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5.11 Wild and Scenic Rivers

5.11.1 Introduction

Since the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), this section has been updated to confirm the need for streambank stabilization of the White River near existing SR 37 and to revise the planned treatment of I-465 bridges over the White River.

The DEIS indicated that streambank stabilization activities along the White River at the confluence of Stotts Creek may occur. Since the publication of the DEIS, it is apparent that the streambank in this area is eroding at a rate which will jeopardize the existing and proposed infrastructure. As such, streambank stabilization activities will occur at this location. Specific streambank stabilization activities or the extent of in-stream work has not yet been determined. Specific streambank stabilization activities will be determined in final design and coordinated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management as part of the permitting process.

Additionally, the DEIS indicated the I-465 bridge over the White River would be rehabilitated. After the DEIS was published, it was determined this bridge will be replaced.

The rivers of the United States are valuable resources that provide a variety of scenic, recreational, geological, wildlife, historic, and cultural values. Many of these rivers are protected under federal and state laws. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) protect rivers at the national level. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) protect Indiana's rivers at the state level.

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System was created in 1968 by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states that it is "the policy of the United States that certain selected rivers of the nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations" (16 U.S.C. §§1271-1287). The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System list is maintained by the National Park Service (NPS).

In addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, the NPS has compiled and maintains the NRI. The NRI is a register of rivers that may be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The intent of the NRI is to provide information to assist in making balanced decisions regarding use of the nation's river resources.

Rivers and streams considered to have special importance and that merit special protection by the State of Indiana must also be taken into consideration. These rivers are listed as Indiana Waters



Designated for Special Protection (designated salmonid waters (327 IAC 2-1.5-5(a)3), outstanding state resource waters (327 IAC 2-1-2(3) and 327 IAC 2-1.5-19(b)) or exceptional use streams (327 IAC 2-1-11(b)), or as a natural, scenic, and recreation river and stream under 312 IAC 7-2.

5.11.2 Methodology

Several data sources were reviewed to determine whether protected waters are present within the I-69 Section 6 field survey study area. The NPS National Wild and Scenic Rivers System website was reviewed to identify National Wild and Scenic Rivers. The IDEM Listing of Indiana Waters Designated for Special Protection was reviewed to identify state designated waters.¹ The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) Information Bulletin #4 - Outstanding Rivers List for Indiana was reviewed to identify any natural, scenic, and recreational rivers and streams.²

The Geographic Information System (GIS) data layer, “National River Inventory, 2004 (1:100,000),” retrieved from IndianaMap was used to determine whether the proposed alternatives would cross rivers listed on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory.

5.11.3 Analysis

There are no rivers listed in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System within or near I-69 Section 6. There are also no rivers listed on the IDEM Listing of Indiana Waters Designated for Special Protection.

The White River is identified as an NRI segment, west of SR 37 and parallel to I-69 Section 6 from Martinsville to approximately 1.7 miles south of I-465. According to the NRI, the White River has an excellent fish production potential and is recommended by the state for evaluation for inclusion in the Natural, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers and Streams system.

The White River is also identified as an NRC Outstanding River, west of SR 37 and parallel to I-69 Section 6 for the entire length of the project. It is listed as an Outstanding River because it 1) is listed in the NRI, 2) is a State Heritage Program Site (identified by state natural heritage programs or similar state programs as having outstanding ecological importance), and 3) is a state-designated canoe/boating route.

I-69 Section 6 would not cross the NRI segment of the White River, but the confluence of the White River and Stotts Creek is within the proposed right of way of all alternatives near the intersection of SR 37 and New Harmony Road. The White River is eroding its eastern bank in

¹ The IDEM Listing of Indiana Waters Designated for Special Protection was accessed on August 1, 2016, at: http://www.in.gov/dnr/water/files/Appdx_F-2.pdf

² The Natural Resources Commission Information Bulletin #4 - Outstanding Rivers List for Indiana was accessed on August 1, 2016, at: <http://www.in.gov/legislative/iac/20070530-IR-312070287NRA.xml.pdf>



this area jeopardizing the existing and proposed roadway and bridge infrastructure. Therefore, stream bank stabilization measures will be installed in the river near its confluence with Stotts Creek. See **Figure 5.11-1**. Impacts from these measures would not adversely affect the qualities for which the river was designated as an NRI segment or NRC Outstanding River.

In addition to the bank stabilization measures discussed above, the I-465 bridges over the White River would be replaced as part of this project. Although this portion of the river is not identified as an NRI segment, it is identified as an NRC Outstanding River. Minimal impacts are anticipated to the White River as there will likely be fewer piers. The existing bridges (one in each travel direction) were constructed in the 1960s with eight piers. Since current engineering practices allow longer spans, preliminary estimates indicate the proposed bridges would require only four piers.

Figure 5.11-2 shows the location of the proposed White River bridges. Impacts would not adversely affect the qualities for which the river was designated as an NRC Outstanding River.

5.11.4 Mitigation

No Wild and Scenic Rivers are present in I-69 Section 6. Therefore, no mitigation for impacts to such resources would be required. Mitigation for impacts to the White River would be completed in accordance with permitting agency requirements.

5.11.5 Summary

There are no National Wild and Scenic Rivers present within I-69 Section 6. Therefore, the proposed project would have no adverse impacts to National Wild and Scenic Rivers. The White River is listed on the NRI from Martinsville to approximately 1.7 miles south of I-465 and as an NRC Outstanding River from Martinsville north of I-465. Impacts to the White River will occur as a result of streambank stabilization measures adjacent to I-69 near Stotts Creek and the replacement of the I-465 bridge over the river. Impacts associated with streambank stabilization near Stotts Creek are anticipated to be self-mitigating impacts as the waterway is severally degraded. No rivers listed on the IDEM Listing of Indiana Waters Designated for Special Protection would be crossed by this project. Therefore, the project would have no adverse impacts to those resources.



Figure 5.11-1: White River and SR 37



Figure 5.11-2: White River and I-465

