US Army Corps of Engineers
Chicago District

Region 5

KANE COUNTY ADVANCED IDENTIFICATION OF WETLANDS STUDY

FINALIZATION OF KANE COUNTY ADVANCED IDENTIFICATION STUDY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, (USEPA) Region V, and the Chicago District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (District), in consultation with Federal, state, and local regulatory and planning agencies, have completed an Advanced Identification (ADID) of aquatic resources study for Kane County, Illinois. This ADID was initiated as a planning tool to identify significant aquatic resources within the rapidly developing area of Kane County and to encourage their protection. The Kane County ADID identifies wetlands and streams that are generally unsuitable for the discharge of dredged and fill material or require special precautions. In addition, the information developed through the Kane County ADID process will provide watershed-based information that will be useful in planning for development, for evaluating the effects of development on water quality and flooding potential in a watershed, and in selecting sites for restoration or preservation.

The Kane County ADID has identified 139 wetlands as high quality habitant sites; An additional 372 wetlands were identified as having high value for stormwater and water quality functions. Approximately 70.5 stream miles in Kane County were designated high quality. It is ***NOT*** presumed that this study has identified every site of high value in Kane County. Maps illustrating the locations of the Kane County ADID sites and the final report may be reviewed at the Chicago District Regulatory Branch website, www.lrc.usace.army.mil/co-r or in paper form at:

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Department of Environmental Management
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The Corps of Engineers regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into wetlands and other waters of the United States pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and uses the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, found at 40 CFR Part 230 of the Federal Register to determine whether a permit for such activities should be issued. The Kane County ADID has identified high quality aquatic resources that would likely be found to be unsuitable for filling activities. The determination of unsuitability was based on the likelihood that the use of high quality habitat or high functional value sites for discharge of dredged or fill material would not comply with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines. Therefore, potential applicants are being notified in advance that it will be difficult to meet the requirements of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines, which is necessary in order to receive a 404 permit to fill these sites. This ADID does not alter the existing permit application process but simplifies it by giving the public an advance indication of the probability of receiving a permit. The District will likely elevate permit applications for these sites to the individual permit review process and conduct a project specific environmental assessment and evaluate the project for compliance with the 404(b)(1) Guidelines.

ADID sites were identified as being high habitat value, high functional value, and/or high quality streams were determined to be unsuitable for fill activities. This determination was made by evaluating the aquatic resources of Kane County with respect to two functional areas: quality of biological community/habitat value and water quality/stormwater storage functions. For the high habitat value wetland sites, habitat quality and/or floristic diversity were assessed. The assessment of stream habitat quality was based on Index of Biological Integrity scores, which were recently revised by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Streams with a score of 50 or more are considered Grade A and were identified as high quality in the Kane County ADID.

Sites identified as providing high functional value for water quality improvement and stormwater storage functions were evaluated to assess their value for one or more of the following functions: shoreline and streambank stabilization, sediment and toxicant retention, nutrient removal and transformation and stormwater storage/hydrologic stabilization. Any wetland meeting three of the four criteria for water quality/stormwater storage functions was identified as a high functional value wetland. A wetland was also considered to have high functional value if it met one or more of the water quality criteria and was located in a critical position within the watershed with respect to high habitat quality wetlands or streams.

Detailed descriptions of all of the methods uses to assess these functions are provided in the Advanced Identification Study Kane County, Illinois Final Report.

Summary of ADID Results for Kane County

-A total of 139 wetlands totaling 5,788 acres met the criteria for High Habitat Value. High Habitat value wetlands comprise approximately 1.7% of the 334,080 acres that make the entire area of Kane County, and approximately 21% of the county's 27,368 acres of wetland. Approximately one third of the high Habitat Value wetlands are currently within Kane County Forest Preserves or are within Illinois Natural Area Inventory sites.

-Including the Fox River, 70.5 of a total of 418 river and stream miles in Kane County or 17%, were designated high quality streams. High quality stream segments were found on several different streams and rivers scattered throughout the county including Big Rock Creek, East Branch Big Rock Creek, Ferson/Otter Creek, the Fox River, Mill Creek, Poplar Creek, Tyler Creek, Waubonsie Creek, Welch Creek, Burlington Creek, and Union Ditch #3. Both Burlington Creek and Union Ditch #3 were added as high quality streams based on IBI data collected by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in July 2004.

-A total of 372 wetlands, comprising 10,745 acres or 3.2% of the entire area of Kane County, met the criteria for High Functional Value. The High Functional Value wetlands comprise approximately 39% of the county's 27,368 acres of wetland.

On May 14, 2004, the USEPA and the District issued a joint public notice announcing the preliminary findings for the Kane County, Illinois ADID study. The public notice solicited comments on the proposed Kane County ADID findings. An informational public meeting was held on June 16, 2004 at the Kane County Governmental Center in Geneva, Illinois to provide the public an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments on the Kane County ADID. No comments were received from the public in response to the public notice on the ADID study.

A copy of the record of decision can be reviewed at either the USEPA's office or at the District office.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

16 Sep 2004
Date

KEVIN PIERARD, Chief
Watersheds and Wetlands Branch
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region V

20 Sep 2004
Date

ORIGINAL SIGNED

MITCH ISOE, Chief
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