

**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: Friday, May 29, 2026

Public Notice Ending Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026

Agency Log No.: C-0003-26

Federal Permit Information: Federal permit/license no. CEMVR-RD-2025-1131 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 - District 3, Tricia Thompson, PE Region 2 Engineer - 700 East Norris Drive, Ottawa, IL 61350-0697

Discharge Location: In Section 10 of Township 36-North and Range 4-East of the West 2nd Principal Meridian in LaSalle County. Additional project location information includes the following: US 34, 3.6 miles NE of IL 23 (south), Leland, IL 60531

Name of Receiving Water: Little Indian Creek

Project Name/Description: FAP 68 (US 34/IL 23) over Little Indian Creek - proposed removal and replacement of the structure (SN 050-0041) that spans over Little Indian Creek as well as minimal reconstruction of the roadway near Leland, IL

Construction Schedule: Beginning Mar 2026 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-0003-26-05292026-PublicNoticeAndFactSheet.pdf

401 Water Quality Certification Fact Sheet for US 34/IL 23 over Little Indian Creek

IEPA Log No. C-0003-26

Contact: Angie Sutton 217-782-9864

IDOT has applied for a 401 Water Quality Certification for impacts associated with replacement of a bridge on US 34/IL 23 that crosses Little Indian Creek. The proposed project will occur in Township 36 North, Range 4 East, Section 10 approximately 3.6 miles northeast of IL 23 south in LaSalle County. The construction will involve the removal and replacement of the existing structure (SN 050-0041) over Little Indian Creek and replacing it with a new structure (SN 050-0264) built on the same general alignment consisting of steel or concrete I-beams in 3-4 spans. The total length of the proposed structure is expected to be approximately 183' 5.5". Two piers and two bridge abutments within the waterway will be removed and replaced with three new piers. The proposed project will provide a transportation facility that is reliable and meets current design standards. Once completed, the new bridge will provide improved safety, improved structural capacity, and overall improve the comfort and reliability of the structure. Traffic may be maintained by a single lane during construction as existing structure may be removed one half at a time in order to build the proposed roadway and structure.

Little Indian Creek will undergo impacts to 98 linear feet (LF) as a result of placement of 599.3 cubic yards (CY) of fill. Permanent impacts will occur in 0.11 acres (Ac) of emergent wetland and 0.002 Ac of shrub wetland as a result of placement of 4878.7 CY of fill. Temporary impacts will occur in the stream as a result of removal of the existing piers and 7 CY of backfilling. Total fill from permanent impacts is expected to be approximately 5471 CY. Permanent impacts will be mitigated by the purchase of wetland credits from the Morris Wetland Bank owned by IDOT in Grundy County at a 2:1 ratio for a total of 0.224 credits.

Information used in this review was obtained from the application documents dated July 2025, December 22, 2025, January 8, 2026, and April 1, 2026.

Identification and Characterization of the Affected Water Body.

Illinois Natural History Survey staff conducted wetland and surface water delineations for the proposed project on September 7, 2023. The survey identified 1 surface water and 2 wetlands onsite. Impacts are proposed for both wetlands.

Little Indian Creek (IL_DTAB-02) is listed as a biologically significant stream in the 2008 Illinois Department of Natural Resources Publication *Integrating Multiple Taxa in a Biological Stream Rating System*, and is given an integrity rating of "A" in that document. Little Indian Creek, Waterbody Segment, IL_DTAB-02, is not listed on the 2024 Illinois Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303(d) List as impaired. Aesthetic quality and aquatic life uses are fully supported. This segment of Little Indian Creek is subject to enhanced dissolved oxygen standards.

Little Indian Creek, identified as OSW1 in the delineation, enters the project boundary 65 feet northwest of IL 23/US 34 and exits 58 feet southeast of IL 23/US 34. The stream has a National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) code of R2UBF (permanently flooded, unconsolidated bottom, lower perennial, riverine). This perennial stream has a watershed area of 54 square miles. No riffles or pools were observed during the field visit. The project area includes a total of 162 LF of stream. The stream drains farmland and residential areas to Indian Creek, and eventually the Fox River. Channel width is approximately 40 feet with small riparian and associated fringe wetland areas adjacent to the stream within and adjacent to the project area. Immediately upstream of the project bridge, the stream has a relatively narrow riparian corridor, as the adjacent land is mowed.

In 2007 the macroinvertebrate Index of Biological Integrity (IBI) score indicated the stream was in good ecological condition.

Wetland Site 1 lies 32 feet southeast of IL 23/US 34. It is a wet shrubland of which the entire 0.01 Ac exists within the project area and has an NWI code U (upland). Wetland Site 1 is a depressional wetland and has a native mean C of 1.5, and a Floristic Quality Index (FQI) of 7.8. Site 1 connects to Little Indian Creek and abuts Site 2. Vegetation was highly disturbed due to recent mowing/bush hogging. Dominant vegetation consisted of gray dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*), moneywort (*Lysimachia nummularia*), fog fruit (*Phyla lanceolata*), and peach-leaved willow (*Salix amygdaloides*).

Wetland Site 2 consists of three polygons connected under IL 23/US 34 and lies approximately 10 feet south of Little Indian Creek via a culvert 32 feet northwest of IL 23/US 34. It is a wet meadow of undetermined total size with 0.2 Ac occurring within the project area. Site 2 has an NWI code U (upland). Wetland Site 2 is a depressional wetland and has a native mean C of 1.4, and an FQI of 7.1. The southeast portion of Site 2 abuts Site 1. Dominant vegetation consisted of reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*).

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

Removal of the existing piers and placement of fill in the wetlands will temporarily increase suspended solids but would be expected to settle quickly once construction is completed. Temporary construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) and dewatering are anticipated to offset some of the pollutant loading associated with construction of the project. No pollutant load increase is anticipated for the bridge replacement due to treatment of runoff through (BMPs).

The potential impacts will primarily be related to increased pollutant loading and roadside ditch or wetland disturbance during construction, operation, and maintenance. Given the increase in impervious surface is insignificant, and that proposed drainage will maintain existing drainage, no change in chloride concentration is anticipated for the stream crossed by the proposed project.

Additionally, there will be an undetermined amount of tree removal associated with this project.

Permanent wetland impacts will include 4878.7 CY of fill in 0.112 Ac as filling and grading to allow access to the bridge piers. Permanent stream impacts from clean aggregate riprap consist of 371.5 CY of fill for

the west abutment, 156.6 CY of fill for the east abutment, and 64.2 CY of fill for the three new piers, totaling 59.2.3 CY. Temporary impacts will occur upon removal of the existing piers, with 7 CY of backfill in those former pier locations. All temporary items will be removed from the creek channel and banks upon completion of the project.

Fate and Effect of Parameters Proposed for Increased Loading.

Proposed drainage design is to make improvements to the existing conditions such as re-grading ditches and native vegetation planting. The proposed bridge will continue to drain directly to Little Indian Creek as the current bridge does. Wetland impacts will be kept to a minimum. The proposed infiltration BMPs will reduce pollutants prior to discharging to the waterway. Erosion and sediment control measures will be maintained and remain in place until construction is complete and conditions at the site are stable. The Design-Build Contract will include the sediment and erosion control plans as guided by The Illinois Department of Transportation Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction and the Urban Manual. Temporary construction BMPs and dewatering are anticipated to offset some of the pollutant loading associated with construction of the project.

Stream impacts could occur depending on stream characteristics, traffic, and post construction BMPs that are implemented. There is no potential increase in operational impacts over the existing condition as increases in traffic are not proposed. In addition, the proposed project will implement existing BMPs including vegetated ditches, which are effective at reducing pollutants associated with road operation (i.e. suspended solids, chloride).

Avoidance options for the proposed projects were determined not to be possible due to the need to perform construction activities and grading. Impacts were minimized by the greatest extent possible to still meet the purpose and need of the project.

Purpose and Social & Economic Benefits of the Proposed Activity.

The purpose of this project is to completely remove and replace an existing dilapidated bridge structure to provide a reliable transportation facility that meets current design standards. Benefits will include enhanced safety, increased structural capacity, and improved overall comfort and ride quality. Employment will temporarily increase, resulting in a temporary boost to the local economy.

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

The applicant evaluated the following alternatives:

- No Action: This option would avoid impacts to streams, wetlands, and floodplains. There would be no new impervious surfaces and discharges to the stream. The No Action alternative would

not address the bridge condition or safety issue. This alternative was eliminated as the bridge condition is deteriorating, and the structure is a potential hazard to commuters. Additionally, this option does not meet the project purpose and need.

- Replace the Superstructure: This alternative would result in no permanent impacts to aquatic resources. There would be temporary impacts to wetlands and discharge into the stream and floodplain during construction. This option was determined not to be viable due to the need for the bridge to be widened, which cannot be done without replacement of the superstructure. For this reason, this alternative was not considered further.
- Complete Bridge Replacement (Preferred Alternative): Permanent wetland impacts and discharge into the stream and floodplain will occur with this alternative. This was chosen as the preferred alternative due to its ability to meet the project purpose and need of improving safety and the structural capacity of the structure. Runoff will be treated using the current Best Management Practices (BMPs), through vegetated roadside ditches/swales, therefore no pollutant load increase is anticipated for the bridge replacement. During construction, pollutant load will be minimized and managed by IDOT typical temporary erosion control measures and BMPs.

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

An IDNR/IDOT coordinated natural resource review was completed on March 26, 2026.

Review for Endangered Species Act - Section 7:

A Section 7 review was completed using the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) IPaC review tool. The species listed included the Tricolored bat, Indiana Bat, northern long-eared bat, scaleshell mussel, rusty patched bumblebee, decurrent false aster, and eastern prairie fringed orchid. No proposed or designated critical habitat was listed in the proposed project area. A bridge assessment was completed with no bats or signs of bats observed on the bridge. After consultation, it was determined that the project is not likely to adversely affect the Tricolored, Indiana, or Northern long-eared bats. It was recommended that no tree clearing occur from April 1 through September 1. Regarding the remaining listed species the applicant stated the following:

"We cross-referenced the preferred habitat of each the remaining listed species, with our knowledge of the project area and determined that the project will have no effect on those species. Should the proposed improvement be modified, or new information indicates listed or proposed species may be affected, consultation or additional coordination should be initiated."

An EcoCAT consultation (Project # 2612712) was initiated on March 26, 2026. The Illinois Natural Heritage Database contains no record of State-listed threatened or endangered species, 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 is terminated.

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 a reliable transportation facility that 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.