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:**
Friday, August 1, 2025	Thursday, August 21, 2025

Agency Log No.: C-0134-24

Federal Permit Information: Federal permit/license no. LRL-2023-913 is under the jurisdiction of Louisville District, Regulatory Branch U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Name and Address of Discharger: WFI Holdings-B, LLC/ Naturion, Breann Bundgaard - 248 Southwoods Centre, Columbia, IL 62236

Discharge Location: In Section 35 of Township 9-South and Range 3-East of the West 3rd & East 3rd Principal Meridian in Williamson County. Additional project location information includes the following: SW of Marion off of Route 166 and New Dennison Rd, Marion, IL 62959

Name of Receiving Water: Unnamed Tributary of South Fork Saline River

Project Name/Description: Seminary Springs Mitigation Bank - proposed creation of stream and wetland mitigation bank wherein 48.8 acres of wetland, 11.2 acres of forested buffer, and 4,419 ft of stream will be enhanced or restored and managed in perpetuity via a conservation easement

Construction Schedule: Not identified

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-0134-24-08012025-PublicNoticeAndFactSheet.pdf

401 Water Quality Certification Fact Sheet for Naturion, LLC./Seminary Springs Mitigation Bank

IEPA Log No. C-0134-24

Contact: Angie Sutton 217-782-9864

Naturion ("Applicant") is proposing to restore two intermittent streams to their historic location and create a stream and wetland mitigation bank in Township 9 South, Range 3 East, Section 35, Williamson County, Illinois. The project will be constructed in a cultivated field southeast of Tippy Lane in Marion. The project plans will include the relocation of the intermittent streams, as well as restoration of forested wetland/bottomland habitat. The streams, both part of the same intermittent tributary to be relocated, was historically moved and channelized along the sides of the cultivated area. Historic meander scars have been used for reference as to where the waterway will be re-established. Areas surrounding the relocated stream will be planted and seeded with native, perennial vegetation.

The project will result in the creation of 4,419 linear feet (LF) of restored stream channel, 48.8 acres (Ac) of hardwood bottomland forested wetlands and 11.2 Ac of enhanced forested buffer.

1,301 LF of Tributary A will be filled and 1,276 LF will be abandoned, 233 LF of Tributary B will be filled and 48 feet abandoned and 611 LF of Tributary C will be filled and 423 LF will be abandoned to restore the stream channels back to their historic location and restore wetland hydrology.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

Tributaries A, B, and C are all unnamed tributaries to the South Fork Saline River. The unnamed tributaries to the South Fork Saline River have 0 cfs of flow during critical 7Q10 low-flow conditions. The unnamed tributaries to the South Fork Saline River are classified as General Use Waters. The unnamed tributaries to the South Fork Saline 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 South Fork Saline River, tributaries to Waterbody Segment IL_ATH-02, are not listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as they have not been assessed. The unnamed tributaries to the South Fork Saline River are not subject to enhanced dissolved oxygen standards.

Tributary A is a perennial stream that was moved to the east side of the property and constructed with no meanders. Tributary B is an ephemeral stream in the northern part of the project site entering north and draining south, connecting with Tributary A. Tributary C is intermittent and located along the northern and western edges of the site. All the tributaries are of poor quality, with unstable habitat. No wetlands will be impacted by the proposed project.

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

The stream restoration, wetland creation and enhancement activities proposed by this project are expected to provide an overall benefit to the water quality of this watershed. The proposed project will reroute two unstable tributaries to the South Fork of the Saline River to a stable natural channel in the historic location. The new channel will restore hydrology to the area and allow for the creation of approximately 48 Ac of forested wetlands along the stream channel. This design is expected to reduce sediment/siltation, total suspended solids, manganese and dissolved oxygen through the elimination of the unstable, eroding channels, the creation of a pool and riffle structure in the restored channel and the conversion of approximately 48 Ac of agricultural row crop to a forested wetland. In addition, pollutants in occasional floodwaters from the South Fork of the Saline River will be stored and filtered in the established wetlands. Clean earthen fill into 0.285 Ac of stream in the amount of 17,673 Cubic Yards is proposed.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

Benefits to the filling/abandonment of Tributaries A, B, and C will outweigh the impacts. Those benefits include:

- Relocation of two unstable tributaries that were previously moved to facilitate farming to their historic locations, thus restoring hydrology to the area. This will create 4419 LF of stream channel.
- Restore hydrology to an existing farm field to create 48.8 Ac of forested wetland, and in turn provide habitat and water quality benefits.
- Enhance 0.66 Ac of existing wetlands by removing invasive species, and planting native species
- Wetland buffer enhancement of 11.2 Ac by removing invasive species and planting native species.
- Riparian buffer enhancement in 1100 LF by removing invasive species and planting native species

The project was designed to avoid and minimize impacts to the extent possible while still fulfilling the purpose of restoring the streams to their historic location and creating forested wetlands in the area of restored hydrology. Delineated wetlands on site were avoided and will be enhanced.

During construction activities, the contractor will use site-specific BMPs including, but not limited to, perimeter control and temporary seeding in areas when necessary. After excavation and/grading activities are completed, areas where ground disturbances have occurred will be permanently re-vegetated and stabilized. To minimize erosion and sediment runoff, the new channel will be constructed and stabilized prior to redirecting water to the channel.

Rapid Bioassessments and MIBIs will be conducted each year in the new restored channels as part of the annual monitoring. Additionally, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be implemented.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The mitigation bank will provide compensatory mitigation credits to the service area for wetland and stream impacts, as well as improve habitat and water quality in the immediate watershed post restoration. The flood storage capabilities, sediment reduction and increase in biodiversity provided by the Project also provide social and economic benefits.

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

Alternative 1 - Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative will result in the creation of 4,419 LF of restored stream channel, 48.8 Ac of hardwood bottomland forested wetlands and 11.2 Ac of enhanced forested buffer. To restore the stream channels back to their historic location and restore wetland hydrology, 1,301 LF of Tributary A will be filled and 1,276 LF will be abandoned, 233 LF of Tributary B will be filled and 48 feet will be abandoned, and 611 LF of Tributary C will be filled and 423 LF will be abandoned.

Alternative 2 - No Impact Alternative

Alternative 2 would involve the project area being planted with trees and shrubs to provide buffer along the existing stream banks. This would provide some improvements in terms of shading and reduction in sediment and nutrient loading; however, it would not connect the streams to their historical floodplains or restore hydrology to the site, creating limited opportunity for wetland creation. This alternative was ruled out as the preferred alternative.

Alternative 3 - Tributary A - Limited Stream Restoration

This alternative considered restoration of a 2040 LF portion of Tributary A and no restoration of Tributary C. This would restore the lower portion of Tributary A using natural channel design and restore hydrology to the area for creation of the proposed forested wetlands, however it was determined that the upper portion of Tributary A is unstable and not restoring it could be detrimental to the stream restoration objectives.

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

An EcoCAT endangered species consultation was submitted to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on April 24, 2025. On April 25, 2025, 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 US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) Section 7 consultation was completed on February 16, 2024, and found the following threatened and endangered species that may occur in the proposed project location or may be affected by the proposed project:

- Whooping Crane *(Grus americana)* – Experimental Population, Non-Essential
- Northern Long-eared Bat *(Myotis septentrionalis)* – Endangered
- Indiana Bat *(Myotis sodalis)* – Endangered
- Tricolor Bat *(Perimyotis subflavus)* – Proposed Endangered
- Monarch Butterfly *(Danaus plexippus)* – Proposed Threatened

Since the purpose of the Project is habitat restoration and the channel excavation work will be through an existing agricultural field, there will be no impacts to habitat for these species. Forest enhancement work conducted will follow USFWS recommendations for preserving and improving bat habitat.

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 providing flood storage, sediment reduction, and biodiversity as well as improve habitat and water quality in the immediate watershed post restoration. Comments received during the 401 Water Quality Certification public notice period will be evaluated before a final decision is made by the Agency.