

MEMORANDUM NUMBER 1

EMIQUON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

FULTON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

SUMMARY

TYPE OF PROPOSAL : New MBCC Boundary and Price Approval  
LOCATION : 36 miles southwest of Peoria, Illinois  
TOTAL REFUGE (Proposed)  
ACRES : 76 (fee)  
OWNERSHIPS : One  
ESTIMATED COST : \$815,000; PER ACRE: \$10,697

PRICE APPROVAL

ACRES : 76 (fee)  
OWNERSHIPS : One  
APPRAISED VALUE AND  
RECOMMENDED PRICE : \$815,000; PER ACRE: \$10,697

PURPOSE OF REFUGE : To protect and manage habitat for migratory waterfowl and other migratory birds.

STATE APPROVAL : April 21, 2026, JB Pritzker, Governor, State of Illinois

REFUGE STATUS

	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Per Acre</u>
ACQUIRED WITH LWCF FUNDS	: 1,530	\$1,764,858	\$1,155
ACQUIRED WITH NAWCA FUNDS	: 247	\$572,000	\$2,314
ACQUIRED BY OTHER FUNDS	: 778	1,707,042	\$2,196
ACQUIRED BY EXCHANGE	: 4	\$19,750	\$5,253
THIS PROPOSAL	: 76	\$815,000	\$10,697
REMAINING TO BE ACQUIRED	: <u>8,487</u>		
TOTAL	: 11,122		

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HISTORY -

The Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge is located within the Mississippi Flyway along the Illinois River, which flows northeast to southwest through the State. The Refuge was established on December 29, 1993, under the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 to conserve wetlands of national importance and to fulfill international obligations under multiple migratory bird treaties. Situated at the confluence of the Spoon and Illinois Rivers near Havana in west-central Illinois, the Refuge protects a historically rich floodplain landscape once characterized by clear, shallow lakes, sloughs, bottomland hardwood forests, and tallgrass prairies.

The Illinois River corridor is a major migration and wintering area within the Mississippi Flyway, supporting large numbers of migratory waterfowl including mallard, Northern pintail, green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, gadwall, and American wigeon. Emiquon NWR and the other refuges in the Illinois River Refuge Complex collectively support 60 to 70 percent of waterfowl migrating along the Illinois River. The Refuge was designated a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention in 2012. It has also been designated as an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society. This is the first time a proposed land acquisition at Emiquon NWR has come before the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

JUSTIFICATION -

The 76-acre property proposed for fee title acquisition currently consists of low-lying agricultural land that the Service would restore to wetland and floodplain forest, enhancing habitat quality for migratory waterfowl and other migratory birds while improving floodwater storage, sediment retention, and water quality within the Illinois River, an important tributary to the Mississippi River. Acquisition and restoration will support the Service's efforts to restore floodplain hydrology, wetlands, and associated habitats along the Illinois River for the benefit of migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and other priority species. Additionally, the acquisition will provide land-based access to an additional 98 acres of existing refuge lands that are currently reachable only by water via the Spoon River.

PRESENT USE AND OWNERSHIP -

The property is currently in row crop agricultural production and has been farmed for several decades.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT -

Working with partners, the Service would restore the 76-acre tract to floodplain wetlands and floodplain forest using a combination of passive restoration, seeding, planting, and invasive species control, as appropriate. While already functioning as a stopover and feeding area for migratory waterfowl, restoration of the tract will greatly enhance habitat conditions for waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds, and other species that depend on floodplain wetlands. Service management of the property will focus on protecting and enhancing migratory waterfowl habitat, while providing public opportunities for wildlife-dependent recreation.

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The Service anticipates opening these newly acquired lands to hunting and fishing in accordance with state of Illinois seasons and regulations.

ACQUISITION PROPOSAL - Boundary and price approval are requested for the fee title acquisition of 76 acres, in one ownership, for the appraised value and recommended price of \$815,000, or \$10,697 per acre. The price per acre is typical for this area and reflects the appraisal's finding that the highest and best use of the property is agricultural production.

TRACT SUMMARY

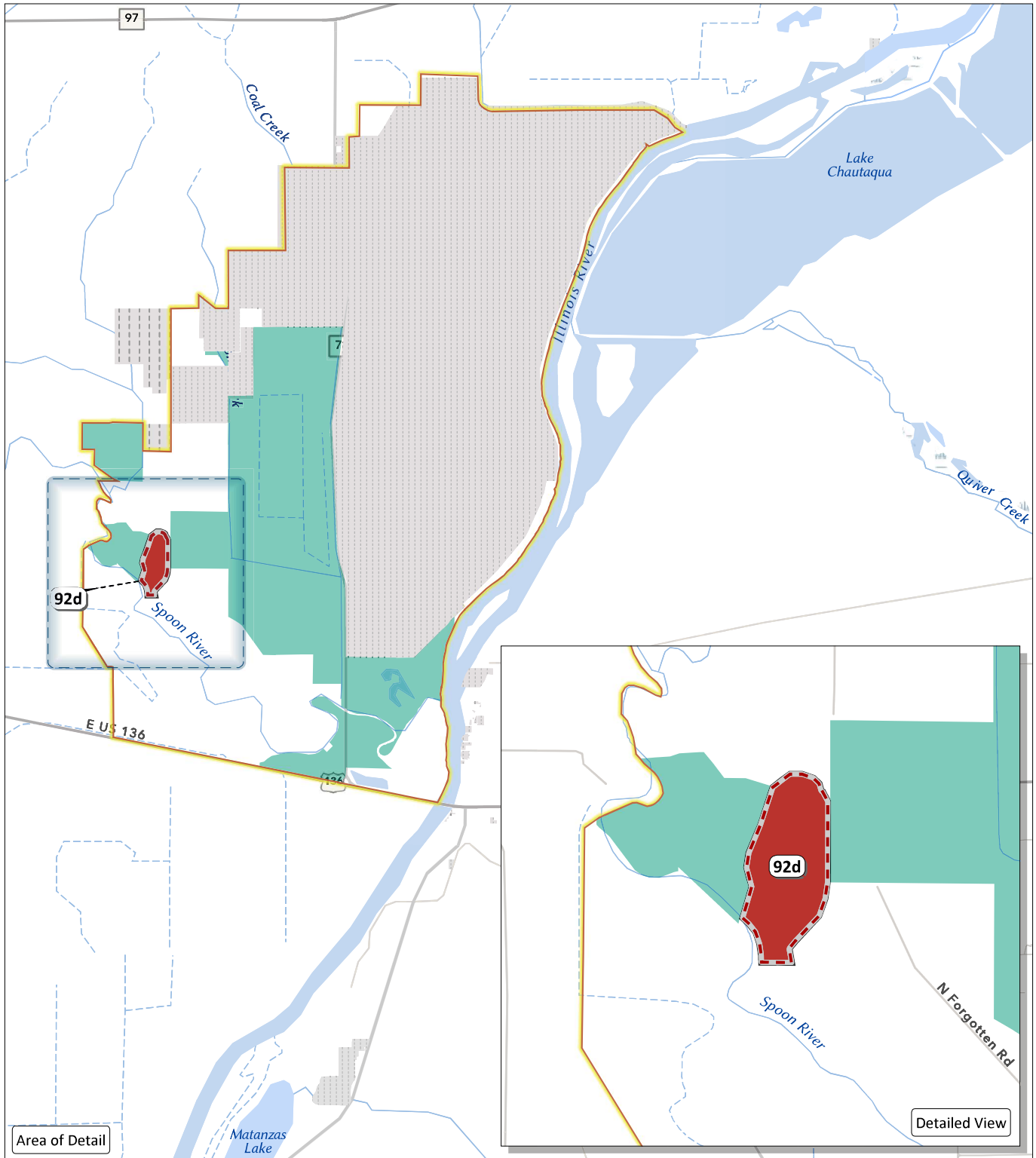
Appraised Value and Recommended Price

<u>Tract Number</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Per Acre</u>
(92d)	76.19	\$815,000	\$10,697

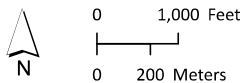
Congressional  
Delegation:

U.S. Senator Richard Durbin (D)  
U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D)  
U.S. Representative Mary Miller (R) 15<sup>th</sup> District

Emiquon NWR  
May 19, 2026



Produced in the Division of Realty  
 Falls Church, Virginia  
 MBCC Meeting Date: May 19, 2026  
 Land Status Current To: 8/15/2025  
 Map Date: 4/15/2026  
 Basemap: ESRI Vector Base v2,  
 FWS Cadastral Vector Data  
 Projection: Web Mercator - NAD 1983



- Boundary to be Approved
- FWS Project Boundary
- Fee
- FWS Previously Acquired
- Less than Fee
- U.S. Protected Areas (PAD-US)
- Federal
- State
- Other Protected Areas