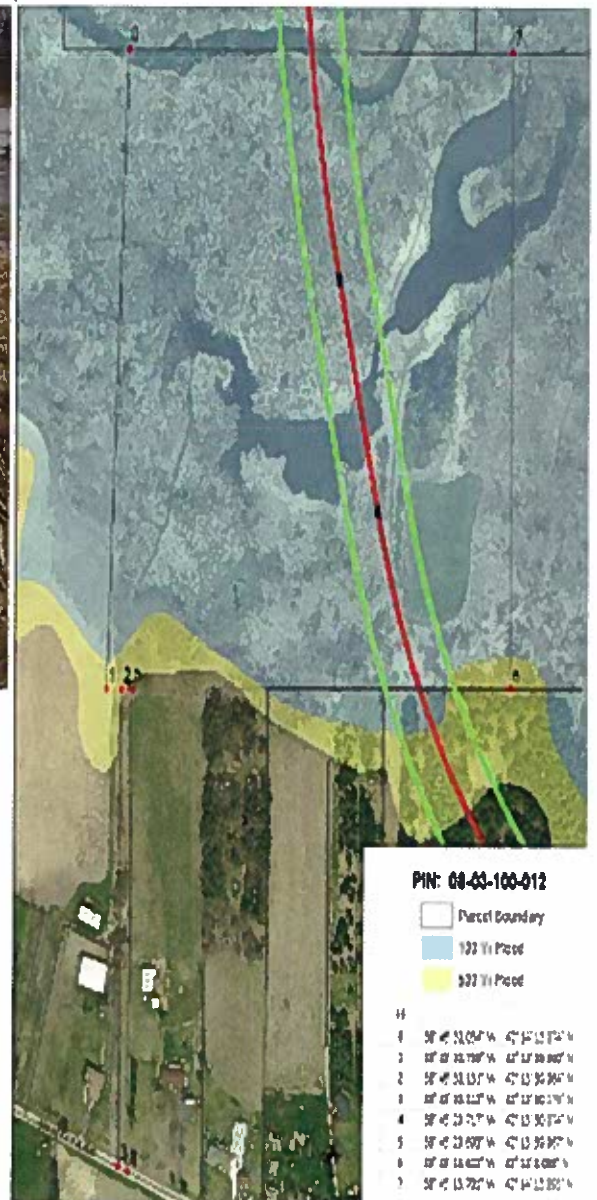


EI- 23599

Belvidere Scoping Mtg
April 19, 2016



“Boone County, Illinois” Land to
be affected by GLBT Rail Project

Dave Navecky
Docket No. FD 35952
Surface Transportation Board
Office of Environmental Analysis
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky:

Introduction:

I would like to express concerns over the proposed Great Lakes Basin Transportation, LLC (GLBT) rail line project. Docket # 35952. I and countless others oppose the project and ask the Surface Transportation Board to deny the proposal in question. Our concerns are simple; the **environmental impact** for the 280 miles of proposed track is tremendous along with the disruption of private property, **rivers, creeks, wetlands**, forest and designated **conservation areas**. While the 280 miles is of great concern to us, this report will be reflecting and focusing on just 40 acres of land in Boone County, Illinois. This report will contain maps, data, images, and other useful information to outline why the GLBT should not come through this 40 acres of land. Attached in the appendix that will reflect scientific data and findings which will show you why the proposed railroad should not be permitted by the Government.

Background:

In 2008, 40 acres in Boone County, Illinois East of the City of Belvidere, along the Coon Creek **property number 08-03-100-012** was added into the **Illinois Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**. CSP is a state program where the priorities are to: promote the



Satellite View of our 40 acres from Win GIS with hybrid view



Satellite view of 40 acres with proposed route of GLBT

restoration of native species; reduce the impacts of invasive species; protect, restore, and enhance species in greatest need of conservation; and reduce forest fragmentation in Illinois.



Since this time, countless man hours have been spent managing invasive plant species, providing suitable **habitat** for waterfowl (Wood Duck, Mallards, Canadian Geese, diver ducks along with other puddleducks), amphibians (frogs, and toads), several species of turtles, **Sandhill Cranes, Bald Eagles**, turkeys, deer, and other hydraulic life such as cattails and other native plant species. If the proposal were to go through it would leave nearly half of our

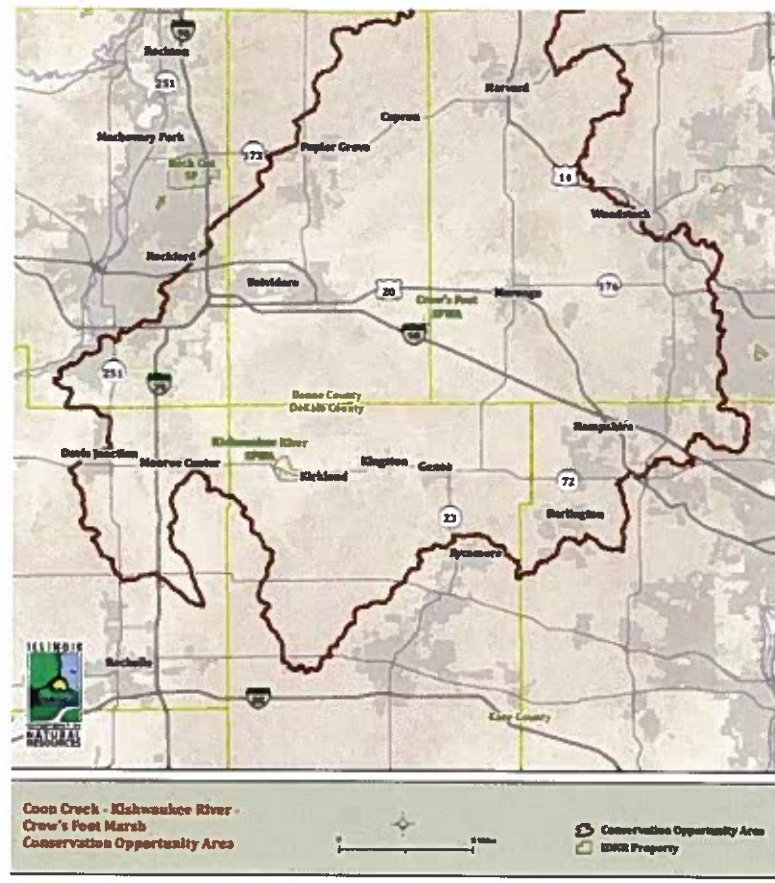
property without access.

Environmental Impact:

In order to understand the environmental impact of the GLBT proposed railroad a full perspective of the areas must be looked at.

*"The **Boone County and the McHenry County Conservation Districts** formed a partnership with the **Illinois Department of Natural Resources** to develop a **conservation initiative aimed at preserving and enhancing habitat along the high quality Kishwaukee River and its tributary, Coon Creek.**"*

The conservation initiative covers 3/4 of Boone County and the proposed project goes through areas where the partnership of the IDNR and Boone County Conservation District are trying to or already have preserved. While they are in



¹ Kishwaukee River Crows Foot Marsh - Coon Creek - Kishwaukee River
<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IWAP/Pages/KishwaukeeRiver.aspx>

constant negotiations with landowners to buy land for preservation, we in essence, are doing the same thing by preserving the land.

What makes the the Kishwaukee River and its tributary so important?

The Kishwaukee River watershed has been identified as a **"Unique Aquatic Resource" or class "A" stream**. This area includes habitat for at least four state **threatened species** of birds and six **endangered** species of birds.²

After years of conducting studies of the Kishwaukee River and its tributaries, such as Coon Creek, reports began to be finalized. The findings of these reports can be found in the Appendix (A & B) outlining the Boone County, McHenry County and DeKalb County Conservation District's strategic plan for the Kishwaukee River and its tributaries.

While these reports focus on the vast area of the watershed (42 subwatersheds) please **pay close attention to the Coon Creek**. In the report titled *Kishwaukee River Watershed - Strategic Plan for Habitat Conservation and Restoration* you will find several figures demonstrating the significance of Coon Creek. **Figure 4 shows Coon Creek a Priority Subwatershed** for the Kishwaukee River. Also **Figure 23**, shows how certain areas within the watershed are Target Species Habitat Restoration Areas and Coon Creek is one of them.

In a report put together by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources "Fish Assemblages and Stream Conditions in the Kishwaukee River Basin: Spatial and Temporal Trends, 2001 - 2011" (Appendix C) stated the following -

Coon Creek was sampled at the junction of Grange and Burma Roads in McHenry County. The electric seine was used to sample an area 618' long X 35' wide for a total sample time of 68 minutes. Four pools, 2 riffles, and 2 runs were sampled. The stream in this area appeared to be widening with a bottom of 20% silt-mud, 40% sand, and 40% gravel. Instream cover was provided by undercut banks, submerged roots, brush-debris jams, and submerged terrestrial vegetation.

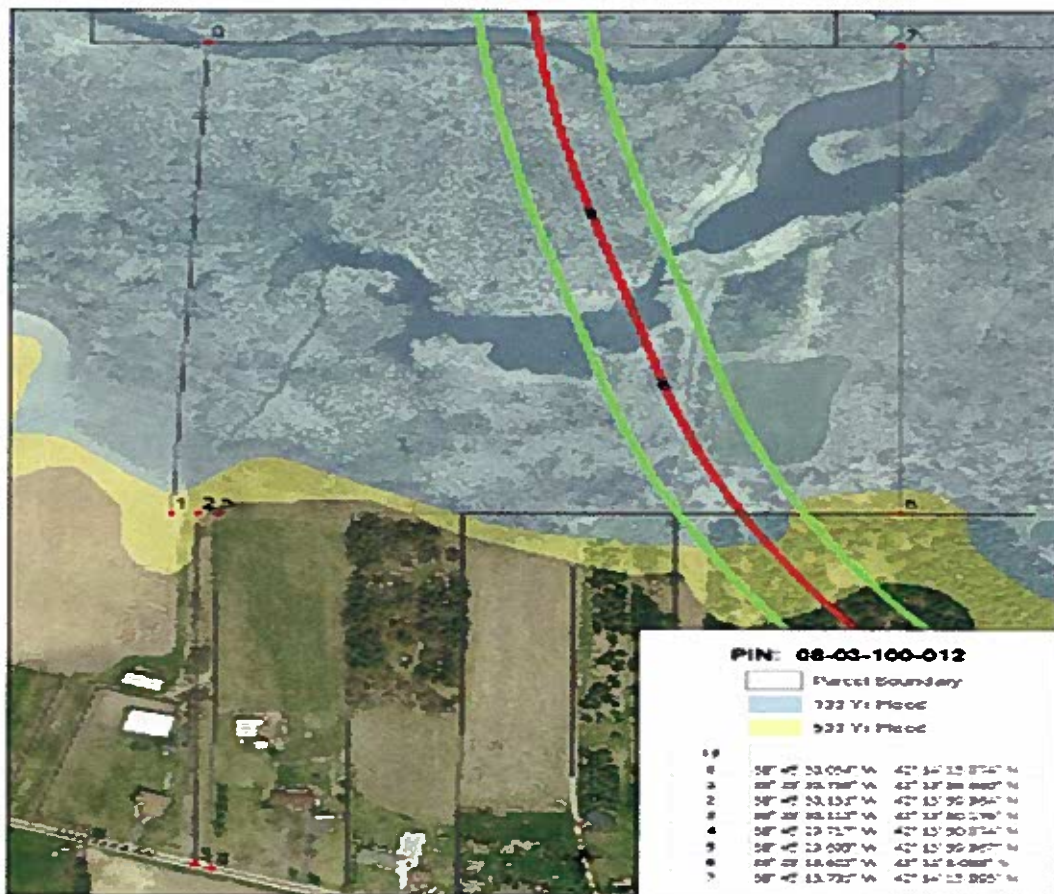
Large fishes collected included 5 species of native suckers, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, rock bass, bluegill, carp, and green sunfish. Smaller fishes included blackstripe topminnows, 4 species of darters, 9 species of minnows, stonecats, and a single lamprey ammocete, most probably an

² Kishwaukee River Crows Foot Marsh - Coon Creek - Kishwaukee River
<https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IWAP/Pages/KishwaukeeRiver.aspx>

American Brook Lamprey. The **IBI for this station was 54, a significant improvement over the 32 score of 2006.** This station was not sampled prior to 2006 so earlier comparison data is not available.

While the portion of the Coon Creek that runs along 40 acres was not sampled, findings in the above report can indicate similar to increase findings along the Coon Creek.

Although only a portion of Coon Creek aligns with the 40 acres in this report, the **environmental impact is greater than it looks.** Like all bodies of water the Coon Creek floods when it receives more precipitation than it can hold. As shown by the image provided by **Boone County Geographic**



Information System, this area falls well within the **100 and 500 year flood.** Again reinsuring why this area was specifically looked at during the Kishwaukee River Watershed - Strategic Plan for Habitat Conservation and Restoration studies. Any type of bridge or levee system installed will disrupt the natural flow of the creek causing **unforeseen environmental impact** well into the future for agriculture and the residents close by.



Here is a picture taken on March 31, 2016 showing minor flooding of the 40 acres.

The US Army Corp of Engineers and United States Environmental Protection Agency define wetlands as:

Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. ³

The Corps uses three characteristics of wetlands when making wetland determinations: **vegetation**, **soil**, and **hydrology**. All three of these characteristics are **present** on these 40 acres.

While the GLBT design team planned the route around known wetlands⁴ this 40 acres while not designated a wetland by any government agency falls well within the definition of a wetland by the USACE and EPA.

Conclusion:

In conclusion the 280 miles of proposed track will rip up private property, **rivers**, **creeks**, **wetlands**, forest and designated **conservation areas**. While we're not able to speak about the majority of the track we are able to speak about how this track will cause dramatic environmental impact now and into the future on this piece of property. **The rail should be moved outside this conservation area to maintain the integrity of the natural habitat.** And after years of conservation efforts fish, mussels, amphibians, hydrologic soil and vegetation will be the **victims** of this proposal. Please

³ Recognizing Wetlands - http://www.usace.army.mil/Portals/2/docs/civilworks/regulatory/rw_bro.pdf

⁴ Great Lakes Basin Transportation - FAQ - <http://www.greatlakesbasin.net/#!/communities/g3a0x>

take in consideration all the documentation we've provided which indicates the importance of the Kishwaukee River, Coon Creek and the tributaries. I am OK with an on-site inspection of the area, contact me to set up.

Sincerely,

Bruce Heine
635 Dorset Ave
Palatine, Illinois 60067
847-612-0259
bruceh9@hotmail.com

Appendix:

Appendix A:

- **Strategic Plan for Habitat Conservation and Restoration**

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0LHwqadKUVBVHpLVmJoc3pVemc2N0tNR3dJd3pZYkthU1kw>

Appendix B:

- **Report on the Natural Resources and Habitat in the Kishwaukee River Watershed**

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0LHwqadKUVBN1JycDcxS3RreVIWUE9UN2Jld2RyR2dtOXdR>

Appendix C:

- **Fish Assemblages and Stream Conditions in the Kishwaukee River Basin: Spatial and Temporal Trends, 2001 - 2011**

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0LHwqadKUVBdJdsMUZPVWVMZjMxVHJBaGcxVUhhYXhtMGFj>

Other Resources:

- **Beaver Creek Watershed Action Plan**

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0LHwqadKUVBLUxoUIhJM2RPMnJfbGJDdbGZwc0NQNUJMVDhB>

- **Coon Creek/Mosquito Creek Natural Communities Assessment**

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0LHwqadKUVBVmZPQ0xdlhoRzI5QzZiRTc4Q09ubVNFLVFN>

- **Kishwaukee River EcoSystem Partnership**

- <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B0LHwqadKUVBUTZvaEVrd1plb2JIRkMyQzBJbXhBRmxnOU1B>
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