



US 20 Galena Bypass  
 Citizen's Advisory  
 Subcommittee Group



**MEETING MINUTES**

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Date: November 20, 2006

Date of Meeting: October 19, 2006

Meeting Place: City Hall, Freeport, IL

Project: US 20 (FAP 301) Galena Bypass  
 IDOT Job No. D-92-025-04  
 Teng Project No. 02-3460-01

Subject: Reforestation/Prairie Mitigation/ROW  
 Landscape Design/Wildlife Issues  
 C.A.G. Subcommittee Meeting

PARTICIPANTS:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION/ AFFILIATION</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
James Boho (JB)	C.A.G. Member	Galena
Robert J. Johnson (RJ)	C.A.G. Member	Galena
Chris Kirkpatrick (CK)	C.A.G. Member	Elizabeth

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION/ AFFILIATION</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Masood Ahmad (MA)	IDOT Dist 2	Dixon
Richard Maggi (RM)	IDOT Dist 2	Dixon
Mark Nardini (MN)	IDOT Dist 2	Dixon
Steve Robery (SR)	IDOT Dist 2	Dixon
Cassandra Rodgers (CR)	IDOT Dist 2	Dixon
Joe Hoerner (JH)	Teng	Chicago
Joe Murphy (JTM)	Teng	Chicago

This meeting was held to discuss reforestation, prairie mitigation, ROW landscape design and wildlife issues with respect to the Galena Bypass project. The following is the summary of items discussed and conclusions reached:

1. Introductions:

JH gave a brief introduction as to the purpose of the meeting, and explained the handouts and exhibits. A sign-in sheet was passed around. JB explained that Jim Rachuy (JR) was unable to attend the meeting due to time and schedule sensitive crop harvesting issues, but that JB and CK met with JR that morning and have been designated to speak in his behalf.

2. Meeting Topics:

CK listed the three topics he intended to cover during the meeting:

- Prairie Mitigation
- Reforestation
- ROW Landscape Design

3. Discussion of Prairie Mitigation:

CK discussed specific comments with regard to the prairie mitigation:

- CK expressed concern that Parcel 2 which will be used for prairie mitigation is somewhat wetter than the dolomite hill prairie areas, and that these are different prairie communities. CR explained that this prairie mitigation site has been designated to mitigate all of the prairie impacts for the entire project from Freeport to Galena. As stated in the EIS, it is not possible to mitigate impacts to the dolomite hill prairie, unless another dolomite site could be found. The proposed mitigation for the impacts to the dolomite hill prairie was to seek an easement from the owner of the remaining dolomite hill prairies so that they could be managed. CR previously contacted the owner and unfortunately he was not interested in any type of agreement. The good news is that Teng has been able to revise the roadway design so as to avoid impacts to the dolomite hill prairie that is located within the proposed right-of-way, so dolomite hill prairie mitigation is no longer a concern.
- CK stated that his volunteer group, the Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts, would be interested in managing the dolomite hill prairie area because of its rich biodiversity. CK stated that there are some species there that have yet to be identified.
- CK described earlier attempts to discuss prairie restoration and management with the property owner of the dolomite hill prairies that are located outside the proposed ROW. These attempts were not successful. However, C.A.G. member JR has contacted the owner of the property containing the dolomite hill prairie that is located partially within the proposed ROW and this owner was generally receptive to the idea of managing the prairie in the future.
- CK inquired if there was a Mitigation Plan being written that could be used as a guideline to make the most appropriate and effective measures with regard to time and cost. CK stated that the plan would also serve as a document of the agreement between the C.A.G. and IDOT on this important topic. CR stated

she will begin writing a Mitigation Plan to address these issues, subsequent to this meeting and any further input from the C.A.G. CK requested that the following details be included in the plan:

- Inclusion of species native to JoDaviess County as well as being suited for the individual parcel.
- Species are not to be chosen solely on the basis of aesthetic reasons.
- CK and CR discussed IDOT's Class 4 seeding:
  - CK recommended that no Switch Grass be included, and that we limit the amount of Big Bluestem and Indian Grass used.
  - RM and CR expressed concerns over purchasing procurement issues with respect to sourcing local seed.
  - RM expressed further difficulties with broader purchasing procurement issues, including the availability of specific species.
  - JB requested that the recommended sources for prairie seed be listed in the mitigation plan.
  - MA inquired if the desired seed could be pre-purchased and provided to the contractor. This will be explored further.
  - CK and JB stated that the approximate cost for purchasing seed for Parcel 2, which is approximately 10 acres, is from \$15,000 to \$17,500.
- CK stated that the Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts is a non-for-profit organization and would be interested in helping IDOT manage the prairie mitigation site. This would include management techniques to control thistle and other weeds, burning, and seed collecting. CK is a board member for The Prairie Enthusiasts, and JR is the Director for the Northwest Illinois Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts.
- CR discussed the prairie mitigation species list in detail, and CK agreed to review the list further and make specific written recommendations, including appropriate application ratios and available sources. CK will also provide recommendations with respect to exact locations for planting of particular species within the parcel.
- RM inquired which herbicides CK recommended. CK recommended planting a no-till soybean crop the year before planting the prairie seed, and then broadcasting the prairie seed after the crop is harvested. CK stated that this method would result in a good seed bed and would create revenue from sale of the crop as compared to applying herbicide to the parcel and leaving it sit fallow for an entire growing season. MN stated that it is yet to be determined when the parcel can be purchased, as funding for this has not been identified.
- CR discussed the internal conflict between IDOT's desire to close out contract expeditiously, and the need to keep contracts open to allow for seeding and planting at the proper times.

- CK stated that there are local conservation groups that are very willing to manage prairie sites once the sites are established.
- MA inquired if IDOT could transfer the parcel to the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation. CR stated that IDOT can only transfer ownership of sites to other state agencies; therefore transference to the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation or other similar organizations would not be allowed, unless a transfer of ownership is passed through legislation.
- MN discussed access issues with regard to Parcel 2. A gate was suggested since management groups would only need access to the site 3 to 4 times a year in order to control weeds, burn the prairie and gather seed. MN stated that any organization would need a permit in order to access the site. CK stated that they work within those restrictions on a regular basis. JB suggested that IDOT and Teng further study this issue of access to the site for any potential future management group.

#### 4. Discussion of Reforestation

CK discussed specific comments with regard to the reforestation:

- CK suggested providing his recommended species list and comparing it with CR's list. CR explained how the species list was originally developed. Only species listed for JoDaviess County were included. The report by William Handel titled, "Vegetation and Natural Communities of the Driftless Assessment Area", was also consulted.
- CK recommended using only the "dry to mesic" species in the reforestation areas, since we are mitigating for upland forests. The group agreed with this approach.
- CK recommended removing Dogwoods, Pin Oaks, Maples and Green Ash from the list. CK recommended using a small percentage of Basswood and Hackberry; and stated that Hop Hornbeam would probably not survive. CK stated the Oak-Hickory forests need to be maintained, and that Maples may overtake the sites and should be avoided. CK added that a limited amount of White Ash would be acceptable, and further recommended that we remove Butternut due to the ongoing blight.
- JB inquired if there can be a set formula in terms of percentages for various tree species for a typical one acre parcel that can be generally applied to the rest of the parcels. CK agreed to recommend a "best template" that can generally be applied to various conditions. CR commented that the exact species to be planted will be determined by such factors as soil type and moisture content at the particular sites.
- CK further agreed to review the reforestation species list and make specific written recommendations, including canopy species and understory mixes.
- CK pointed out that we are defining a reforestation process and should include the appropriate shrub and herbaceous layers. CR stated that the low-profile

prairie mix will be used as the herbaceous layer. CK recommended adding some forbs to the prairie mix. CR explained how there will not be a canopy for 15 to 20 years to provide shade. Therefore it was decided not to plant woodland wildflowers as the herbaceous layer.

- CR explained that there may be maintenance contracts for the first 2 to 3 years, depending on available funding. RM stated that we need to be prepared for the fact that there may not be any funding available for maintenance after this period. CK stated that he and the Northwest Illinois Prairie Enthusiasts are willing to help by providing management assistance. Maintenance issues will be addressed in the Mitigation Plan.
- CK agreed with the IDOT standard tree caliper size of 1¾". The group discussed various sources for locating the recommended species.
- RM explained that balled and burlapped trees are much more practical, and that seedlings run the risk of being eaten by deer and shaded by weeds. However, certain species may only be available in smaller caliper, and these trees will also be protected from deer in the same manner as the balled and burlapped size trees. CK agreed that it is more cost efficient to use larger trees. RM added that the best defense against weeds is shade, and that larger trees provide shade more readily than seedlings.
- JB expressed concern over the fact that smaller trees may be installed, especially with respect to value of the trees. RM and CR assured JB that the exact tree sizes will be determined based on availability of the species. If a certain species and/or size are not available after the award of the contract, and the contractor can prove that they are not available, then substitutions are allowed. At that time, IDOT will have to determine if a smaller size or a different species at the larger size will be substituted. Any species availability and size limitation concerns and associated preferences will be further addressed in the Mitigation Plan.
- CK inquired about watering. RM stated that the contractor is responsible for one year of watering, but usually forgoes the watering and merely replaces all trees that do not survive after one year. RM stated that the contractor usually assumes that they will replace 10% of the trees under the one-year warranty.
- CK acknowledged that the only course of action is to put forth the best recommendations for the contractors to follow, and enforce them to the degree possible.
- RM brought up the issue of tree procurement locations. RM prefers purchasing stock from more northern states for hardiness. JB inquired if a set radius could be established for tree procurement. RM recommended a 200 mile radius; and CK recommended restricting procurement to the same climatic zone that Galena is in.

- CK inquired how many forest acres will need to be mitigated in addition to the listed mitigation sites. CR and JTM stated that 42.07 acres will still need to be mitigated, assuming all of the listed sites can be purchased.
- JB reiterated his desire to choose mitigation parcels adjacent to the ROW. He said that the top priority is along the ROW, if not there then it should be adjacent to other state-owned parcels, and if not there then it absolutely needs to be in JoDaviess County.
- CK stated that he is also willing to provide assistance in drafting CR's reforestation and prairie mitigation plan. CR stated that he will definitely have the opportunity to review and comment on the draft mitigation plan.

#### 5. Discussion of ROW Landscape Design

CK discussed specific comments with regard to the ROW landscape design.

- CK stated that the specification, procurement and installation process would be similar to reforestation process. This approach will be aesthetically pleasing, and will also support wildlife habitats. CK brought up the topic of warm vs. cool season plantings management. RM explained that from the edge of pavement to the ditch flow line will be cool season grasses that are mowed; from the ditch flow line to the ROW will be native prairie mix.
- CK recommended that the landscape design species list match the reforestation species list.
- CK stated that he does not want to use Malus (Crabapples), Maples, Alternate-Leaved Dogwoods, or American Cranberries. CK stated there may be more species that can be added to list. CK will make recommendations in writing.
- CK summarized that three options for maintenance and weed control are 1. mowing, 2. herbicides and 3. burning. RM stated that it is difficult to burn along the roadway due to safety concerns.
- RM stated that it is desirable to secure optimum seeding dates, however the reality is that IDOT contracts do not always promote seeding and planting at the proper times, and that temporary seeding needs to be implemented in many cases.
- CK inquired how the final seed bed would appear. RM replied that it would resemble a seeded bed or lawn. The seed is normally drilled. RM also stated that slopes steeper than 3 to 1 can be hydro-seeded. CR stated that they will use both grasses and forbs in this area.

#### 6. Discussion of Wildlife Issues

The subcommittee discussed specific comments with regard to the wildlife issues:

- CK stated that Public safety is the most critical concern when considering the deer crossings.

- The broad concept of bridges used for wildlife crossings was discussed. JH stated that IDOT is proposing deer crossing accommodations (as per the EIS Commitments) at each of the proposed bridges (Hughlett Branch, Galena River, Stagecoach Trail and Heller Pond). Small animal crossings will be provided at various drainage culverts along the alignment as habitat dictates. IDOT and Teng are currently studying the feasibility of providing an additional deer crossing between Hughlett Branch and the Galena River.
- IDOT and Teng have researched the use of wildlife crossings in other states including Colorado, California, Florida, New Mexico, Virginia, Ohio, Montana, Washington, as well as Canada. There isn't a general formula for constructing them and there are differing theories as to the required size that deer will use to cross under a roadway. It has been shown that deer generally will not enter a crossing unless they can see habitat on the other side. The proposed culverts in the project area are over 300 ft. long and the examples studied are generally much shorter, between 100 and 200 ft. IDOT and Teng are concerned with constructing such a long culvert solely for the purpose of a large animal crossing, without being able to accurately gauge its effectiveness.
- SR stated that an additional crossing along the Galena Bypass could be further investigated, including constructing an additional bridge rather than a culvert, but that there would be a significant cost associated with the construction of such a structure - in the neighborhood of at least several million dollars.
- CR stated that there are multiple deer crossing recommended in the EIS to be placed in the Tapley Woods area. CK stated that it is hard to know if an additional deer crossing is justified, and it is hard to know if it would actually reduce the number of deer fatalities. JB stated that there is a definite need for multiple deer crossings in the Tapley Woods area as outlined in the EIS.

7. Meeting Recap / Next C.A.G. Meeting

- JB summarized that the Subcommittee's written recommendations pertaining to prairie mitigation, reforestation and landscaping will be developed by CK, with support from the subcommittee, and submitted to the rest of the group no later than December 1, 2006.
- CR will prepare the Mitigation Plan and CK will review and comment on the draft materials and recommendations.
- Teng and IDOT will have to review the Subcommittee's recommendations.
- SR recommended that Subcommittee members and the broader C.A.G. membership, along with IDOT and Teng communicate as much as possible on the forum. The group concurred with that suggestion.
- JH further suggested that the forum be used as a conduit for commenting on, and reviewing/approving components of the Mitigation Plan to the extent that it is feasible.

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- JB recommended that the next C.A.G. meeting not be held until February of 2007, in order to provide adequate time to review the information at hand, and develop the Mitigation Plan.
- JH recapped that the following issues will be included as topics at the February 2007 C.A.G. Meeting:
  - Reforestation/Prairie Mitigation, ROW Landscape Design, and Wildlife Issues Update
  - Mitigation Plan
  - Overlook
  - Noise
  - Emergency Access
- JB requested that Teng add folders for the new C.A.G. topics to the forum.
- CK stated that he has worked with Phillip Milhouse in the past on a project in Hanover, and that he is a very good archaeologist and historian from the Galena area. JB stated that there will be no need to involve Lester Johnson on this task, as CK is comfortable with the abilities of Phillip Milhouse.

Very truly yours,

TENG & ASSOCIATES, INC.

**Joe Murphy**

Joe Murphy

Landscape Designer

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