Conservation Plan for the Illinois Chorus Frog (Pseudacris Streckeri Illinoensis) South of Meredosia, Morgan County, Illinois.

1. **Description of the impact likely to result from the proposed taking.**

Meredosia Truck Access Road, Morgan County, Illinois, a variable width right of way each side of the following described centerline, said right of way lying in parts of Sections 23, 26 and 27 in Township 16 North and Range 13 West being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at a found nail at the Northeast corner of the Northwest Quarter (NW ¼) of said Section 27; thence North 89° 39' 37" West (an assumed bearing) along the North line of said Section 27 a distance of 1342.06 feet to a found stone at the Northwest corner of the Northeast Quarter (NE ¼) of the Northwest Quarter (NW ¼) of said Section 27; thence South 16° 15' 20" West a distance of 1296.58 feet to the True Point of Beginning, said point of beginning is at the centerline of Washington Street as now exists and the centerline of said 100 foot right of way; thence South 89° 48' 50" East a distance of 1702.41 feet to a point on the East line of the Northwest Quarter (NW ¼) of said Section 27, said point being 1242.33 feet South of the Northeast corner of the Northwest Quarter (NW ¼) of said Section 27; thence continuing South 89° 48' 50" East a distance of 2655.65 feet, more or less, to the East line of Section 27, said point being 1256.74 feet South of the Northeast corner of said Section 27; thence continuing South 89° 48' 50" East a distance of 559.47 feet to a point of curvature, said curve having a radius of 800.00 feet a length of 1191.36 feet; thence North 47° 31' 25" East along the chord of said curve a distance of 1084.29 feet to the point of tangent of said curve; thence North 04° 51' 40" East a distance of 535.04 feet, more or less to the South line of said Section 23, said point being 1404.01 feet East of the Southwest corner of said Section 23; thence continuing North 04° 51' 40" East a distance of 2707.96 feet to the South line of the Northwest Quarter (NW ¼) of said Section 23, said point being 1341.95 feet East of the Southwest corner of the Northwest Quarter (NW ¼) of said Section 23; thence continuing North 04° 51' 40" East a distance of 1469.93 feet to the centerline of Illinois Route 104 at Station 67 + 50, said point is the terminus of said right of way centerline, all in the County of Morgan and State of Illinois.

The current land use of this parcel is primarily agricultural. Morgan County has purchased, or reached agreement to purchase this parcel.

The Illinois chorus frog is a State threatened species that is known to occur in nine counties in Illinois, in sandy habitats along the central part of the Illinois Waterway, and only along its eastern side. It breeds in early spring, in shallow, fishless ponds/pools that hold water through June when the transforming froglets leave their natal ponds. The spent adults and froglets then migrate to suitable habitat to spend the remainder of the year. They are highly fossorial and migrate to preferred areas of sandy soil with sparse vegetation or absence of vegetation. They require substrates with poor to very poor sod development to accommodate their fossorial habits. The post-breeding activity is subterranean, with frogs seldom or never coming to the surface during non-breeding seasons. This frog species has two main requirements: sand substrates for burrowing during non-breeding seasons, and ephemeral, fishless bodies of water that persist long enough to allow for breeding and transformation of at least some of the froglets. Because these habitats have been converted to agriculture or developed for other human activities, Illinois chorus frogs are now uncommon.

The West 5000 feet of proposed highway will be constructed over the following loamy sand soils; Bloomfield, Plainfield, and Sparta. This habitat may be used by Illinois chorus frogs for burrowing during non-breeding seasons. The Soil Survey of Morgan and Scott Counties, Illinois, issued September of 1988 identified 5,290 acres of loamy sand soils in Morgan County. Most of this is in Illinois River Valley and adjacent to poorly drained level silty loam soils which may provide standing water for breeding sites during wet years.

The construction of the road across these soils could be potential "incidental taking" of Illinois chorus frogs due to excavation and fill activities that could result in frogs being buried or crushed.

The number of frogs utilizing this sand area is unknown. No frogs were found in Spring 2001, which may have been a poor breeding year due to dry weather. The proposed right of way to be acquired is 10.43 acres, of which 2.75 acres will be pavement. The remainder will be seeded with prairie seed mixture (Class 4 modified from Table 1 – Seeding Mixtures in the "Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction".)

2. **Measures the applicant will take to minimize and mitigate that impact.**

Construction limits are shown on plans and contractor will be required to stay in them. This area not in the road footprint will be left undisturbed as "open space" which will serve as habitat enhancement for the Illinois chorus frog within the project area. No borrow pits or waste areas will be required on this project.

A series of three small ponds will be constructed to depths of 1, 2 and 3 feet about 200 feet off the right of way in silty soil which may be utilized as a breeding area by Illinois chorus frogs. (See attached plan and location map.) Erosion control will consist of both temporary and permanent measures, which will be bid as pay items in contract. All disturbed area will be seeded.

The establishment of prairie grasses on unpaved right of way should allow burrowing during non-breeding seasons. The construction of the three ponds between proposed road and sandy areas may enhance successful breeding.

The Illinois chorus frog spends its non-breeding life underground and would be difficult, if not impossible to monitor. During breeding, it may travel up to one mile and its presence may be detected by its song. Morgan County will provide monitoring for a period of five (5) years following construction. This monitoring will only involve annual Spring surveys ("call listening surveys") to simply determine the presence or absence of Illinois chorus frogs at the subject site.

Morgan County will provide the Department with a copy of these annual listening survey reports within 30 days after completion of that Spring's final survey.

The cost of seeding is included in construction costs. The ponds will be constructed by Morgan County, and their cost will be less than $10,000.00.

Morgan County will acquire the land for construction of mitigation ponds in accordance with federal and state regulations as soon as we receive approvals from Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Pond excavation shall be completed as early as practical to provide breeding habitat for early Spring.

If the excavated ponds are found to be unsuitable for breeding by the Illinois chorus frog, Morgan County shall modify the ponds based upon recommendations of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Morgan County will plant or cause to be planted, native species of emergent and sub-mergent aquatic vegetation in t6he excavated breeding ponds to provide substrate for Illinois chorus frogs breeding activity. If the initial planting fails, Morgan County shall make one (1) additional attempt to establish native emergent aquatic vegetation in the excavated ponds.

Morgan County receives funding for highways from Motor Fuel Tax, local property taxes, and other sources. These sources of funding will be available to continue measures instituted in conservation plan for a minimum period of five years.

3. **Alternative actions that would not result in take.**

Morgan County has been aware of the need for better highway access to the industrial area South of Meredosia for many years. This area was developed because of river and rail transportation, however as the years passed, trucks have been carrying a higher percentage of products. This has resulted in several concerns to the residents of Meredosia. Namely, the movement of hazardous materials through residential areas on Washington Street and the dangerous intersection of Washington Street and Illinois Route 104 at the end of the Illinois River bridge.

Morgan County considered alternates for this project. Alternate A, B, C, and a no-build alternate D. Based on an 80' right of way, Alternate A would require approximately 15.4 acres of right of way (14.7 acres agricultural, 0.7 acres wooded). Alternate B would require approximately 16.8 acres of right of way (16.6 acres agricultural, 0.2 acres wooded). Alternate C would require approximately 19.5 acres of right of way (18.3 acres agricultural, 1.2 acres wooded).

Alternate A was close to town and would have increased noise to senior housing and relocation of at least one residence.

Alternate B would have impacted a wetland area and required a large fill to cross an abandoned sand pit which would also pose engineering problems.

Alternates A, B, and C all cross sandy loam soils which are potential chorus frog habitat.

Alternate D, the no-build alternate would not address the problems of industries or concerns of Meredosia residents, therefore Alternate C was selected.

These alternates are shown on attached map.

4. **Data and information to assure that the proposed taking will not reduce the likelihood of the survival of the species.**

The Illinois chorus frog is found in nine counties in Illinois. The historical records* for 1988 in Morgan County show 10 locations of which one is near this project; 1991 records show 3 locations all well North of this project, and 1993 records show 10 locations of which one is near our project.

Since the population of Illinois chorus frogs is widespread, and our taking across the suitable habitat of sandy soils is narrow (80 feet ± wide) and transverse, we expect our impact to be minor.

*Distribution and status of the Illinois Chorus Frog, September, 1993, Ellin Beltz.

5. **An implementing agreement, which shall include, but not be limited to:**

John E. Petzing
Herpetologist
Illinois Natural History Survey
172 Natural Resources Building
607 East Peabody Drive
Champaign, IL 61820

Calvin W. Hance
County Engineer
Morgan County Highway Department
P.O. Box 458
Jacksonville, IL 62651

Benton & Associates, Inc.
Engineers
1970 West Lafayette Street
Jacksonville, IL 62650

The Illinois Natural History Survey has completed its duties of surveying for threatened or endangered frogs on March 14, March 28, and April 5, 2001

Morgan County Highway Department is responsible for all biological clearance coordination and recommendations related to the project and addresses those items listed under the Incidental Take Notice.

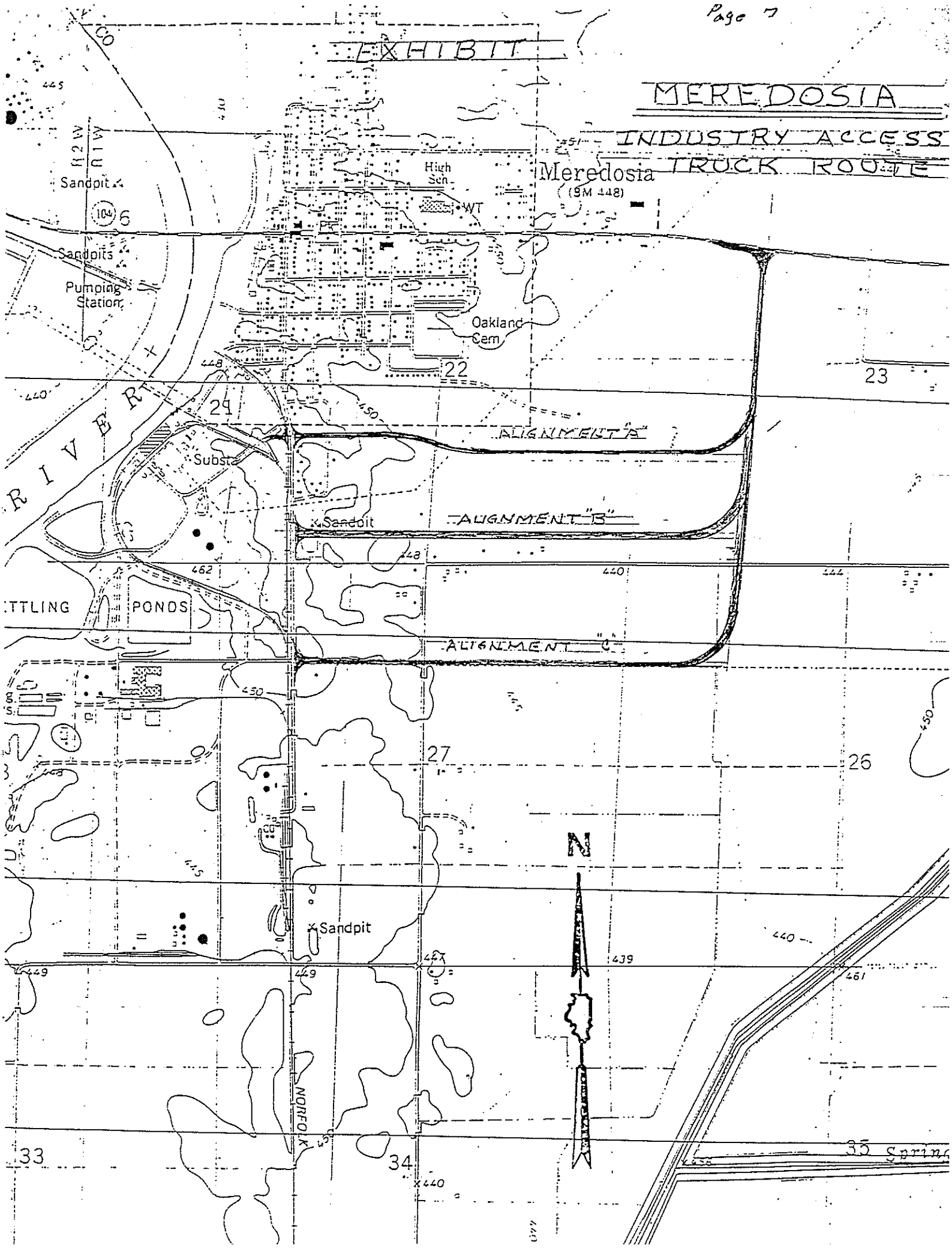
Benton & Associates is the consultant that is responsible for surveying and engineering plans.

This project is authorized by the Morgan County Highway Department which receives funding from the State of Illinois and local taxes in carrying out its programs. Legal contracts are recommended to the Morgan County Board of Commissioners for approval.

The Morgan County Highway Department exclusively abides by the National Environmental Policy Act and all associated state and federal environmental laws in carrying out its mission of performing the most environmentally sensitive methods of transportation planning and engineering.

Not applicable since the Illinois chorus frog (Pseudacris streckeri illinoensis) is not federally threatened or endangered.

Not applicable since the Illinois chorus frog (Pseudacris streckeri illinoensis) is considered an animal under the Illinois Endangered Species Act (ILCS 10/2).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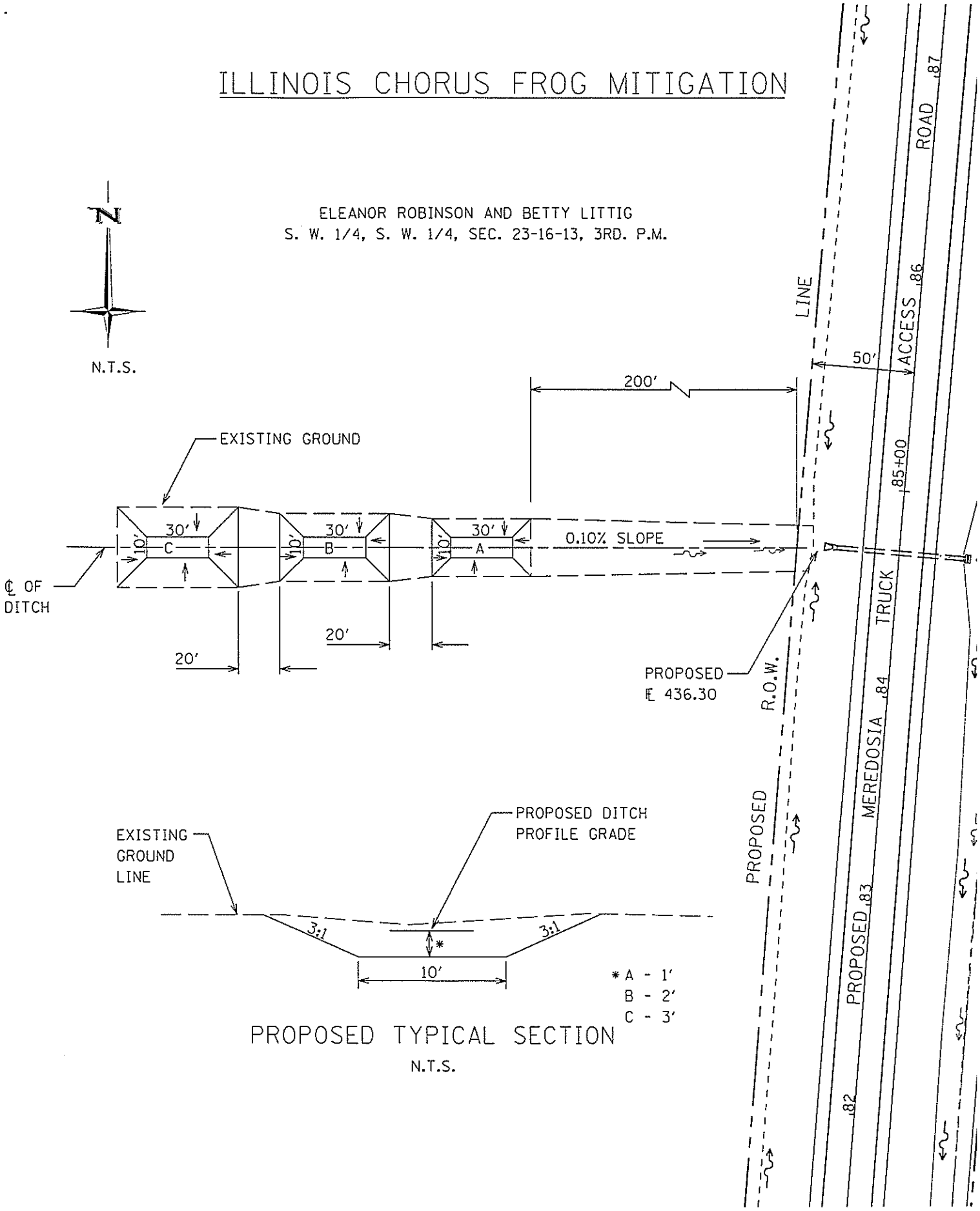
ILLINOIS CHORUS FROG MITIGATION

ELEANOR ROBINSON AND BETTY LITTIG
S. W. 1/4, S. W. 1/4, SEC. 23-16-13, 3RD. P.M.



PROPOSED TYPICAL SECTION

N.T.S.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Morgan County Highway Department has applied for Incidental Take Authorization to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Resource Conservation, concerning an Illinois threatened frog species, the Illinois chorus frog (Pseudacris streckeri illinoensis).

The County mailing address is:

Morgan County Highway Department
P.O. Box 458
Jacksonville, Illinois 62651

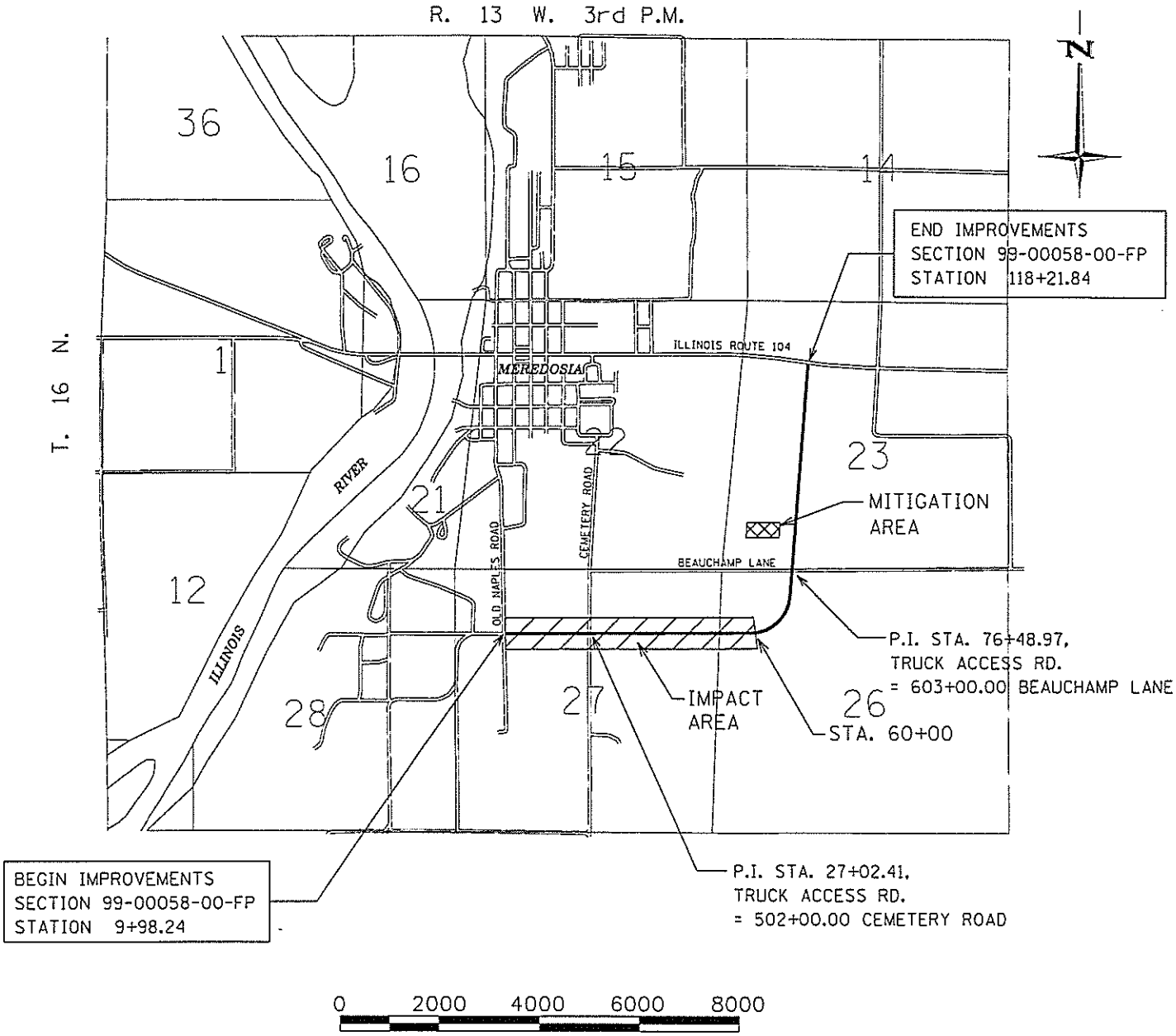
The accompanying map shows the site of proposed taking, that through highway construction activities may impact the Illinois chorus frog. The activities that may cause mortality to these burrowed frogs are clearing of brush and timber, and excavation and placement of fill material.

Since these burrowing frogs are typically found in areas of unconsolidated sand for the non-breeding part of the frog's life cycle, only the portion of the project from Old Naples Road easterly for a total distance of 5,000 feet would constitute a potential taking.

The County has written a Conservation Plan outlining measures to compensate for any potential taking of the chorus frogs. A copy of the Conservation Plan can be found at the Meredosia Public Library, 306 Main Street, Meredosia, Illinois, 62665, and at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Resource Conservation, 600 N. Grand Ave., Springfield, Illinois 62706.

Comments to this proposal should be directed to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Heritage, 524 S. Second Street, Springfield, Illinois, 62701-1787, or e-mail to: endspec@dnrmail.state.il.us.

The comment period closes 30 days after the final publication of this notice that first appears in the Meredosia Budget on The final publication is scheduled for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ILLINOIS ROUTE 104
MEREDOSIA
RIVER
ILLINOIS
OLD NAPLES ROAD
CEMETERY ROAD
BEAUCHAMP LANE
END IMPROVEMENTS
SECTION 99-00058-00-FP
STATION 118+21.84
MITIGATION
AREA
P.I. STA. 76+48.97,
TRUCK ACCESS RD.
= 603+00.00 BEAUCHAMP LANE
IMPACT
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P.I. STA. 27+02.41,
TRUCK ACCESS RD.
= 502+00.00 CEMETERY ROAD
BEGIN IMPROVEMENTS
SECTION 99-00058-00-FP
STATION 9+98.24
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