



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHICAGO DISTRICT
231 SOUTH LASALLE STREET SUITE 1500
CHICAGO, IL 60604

August 28, 2025



SUBJECT: Fox River Connectivity & Habitat Study Request for Letter of Support

Honorable Mayor Kevin Burns
City of Geneva
22 S. First Street
Geneva, IL 60134-2203

Dear Honorable Mayor Burns:

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District (USACE), in partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), is conducting the Fox River Connectivity and Habitat Feasibility Study authorized under Section 519 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, as amended. The study addresses riverine connectivity and habitat degradation related to ten dams on the Fox River from Algonquin, IL downstream to Montgomery, IL. The study has explored an array of opportunities to improve connectivity and habitat restoration and, as of September 2023, identified dam removal as an alternative that appears to reasonably maximize ecosystem benefits compared to costs.

The draft Project Implementation Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment was released for public review in September 2023. USACE received nearly 1,000 comments expressing both support for the proposed project and concerns related to sediment quality and/or potential impacts to infrastructure, recreation, and wildlife. Since that time USACE and IDNR have been conducting further analyses to address these concerns.

USACE requires items of local cooperation from a non-federal sponsor to share project costs and provide lands, easements, rights of way, relocations, and disposals (LERRDs). As such, a letter of intent (LOI) is required from a non-federal entity to demonstrate understanding of responsibilities and willingness to participate in the proposed project. IDNR has agreed to provide the LOI for the state-owned dams in the study area with a caveat that, as outlined in IDNR's Public Dam Removal Program Local Government Participation Guidance, local governments that oppose dam removal or modification can opt to take ownership of the dam, including all associated costs for liability coverage and maintenance.

USACE is requesting a letter of support from your community to confirm IDNR's ability to serve as a non-federal sponsor and proceed with dam removal or modification without opposition. We request a formal response no later than January 31, 2026. If no response is received, USACE will assume that your community does not oppose removal or modification of the Geneva Dam, and USACE will continue to include the Geneva Dam in the final plan as the feasibility study is completed. Attached is a template letter of support to guide your response.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your continued dialog related to this important project. Please feel free to reach out to me at _____ Mr. Ryan Johnson, Lead Planner, at _____ if you would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Digitally signed by
ROCKWELL, KENNETH PAUL, 12
37939120
Date: 2025.09.02 10:53:19 -05'00'

KENNETH P. ROCKWELL
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

Enclosure
Letter of Support/Non-Support Template

Colonel Kenneth P. Rockwell
Commander, Chicago District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
231 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 1500
Chicago, Illinois 60604



Dear Colonel Rockwell:

This letter, while not legally binding, is provided as an expression of [municipality's name]'s (Select One: support for OR opposition to) Illinois Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) intent to partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under Section 519 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, as amended, for the Fox River Connectivity and Habitat Feasibility Study in Kane and McHenry Counties, Illinois, specifically with regard to the [dam name] dam in our community.

EITHER: [If SUPPORT]

We understand that the feasibility study is investigating a full range of alternatives to identify a plan to restore connectivity and aquatic habitat in the Fox River, and that dam removal is identified as the tentatively selected plan in the Draft Project Implementation Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment dated September 2023. As the community in which the [dam name] dam is located, we support IDNR's intent to serve as a non-federal sponsor and provide the necessary items of local cooperation for the proposed project.

We also understand that additional assessments for environmental, historic, and sediment quality impacts will be conducted and incorporated into the draft Project Implementation Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment and the design of the project. Depending on the results of these additional assessments, the IDNR will either continue to serve as a non-federal sponsor to implement the proposed project, evaluate other modifications, or choose to keep the dam intact without modification.

OR [If OPPOSE]

We understand that by choosing not to support IDNR's intent to serve as non-federal sponsor and provide the necessary items of local cooperation for the proposed project, that [dam name] dam may be removed from the tentatively selected plan in the Project Implementation Report and Integrated Environmental Assessment, forgoing the possibility of receiving federal funding to be addressed through the current project. Further, we are aware that, absent the proposed project, IDNR may choose to proceed with one of the options set forth in its Public Dam Removal Program Local Government Participation Guidance.

<https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/waterresources/documents/engstudies/Dam%20Removal%20Program%20Guidance.pdf>

Please contact [name] at [email or phone] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
[Name/title of official]