impacted by the proposed project. A total of 1.571 Ac. of wetland impacts are expected as a result of the project. The project will not require fill impacts to the waterway in the survey area, however, it has been characterized by the applicant. Work will take place within the floodplain.

Site 3 was determined to be a wet floodplain forest located approximately 36 feet, 475 feet, 855 feet, 1078 feet, 1367 feet, 1607 feet, 2052 feet, 2142 feet, and 3250 feet east of Meridian Road. Site 3 has NWI codes of PFO1A (temporarily flooded, broad-leaved deciduous, forested, palustrine wetland) and U (upland) with a total area of 58 Ac occurring within the project corridor. This site has a mean C of 3.2, and an FQI of 29.4, both of which indicate a medium natural quality. Hydrology is connected by the tributary to the Big Muddy River. Dominant vegetation included silver maple *(Acer*

saccharinum), common beggar's ticks *(Bidens frondosa)*, big shellbark (*Carya laciniosa),* buttonbush *(Cephalanthus occidentalis)*, and swamp privet *(Forestiera acuminata)*.

Site 4 was determined to be a wet floodplain forest located approximately 462 feet, 1251 feet, 1782 and 2021 feet east of Meridian Road. Site 4 has an NWI code of U (upland) with a total area of 7.54 Ac occurring within the project corridor. This site has a mean C of 2.4, and an FQI of 12.4, both of which indicate a medium natural quality. Dominant vegetation included common beggar's ticks, spiny barnyard grass (*Echinochloa muricata),* and fall panicum *(Panicum dichotomiflorum).*

Site 18 was determined to be a farmed wetland located approximately 2181 feet west of Blairsville Road. The NWI code for Site 18 is U (upland) with a total area of 0.32 acres occurring within the project corridor. Because the site is actively farmed, the only species considered dominant was found to be waterhemp (*Amaranthus tuberculatus**)*** and fall panicum *(Panicum dichotomiflorum).* An FQI and Native Mean C were not reported for the site. Additionally, Illinois Department of Natural Resources has indicated they will not take jurisdiction over this farmed wetland.

Wetland Site	Community Type	FQI/ Native Mean C	Acreage in Survey Area	Acreage Impacted	High Quality Aquatic Resource? (Y/N)
3	Wet Floodplain Forest	29.4/3.2	58.0	1.296	N
4	Wet Meadow	12.4/2.4	7.54	0.275	N
18	Farmed Wetland	N/A	0.32	0.24	N

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 road construction may occur in the proposed project area and temporarily downstream of the construction area during the proposed work. Permanent impacts will consist of 31,020 CY of fill material in Wetland 3, 7425 CY of fill material to Wetland 4, and 718 CY of fill material to Wetland 18. Fill material will include soil fill, concrete, and riprap/stone.

Cofferdams may still be used to install one pier for the three-span bridge due to the soil types in the floodway/floodplain. Riprap will be used to stabilize slopes at bridge abutments and at culvert inlets and outlets. Culverts will be constructed to convey storm water runoff into roadside ditches and ultimately to the existing drainage along the alignment. The pavement drainage in the east segment is also an open ditch design with curb outlets draining to ditches. All culverts will have riprap stabilized inlets and outfalls, and porous granular material making up the bedding and backfill.

Storm sewer is proposed within the residential area adjacent to existing Club Road, as well as in the vicinity of the Cambria Road roundabout.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

Wetlands identified as Site 3, Site 4, and Site 18 will be permanently impacted as a result of fill for road construction. The increased concentrations of suspended solids, and streambed sedimentation will be short term, and the recolonization of a potentially affected stream reach by benthic invertebrates and fish will be relatively rapid if required measures to minimize sedimentation are followed. Effects to aquatic organisms are anticipated to be minor, and mostly temporary in nature.

Mitigation of the 1.571 acres of permanent impacts to jurisdictional wetlands is proposed through the purchase of wetland bank mitigation credits from the Crab Orchard Creek Wetland Mitigation Bank.

Total compensatory mitigation required as a result of this project is 7.5405 Ac.

Impacted Feature	Feature Type	Impact Area (Ac)	Mitigation Ratio	Mitigation Credits Required
3	Wet Floodplain Forest	1.296	5.5:1	7.128
4	Wet Meadow	0.275	1.5:1	0.4125
18	Farmed Wetland	0.24	N/A	0
			Total	**7.5405**

Excavation for the new storm sewer will result in temporary sediment discharge during the excavation and covering of the storm sewer. An erosion and sediment control plan has been prepared to minimize the discharge of sediment and other pollutants into waterways. The plan will be incorporated into all construction activities and erosion and siltation barriers will be positioned to prevent erosion and other materials from entering waterbodies and wetlands. Construction will occur during dry periods, temporary cofferdam installation for bridge pier construction, and dewatering activities will incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce turbidity and floating debris from return flows. Wetland protections will include perimeter protections, and temporary and permanent stabilization measures such as road embankment seeding and mulching. Siltation barriers will be positioned to prevent erosion and other materials from entering discharge locations, and ground cover will be applied to disturbed soil areas. On-site drainage features such as diverting road embankment discharges through vegetated ditches and sediment basin construction will be incorporated into the design of the proposed facilities.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The proposed project was evaluated as part of the Southern Illinois Metropolitan Planning Organization (SIMPO) East-West Corridor Study and identified as a preferred corridor for improvement to alleviate congestion on IL 13. The study recommendation included the extension of Herrin Road into Jackson County to provide a much-needed east-west corridor alternative to IL 13. The extension of Herrin Road will provide the casino and adjacent properties with more reliable access that will not be subject to closures due to routine flooding.

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

Alternatives A1 and A2

Alternative A begins as a modified west leg of the existing Herrin Road and Cambria Road roundabout and parallels the north side of the Ameren utility easement. The Alternative A1 alignment turns south and crosses under the Ameren overhead utility lines less than 500 feet west of the Big Muddy River tributary crossing. A1 ends a few hundred feet east of the casino entrance after an S-curve. The Alternative A2 alignment turns south and crosses under the Ameren overhead utility lines approximately 1,000 feet east of the Big Muddy River tributary crossing ending similarly to A1 at the casino entrance. The proposed right-of-way (ROW) for Alternative A1 varies in width from 120 feet at the east end to 270 feet near the tributary crossing, while the proposed ROW for Alternative A2 varies in width from 120 feet at the east end to 315 feet near the tributary crossing. The proposed ROW width immediately adjacent to the Herrin Road/Cambria Road roundabout is approximately 100 feet. Alternative A would impact the most acres of high-quality wetlands, ponds, and forested acres, and would require the most stream crossings. This was not chosen as the preferred alternative.

Alternative B (Preferred Alternative)

Alternative B connects to the Herrin Road and Cambria Road roundabout as a modified west leg, similar to Alternatives A1 and A2. Alternative B curves to the northwest and aligns with Club Road approximately 1,300 feet west of the Herrin Road/Cambria Road roundabout. Then the Alternative B alignment follows the existing Club Road alignment for approximately 1,900 feet before it curves to the south toward the Walker's Bluff casino site. Alternative B crosses the Big Muddy River tributary approximately 500 feet north of the Ameren easement before curving back to the west and terminating a few hundred feet east of the Walker's Bluff casino entrance. The proposed ROW for Alternative B varies in width from 120 feet at the east end to 300 feet near the tributary crossing. The proposed ROW width immediately adjacent to the Herrin Road/Cambria Road roundabout is approximately 100 feet. Alternative B impacts less high-quality wetlands and forested acres, impacts no ponds, and requires half the number of stream crossings. This was determined to be the preferred alternative.

No-Build Alternative

The No- Build Alternative does not provide a new east-west route in the area to reduce traffic on IL 13. The existing roadway would require routine maintenance to keep it functional, but does not include any alignment, safety or capacity improvements. This alternative does not require ROW and avoids impacts, however, the No-Build Alternate would not solve the issue of traffic congestion on the only continuous east/west route in the area (IL 13). A No-Build Alternative would not provide better service to areas without an efficient connection to IL 13 or I-57, nor would it address the need for additional east/west capacity as a result of the proposed casino. This Alternative would also not address the unreliable access to Walker's Bluff that is prone to closures due to flooding events that have cut off access from the existing Walker's Bluff resort. The No-Build Alternative does not fulfil the proposed project's purpose and need.

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

The Illinois Natural Heritage Database contains no records for state or federally listed species in the vicinity of the project. The results of the fish and macroinvertebrate surveys did not find any state or federally threatened or endangered species. The Illinois Natural Heritage Database contains no record of Illinois Natural area Inventory Sites, dedicated Illinois Nature Preserves, or registered Land and Water Reserves in the vicinity of the project location. Therefore, consultation under Part 1075 was terminated.

A review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website was conducted, and the following threatened and endangered species may be present within the vicinity of the Project: the Indiana Bat,

Northern Long-eared Bat, Tricolored Bat (Proposed), Whooping Crane, and the Monarch Butterfly (Candidate). A preliminary determination, in compliance with the

Endangered Species Act as amended, has been made that this activity may affect the listed bat species.

Although no Indiana or Northern long-eared bats were encountered during the mist netting for the project, one juvenile female Tri-colored bat was encountered as Site 2. Mist netting Site 2 appears to be outside of the alignment for the preferred alternative. No tree removal is proposed for the Site 2 area.

The Indiana and Northern-long eared bats are not likely to be adversely affected provided the following conservation measure is implemented:

- Trees three (3) inches or greater in diameter at breast height will not be cleared April 1 through September 30.

Trees shall be replaced in accordance with IDOT's Tree Replacement Policy (DE 18).

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 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 public by providing a much-needed east-west corridor alternative to IL 13. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.