

CASE 207-S-26

SUPPLEMENTAL MEMORANDUM #1

May 28, 2026

Petitioner: Jennifer Ash

Request: Authorize a “Travel Trailer Camp” as a Special Use Permit in the AG-2 Agriculture Zoning District.

Location: A 15.27-acre field, in the South Half of the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 2, Township 19 North, Range 9 East of the Third Principal Meridian, in Urbana Township with PIN 30-21-02-302-012, commonly known as the property owned by Jennifer Ash Trust.

Site Area: 15.27 acres

Time Schedule for Development: As soon as possible

**Prepared by: Charlie Campo, Zoning Officer
John Hall, Zoning Administrator**

NEIGHBOR CONCERNS

A letter citing several concerns from a neighbor to the subject property was received on May 27, 2026. The letter also included a petition signed by neighbors who also had concerns regarding the development. The petitioner provided a response addressing the concerns identified along with a map exhibit showing similar developments. See Attachments B and C

SEPTIC SYSTEM

The Champaign County Public Health Department provided an email dated April 2, 2026, regarding the suitability of the site to accommodate the necessary septic systems to serve the development. The email is included as Attachment A.

NATURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION REPORT

The Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District submitted a Natural Resource Information Report for the subject property including an EcoCAT review. The report is included as Attachment D.

ADDITIONAL AND REVISED SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Additional Special Conditions based on the concerns of neighbors are as follows:

- K. An evergreen vegetative screen planting shall be installed along the north property line using Arborvitae that is a minimum of five feet tall at the time of planting and spaced to provide a 50% screen within two years of planting using two rows of plantings if necessary.**

The special condition stated above is required to ensure the following:
That there is adequate buffering for neighbors.

- L. **Each fire pit shall have an adequately sized fire extinguisher permanently located within a reasonable distance of the fire pit.**

The special condition stated above is required to ensure the following:

That there is a means of controlling any fire that escapes the fire pit.

- M. **Limits on the number of events, guest attendance, and traffic are as follows:**
- (1) **Attendance at events shall be limited to no more than 50 people including lodge guests and event staff. Events shall not be construed to be simple gatherings of lodgers.**
 - (2) **Events shall not occur more often than once per two weeks. (Or 26 times per calendar year, or other limitation proposed by the Board.**
 - (3) **The number of guests at any event shall be kept on file by the owner and shall be made available for inspection by the Zoning Administrator when requested.**

The special condition stated above is required to ensure the following:

That there is a means of ensuring that the travel trailer camp does not become an event center without proper zoning approval.

- N. **The applicant shall coordinate with the Carroll Fire Protection District in developing a written fire prevention plan to be approved by the Carroll Fire Protection District and a pre-opening fire safety inspection by the Carroll Fire Protection District and the Zoning Administrator shall not authorize occupancy of the Wildfire Lodge unless and until the Zoning Administrator receives a written approval by the Carroll Fire Protection District of both the fire prevention plan and the pre-opening fire safety inspection including emergency vehicle access.**

The special condition stated above is required to ensure the following:

That the relevant fire protection authority has approved the facility in regard to fire prevention and fire safety measures.

Modified Special Condition H. (changes underlined)

- H. **This special use permit does not authorize commercial onsite food preparation or the construction of any commercial food preparation area or commercial kitchen.**

The special condition stated above is required to ensure the following:

To protect public health.

ATTACHMENTS

- A Email from Champaign County Department of Public Health dated April 2, 2026
- B Letter in opposition to proposed development and signed petition of neighbor concerns received May 27, 2026
- C Response to neighbor concerns from petitioner Jennifer Ash received May 27, 2026.
 - (1) Cover Letter
 - (2) Response to Neighbor Opposition
 - (3) Map Exhibit attachment
- D Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resource Information Report received May 28, 2026

Charles W. Campo

From: Larry Johnson <ljohnson@fehrgraham.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2026 2:48 PM
To: Chad Osterbur
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL EMAIL]FW: Public Health

FYI

Larry A. Johnson
Fehr Graham Engr & Env
1610 Broadmoor
Champaign, IL 61820
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jacob Sigler <jsigler@c-uphd.org>
Date: April 2, 2026 at 11:54:32 AM CDT
To: Larry Johnson <ljohnson@fehrgraham.com>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL EMAIL]FW: Public Health

This Message is from an external sender.



Larry,

In doing a very basic review of the property, I don't see any glaring issues. There is no Flood zone on the property which is helpful. Without a soil report, more specific information on usage, layout of water lines, etc it is impossible to determine the size of area needed and ideal locations for a septic absorption field, but it does appear there could be adequate space. I believe municipal water is available along that area of high cross Rd, which could also be helpful as private wells have much larger setback requirements.

Jacob Sigler B.S., LEHP
Sewage & Water Program Coordinator
Champaign-Urbana Public Health District
201 W. Kenyon Rd.
Champaign, IL 61820
217-531-2928

From: Larry Johnson <ljohnson@fehrgraham.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2026 2:48 PM
To: Jacob Sigler <jsigler@c-uphd.org>
Cc: Chad Osterbur <costerbur@fehrgraham.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL]FW: Public Health

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jake,

Thanks for looking at this Concept Plan for permit eligibility. We haven't yet done any soil testing or contacted Springfield DPH to see if they have jurisdiction, but would appreciate it if you could take a cursory look at the concept plan.

Thanks for your time and any comments.

Regards,

LARRY A. JOHNSON, PE | Senior Project Manager
Fehr Graham | Engineering & Environmental

From: Chad Osterbur <costerbur@fehrgraham.com>
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2026 9:07 AM
To: Larry Johnson <ljohnson@fehrgraham.com>
Subject: Public Health

Larry, attached is the concept plan for what I was discussing with you last week. If you have a chance lets meet and discuss. Would like to have you chat with Blackford as soon as you are able. Thanks.

CHAD M. OSTERBUR, PE, PLS | Project Manager
Fehr Graham | Engineering & Environmental

1610 Broadmoor Drive
Champaign, Illinois 61821
P: 217.352.7688
fehrgraham.com

Nathan Killion
3302 Nordland Dr
Urbana, IL 61802

May 25, 2026

Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals

Re: Opposition to Wildfire Lodge Special Use Permit Request (Case 207-S-26)

Dear Members of the Board:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Wildfire Lodge Special Use Permit application. As a nearby resident, I believe the proposed development raises significant concerns regarding zoning classification, compatibility with the surrounding area, infrastructure capacity, traffic impacts, public safety, and long-term effects on neighboring properties.

In addition to my concerns and objections outlined below, many surrounding property owners and neighborhood residents have also expressed their own concerns. Attached are three pages of signatures collected in opposition to the proposed development.

1. Classification and Intended Use Concerns

It is unclear how the proposed development has been classified as a “Travel Trailer Park Special Use” rather than an “Outdoor Commercial Recreational Enterprise” or similar commercial event-based use.

Based on the applicant’s project overview materials, the proposed use includes:

- overnight lodging,
- retreats,
- gatherings,
- wellness activities,
- and events involving up to 50 people.

These activities appear consistent with the common understanding of an outdoor commercial recreational enterprise: a for-profit business providing leisure and entertainment activities to the public, primarily outdoors.

The scale and nature of the proposed activities suggest the development may function as a small-scale outdoor event venue in addition to lodging accommodations. If so, the application should be evaluated under standards appropriate for that type of commercial use, including event traffic, parking, noise, and operational impacts.

2. Traffic and Parking Impacts Have Not Been Adequately Addressed

The traffic impact comparison submitted by the applicant appears understated.

Unlike destination resorts with extensive on-site amenities, Wildfire Lodge does not appear to include sufficient amenities that would keep guests on-site for extended periods. Nearby services are not within walking distance, and safe bicycle access is limited or nonexistent. As a result, guest vehicle trips are likely to exceed projected estimates.

Additionally:

- High Cross Road north of Interstate 74 already experiences capacity limitations during peak periods.
- Local residents currently enjoy relatively low traffic volumes and rural road conditions.
- The submitted analysis does not appear to account for traffic generated by events involving up to 50 attendees.
- It is unclear whether adequate parking has been provided for guests, vendors, staff, or overflow traffic.

Before any approval is considered, a more comprehensive traffic and parking study should be required.

3. Incompatibility with the Existing Residential Character of the Area

The surrounding properties consist primarily of:

- single-family residential homes,
- agricultural farmland,
- and low-density rural uses.

Residents purchased homes in this area specifically because of its quiet and secluded rural character. Currently, most traffic and noise are generated locally by residents rather than by commercial activity.

Introducing a commercial hospitality and event-oriented operation into the center of an established rural residential area risks fundamentally altering the character of the neighborhood through:

- increased traffic,
- nighttime activity,
- outdoor gatherings,
- lighting,
- noise,
- and spillover impacts onto neighboring properties.

The proposed natural buffer is also insufficient in the near term, as vegetation may require many years to mature and become effective. In addition, the site plan does not appear to adequately address buffering along the north property line adjacent to existing residences.

4. Comparable Facilities Are Located Away From Residential Areas

Similar facilities already exist within reasonable driving distance, including:

- Ujima Retreat Center,
- Bella Vita Private Resort,
- and Camp Aramoni.

A key distinction is that these facilities appear to be located primarily near wooded areas, farmland, or commercial uses rather than immediately adjacent to established residential neighborhoods.

This raises an important question: what makes this specific property uniquely appropriate for this type of use compared to other locations within Champaign County that could support the development with fewer impacts on neighboring residents?

5. Potential Impact on Property Values

One of the primary reasons residents purchased property in this area was the secluded and rural character of the neighborhood.

If that character is diminished through increased commercial activity, noise, traffic, and transient occupancy, nearby property values may also be negatively affected.

The addition of another commercial-style operation alongside the existing non-residential uses may further impact neighboring residential property values. If possible, the County should conduct or require an independent evaluation of potential impacts on surrounding property values.

6. Infrastructure and Utility Limitations

The area currently has limited infrastructure capacity.

Questions remain regarding:

- whether existing Illinois American Water infrastructure can adequately support the development,
- whether Ameren electrical and gas infrastructure is sufficient for the additional demand,
- and how wastewater will be safely managed given the lack of public sewer service.

The area has historically resisted sewer extension and annexation efforts. It is therefore unclear whether the site can sustainably support expanded commercial occupancy and event usage over time.

7. Fire Protection and Emergency Response Concerns

This area relies primarily on volunteer fire protection services.

The proposal includes guest fire pits and increased transient occupancy, raising important safety concerns, including:

- What safeguards will be implemented regarding fire prevention and enforcement?
- Will hydrant coverage be expanded?
- Is the on-site pond capable of serving as an auxiliary emergency water source?
- Can existing emergency response resources adequately support this type of commercial operation?

8. Long-Term Land Use and Expansion Concerns

Several long-term concerns remain unresolved:

- Is there a contingency plan if the business ceases operation?
- Can the property realistically be restored to agricultural use (or prime farmland), and who would be responsible for doing so?
- What safeguards will prevent gradual expansion into a larger RV park or tiny-home style development?
- What enforcement mechanisms will ensure compliance with the approved scope of the Special Use Permit?
- Does the lodge intend to operate year-round?
- What security measures will be in place if the property is not staffed year-round?

9. Stormwater and Drainage Concerns

There appears to be an existing waterway or drainage feature on the property that serves surrounding areas.

Development activity could alter drainage patterns and negatively impact neighboring properties through:

- runoff changes,
- erosion,
- or reduced drainage capacity.

A detailed drainage and stormwater management plan should be required prior to any approval.

Conclusion

The proposed development raises substantial concerns regarding:

- compatibility with surrounding land uses,
- traffic and parking impacts,
- infrastructure capacity,
- fire protection,
- drainage,
- preservation of the rural residential character of the area,
- and the potential for long-term commercial expansion.

I also respectfully ask the Board to consider what direct benefit this proposed development offers to the surrounding residential neighborhood relative to the impacts and risks it may introduce.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Board deny the requested Special Use Permit or, at minimum, require substantially more detailed analysis and stronger safeguards before considering approval.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nathan Killion

PETITION OF NEIGHBORS CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF WILDFIRE LODGE

We, the undersigned residents and neighboring property owners, respectfully submit this petition to express our concerns regarding the potential impact that Wildfire Lodge, located at 1950 High Cross Road, may have on surrounding properties, neighborhood safety, traffic, noise levels, property values, and the overall character of the community.

Printed Name	Address	Signature
ROBERT W BALES	2002 N. High Cross Rd URBANA, IL 61802	Robert W Bales
MILLERS	3304 Nordland URBANA IL 61802	[Signature]
CHEERYL LUB	3306 NORDLAND DR URBANA IL 61802	[Signature]
Nathan Killian	3302 Nordland Dr URBANA IL 61802	[Signature]
Paula Winger	2000 N. High Cross URBANA, IL 61802	Paula Winger
Tracy Winger	2000 N. High Cross Rd URBANA IL 61802	[Signature]
ANTHONY GRAVINO	2001 N. HIGH CROSS URBANA, IL 61802	[Signature]
Steven Hester	3301 Nordland Dr URBANA, IL 61802	[Signature]
Ivelyn Burke	2004 N. Highcross Rd URBANA, IL 61802	POA Victoria Bales
Scott Grider	1903 N High Cross URB. ILL 61801	Scott Grider
J-C. Kilbourne	3303 Nordland Dr	J-C. Kilbourne
Deanna Kilbourne	3303 Nordland Dr URBANA, IL 61802	Deanna Kilbourne
Glen McInland	2005 High Cross Rd URBANA, ILL 61802	Glen McInland
Paul Olson	3009 Kyle St URBANA, IL 61802	Paul Olson
KENNETH R. OLSON	3009 KYLE ST URBANA, IL 61802	Kenneth R. Olson
Dora Pope-Grubb	1902 Shelly Ct	Dora Pope-Grubb
JOHN GRABB	1902 SHELLEY CT	John Grabb
LINDA YEARSLEY	2002 Shelly Ct	Linda Yearsley
Heather Dunn	2005 Shelly Ct.	Heather Dunn

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Printed Name	Address	Signature
Joyce Remesch	3004 Kyle St	Joyce Remesch
Gael Spainhour	5004 Kyle St	Gael Spainhour
Argelita Simon	3010 Kyle St	ARGELITA SIMON
Mariana Simon-Tobias	3010 Kyle St	M. Simon
Sandra Shafer	1813 Joni Leann Ct	Sandra Shafer
Forrest Leon Shafer	1813 Joni Leann Ct.	Forrest Leon Shafer
CAESAR I. TALIL	1807 CINDY LYNN ST.	Caesar I. Talil
Ashley Dallas	2903 Kyle St	Ash Dallas
Kalah McGraw	1806 Cindy Lynn St	Kalah McGraw
Kirk McGraw	1806 Cindy Lynn St	Kirk McGraw

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Printed Name	Address	Signature
William Vogel	2007 Shelly Ct. Urbana	William Vogel
Deborah Wilcox	3305 E. Bruce Acres Urbana	Deborah L. Wilcox
JENNIE RICE	3212 BRUCE ACRES URBANA	Jennie Rice
JENNIE A RICE & KRISTI J WALL TRUST	PARCEL 302102152005	Jennie Rice
Taylor Anderson	3303 E Bruce Acres Urbana IL	T Anderson
Kaley Spencer	3306 E Bruce Acres Dr. Urbana, IL	Kaley Spencer
Maria Theron	3205 E Bruce Acres Dr, Urbana IL	Maria Theron
Ryan Cunningham	3202 E Bruce Acres Urbana IL	Ryan Cunningham
RANDALL BROWN	2408 N HIGH CROSS RD URBANA 61802	Randall Brown
Sharon McLeod	3201 Bruce Acres Urbana, IL	Sharon McLeod

Cover letter — applicant response to neighbor opposition

Case 207-S-26 · Wildfire Lodge · 1950 High Cross Road, Urbana, IL

To: Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Jennifer Ash, Applicant

Date: May 27, 2026

Dear Members of the Board,

I am submitting this letter in response to the opposition filed by Nathan Killion on May 25, 2026, and the accompanying petition. I welcome the opportunity to address the concerns raised, and I do so with the detailed point-by-point response attached.

Before the Board reviews that response, I want to establish a broader context that I believe is essential to evaluating this application fairly.

This project was designed from the ground up to be low-impact.

Every decision made in the planning and engineering of Wildfire Lodge — from the selection of RVIA and NOAH certified park model cabins on their chassis, to the dark-sky lighting plan, to the private septic systems, to the on-site pond and native prairie restoration — was made with the surrounding environment and neighboring properties in mind. Low impact is not an afterthought or a concession to the permitting process. It is the design intent.

Wildfire Lodge is conceived as a quiet retreat. Our guests are seeking exactly what this land offers: stillness, ecological beauty, and separation from the noise of daily life. A loud or disruptive operation is contrary to our business model, not just our permit conditions. We have more to lose from noise and light violations than any neighbor does.

In fact, I will note with some candor: as a designer of a quiet retreat experience, I am more concerned about the noise that reaches my property from the existing surrounding uses than I am about any noise my guests will generate. That observation is not a complaint — it is a measure of how modest the impact of this operation will genuinely be.

The technical concerns raised will be resolved through the permitting process — by design.

Several concerns in Mr. Killion's letter relate to drainage, stormwater, utility capacity, septic systems, and fire protection. I want to be direct with the Board about how these concerns are addressed: through permits, each of which requires engineered plans reviewed and approved by the relevant County and state agencies before a single shovel enters the ground.

Stormwater management requires an engineered drainage plan, reviewed by the County. Septic systems require a private sewage permit from the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, sized to commercial standards. Electrical and water connections require utility coordination and inspection. Fire safety requires pre-opening inspection. These are not matters left to the applicant's good intentions — they are enforced by the permitting authorities as conditions of construction.

Our engineering firm, Fehr Graham, is engaged and will prepare all required plans in full compliance with applicable Illinois statutes and Champaign County regulations. Our contractors will be held to the same standard. There is no scenario in which construction proceeds without these plans being approved. The permitting process is the safeguard — and it is already built into the project timeline.

What this application is, and what it is not.

Our property is a low-density, boutique lodging operation: a maximum of 8 park model cabins on 15 acres, with a greenhouse used as an amenity space for small private gatherings **secondary** to the lodging. It is not an RV park. It is not a public campground. It is not a commercial event venue. It is not a restaurant or a bar. The cabins remain on their chassis and can be relocated if the business ever ceases — leaving the land fully available for agricultural use with no demolition and no residual commercial footprint.

This project converts formerly farmed land — with all the noise, dust, and chemical exposure that active row crop agriculture entails — into a restored oak

savannah and native prairie with a managed pond. In every practical dimension, that is an improvement for the surrounding neighborhood, not a degradation of it.

I respectfully ask the Board to evaluate this application on its merits, which the staff report has already found to support approval. I welcome the Board's conditions as the mechanism to hold this property to the commitments described in the attached response, and I commit to honoring them.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Ash

Applicant — Case 207-S-26

1950 High Cross Road, Urbana, IL 61802

Attached: Point-by-point response to neighbor opposition letter (9 sections) with illustrative maps.

Applicant response to neighbor opposition

Case 207-S-26 · Wildfire Lodge · 1950 High Cross Road, Urbana, IL

To: Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Jennifer Ash, Applicant

Date: May 27, 2026

Re: Response to opposition letter of Nathan Killion (May 25, 2026) and accompanying petition

I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised by Mr. Killion and the neighboring residents who signed his petition. I take these concerns seriously and welcome the Board's conditions as the mechanism to ensure Wildfire Lodge operates as a genuinely good neighbor. I address each of the nine points raised below.

1. Classification and intended use

Mr. Killion questions whether the Travel Trailer Park Special Use classification is appropriate, suggesting the project should instead be evaluated as an Outdoor Commercial Recreational Enterprise.

The classification was reviewed and determined by Champaign County Planning and Zoning staff after full review of the project overview materials — it is not a classification the applicant chose unilaterally. There is also a technically precise reason for it: the cabins are RVIA and NOAH certified park model recreational vehicles that remain on their chassis. They are not permanent structures. Travel Trailer Park SUP is not merely a convenient classification — it is the technically correct one given the physical nature of the product.

The distinction between this application and an Outdoor Commercial Recreational Enterprise is principled, not semantic. The Board has drawn this exact distinction before. Ujima Retreat Center (Case 106-S-23, 2023) was correctly classified as an Outdoor Commercial Recreational Enterprise because its primary offering is event-based experiences — retreats, wellness programming, youth field trips — with a single cabin as an accessory amenity. Wildfire Lodge is correctly classified under Travel Trailer Park SUP because its primary offering is overnight lodging in 8 park model cabins. The greenhouse event space is an accessory amenity, not the primary use. The classification follows the primary use, and staff has determined that primary use correctly.

2. Traffic and parking

Mr. Killion argues the traffic study understates vehicle trips, that High Cross Road already has capacity limitations, and that parking adequacy is unclear.

On parking: the site plan shows 16–20 dedicated shared parking spaces in addition to one space at each of the 8 cabins, for a total of 24–28 on-site spaces. At maximum event capacity of 50 people — assuming an average of 2 persons per vehicle — approximately 25 vehicles would be present. Cabin guests are already parked at their individual spaces, leaving the shared lot available for event attendees, vendors, and staff. No right-of-way parking is anticipated or permitted. The applicant will accept a condition making this explicit.

On the characterization of High Cross Road as a low-traffic rural corridor: this requires a factual correction. The Apple Dumplin' restaurant operates at 2014 N. High Cross Road — essentially adjacent to this property — six days per week. Life Church CU holds two Sunday morning services and a Tuesday evening service at 2107 N. High Cross Road. Harvest Church, located on Cindy Lynn Street, is accessed via High Cross Road to Kyle Street — meaning its congregation turns off High Cross Road directly across from the south border of

this property every Sunday morning. All three establishments use High Cross Road as their primary traffic corridor. Wildfire Lodge's 6–8 weekend cabin turnovers — with the majority of guests arriving Friday evening and departing Sunday — are modest and predictable by comparison, and far less concentrated than a daily restaurant crowd and two church congregations already using this same stretch of road every week.

The applicant will accept a condition capping event frequency and requiring all event parking to be on-site.

3. Incompatibility with the residential character of the area

Mr. Killion argues the project will fundamentally alter the rural character of the neighborhood through noise, lighting, nighttime activity, and spillover impacts.

The conditions the Board is already recommending address this directly:

- **Condition D** requires dark-sky exterior lighting only, eliminating spillover onto neighboring properties.
- **Condition F** prohibits noise past 10 PM, a limit already written into guest booking policies, house rules, and the pre-arrival guide. Wildfire Lodge will also deploy digital noise monitoring devices throughout the property. These devices measure decibel levels only — no audio recording — and provide real-time reporting through the property management network. Decibel logs will be available to the Zoning Administrator upon request. The applicant welcomes this being written as an explicit condition.

This is also a low-density operation: a maximum of 8 cabins (each <400 sq ft) on 15 acres. A residential subdivision on this parcel would generate more permanent structures, more daily trips, and a more lasting change to the character of the area.

Regarding the assertion that "most traffic and noise are generated locally by residents rather than by commercial activity" — as noted above, this is factually inaccurate given the existing restaurant and church on this corridor.

On buffering: the opposition specifically calls out the north property line as inadequately addressed, and I take that seriously. I am prepared to accept an enhanced buffering condition that includes:

- Dense native plantings along the full north property line, with species selected for screening height and Champaign County soil conditions, coordinated with the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District
- A minimum planting timeline and survival standard written into the condition so it is enforceable, not aspirational
- Supplemental fencing along the north line during the establishment period if the Board believes it is warranted

This gives neighbors near-term, measurable protection rather than a promise that vegetation will eventually mature.

4. Comparable facilities and site selection

Mr. Killion cites Ujima, Bella Vita, and Camp Aramoni as examples of comparable facilities sited away from residential neighborhoods, and asks why this specific property was chosen.

Each of these comparables either does not support the argument or directly contradicts it.

Ujima has already been addressed under Point 1. It is an Outdoor Commercial Recreational Enterprise with a single cabin as an accessory. It is not a lodging operation and is not a meaningful comparable to Wildfire Lodge.

Bella Vita Private Resort is not comparable on any dimension. It is a 110-acre RV resort in Coles County — a different county and a different regulatory jurisdiction — offering public RV sites, tent camping, day passes, weekend memberships, and events in excess of 100 people at rates of \$25–\$65 per night. Wildfire Lodge is a 15-acre boutique lodging operation with 8 private cabins, no public day access, no RV sites, capped events, and a luxury price point. These are categorically different operations.

More importantly, the premise that Bella Vita is sited away from residential areas is factually incorrect. A residential subdivision — Nees Street and Amber Lane — sits directly across IL-16 from Bella Vita's entrance. The Charleston Speedway is immediately adjacent to the east. If the Board were to hold Wildfire Lodge to a standard of being "away from residential areas," Bella Vita would fail that same test. (See attachments.)

Camp Aramoni is 90 miles north of Champaign in LaSalle County near Starved Rock State Park — an entirely different tourism and regulatory context. And again, the residential premise does not hold. Two residential clusters sit directly south of Camp Aramoni on E 8th Road / Route 178: one on N 2189th Road immediately south of the camp entrance, and a second on N 2179th Road with a cul-de-sac of homes within a quarter mile. (See attachments.)

Both of the neighbor's own "well-sited" comparables are adjacent to residential areas. The factual premise of this argument does not hold.

As for why this specific property was chosen: Wildfire Lodge was sited here because of the land's ecological characteristics — existing oak savannah remnants, an on-site pond, and native prairie restoration potential. The project is converting formerly farmed land to a more ecologically productive and visually distinctive landscape. This is what makes the site uniquely appropriate, not its proximity or distance from residences.

5. Property values

Mr. Killion argues that increased commercial activity and transient occupancy will depress neighboring property values.

Three points bear on this.

First, consider what neighbors are currently adjacent to. This land is actively farmed row crops. Row crop agriculture means seasonal equipment noise — tractors and combines running at early morning hours and through harvest — dust from tillage and harvest operations, and regular pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer applications with associated chemical drift. A restored oak savannah with a pond, native prairie grasses, and managed wildflowers is a material improvement in what neighbors look out on and what they are exposed to. The Wildfire Lodge does not replace a quiet, scenic landscape — it replaces a working farm.

Second, the Apple Dumplin' restaurant and Life Church CU have operated on this corridor for years. If those commercial and institutional uses have not depressed neighboring property values, there is no basis to assume that 6–8 cabins with a 10 PM noise cutoff and dark-sky lighting will do so.

Third, the research on rural lodging and agritourism is not one-sided. Boutique lodging operations frequently increase the profile of a rural area and support a local economy that benefits neighboring property owners. The applicant has no objection to an independent analysis if the Board believes it is warranted. We are confident the evidence will support the project.

6. Infrastructure and utility limitations

Mr. Killion raises questions about water, wastewater, and electrical capacity.

- **Water:** City water from Illinois American Water is confirmed as the primary supply. A private well will serve as backup and for irrigation and pond management.
- **Wastewater:** Three private septic systems are planned. All are subject to Champaign County Health Department permit review and approval before construction begins. Sizing will comply with the 50 GPD/bed commercial standard under the Illinois Private Sewage Code (77 Ill. Admin. Code Part 905).
- **Electrical:** Ameren service connections are standard utility coordination. No special infrastructure expansion is anticipated.

The area's historical resistance to sewer extension is not relevant here — the project is explicitly designed around private on-site systems. No sewer extension is sought or required.

7. Fire protection and emergency response

Mr. Killion raises concerns about fire pits, transient occupancy, and the capacity of volunteer fire services.

The applicant supports formal coordination with the local fire district before any guests arrive and will accept a condition requiring a pre-opening fire safety inspection and written fire prevention plan, coordinated with the fire district.

Regarding the on-site pond: we will confirm with the fire district whether it can serve as an auxiliary water source and accept a condition addressing access and markings if they recommend it.

All guest fire pits will have posted rules, physical containment requirements, and will be addressed in the guest liability waiver and pre-arrival communications.

8. Long-term land use and expansion

Mr. Killion raises concerns about expansion, enforcement, closure, and year-round operation.

On expansion: The SUP authorizes a specific use. Any expansion — including into an RV park, tiny-home development, or any other change of use — requires a new SUP application and full public hearing. This is not a theoretical safeguard; it is the operational mechanism of the permit. The applicant will accept annual reporting to the Zoning Administrator as a condition, consistent with what the Board has required of comparable operations.

On closure: The cabins are RVIA and NOAH certified park model recreational vehicles that remain on their chassis. They are not permanent structures. If the business ceases operation, the cabins can be relocated off the property — the same way any park model RV is moved. The only permanent structure is the steel building, which is a standard agricultural outbuilding fully compatible with AG-2 use, including active farming. The land can revert to agricultural use with no demolition and no residual commercial footprint. The applicant is open to a formal decommissioning condition if the Board wishes to make this explicit.

On year-round operation: Wildfire Lodge intends to operate year-round, meaning the property will be actively managed throughout all seasons — not left unstaffed or unsecured.

9. Stormwater and drainage

Mr. Killion raises concerns about altered drainage patterns and impacts to neighboring properties.

Condition C in the staff report already requires a stormwater and drainage plan, prepared by our engineering firm Fehr Graham, before any construction begins.

The plan will address the existing drainage feature on the property and will be designed to protect downstream drainage for neighboring parcels. It will be reviewed and approved by the County before ground is broken.

Beyond regulatory compliance, the land use change itself is likely to improve stormwater conditions relative to the current state. Row crop agriculture involves annual tillage that compacts soil over time, reducing infiltration and increasing surface runoff. Native prairie — which this project is restoring — has deep root systems that dramatically increase water infiltration and reduce runoff compared to tilled cropland. The on-site pond provides additional detention and retention capacity. The net effect of this development is more likely to improve downstream drainage for neighboring parcels than to worsen it. Fehr Graham's plan will quantify this, but the direction of the impact is consistent with the restoration ecology literature.

Conclusion

The nine concerns raised in Mr. Killion's letter are serious and I have tried to address each of them directly and specifically. In summary:

The Travel Trailer Park SUP classification is technically correct — these are RVIA and NOAH certified park model RVs on their chassis. The primary use is lodging, not events. Traffic and parking are manageable and well within the capacity of a corridor that already supports a daily restaurant and two church congregations. The conditions the Board is recommending address noise, lighting, and neighbor impacts. The comparables cited as "well-sited away from residences" are themselves adjacent to residential subdivisions. The land change from row crops to restored prairie is a net improvement for neighbors in every practical dimension — visual, ecological, chemical, and acoustic. Infrastructure is fully planned and permit-required. The RVIA chassis design means the property can revert to agricultural use without demolition if the business ever closes.

I respectfully ask the Board to approve the Special Use Permit and to use its conditions to hold Wildfire Lodge to the good-neighbor commitments described above. I welcome those conditions and commit to operating within them.

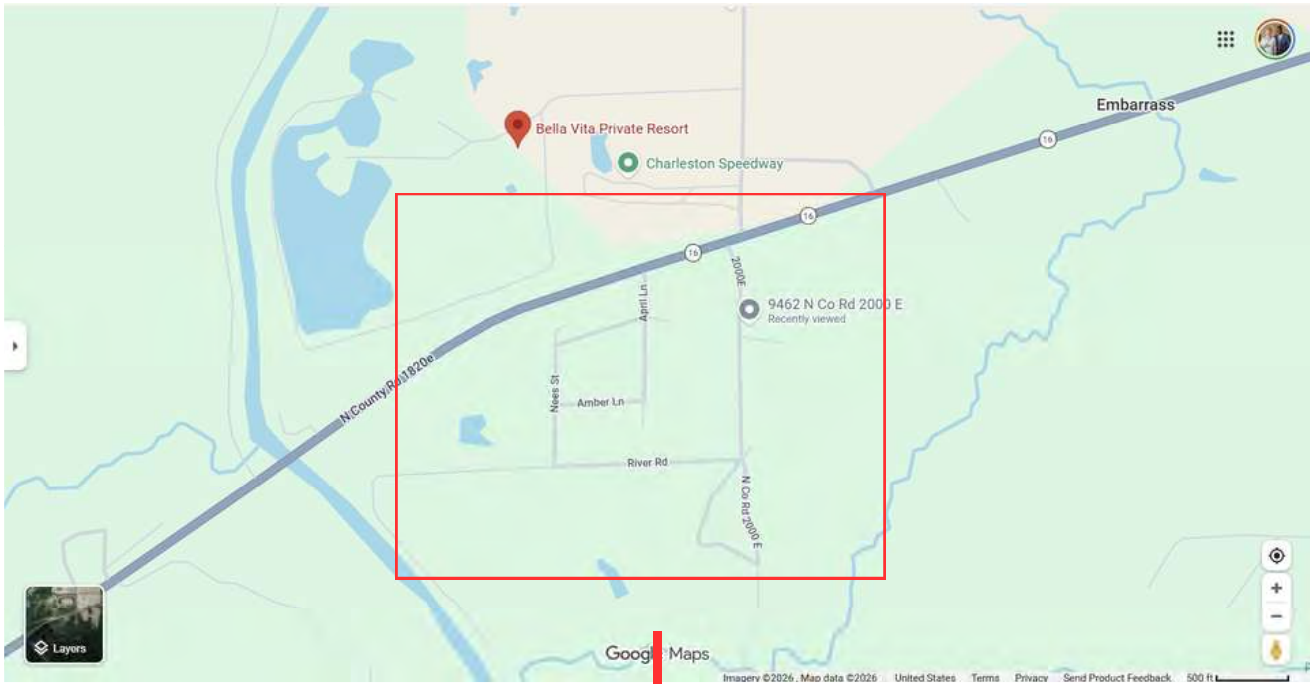
Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Ash

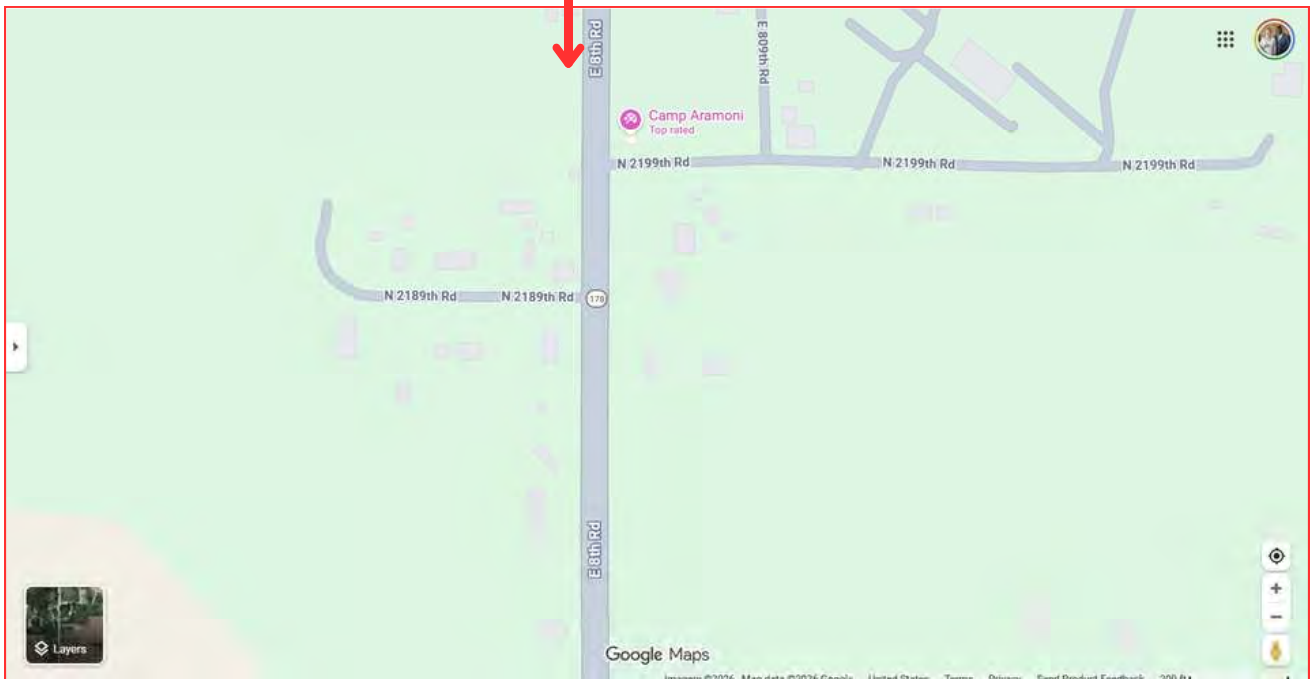
Applicant — Case 207-S-26

1950 High Cross Road, Urbana, IL 61802

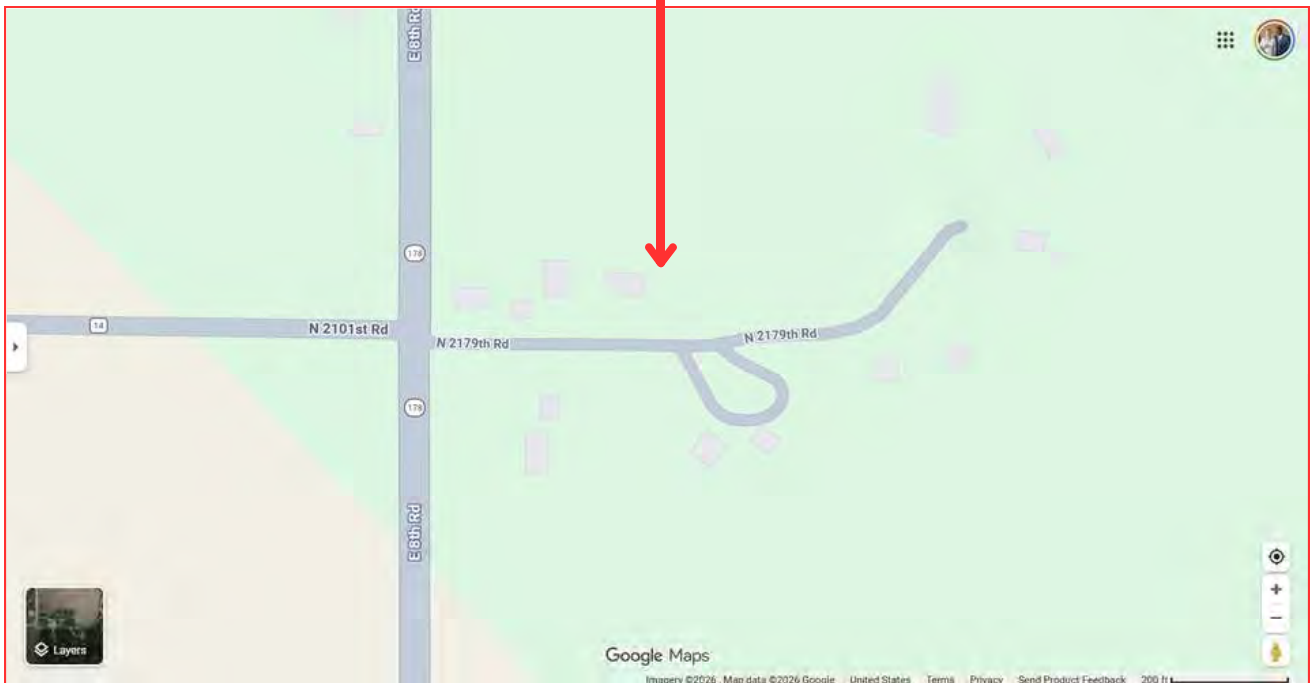
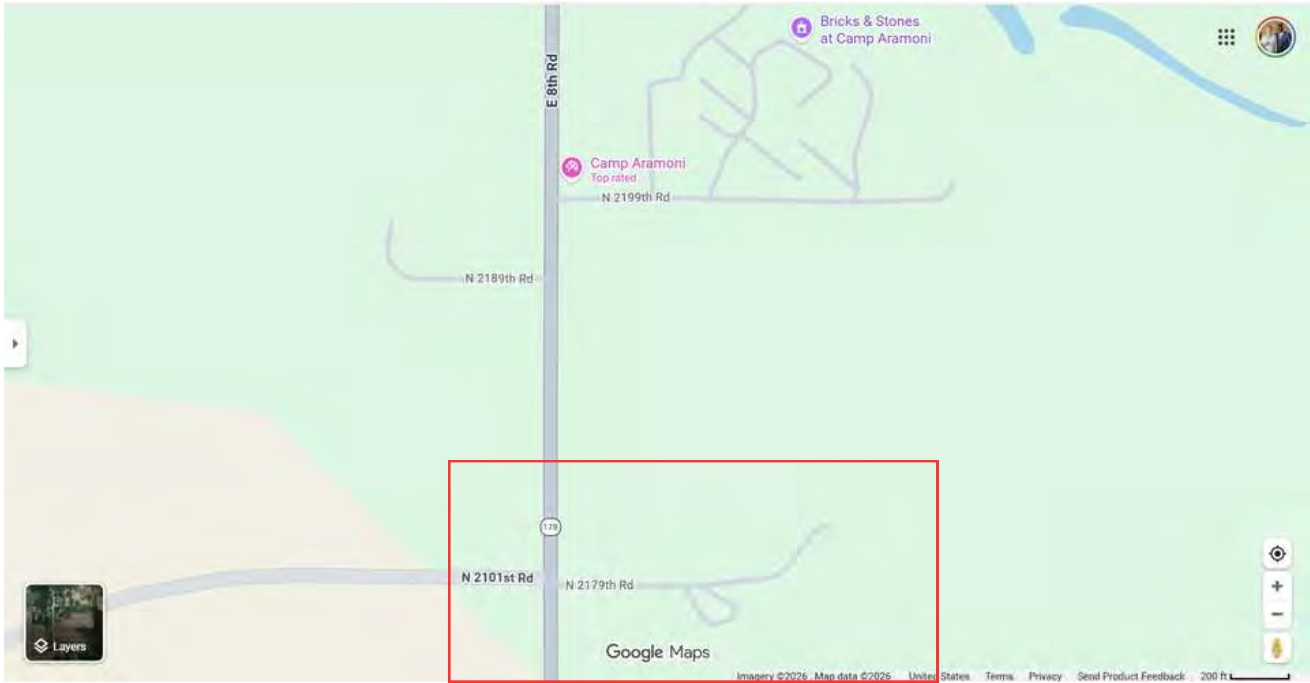
Bella Vita Private Resort, 19795 IL-16, Ashmore, IL 61912



Camp Aramoni, 818 N 2219th Rd, Tonica, IL 61370



Camp Aramoni, 818 N 2219th Rd, Tonica, IL 61370



Champaign County
Soil & Water Conservation District

2110 W Park Court – Suite C

Champaign, IL 61821

217-352-3536 Ext 3



www.ccswcd.com

May 28th, 2026

Wildfire Lodge
Jennifer Ash
2702 Holcomb Dr
Urbana, IL 61822

Re: Natural Resource Information Report
Location: Urbana Township 19 North 9 East Sec 2
NRI#: 2026-05-01
Zoning: AG2

Dear Jennifer Ash,

The Champaign Soil & Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) has reviewed your application for a Natural Resource Information Report (NRI) for the following property:

No wetlands or floodplains were found on the site from office maps (see attached). However, soils within the project area primarily have a low infiltration rating. Our inventories are for informational and planning purposes only. Any proposed drainage work, in wet areas, requires a certified wetland delineation. If drainage work is to occur, please contact the Army Corps of Engineers and Champaign County Department of Planning & Development for permit information.

Please be advised that an EcoCAT inventory (See attached) shows the following within the project area; Brownfield Woods INAI Site, Trelease Woods INAI Site, and Rusty-Patched Bumble-bee may be in the vicinity of the project location.

This letter fulfills your requirement to notify the CCSWCD of land use changes as per the Illinois Compiled State Statutes, Illinois Revised Statutes, and the Champaign County policy. If you have any questions concerning this letter, feel free to call our office at the number listed above.

Sincerely,

Natalie Sutton
Resource Conservationist

Applicant: Champaign County SWCD
Contact: Natalie Sutton
Address: 2110 W Park Court Ste C
Champaign, IL 61821
Project: Wildfire Lodge
Address: Champaign, Champaign

IDNR Project Number: 2616413
Date: 05/28/2026

Description: NRI Report

Natural Resource Review Results

This project was submitted for information only. It is not a consultation under Part 1075.

The Illinois Natural Heritage Database shows the following protected resources may be in the vicinity of the project location:

Brownfield Woods INAI Site
Trelease Woods INA Site
Rusty-Patched Bumble-Bee (*Bombus affinis*)

Location

The applicant is responsible for the accuracy of the location submitted for the project.

County: Champaign

Township, Range, Section:

19N, 9E, 2
19N, 9E, 3



IL Department of Natural Resources

Contact

Impact Assessment Section
217-785-5500
Division of Ecosystems & Environment

Government Jurisdiction

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Disclaimer

The Illinois Natural Heritage Database cannot provide a conclusive statement on the presence, absence, or condition of natural resources in Illinois. This review reflects the information existing in the Database at the time of this inquiry, and should not be regarded as a final statement on the site being considered, nor should it be a substitute for detailed site surveys or field surveys required for environmental assessments. If additional protected resources are encountered during the project's implementation, compliance with applicable statutes and regulations is required.

Terms of Use

By using this website, you acknowledge that you have read and agree to these terms. These terms may be revised by IDNR as necessary. If you continue to use the EcoCAT application after we post changes to these terms, it will mean that you accept such changes. If at any time you do not accept the Terms of Use, you may not continue to use the website.

1. The IDNR EcoCAT website was developed so that units of local government, state agencies and the public could request information or begin natural resource consultations on-line for the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act, Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act, and Illinois Interagency Wetland Policy Act. EcoCAT uses databases, Geographic Information System mapping, and a set of programmed decision rules to determine if proposed actions are in the vicinity of protected natural resources. By indicating your agreement to the Terms of Use for this application, you warrant that you will not use this web site for any other purpose.

2. Unauthorized attempts to upload, download, or change information on this website are strictly prohibited and may be punishable under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986 and/or the National Information Infrastructure Protection Act.

3. IDNR reserves the right to enhance, modify, alter, or suspend the website at any time without notice, or to terminate or restrict access.

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EcoCAT operates on a state of Illinois computer system. We may use software to monitor traffic and to identify unauthorized attempts to upload, download, or change information, to cause harm or otherwise to damage this site. Unauthorized attempts to upload, download, or change information on this server is strictly prohibited by law.

Unauthorized use, tampering with or modification of this system, including supporting hardware or software, may subject the violator to criminal and civil penalties. In the event of unauthorized intrusion, all relevant information regarding possible violation of law may be provided to law enforcement officials.

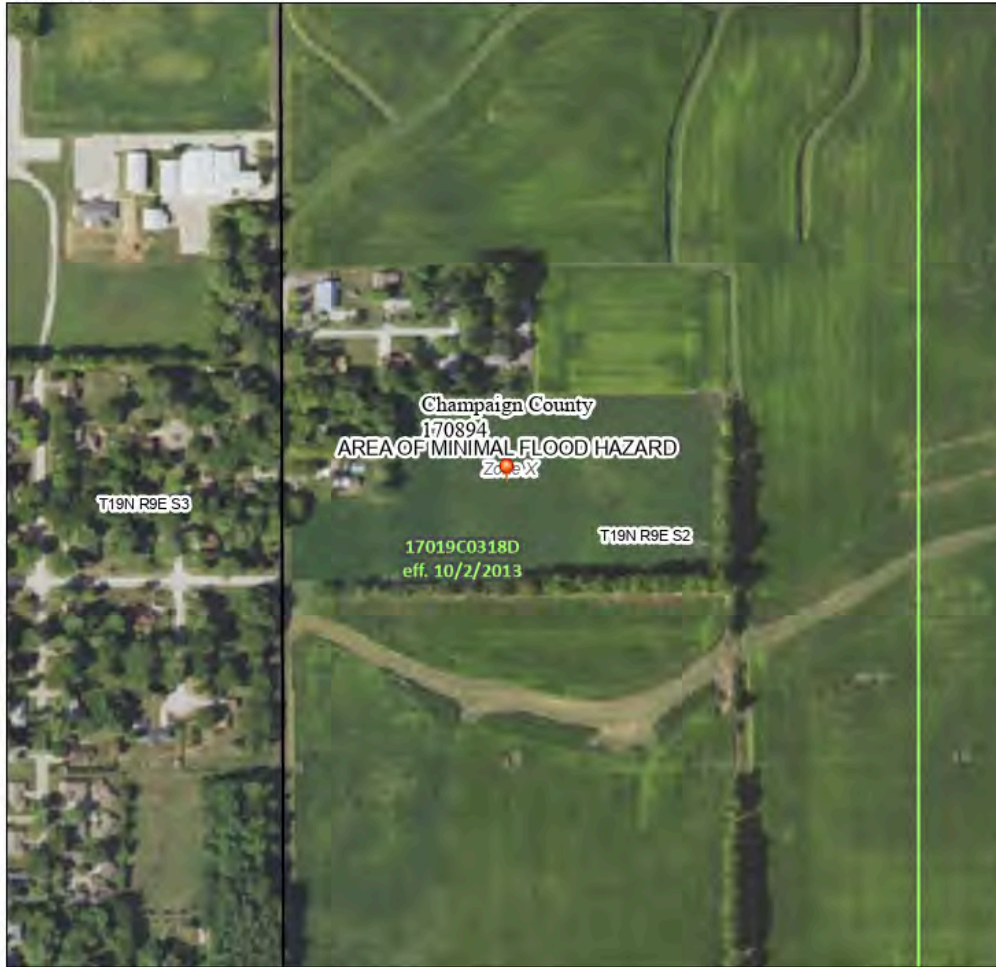
Privacy

EcoCAT generates a public record subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Otherwise, IDNR uses the information submitted to EcoCAT solely for internal tracking purposes.

National Flood Hazard Layer FIRMette



88°9'57"W 40°8'10"N



Legend

SEE FIS REPORT FOR DETAILED LEGEND AND INDEX MAP FOR FIRM PANEL LAYOUT

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS		Without Base Flood Elevation (BFE) <i>Zone A, V, X-200</i>
		With BFE or Depth <i>Zone AE, AO, AH, VE, AR</i>
		Regulatory Floodway
OTHER AREAS OF FLOOD HAZARD		0.2% Annual chance Flood Hazard, Areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depth less than one foot or with drainage areas of less than one square mile <i>Zone X</i>
		Future Conditions 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard <i>Zone X</i>
		Area with Reduced Flood Risk due to Levee. See Notes. <i>Zone X</i>
		Area with Flood Risk due to Levee <i>Zone D</i>
OTHER AREAS		NO SCREEN Area of Minimal Flood Hazard <i>Zone X</i>
		Effective LOMRS
GENERAL STRUCTURES		Area of Undetermined Flood Hazard <i>Zone D</i>
		Channel, Culvert, or Storm Sewer
OTHER FEATURES		Levee, Dike, or Floodwall
		Cross Sections with 1% Annual Chance Water Surface Elevation
MAP PANELS		Digital Data Available
		No Digital Data Available
		Unmapped

The pin displayed on the map is an approximate point selected by the user and does not represent an authoritative property location.

This map complies with FEMA's standards for the use of digital flood maps, if it is not void as described below. The basemap shown complies with FEMA's basemap accuracy standards.

The flood hazard information is derived directly from the authoritative NFHL web services provided by FEMA. This map was exported on 5/28/2025 at 5:20 PM and does not reflect changes or amendments subsequent to this date and time. The NFHL and effective information may change or become superseded by new data over time.

This map image is void if the one or more of the following map elements do not appear: basemap imagery, flood zone labels, legend, scale bar, map creation date, community identifiers, FIRM panel number, and FIRM effective date. Map images for unmapped and unmodernized areas cannot be used for regulatory purposes.

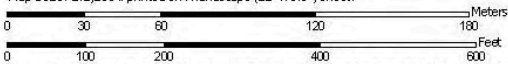
Basemap Imagery Source: USGS National Map 2023

Hydrologic Soil Group—Champaign County, Illinois
(Wildfire Lodge)

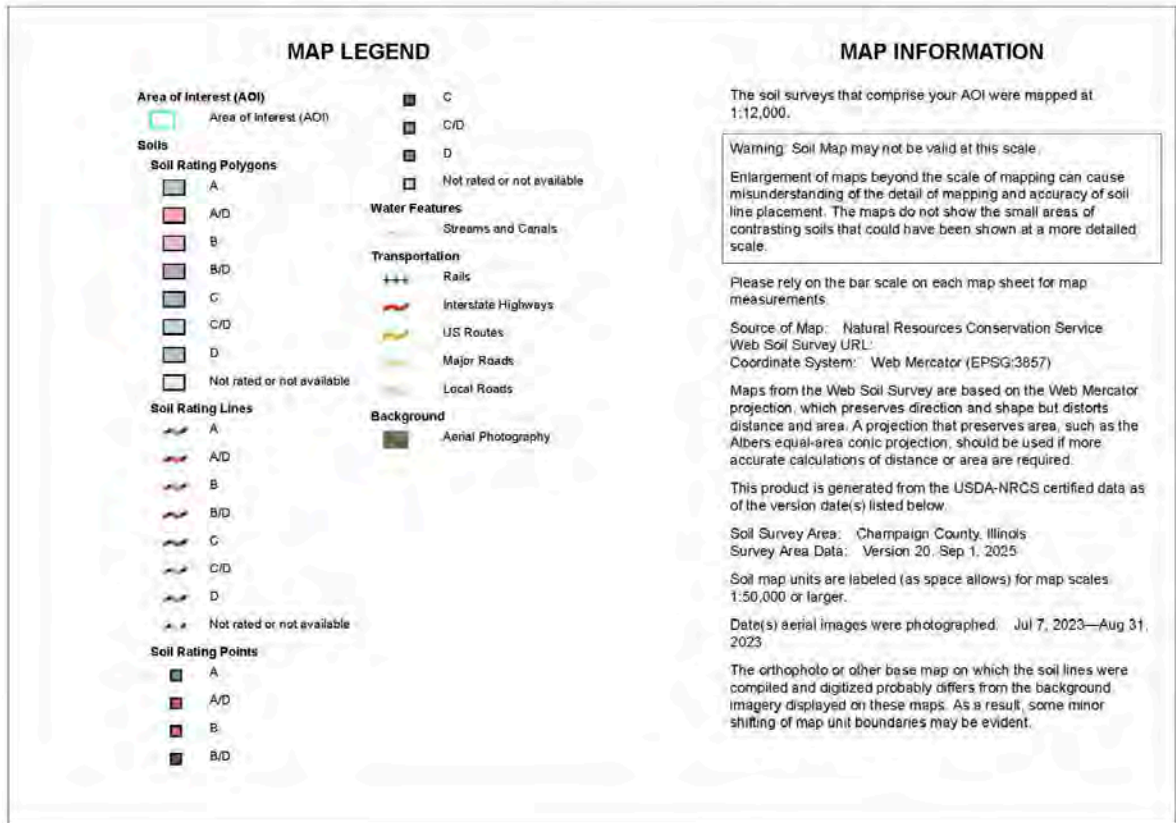


Soil Map may not be valid at this scale.

Map Scale: 1:2,250 if printed on A landscape (11" x 8.5") sheet.



Map projection: Web Mercator Corner coordinates: WGS84 Edge tics: UTM Zone 16N WGS84



Hydrologic Soil Group

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
152A	Drummer silty clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	B/D	6.3	39.4%
233B	Birkbeck silt loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes	C	0.1	0.5%
236A	Sabina silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	C/D	3.6	22.7%
291B	Xenia silt loam, Bloomington Ridged Plain, 2 to 5 percent slopes	C	5.9	37.4%
Totals for Area of Interest			15.9	100.0%

Description

Hydrologic soil groups are based on estimates of runoff potential. Soils are assigned to one of four groups according to the rate of water infiltration when the soils are not protected by vegetation, are thoroughly wet, and receive precipitation from long-duration storms.

The soils in the United States are assigned to four groups (A, B, C, and D) and three dual classes (A/D, B/D, and C/D). The groups are defined as follows:

Group A. Soils having a high infiltration rate (low runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These consist mainly of deep, well drained to excessively drained sands or gravelly sands. These soils have a high rate of water transmission.

Group B. Soils having a moderate infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of moderately deep or deep, moderately well drained or well drained soils that have moderately fine texture to moderately coarse texture. These soils have a moderate rate of water transmission.

Group C. Soils having a slow infiltration rate when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of soils having a layer that impedes the downward movement of water or soils of moderately fine texture or fine texture. These soils have a slow rate of water transmission.

Group D. Soils having a very slow infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. These consist chiefly of clays that have a high shrink-swell potential, soils that have a high water table, soils that have a claypan or clay layer at or near the surface, and soils that are shallow over nearly impervious material. These soils have a very slow rate of water transmission.

If a soil is assigned to a dual hydrologic group (A/D, B/D, or C/D), the first letter is for drained areas and the second is for undrained areas. Only the soils that in their natural condition are in group D are assigned to dual classes.

Rating Options

Aggregation Method: Dominant Condition









Component Percent Cutoff: None Specified

Tie-break Rule: Higher



May 28, 2026

Wetlands

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
|  Estuarine and Marine Deepwater |  Freshwater Emergent Wetland |  Lake |
|  Estuarine and Marine Wetland |  Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland |  Other |
| |  Freshwater Pond |  Riverine |

This map is for general reference only. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for the accuracy or currentness of the base data shown on this map. All wetlands related data should be used in accordance with the layer metadata found on the Wetlands Mapper web site.