

**IDOT District 1, Will County
Caton Farm-Bruce Road
Environmental Assessment
Concurrence – Preferred Alternative
ESA – Consultation open on Hines Emerald Dragonfly, Biological Assessment expected**

DECISIONS:

Preferred Alternative concurrence obtained from USEPA, USFWS.

NEXT STEPS:

Civiltech to revise Preferred Alternative Document to state no graves will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative and submit to USACE.

USACE to provide concurrence on Preferred Alternative after receiving revised document.

USFWS to provide comments to IDOT on the Draft Biological Assessment that was submitted in February 2012.

DISCUSSION:

The previous presentation to the NEPA/404 merger team was on June 15, 2012 to update the team on the project. The purpose of this presentation was to obtain concurrence on the Preferred Alternative.

The presentation was conducted by Mary Young of Civiltech Engineering, the project consultant. Printed copies of the presentation slides were distributed to attendees.

Civiltech (Young) began by giving a brief recap of the project location in Will County, located east of Joliet and includes a study area covering approximately 11 miles by 3 miles in area. The project commences at the intersection of U.S. Route 30 and Caton Farm Road and continues through the Des Plaines River Valley and ends at the intersection of IL Route 7 (159th Street) and Cedar Road. In March of 2005, Concurrence Point #1 – Project Purpose and Need was reached. In January of 2007, Concurrence Point #2 was reached with six alternatives to be carried forward, which included two different River Valley crossing locations and 14 build alternatives. The following alternatives were carried forward:

- Caton Farm – Bruce – Gougar Alignment
- Caton Farm – Bruce – Middle Alignment
- Caton Farm – Oak – Bruce – Gougar Alignment
- Caton Farm – Oak – Bruce – Middle Alignment
- Caton Farm – Oak – Gougar Alignment
- Caton Farm – Oak – Middle Alignment

Caton Farm – Bruce Road Corridor – These alternatives directly impact the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly (HED) Critical Habitat and approximately 4.5 acres of Dellwood Park West. Therefore, it was recommended to drop the Caton Farm – Bruce Road Corridor alternatives.

The remaining alternatives have comparable quantitative impacts. However, there are qualitative justifications for the selection of a preferred alternative.

Caton Farm – Oak vs Caton Farm – Oak – Bruce Corridor - Oak Avenue is classified as a Local Street and new development by the City of Lockport to the east of Briggs Street has occurred consistent with a local street. Bruce Road is classified as a collector roadway west of Gougar Road and an arterial east of Gougar Road. The City of Lockport's requirements for new developments along Bruce Road including land uses and setbacks are consistent with this type of facility. Based on the functional classification of Oak Avenue and Bruce Road, it is desirable to transition from Oak Avenue to Bruce Road as quickly as

possible. It was recommended that both Caton Farm – Oak Corridor alternatives be dropped from further consideration.

Caton Farm – Oak – Bruce Corridor – A completed east-west arterial facility will accommodate substantial traffic volumes in the future. Locating the arterial roadway along Gougar Road will impact existing land uses not compatible with an arterial facility. Also, it will overlay heavy east-west traffic with north-south traffic creating a double-linking affect, which is not operationally desirable. The Middle Alignment presents a rare opportunity to plan future land uses compatible with an arterial highway.

In 2009, the Transportation Corridor Committee reached a consensus that the locally preferred alternative is Caton Farm – Oak – Bruce – Middle. In July of 2009, the Will County Board passed a resolution adopting the Caton Farm – Oak – Bruce – Middle as the locally preferred alternative.

Considerable coordination has occurred with the USFWS and project stakeholders which has led to the further refinement of the Preferred Alternative.

USEPA (West) asked that since the HED adults were found not only within the designated Critical Habitat, but in other areas of the River Valley, can those areas of the River Valley be designated as HED Critical Habitat. USFWS (Cirton) stated that the USFWS has already designated the area for the HED Critical Habitat and that it was based mostly on their larval habitat. The HED Critical Habitat does not mean that adults only fly within the Critical Habitat. Adults were observed in other areas within the River Valley. Coordination between Will County, USFWS, and the project team resulted in the Caton Farm – Oak alternatives moving as far south as possible. USFWS was comfortable with the Caton Farm – Oak alignments as it pertains to the HED.

USFWS (Cirton) confirmed with FHWA that the Biological Assessment and Biological Opinion are needed before finishing the Environmental Assessment. FHWA (Fuller) stated that the Biological Assessment and Biological Opinion will take about six months resulting in an Environmental Assessment submittal in February of 2013.

USEPA (Westlake) asked if a cost has been developed for the project. Will County (Kupkowski) stated it has not and that the project will be constructed in stages.

USEPA, USFWS concurred with the Preferred Alternative. USACE (Chernich) asked if the Preferred Alternative will impact any graves, as shown in Table IV-32 of the Preferred Alternative Document. Civiltech (Young) stated that the Preferred Alternative will not impact any graves. USACE (Chernich) will concur with the Preferred Alternative after receiving a revised copy of the Preferred Alternative Document.