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

2520 West Iles, 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:**
Tuesday, October 28, 2025	Monday, November 17, 2025

Agency Log No.: C-0001-25

Federal Permit Information: Federal permit/license no. CEMVR-OD-P-2014-0799 is under the jurisdiction of Rock Island District, Regulatory Branch U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Name and Address of Discharger: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District - Clock Tower Building, P.O. Box 2004, Rock Island, IL 61204

Discharge Location: In Section 23 of Township 27-North and Range 4-West of the West 3rd & East 3rd Principal Meridian in Woodford County. Additional project location information includes the following: Illinois Waterway, River Miles 78.9-290.7, IL 61611

Name of Receiving Water: Illinois Waterway

Project Name/Description: Dredged Materials in support of 9-foot Navigation Channel Project on the Illinois Waterway - proposed routine channel maintenance of the 9-foot Navigation Project on the Illinois Waterway, River Miles 78.9-290.7

Construction Schedule: Immediate (Planned project duration is approximately 59 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.

Name: Webert Deslien Email: webert.deslien@illinois.gov Phone: 217/782-3362

Post Document. No. C-0001-25-10282025-PublicNoticeAndFactSheet.pdf

401 Water Quality Certification Fact Sheet for IWW Maintenance Dredging

IEPA Log No. C-0001-25

Contact: Angie Sutton 217-782-9864

The United States Corps of Engineers (USACE) has applied for a 401 water quality certification for the maintenance dredging of the navigational channel on the Illinois Waterway (IWW) from River Mile (RM) 78.9 to 290.7 within the States of Illinois. The affected reaches of the river in Illinois are located in the following counties: Will, Grundy, LaSalle, Bureau, Putnam, Marshall, Woodford, Peoria, Tazewell, Fulton, Mason, Schuyler and Cass. The project extends approximately 212 river miles from just downstream of the Lockport Lock and Dam (L&D) at Lockport, IL to the LaGrange L&D approximately 9 RMs downstream from Beardstown, IL. The project is comprised of 6 locks and dams with a slackwater navigation pool upstream of each dam extending to the next dam.

Funds for development, operation, and maintenance of the navigation system were authorized by initiation of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1927. The Rock Island District (District) has been assigned responsibility to maintain a 9-foot navigation channel on the IWW between the La Grange Lock and Dam and Lockport Lock and Dam (RM 78.9-290.7) as provided by the River and Harbor Act of 1927 and subsequent modifications. This Act provides for the maintenance of a channel not less than 9 feet in depth. Aside from routine maintenance on L&D structures, annual dredging is required at various locations in the navigation channel. Dredging is required at numerous, and often unpredictable, locations in this reach of the waterway.

Annual maintenance dredging is normally performed at 10 to 15 sites with material volume ranging from approximately 76,000 to 705,000 cubic yards (CY) annually. The dredged material is removed by either hydraulic methods using a cutter-suction dredge, or by mechanical methods using a clamshell dredge or excavator. Hydraulic dredging transports materials onto barges for transport to approved placement sites, while mechanical dredging loads material onto barges for transport to approved placement sites. Spoils would be placed in historic placement sites as no new placement sites are proposed. Dredged material may be placed in several different manners such as bankline, inland floodplain, upland placement, thalweg placement, temporary placement, or beneficial use sites.

Information used in this review was obtained from the application documents dated December 2024, and December 27, 2024, January 3, 2025, and August 8, 2025.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

The IWW includes segments of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC), Des Plaines River, and Illinois River for the proposed project.

The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal from RM 290.7 to approximately RM 290 is a Chicago Area Waterway System and Brandon Pool Aquatic Life Use B Water. At River Mile 290, located in Will County, the 7Q10 flow is approximately 1317 cfs. The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal is not listed as biologically significant in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources publication Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System, nor has it been given an integrity rating in this document. The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, Waterbody Segment IL_GI-02, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and indigenous aquatic life use with potential causes given as chloride, dissolved oxygen, nickel, pH, total phosphorus, and total dissolved solids (TDS). Aesthetic quality use is fully supported.

The Des Plaines River from RM 290 to approximately RM 279 is Upper Dresden Island Pool Waters and is comprised of Waterbody Segments IL_G-23 and IL_G-12.

At RM 279, located in Will County, the 7Q10 flow is approximately 1503 cfs. The Des Plaines River (Waterbody Segment IL_G-23) is not listed as biologically significant in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources publication Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System, nor has it been given an integrity rating in that document. The Des Plaines River, Waterbody Segment IL_ G-23, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and indigenous aquatic life use with potential causes given as chloride, dissolved oxygen, nickel, pH, total phosphorus, and total dissolved solids (TDS). Aesthetic quality use is fully supported.

The Des Plaines River (Waterbody Segment IL_G-12) is not listed as biologically significant in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources publication Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System; however, it has been given an integrity rating of “D” in that document.

The Des Plaines River, Waterbody Segment, IL_G-12, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with

potential causes given as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Indigenous aquatic life use is fully supported.

The Des Plaines River from RM 279 until it combines with the Kankakee River to form the Illinois River at approximately RM 272.8 is General Use Water. At RM 272.8, located in Grundy County, the 7Q10 flow is approximately 2100 cfs. The Des Plaines River, Waterbody Segment IL_G-24, is not listed as biologically significant in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources publication Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System, nor has it been given an integrity rating in that document. The Des Plaines River, Waterbody Segment, IL_G-24, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and primary contact use with a potential cause given as fecal coliform. Aquatic life use is fully supported.

The Illinois River from 272.8 to RM 78.9 is General Use Waters and is comprised of Waterbody Segments IL_D-10, IL_D-23, IL_D-20, IL_D-16, IL_D-09, IL_D-30, IL_D-05, and IL_D-31

The Illinois River makes up the remainder of the proposed dredging project and is comprised of RM 272.8 to RM 78.9. At RM 78.9, located in Brown and Cass Counties, the 7Q10 flow is 3635 cfs. The Illinois River segments between these river mile markers are not listed as biologically significant in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources publication Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System. Waterbody Segments IL_D-10 and IL_D-20 have been given integrity ratings of “B” in that document, while the remaining segments in the project stretch of the Illinois River have not been given integrity ratings in that document. The waterbody segments that have reaches enhanced in regard to the dissolved oxygen water quality standard are IL_D-10, IL_D-23, and IL_D-20.

All waterbody segments are found on the 2024 Illinois 303(d) List.

The Illinois River, Waterbody Segment IL_D-10, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mercury, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Aquatic life and primary contact uses are fully supported.

The Illinois River, Waterbody Segment, IL_D-23, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential

causes given as aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mercury, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene, and aquatic life use with potential causes given as cause unknown and dissolved oxygen. Aesthetic quality and primary contact uses are fully supported.

The Illinois River, Waterbody Segment, IL_D-20, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mercury, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene, and primary contact use with a potential cause given as fecal coliform. Aquatic life use is fully supported.

The Illinois River, Waterbody Segment, IL_D-16, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls(PCBs). Aesthetic quality, aquatic life, and primary contact uses are fully supported.

The Illinois River, Waterbody Segment, IL_D-09, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mercury, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene, aquatic life use with potential causes given as cause unknown and dissolved oxygen and primary contact use with a potential cause given as fecal coliform. Aesthetic quality use is fully supported.

The Illinois River, Waterbody Segment, IL_D-30, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mercury, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene, and public and food processing water supply use with potential causes given as atrazine and iron. Aesthetic quality , aquatic life and primary contact uses are fully supported.

The Illinois River, Waterbody Segment, IL_D-05, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential causes given as aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mercury, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene, and primary contact use with a potential cause given as fecal coliform. Aesthetic quality and aquatic life uses are fully supported.

The Illinois River, Waterbody Segment, IL_D-31, is listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired for fish consumption use with potential

causes given as aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, mercury, mirex, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and toxaphene, and primary contact use with a potential cause given as fecal coliform. Aquatic life use is fully supported.

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

Pollutant load increases that would occur from this project include some increases in suspended solids during the dredging and placement of the spoil material. The benthic habitat to be dredged will be disturbed but should revert to its previous condition of aquatic life support soon after dredging. Dredged material from the upper portion of the IWW (RM 231-290.7) will consist primarily of coarse sand, gravel, rock, and cobble, while the downriver portion (RM 78.9-230) will consist of fine silt and clay material.

Testing and previous dredging experience have shown localized increases in the suspended particulates and turbidity associated with the dredging and placement of materials. Finer materials settle at slower rates while coarser material will settle out more quickly. The finer material causes greater consideration and concern for increased total suspended solids (TSS) and turbidity. The action of the mechanical bucket and cutterhead disturbs sediments near the river bottom, causing elevated levels immediately downstream. Shoreline placement of dredged material may also result in elevated levels due to material being carried in the water return. Bulk sediment analyses were performed for metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, and herbicides to determine suitability for beneficial use placement. Thirty fine- and coarse-grained samples were collected between 2000 and 2007 over a nearly 200-mile length of the IWW. Threshold Effect Concentration (TEC) and Probable Effect Concentration (PEC) values were compared and found that no samples had heavy metal concentrations exceeding the PEC. The fine-grained samples collected from and upstream of Peoria Lake exceeded the PEC for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon and PCBs.

Dredged material placement sites vary significantly in size. Dredged material may be placed in several different manners such as bankline, inland floodplain, upland, thalweg, temporary placement, or beneficial use sites.

In accordance with 35 Ill. Admin. Code Section 303.400, the U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, may bankline dispose of sediment generated during maintenance dredging operations on the Illinois Waterway/River between river miles 80.2 and 291. The provisions of this Section mean that the bankline disposal activities conducted in compliance with Section 303.40(a)(1) through (a)(3) would not need to comply with water quality standards for the offensive conditions standard of 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.203, the dissolved oxygen standard of 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.206, the total lead, total zinc, mercury, and total copper standards of 35

Ill. Adm. Code 302.208, and the ammonia nitrogen and un-ionized ammonia nitrogen standards of 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.212. Compliance measures are met if 1) Less than 10% of representative samples from a proposed dredge cut are composed of fine-grained material, where a material is finegrained if more than 20% of the sample passes a #230 sieve; or 2) The SSTFATE model indicates that applicable water quality standards will be met at the perimeter of a temporary area of allowed dilution having a surface area no larger than 48,000 square feet, and not exceeding either 1,000 feet in length or 150 feet in width; and 3) The U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, holds a Water Quality Certification for its dredging operations from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §1341 (1988).

Maintenance dredging of the navigational channel to a minimum depth of nine feet for river miles (RM) 0-80 of the Illinois River is approved under a separate authorization for which the IEPA granted CWA Section 401 certification for on October 4, 2024 (IEPA Log number C-0181-22).

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

The increase in suspended solids will be local and temporary. Placement areas will be the same (or very similar) to past dredging projects. Placement sites have been previously evaluated and are documented in site-specific Dredged Material Management Plans (DMMPs) or Environmental Assessments (EAs). Any necessary mitigation measures required for dredged material placement sites proposed are addressed in those documents and new placement sites will require additional evaluations. The District also continues to coordinate dredging actions with the On-Site Inspection Team (OSIT) and considers recommendations to avoid and minimize impacts to natural resources.

Mussel surveys and ongoing evaluations of mussel bed locations are conducted to ensure that dredging operations make every attempt to avoid or minimize impacts to identified mussel populations.

Additional site-specific information of effects on particulates and turbidity, chemical and physical properties of the water column, effects to biota, and actions taken to minimize impacts are described in subsequent DMMPs and/or EAs. Beneficial uses of dredged material are also pursued when and where they are feasible.

Purpose and Anticipated Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The IWW is a nationally important commercial transportation route which requires locks, dams, and dredging to maintain safe and efficient inland waterway traffic. This project is necessary in order to maintain the IWW 9-foot Navigation Channel Project to a depth of 9-feet below flat pool.

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

There are no practical and feasible alternatives to the placement of fill in the proposed sites that would meet the objectives and goals of this project. The proposed project is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative.

The alternatives for this project will follow guidelines set forth by the Agency. Prior to the discharge of any dredged material all Agencies involved in the project shall be informed of the proposed dredging activity. Dredging shall occur in historic dredging locations. The historic dredging locations include reaches of the river(s) in which dredging has occurred in the past five years. If additional reaches are necessary, they need to be reviewed individually. Historic dredge placements sites, used within the last five years, may be utilized. Any new or additional dredge spoil placement sites will need to be reviewed individually. The least intrusive alternative would be to not allow dredging. However, this is not an acceptable alternative given that this is a useful project and will maintain commercial and recreational uses of the river system.

No new placement sites are proposed and dredged material placement sites proposed have been previously evaluated and selected in compliance with the NEPA. Any new sites proposed will require additional NEPA evaluation.

Further discussion on Project alternatives is included in the following documents:

- *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Operation and Maintenance of the IWW 9-Foot Navigation Project (USACE RID, 1975)*
- *The Long-Term Management Strategy for Dredged Material Placement for the IWW Main Report (USACE RID, 1995)*
- *The Summary of Cumulative Dredging, Dredged Material Placement Actions, and Programmatic Environmental Assessment (USACE RID 2003)*
- *Dredged Material Management Preliminary assessment for the IWW* (USACE RID, 2022); and

- Subsequent site-specific Dredged Material Management Plans (DMMPs) or Environmental Assessments (EAs) for channel maintenance activities on the IWW

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

The District has coordinated dredging operations with various State and Federal agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This multi-agency group, the On-site Inspection Team (OSIT), has considered threatened and endangered species as part of the dredged material placement related actions for this project and as such have made the following determinations:

There are 9 federally listed threatened and endangered species, one candidate species, one proposed endangered species, one proposed threatened species, and one non-essential experimental population for counties occurring within the Project area along the IWW corridor.

Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), Hine's emerald dragonfly (*Somatochlora hineana*), rusty patch bumblebee (*Bombus affinis*), and leafy prairie-clover (*Dalea foliosa*) are listed as Endangered. Eastern massasauga (*Sistrunus catenatus*), decurrant false aster (*Boltonia decurrens*), eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Plantanthera leucophaea*), and lakeside daisy (*Hymenoxys herbacea*) are listed as Threatened. Tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) is listed as Proposed Endangered. The western Regal Fritillary (*Argynnis idalia occidentalis*) is listed as Proposed Threatened. Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus)* is listed as a Candidate, and whooping crane (*Grus americana*) is listed as an Experimental Population, Non-Essential. Critical habitat for the Indiana bat was identified on the IPaC species list, but channel maintenance operations will not take place near any identified critical habitat and therefore will have no effect to the Indiana bat.

Based on the county location along the river corridor where the species occurs, the habitat needs of the species, the dredging season, and typical dredge placement practices, the only species perceived to be potentially affected by dredging operations is the decurrent false aster. Decurrent false aster is found in moist, sandy floodplain areas and benefits from disturbance (such as periodic flooding) to scour away other plants that compete for the same habitat. Shore pipe corridors and offloading areas avoid vegetated areas or are surveyed for the presence of decurrent false aster before being used. When found it is avoided or USFWS is consulted under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Potential impacts to other species, such as the bat and mussel species, are likely to be more easily identified and avoided during the planning process. Avoidance measures would consist of limiting vegetation clearing and

ground disturbance, adjusting schedules around a species' active season, and avoiding known populations actively utilizing specific placement sites.

Agency Conclusion.

This assessment was conducted pursuant to the Illinois Pollution Control Board regulation for Antidegradation found at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.105 (Antidegradation standard). We find that the proposed activity, utilizing historic dredging locations and placement sites, will result in the attainment of water quality standards. 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. This activity will benefit the community at large by maintaining commercial and recreational uses of the river system. The proposed activity is therefore compliant with the Antidegradation standard.