



PUBLIC NOTICE

US Army Corps
of Engineers
Rock Island District

Sponsor: WFI Holdings, LLC

Date: June 16, 2020

Expires: July 15, 2020

CEMVR-OD-P-2016-310

Section 404

WETLAND AND STREAM COMPENSATORY MITIGATION BANK PROPOSAL

This notice is issued in accordance with the Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources; Final Rule (the Mitigation Rule) described in the Federal Register dated April 10, 2008, (33 CFR Parts 325 and 332).

1. **Sponsor.** WFI Holdings, LLC, 248 Southwoods Center, Columbia, Illinois, 62236.
2. **Project Location:** Section 29, Township 15 North, Range 4 West, Sangamon County, Illinois. UTM NAD-83 Zone 16, Lat. 39.718236, Long. -89.557663, South Fork Sangamon River within the Sangamon River Watershed.
3. **Bank Objectives:** The Sangamon River Wetland and Stream Mitigation Bank has eleven objectives:
 - 1) Increase food, shelter and breeding habitat for wildlife.
 - 2) Increase Bottomland Hardwood diversity, quality and hard mast tree dominance.
 - 3) Reduce forest fragmentation for “area sensitive” neo-tropical species.
 - 4) Maintain and enhance hydrologic functions and values.
 - 5) Recreate a natural levee that once existed between Sangamon River and the floodplain
 - 6) Enhanced opportunities for wildlife and human use by elimination of existing annual row-cropped farm field and restoration of a diverse wooded wetland.
 - 7) Restore and enhance the riparian stream corridor buffer.
 - 8) Reduce erosion and sedimentation, thereby improving water quality.
 - 9) Restore, enhance and preserve a wooded riparian corridor on each side of the Sangamon River and its tributaries that are connected to the flood pulse of the Sangamon River System.
 - 10) Restore woody and herbaceous vegetation to create a continuum of plant species.
 - 11) Reduce nutrient loading and increase nitrate fixation.

4. **Project Description.** The applicant proposes to establish the Sangamon River Wetland and Stream Mitigation Bank to generate approximately 83 wetland credits and 17,857 stream credits, for use by the regulated public, to mitigate for unavoidable wetland and stream impacts within the service area of the bank. The proposed service area encompasses the: South Fork Sangamon River (HUC 07130007), Lower Sangamon River (HUC 07130008), Upper Sangamon River (HUC 07130006), Salt Creek of the Sangamon River (HUC 07130009), and Mackinaw River (HUC 07130004), which lie within the boundaries of the Rock Island District. The proposal involves the creation and enhancement of 123.20 acres of forested wetland, wetland and stream corridor along the South Fork Sangamon River. The existing site attributes lend themselves to the establishment of hardwood forest, emergent wetland, and riparian corridor habitat. The mitigation bank will be utilized in the future, when appropriate, to compensate for unavoidable aquatic impacts by future projects through the purchase of stream credits from the bank sponsor WFI Holdings, LLC. The long term manager of the site will be the Heartlands Conservancy.

A. **Project Site.** The proposed Sangamon River Wetland and Stream Mitigation Bank is an unprotected floodplain of the South Fork Sangamon River. The property has been utilized for agriculture and recreational purposes over the last 25 years. The bank site is a total of 123.20 acres situated on a 135.27 parcel of land that consists of prior converted cropland, river channel, and degraded wooded riparian corridor adjacent to the South Fork Sangamon River.

B. **Permit and Action Areas.** The Corps has determined the permit and action areas consist of the entire 123.20 acres associated with the proposed Sangamon River Wetland and Stream Mitigation Bank.

4. **Agency Review.** Department of the Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineer is participating in this matter as a member of the Interagency Review Team. The Interagency Review Team consists of the Corps of Engineers, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Information submitted with the prospectus was sufficient to determine that a Corps of Engineers NWP 27 authorization under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act will be required. If approved, the proposed Bank could provide stream and wetland credit for future, Section 404, authorized projects which require compensation. Such usage will be in accordance with the mitigation banking instrument, if the sponsor chooses to proceed.

5. **Historical/Archaeological.** The proposed project that was originally initiated in 2017, involves planting of wetland species over the project area to create a wetland bank. Once the plantings are established there will be no further ground disturbance in the project area. In anticipation of a request for a cultural resource survey the applicant provided copies of the report entitled, Sangamon River Wetlands, Rochester Illinois. SCI No. 2010-3109.40 dated 27 January 2017. Mr. Don Booth with SCI Engineering, Inc., in O'Fallon, Illinois prepared the report. None of the identified historic properties were recommended as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The District Archaeologist concurred with the recommendations in the report. The report was coordinated with the Illinois SHPO under a separate cover letter dated June 6, 2017. Illinois SHPO concurred with the recommendations by letter dated June 28, 2017. Therefore, based on a review of the above referenced sources it is the opinion of the District there will be no historic properties affected because "the nature, scope, and magnitude of the work, and/or structures to be permitted are such that there is little likelihood that a historic property exists or may be affected" (33 CFR Part 325, Appendix C.3.b).

6. Endangered Species.

A. District staff performed a preliminary review of this application for the potential impact on federally threatened or endangered species pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act as amended.

- The federally threatened eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*) potentially occurs statewide in a wide variety of habitats, from mesic prairie to wetlands such as sedge meadows, marsh edges, and bogs.
- Sangamon County is within the range of the federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federally threatened Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). Both species will roost underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of both live and dead trees.
- The Northern long-eared bat will also utilize barns, sheds, caves, mines, and bridge structures as summer roosts.

B. Since the majority of the project area was intensively farmed and there will be no tree clearing the Corps has determined the proposed permit action will have no effect on the three listed species. At this time, we are coordinating this application with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the respective resource agencies through this public notice. Accordingly, our preliminary determination is subject to change should further information become available.

C. Effective August 9, 2007, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), was removed from the List of Threatened and Endangered Species due to successful recovery efforts. However, the bald eagle continues to be protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. There are no known active eagle nests or winter roosts within the action area.

7. Dredge/Fill Material Guidelines. The evaluation of the impact of the proposed activity on the public interest will also include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR Part 230).

8. Public Interest Review. The decision whether to issue the Corps permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

9. Who Should Reply. The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision,

comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity. These statements should be submitted on or before the expiration date specified at the top of page 1. These statements should bear upon the adequacy of plans and suitability of locations and should, if appropriate, suggest any changes considered desirable.

10. **Public Hearing Requests.** Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. A request may be denied if substantive reasons for holding a hearing are not provided.

11. **Reply to the Corps.** Comments concerning the Corps permit should be addressed to the District Engineer, US Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, ATTN: OD-P (W. Frohlich), Clock Tower Building - Post Office Box 2004, Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004. Mrs. Wendy Frohlich may be contacted for additional information via phone at 309/794-5674 or email: wendy.m.frohlich@usace.army.mil.

12. **Complete Draft Mitigation Banking Instrument:** The complete draft mitigation banking instrument can be found on our public website at:

https://ribits.ops.usace.army.mil/ords/f?p=107:278:::NO:RP,278:P278_BANK_ID:5744.

Attach
Plan

Mr. Trevor E. Popkin
Chief, Illinois/Missouri Section
Regulatory Branch

REQUEST TO POSTMASTERS: Please post this notice conspicuously and continuously until the expiration date specified at the top of page 1.

NOTICE TO EDITORS: This notice is provided as background information for your use in formatting news stories. This notice is not a contract for classified display advertising.

Figure 1 – Location in Sangamon River Watershed

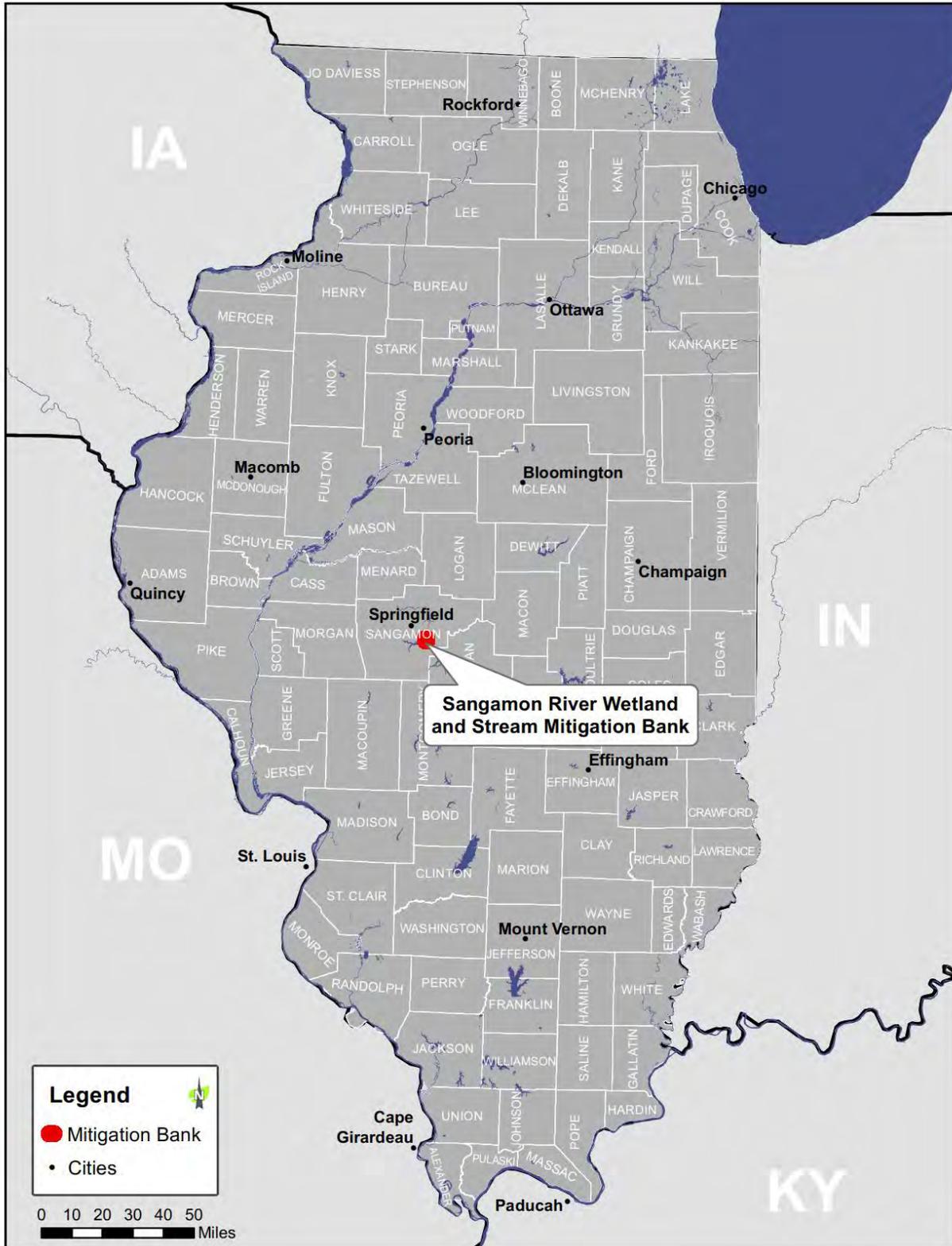


Figure 3 – Sangamon and Mackinaw River Watersheds

Watershed Map

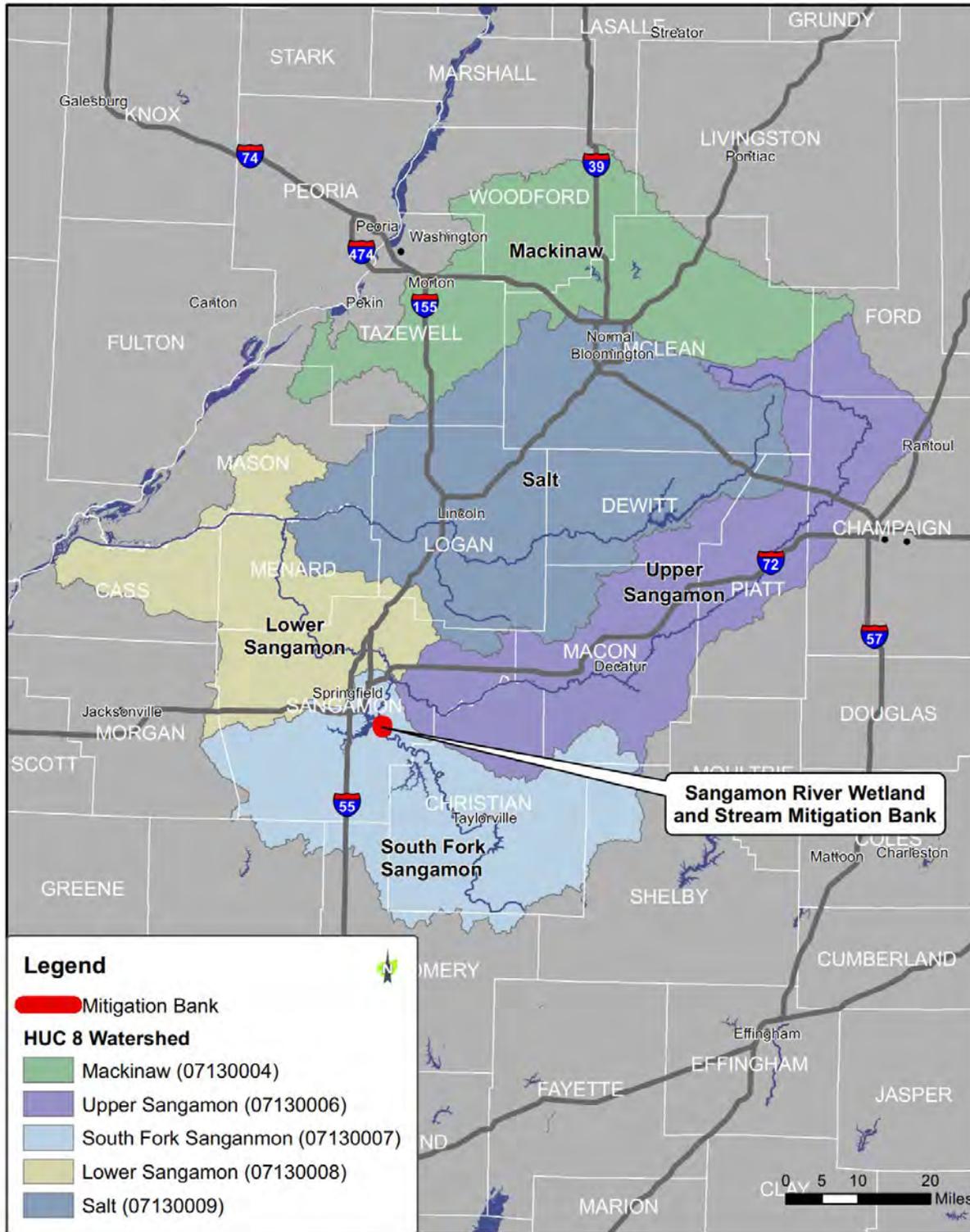


Figure 9A – Master Habitat Mitigation Plan

Habitat Mitigation Plan

