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:**
Wednesday, October 29, 2025	Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Agency Log No.: C-0038-25

Federal Permit Information: Federal permit/license no. OD-R 18-023 is under the jurisdiction of Rock Island District, Regulatory Branch U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Name and Address of Discharger: Illinois Department of Transportation, Lora S. Rensing, P.E. - 3215 Executive Park Dr., Springfield, IL 62703

Discharge Location: In Section 15 of Township 5-South and Range 2-West of the West 4th Principal Meridian in Pike County. Additional project location information includes the following: IL 100/106, Florence, IL 62363

Name of Receiving Water: Illinois River and Unnamed Tributary of Florence River

Project Name/Description: Florence Bridge replacement project over the Illinois River - proposed removal and replacement of the structure (SN 086-0001) that spans over the Illinois River and Ferry Lake as well as the reconstruction of the roadway approaches near Florence, IL

Construction Schedule: Beginning Sep 2025 and ending Oct 2028

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-0038-25-10292025-PublicNoticeAndFactSheet.pdf

401 Water Quality Certification Fact Sheet for Florence Bridge Replacement

IEPA Log No. C-0038-25

Contact: Angie Sutton 217-782-9864

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has applied for a 401 Water Quality Certification for impacts associated with removal and replacement of the IL 100/106 bridge structure (SN 086-0001) spanning the Illinois River, and reconstruction of the roadway approaches and IL 100/106 at the Florence Road intersection in Section 25, Township 14 North, Range 14 West, Pike and Scott Counties, near Florence, Illinois. The proposed structure (SN 086-0506) will be built downstream, approximately 300 feet south of the existing bridge, in 18 four-unit spans using steel web plate girders. Substructure units 1, 2, and 3, will utilize drilled shaft foundations, and unit 4 will utilize large diameter open-ended pipe pile (LDOEPP). The total length of the structure will be 3,916 feet 9 inches. Excavation of 5025 cubic yards (CY) is proposed in 2108.4 square feet (SF) for shaft placement. Riprap/aggregate placement in the amount of 5317.3 CY is proposed for service and access roads, and placement in the amount of 862.8 CY is proposed at the piers.

The existing structure will be demolished after the proposed roadway and structure are constructed and open to traffic. Currently the exact method of removing the existing bridge is undetermined. The applicant provided the Agency with a report on findings of a painted surface condition study/survey that was used to make recommendations about mitigating release of painted surface residues into the waterbodies where the structure will fall. The proposed project will provide a new bridge structure across the Illinois River that is more reliable and meets current design standards. The existing Florence Bridge was constructed in 1929 and is functionally obsolete and structurally deficient.

The bridge construction project has been authorized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) using Nationwide Permit (NWP) 15 (U.S. Coast Guard Approved Bridges) to satisfy federal CWA § 404 permitting requirements. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) also regulates this activity under its own authority; therefore, a state water quality certification under CWA § 401 is required for the USCG permit process. Until recent changes to the 401 certification rules pursuant to 40 CFR 121, USCG would satisfy its permitting criteria by using an existing water quality certification issued for a USACE permit, provided the project's permitted activities are identical. Given these procedural changes, it is necessary for the proponent to seek a separate CWA § 401 water quality certification for the pending USCG permit even though this Agency has already evaluated and made a final determination that the activity would meet all applicable water quality requirements.

Wetlands 4 and 11 will be impacted by the project. The proposed project will result in 7.18 acres (Ac) of permanent wetland impacts. Wetland mitigation required is 38.01 Ac and will occur at the LaGrange Wetland mitigation bank owned by IDOT in Brown County.

Information used in this review was obtained from the application documents dated November 2017, September 20, 2021, May 31, 2024, January 13, 2025, January 17, 2025, and January 24, 2025.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

Waterbody site 3w in the wetland delineation report is identified as the Illinois River. It is a perennial stream that flows from north to south through the project corridor and has a National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) code R2UBH.

The Illinois River has 3743 cfs of flow during critical 7Q10 low-flow conditions. The Illinois River is classified as General Use Water. The Illinois River 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 Illinois River, Waterbody Segment IL_D-32, 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 a potential cause given as dissolved oxygen. Aesthetic quality and primary contact uses are fully supported. This segment of the Illinois River is not subject to enhanced dissolved oxygen standards.

Waterbody site 1w is identified as a tributary to the Illinois River. It is a perennial stream that crosses under IL 100/106 approximately 129 feet west of Florence Road and has a NWI code R5UBH.

Waterbody site 4w is identified as a tributary to the Illinois River. It is a perennial stream that crosses under IL 100/106 approximately 925 feet west of Coon Lane and has a NWI code R2UBHx.

The unnamed tributaries (1w and 4w) to the Illinois River have 0 cfs of flow during critical 7Q10 low-flow conditions. The unnamed tributaries to the Illinois River are classified as General Use Water. The unnamed tributaries to the Illinois River are 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 are they given integrity ratings in that document. The unnamed tributaries to the Illinois River, (no segment codes), tributaries to Waterbody Segment IL_D-32, are not listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as they have not been assessed. These segments of the unnamed tributaries to the Illinois River are not subject to enhanced dissolved oxygen standards

Illinois Natural History Survey conducted delineations on July 20-21 and August 15-16 in 2017 for the Florence Bridge project. A Wetland Impact Evaluation form was submitted based on the delineations for this project. Thirteen wetlands (Wetlands1-13) were identified withing the project area. Impacts are proposed for Wetlands 4 and 11.

Wetland 4 is a wet floodplain forest community with NWI codes PFO1A, PFO1C, PSS1A, PSS1C, PUBG, and U. The wetland site is located approximately 21 feet north and 28 feet south of IL 100/106, 339 feet east of Florence Road, and 655 feet southwest of the intersection of Coon Lane ad Brown Road. Wetland 4 occurs within 87.09 Ac of the project corridor with permanent impacts proposed to occur in 6.81 Ac. The site has a Mean C of 2.6, and an FQI of 17.6 and consists of multiple polygons along the Illinois River. Within Wetland Site 4, Area 1 is the mainline west of the river with 2.09 Ac of proposed impacts, Area 2 is the mainline east of the river with 4.12 Ac of impact and Areas 3 and 4 are access roads with 0.31 and 0.29 Ac of impacts respectively. This site was determined to be a wet floodplain forest with pockets of wet shrubland and shallow open water. The federally endangered Decurrent False Aster *(Boltonia decurrens)* was found at this site.

Wetland 11 is a wet meadow community with NWI codes PEM1A and U. The wetland site is located approximately 29 feet northeast and 20 feet southwest of IL 100/106. Wetland 11 occurs within 4.49 Ac of the project corridor with permanent impacts proposed to occur in 0.37 Ac. The site has a Mean C of 2.6, and an FQI of 17.2.

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

Stormwater runoff from IL 100/106 currently flows into roadside ditches that drain into an unnamed ditch and ultimately to the Illinois River north of IL 100/106 and Florence. Stormwater runoff on the east side of the river flows east into an existing drainage ditch and pumped 2.7 miles south of IL 100/106 to the river by the Big Swan Drainage and Levee District (BSDLD). Bridge runoff enters the Illinois River through the deck drains and steel deck grates. The proposed stormwater management techniques to be utilized for the new bridge include

continued collection of west side stormwater in new roadside ditches that drain to the unnamed tributary and outlet into the Illinois River north of IL 100/106 and Florence. East side runoff will be collected in new roadside ditches ad outlet into the BSDLD ditch, and bridge runoff will enter the river via deck drains.

Salt spray and splash typically are concentrated within the shoulder limits of the roadway. Efficiently draining storm water from the roadway minimizes splash from the roadway; storm water on the IL 100/106 roadway will be managed through a combination of an open ditch system and crossroad culverts.

Project construction may have minor effects of on the surface water quality; however, the effects will be temporary. A Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Plan will be developed prior to construction, in accordance with the IDOT's Drainage Manual and Bureau of Design & Environment Manual. The increased runoff will not have significant effect on surface waters in the project area. There will be slight increases in the amounts of runoff due to additional impervious surfaces resulting from the proposed improvement. As this project does not include widening and added lanes for capacity, the increase in impervious areas is minimal. The increase in impervious surfaces may increase the concentrations of heavy metals in stormwater runoff.

The proposed project will generate increases in suspended solids during excavation for bridge construction and during bridge removal activities. Aquatic life uses in the portion of the river that will be disturbed during construction may be negatively impacted, but in time, they should recover and support approximately the same community structure as is now found in the existing channel.

Additionally, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has confirmed the presence of lead-based paint on the existing structure. As a result, the Department has a developed a provision outlining steps to be taken prior to structure removal.

Riprap/aggregate placement in the amount of 5317.3 CY is proposed for service and access roads, and placement in the amount of 862.8 CY is proposed at the piers. Excavation of 5025 CY is proposed in 2108.4 square feet (SF) for shaft placement.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

Appropriate erosion control methods will be implemented to minimize erosion and sedimentation. BMPs will be implemented to protect surface water, and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan will propose countermeasures to address runoff and sedimentation. Staging areas for equipment repair and maintenance will be located away from drainage courses and surface waters and a wash down area for equipment will be designated. Winter Operation BMPs include annual training for road crews to improve the efficiency of de-icing application and to reduce loss of de-icing chemicals, utilization of calibrated spreaders, pre-wetting of solid de-icing chemicals/mixtures for better pavement adhesion and ice/snow melting and adjusting de-icing chemical rates according to pavement temperature and weather conditions.

Concerning management of the lead-based paint removal, the Department states the following where surface water is concerned: “Containment systems shall be maintained to prevent the escape of paint chips, abrasives, and other debris into the water, and onto the ground, soil, slope protection, and pavements. Releases or spills of, paint chips, abrasives, dust and debris that have become deposited on surrounding property, structures, equipment or vehicles, and bodies of water are unacceptable. If there are inadvertent spills or releases, the Contractor shall immediately shut down the emissions-producing operations, clean up the debris, and change work practices, modify the containment, or take other appropriate corrective action as needed to prevent similar releases from occurring in the future.”

The entirety of the recommended steps is included in the application documents.

The wetland mitigation proposed to occur at the LaGrange Wetland Mitigation Bank is 38.01 Ac as summarized on the Wetland Impacts Evaluation (WIE) form included in the application materials. Wetland 11 will be mitigated at a ratio of 1.5 for a total of 0.55 Ac. Wetland 4 will require mitigation at a ratio of 5.5:1 due to the presence of the federally listed Decurrent false aster for a total of 37.455 Ac.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide a transportation across the Illinois River for all modes of traffic, facilitate improved river navigation, and support local and regional economic needs, while meeting current design standards. The bridge is a transportation connector for the surrounding area, as it currently carries approximately 1,500 vehicles daily. The existing IL

100/106 river bridge, constructed in 1929, is “functionally obsolete” and “structurally deficient”, and can no longer be relied upon to maintain this crucial transportation link.

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

Initial alternatives included the no-build alternative (1A), as well as alternatives that considered whether to rehab or maintain the bridge (Alternatives 1B and 1C), and various build alternatives (Alternatives 2A, 2B, 3, 4B, 4A, 4C, 4D, 5A, and 5B). Combined Alternatives 3 and 4B, and 4C/D were also assessed. After the initial screening it was determined that Alternatives 1B, 1C and 3 did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and because of this, they were not carried forward for further assessment.

Of the remaining build alternatives initially developed, Alternatives 2A and 2B, combined Alternative 3 and 4B, and Alternatives 4B, 4D and 5A were dismissed for having higher environmental and travel performance impacts, costs and/or geometric concerns.

The designs for the final four alternatives were refined and re-evaluated for a preliminary comparison of engineering and environmental factors. Criteria considered were Bridge/Roadway Deficiencies, Safety, Regional Mobility, Local Access/Mobility, Economic Impacts, Cultural/Historical Resources, and Natural Resources. The alternatives to be carried forward include the following:

<u>Alternative 1A - No-Build</u>

The No-Build alternative would continue to require operation costs associating with the lift span as well as maintaining the bridge in a state of good repair. This alternative would require more frequent and less predictable maintenance schedules due to the bridge’s age, mechanical and electrical components, and susceptibility to river vessel collisions. The anticipated continuance of routine maintenance and rehab will not address the geometric deficiencies. This alternative would not address the structural deficiencies, the narrow navigational width, or the substandard conditions of the bridge. This does not meet the project purpose and need. For these reasons, a no-build alternative was not chosen.

<u>Alternative 4A</u>

Under the refined Alternative 4A, a new bridge would be constructed 100 feet north of the existing IL 100/106 River Bridge. An overpass bridge would cross Florence Road and a new

road connecting it to IL 100/106 would be built in the northwest quadrant of the crossing with one 12-foot lane in each direction. The existing bridge would be left in place to maintain traffic during construction and then removed once the proposed new bridge is completed. This alternative was not chosen as the preferred alternative. This alternative would require 27.3 Ac of right-of-way, a river bridge length of 3165 feet, a new roadway length of 4232 feet, and cost $70.6 M. After considering wetland (14.8 Ac), T&E (1.25 Ac Decurrent False Aster), forest (16.9), structure (1 commercial) and resource impacts (moderate), this alternative was not chosen as the preferred alternative.

Alternative 4C

This alternative consists of constructing a new bridge 100 feet south of the existing IL 100/106 River Bridge. An overpass bridge would cross Florence Road and a new road connecting it to IL 100/106 would be built in the southwest quadrant of the crossing with one 12-foot lane in each direction. The existing bridge would be left in place to maintain traffic during construction and then removed once the proposed new bridge is completed. This alternative would require 32.9 Ac of right-of-way, a river bridge length of 3167 feet, a new roadway length of 5078 feet, and cost $77.6 M. Alternative 4A impacts that greatest number of mussels (270) and INAI site (3.3 Ac). Forest land impacts are greater than those of Alternative 4A (30.4 Ac), though this alternative would result in slightly fewer wetland and floodplain impacts (13.4 Ac and 25.4 acres respectively). This alternative was not chosen as the preferred alternative.

Alternative 4C/D (Preferred Alternative)

This alternative consists of constructing a new bridge 300 feet south of the existing IL 100/106 River Bridge which would provide an easier connection to Florence Road. Alternative 4C/D includes a new Illinois River bridge and approach roadways with one 12-foot lane in each direction. Florence Road would be crossed with an overpass bridge and would be connected to the new IL 100/106 via accessing existing IL 100/106 to the west and a short connector road between the existing and new alignments approximately 1,300 feet north of Florence Road. The existing bridge would be left in place to maintain traffic during construction and then removed once the proposed new bridge is completed. This alternative would require 45.8 Ac of right-of-way, a river bridge length of 3167 feet, a new roadway length of 6586 feet, and cost $77.63 M. compares generally with Alternative 4C in many of the environmental evaluation categories, though it would impact slightly fewer wetlands (12.4 Ac), a smaller area of INAI site (2.9 Ac acres) and a smaller number of mussels impacted (86).

Impacts to prime farmland would be greater in comparison to Alternative 4C (14.9 Ac). Alternative 4C/D satisfies the project purpose and need and is the only alternative found to have no known impacts to sensitive archaeological resources. The alternative also avoids

displacement of residential and commercial properties which was placed as high importance by stakeholders and the public. Because this location is further downstream from the river bend, it is a better option when considering river navigation. This alternative was chosen as the preferred alternative.

Alterative 5B

This alternative consists of constructing a new bridge 4500 feet south of the existing IL 100/106 River Bridge, crossing the river at a non-perpendicular angle. This would utilize a portion of 250th Avenue west of the river. Florence Road would be crossed by the proposed bridge, and a new road connecting IL 100/106 and Florence Road would be built in the southwest quadrant of the crossing with one 12-foot lane in each direction. The existing bridge would be left in place to maintain traffic during construction and then removed once the proposed new bridge is completed. This alternative would require 90.1 Ac of right-of-way, a river bridge length of 1816 feet, a new roadway length of 18,885 feet, and cost $72.1 M. This alternative differs from the preceding three alternatives due largely to its location approximately 0.9 miles south of the existing bridge. At this location, Alternative 5B would result in the greatest impact to floodplains (41.1 Ac) and prime farmland (59.0 Ac), though least impacting to wetlands (5.2 Ac) and no impacts to the federally threatened and state threatened Decurrent False Aster or the INAI Site. Alternative 5B would displace 6 residences, where none of the other alternatives would result in any residential displacements. This option would require the largest amount of new right-of-way (90.1 Ac) and divided parcels (9), but would allow for construction of the shortest length bridge. This alternative was not chosen as the preferred alternative.

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

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for this project and the Federal Highway Authority (FHWA) signed a FONSI for the project on November 1,2021. A Natural Resource Review (NRR) dated January 13, 2025 states the following:

“This project was processed as an Environmental Assessment (EA) which was signed July 28, 2020 and resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact which was signed on October 29, 2021.”

The EA discussed the unusual concentration of invertebrates, Bald eagle, Illinois chorus frog, decurrent false aster and Florence Bridge Bed Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site. As of

January 13, 2025, the Illinois Natural Heritage Database contains records for Bald Eagle, butterfly mussel, decurrent false aster, an unusual concentration of invertebrates and the Florence Bridge Bed Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site. No record of dedicated Illinois Nature Preserves, or registered Land and Water Reserves occurs in the vicinity of the project location.

An EcoCAT consultation (Project # 2002996) was initiated on September 19, 2019 and again (2210344) on March 8, 2022. The Illinois Natural Heritage Database indicated records for the state-listed Illinois chorus frog (*Pseudacris illinoensis*) and the state and federally-listed decurrent false aster (*Boltonia decurrens*) in the project vicinity. The project also crosses the Florence Bridge Bed Illinois Natural Area Inventory (INAI) site.

The Illinois Chorus frog records are restricted to the east side of the Illinois River with no records of the species occurring west of the Illinois River. The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) conducted call surveys from thirteen aquatic locations within or near the project area on the east side of the Illinois River in 2018. No Illinois chorus frogs were heard calling at any of the calling stations location within the project vicinity. The Department has determined this project is unlikely to impact the Illinois Chorus frog.

Approximately 8,825 rosettes of decurrent false aster were found at five sites, occurring in the floodplain on the east side of the Illinois River. The preferred alternative will impact 2.59 acres of decurrent false aster. The Department encourages disturbance to this population be avoided if possible. However, listed plant species are the property of the landowner under the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act [520 ILCS 10/11] and thus, the fate of the population resides with the landowner. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has proposed measures to preserve decurrent false aster, including exclusionary fencing to prevent impacts from equipment and plans to conserve the genetic material of the plant through seed collection and dispersal onsite or at approved locations. The Department concurs with IDOT's proposed method of conserving the genetic material of the local populations of decurrent false aster and of the proposed plan for dispersal of the collected seeds. To preserve the Decurrent false aster IDOT proposes the following measures:

1. Temporary fencing shall be placed alongside the edge of right of way and around the uneconomic remnant property to be acquired on the east side of the river (see figure 4) to prevent equipment from entering the Decurrent false aster habitat. The fencing shall run alongside the edge of the ROW and the uneconomic remnant property in between the river's edge and the levee to prevent construction equipment from driving around the fence and thus driving over Decurrent false aster habitat or any flowering plants. This area is likely to flood, so the type of fencing used should be designed to withstand such incidents.

2. Decurrent false aster seeds would be collected in late September or October (depending on bloom time, weather, and rainfall) two years and one year preceding initial construction activities. For example, if construction activities were scheduled to begin during the spring of 2022, seed collection would occur during the autumn of 2020 and/or 2021 depending on population numbers. Allowing two years for seed collection would increase the likelihood of obtaining enough seed in the event that blooming individuals within the population were extremely low or absent for a given year.
3. The flowering/fruiting heads within the population would be collected during the years described in mitigation measure two. A small portion of the fruiting inflorescence of each individual (or numerous individuals, depending on population size) would be clipped and seeds shaken into a clean bucket. Collecting seeds from individual plants spanning the entire population would increase the likelihood of obtaining genetic variation (i.e., seed from plants growing in full sun, partial shade, river sediment, gravelly soil, etc.).
4. After the Decurrent false aster seeds are collected they would then be allowed to dry for 5 to 7 days in a climate-controlled lab (approximately 67° F [19.4° C] and relative humidity 45%). Seeds would then be divided into lots (depending on the volume of seed obtained) and placed in Ziploc bags and stored in a freezer at a constant temperature of approximately 20° F (-6.7° C). This storage method would allow the seeds to be stored for several years (3 to 7 years, possibly longer). The project will take approximately four years to complete from the time the project begins construction to after the existing bridge is removed. If seeds were collected two years prior to letting they would be stored for six years which is within the safe limits of this storage method.
5. Seed dispersal would optimally be at the original site where seeds were collected. When all construction activities have been completed at the Beardstown Bridge site, seeds can then be removed from cold storage and hand broadcast at the site sometime between late April and June. Broadcasting of seed would depend on weather and flood conditions and optimally would take place at the end of the last major flood event.
6. If unforeseen circumstances arise and the seed has been held for seven growing years IDOT will consider whether the seed should continue to be held or dispersed at another location. One area where dispersal could occur is an approximately 6-acre floodplain prairie/shrub prairie habitat occurring at Ray Norbut Conservation Area, which is 5 miles north of the project site on the west side of the river and is owned and managed by IDOT. Another area where dispersal could occur is the floodplain habitats within Meredosia Lake approximately 20 miles north of the Florence Bridge Site, on the east side of the Illinois River in Morgan County. This site is owned by IDNR. Both of these areas have existing populations of Decurrent false aster. IDOT will coordinate with USFWS and IDNR if this circumstance arises.

“A survey for freshwater mussels was conducted in the project area by INHS in 2017. The survey identified 649 live individuals representing 14 species, plus one species collected only as fresh-dead. No live or fresh dead state or federally-listed mussels were collected. The Aquatic Survey Report states that non-listed species of mussels were moved out of the project area. Relocations of non-listed mussel are good for two years from the date of survey, as

outlined in the *Annual Aquatic Life Relocation Permit* issued to INHS on behalf of IDOT. Therefore, due to the amount of time that will have passed between construction and the 2017 survey, the Department requests an additional mussel relocation effort be conducted prior to construction in accordance with Title 17 *Illinois Administrative Code* Part 860."

"If blasting is incorporated as part of the demolition, the Department requests continued coordination to avoid and minimize impacts to native fish and other wildlife. The Department recommends a blasting plan that discusses measures taken to avoid and minimize blasting impacts to fish and wildlife, such as scare charges and/or bubble/air curtains, be developed and shared for comment. Any mortality of fish and wildlife should also be monitored, documented, and promptly reported to the Department."

On November 14, 2019, US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), issued a Biological Assessment (BA) to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requesting formal Section 7 consultation. Illinois Department of Transportation submitted a revised BA which was included in the request.

A Section 7 consultation was completed by the USFWS on January 13, 2025 and determined that the following species are listed as occurring in Scott and Pike Counties: Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, gray bat, tricolored bat (proposed), decurrent false aster and eastern prairie fringed orchid, western regal fritillary (proposed)and monarch butterfly (proposed). Since the FONSI was signed the tricolored bat, monarch butterfly and western regal fritillary were proposed for listing.

A Biological Assessment was prepared and submitted to USFWS regarding the federally listed species, except monarch butterfly and western regal fritillary. USFWS issued a Biological Opinion on March 9, 2020. The commitments included those stated above under decurrent false aster and statement that the project may affect, likely to adversely affect the decurrent false aster. The following commitments regarding the Indiana bat and Northern long eared bat were also included in the Biological Opinion.

- Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*): Potential habitat for the Indiana bat and northern long eared bat does occur in the project study area. Due to this, no tree removal shall occur between April 1 and September 30. This is a new commitment to the project. A bat bridge assessment, or bat emergence survey, will be conducted within two years of letting. If any bats are found to be roosting in the existing bridge, then the DOT will determine the bat species.

If the bats are determined to be Indiana bat or Northern long eared bat, then the bridge will be removed between October 1 and March 31 of any given year. Tree replacement will follow DOT's D&E-18 policy which provides that "For trees removed from forest areas…the intent of replacement plantings should be to provide comparable functional replacement. Where comparable functional replacement cannot be achieved through replacement plantings within the right-of-way, considerations should be given to providing replacement plantings off the right-of-way." Per the Biological Opinion there will be a may affect, likely to adversely affect to Indiana bat. These commitments will also benefit the tri-colored bat.

- Eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*): It has been determined that the project will have no effect to this species.
- Monarch butterfly (Danaus plexippus): The monarch butterflies lay eggs on milkweed and larvae emerges after two to five days. Milkweed normally occurs in roadsides, fields, prairies, and pastures. Most of the project area is forested and wetlands. Thus, milkweed may occur in the roadsides but not the rest of the project area. This project will not jeopardize the continued existence of the monarch butterfly.
- Western Regal Fritillary*(Speyeria idalia)*: The western regal fritillary lives in tall-grass prairie and other open and sunny locations such as damp meadows, marshes, wet fields and mountain pastures. There is no preferred habitat in the preferred alternative and therefore, the project will have no effect on the western regal fritillary.

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 area by replacing a structurally deficient crossing by providing a transportation facility that is reliable and meets current design standards. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.