

# Transportation & Environmental Collaboration Initiative

## Project Description and History:

The *Transportation and Environmental Collaboration Initiative* is a project of Chicago Wilderness that began in 2008 in McHenry County, IL and in Northwest Indiana. The primary goal of the Initiative is to strengthen relationships between environmentalists and transportation professionals to ensure a balanced and informed dialogue with both groups. To achieve the goal of strengthening relationships, a local stakeholder group of environmentalists was developed in the first year of the initiative whose role was to host workshops and create a natural resource consensus-driven prioritization map. In year two, the groups refined the prioritization map and implemented an outreach plan to elected officials, transportation planners, other transportation professionals and other engaged stakeholders.

## Partners and Roles:

This group consists of local conveners The Land Conservancy of McHenry County and the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County as well as technical consultant McHenry-Lake Soil and Water Conservation District. The Delta Institute filled the facilitator role and The Donnelley Foundation provided funding.

## Accomplishments:

- Created Resource Prioritization Map
- Developed local stakeholder group in McHenry County, IL
- Conducted transportation planning workshop and training

## Map Layers and Process:

For each of the layers below, the group discussed and agreed upon scores between 1 and 5 for each layer with 5 being the highest priority. The composite scores for each polygon ranged from 0 -39, with highest priority (red) areas scoring 26-39, high (orange) areas scoring 10-25, moderate (yellow) areas scoring 1-9 and low (green) areas scoring 0. See map on reverse.

## Map Caveats and Limitations

- There is currently no county-wide data layer for some resources such as stream headwaters.
- The priority resource map is best used as a guide. Local plans and field surveys need to be considered in reviewing impacts of future surface transportation project.
- Because conditions change over time, this map requires regular updates and maintenance.
- Protection of sensitive areas merits best practices whenever surface development is proposed. Best practices for low-impact development should be used for all resource protection areas regardless of priority ranking.



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# McHenry County Priority Resource Mapping: IL Route 47

## Background and Status:

IDOT began the process of planning for the expansion of route 47 (Phase I) in November, 2007. After the completion of phase I, phases II and III are expected to last 2 and 3 years, respectively. Land acquisition is funded and will begin upon completion of the phase I report. Phase III, construction, is not currently funded.

The Illinois Department of Transportation is currently working to finalize a preferred alternative for this route and a design is expected to be approved some time in 2012. While some data on natural resources is available, some key pieces of information, such as data on species present within the project area, are not available. A number of local groups are actively watching this project, including the Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership, The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, Environmental Defenders of McHenry County and the Sierra Club, among others.

The Transportation & Environmental Collaboration working group identified this site as a priority area based on its adjacency to natural resources with a high potential for negative impact (see map on reverse), the project's timeline and the presence of local expertise. This document is intended to highlight potential risks to natural resources as well as opportunities to apply best practices to transportation projects in McHenry County. Data is being maintained by the McHenry-Lake Soil and Water Conservation District, The Land Conservancy of McHenry County and the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County and can be made available for future projects.

**Contact:** Ders Anderson, Openlands, Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership, [DAnderson@openlands.org](mailto:DAnderson@openlands.org)

For more information on the design & construction process, contact the Illinois Department of Transportation (217)782-7820

## Best Practices and Recommendations for Mitigation:

- Manage stormwater onsite.
- Minimize stream crossings and their impacts & recognize the Kishwaukee as a headwaters of importance.
- Prioritize the preservation of adjacent pocket wetlands as well as stream crossings with the potential to impact perennial flow.
- Collect data on species present within the project area & provide under-road crossings for species movement.
- Follow a "treatment train" philosophy: prioritize upstream mitigation first.
- Increase restoration to the east and north of the project area to increase water holding capacity.
- Work with USACE to implement all applicable local watershed plans.
- Utilize Context-Sensitive Solutions & recommendations of the I-LAST guide. Local communities should request IDOT follow these guidelines.
- Avoid construction on and impacts to organic soils. Minimize impacts to hydric soils.
- Avoid impacts to sensitive aquifer resources.
- Utilize innovative road design techniques to preserve all environmentally sensitive features with potential project impacts.

## Local Stakeholders:

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County  
IL Nature Preserve Commission  
IL Department of Transportation  
IL Department of Natural Resources  
Army Corps of Engineers  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Lakewood, Crystal Lake, Huntley, Lake in the Hills and Woodstock  
Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership

McHenry-Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Silver Creek/Sleepy Hollow Creek Watershed Coalition  
Sierra Club  
Nippersink Watershed Association  
McHenry County Conservation District  
Environmental Defenders of McHenry County

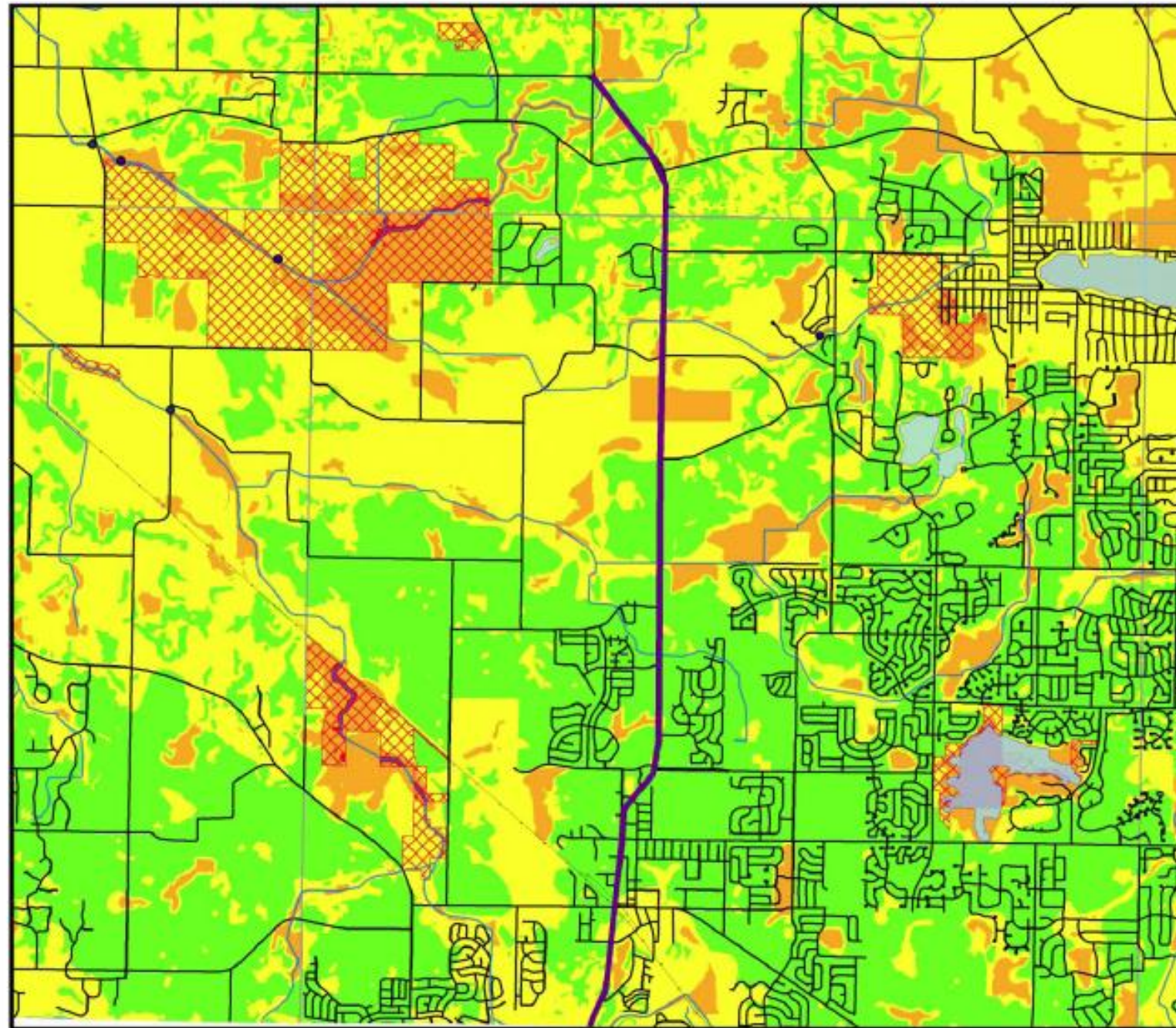
## Local Resources:

Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision  
Lake County Route 120 analysis  
IL Livability & Sustainability transportation plan  
McHenry County, Crystal Lake, Woodstock Green Infrastructure Plans  
McHenry County 2030 Plan and 2020 Transportation Plan

Local Watershed Plans  
Department of Interior Road Guidelines  
ILAST report  
IL Route 47 Study  
KREP Map Products



# McHenry County Framework for Transportation Planning - Highway 47 Widening



**Key To Features**

- Hwy 47 Widening
- Rivers & Streams
- Major Water Features
- Roads
- Railroads
- Townships
- MCCD Sites

**Areas of Environmental Concern**

- Highest (25 - 35)
- High (15 - 25)
- Moderate (1 - 5)
- Lowest (0)

- Operands Mussel Survey Sites
- IDNR Mussel Survey Sites

The following are environmental constraints that were incorporated into the creation of this map, and are ranked 1-5 according to their degree of sensitivity with 5 being the highest:

McHenry County Conservation District Sites, Nature Preserves (Land & Water Reserves, Land Conservancy of McHenry County, IL State Parks, High Quality & High Functional ADID Wetlands and their Associated Buffer, and High Quality Stream Buffers all received a ranking of 5.

Class III Groundwatersheds, McHenry County Natural Areas Inventory, Illinois Natural Areas Inventory, Endangered Species, 25+ Acre Oak Woodlands, and Wetlands (Non-Farmed), all received a ranking of 4.

30-50 Ft. Wetland Buffers, Farmed Wetlands, and Floodways all received a ranking of 3.

100-Year Floodplain, Organic Soils and High Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas received a ranking of 2.

Moderately-High Sensitive Aquifer Recharge Areas received a ranking of 1.

Produced By:  
McHenry-Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District

1 inch equals 5,462.76 feet

## North Stream Crossing



## Hamilton Farms Stream Crossing & Organic Soils



## Southern Two Stream Crossings



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- Railroads
- MCCD Sites
- Organic Soils
- Hydric