



## Natural Resource Management Department Memorandum

TO: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director  
FROM: Patrick Chess, Director of Natural Resources  
RE: October 2025 Department Monthly Report

### LAND MANAGEMENT

#### NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

##### *Restoration*

##### Prescribed Burn Program

NRM staff prepared dozens of sites for the Fall Burn Season. Burn breaks were installed around the planned burn units representing approximately 5,200 acres of potential burns across over 150 different burn units. Constantly changing wind and weather patterns will dictate which units actually get burned. Staff notifies all local fire departments and mails out postcard notifications to neighbors who reside near the planned prescribed burn locations.

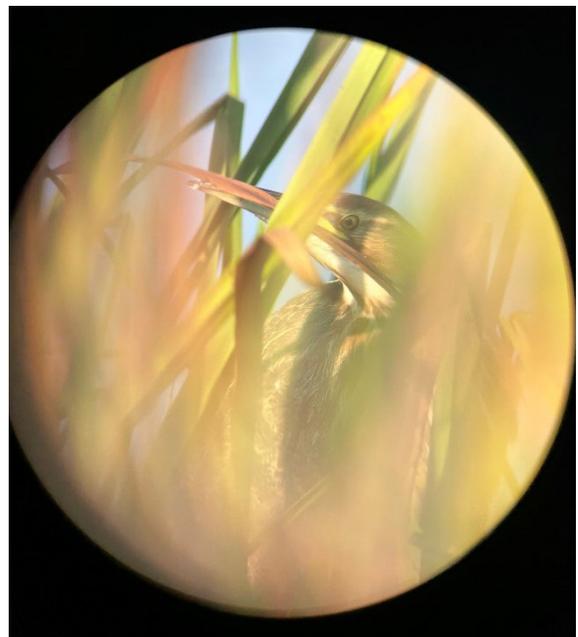
Burn unit preparation largely consists of mowing unit perimeters often followed by raking mowed material away. Breaks are commonly 30 feet wide, and serve to slow the spread of fire allowing staff to contain the burn to the designed unit. This thorough preparation allows for staff to select units that will fit with any given burn condition presented, maximizing crew efficiency.

##### Native Seed Collection & Seed Team

Last month was the continuation of our volunteer seed team events, with events held at Fitchie Creek, Dick Young, and Campton Forest Preserves. We were able to hold numerous successful volunteer events, which averaged approximately 20 people per event. Volunteer-collected seed is now being dried, alongside staff-collected seed. Seed-bearing plant material will then be carefully shredded, sieved, and fan-separated to pull out the viable seed from the chaff. Be on the lookout for news about an NRM Open House, where staff and volunteers will be invited to participate in our annual seed-mixing and potluck lunch. The event is scheduled to take place



*Burn break preparation has been well under way.*



*American Bittern.*

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October Report

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on December 10<sup>th</sup> from 10-1pm at the Natural Resource Management Facility.

### Bison Reintroduction

Staff continued to work at Burlington Prairie Forest Preserve to prepare the site for the reintroduction of bison to the prairies of Kane County. Throughout the course of November the District received a zoning variance from the Village of Burlington to accommodate the electric fence, signage was designed and is being created to post at the site, and the license for bison grazing was signed.

### **Wildlife**

#### Deer Management Program

The District's 2025-2026 Deer Management Program began at all sites on 10/1, with the exception of Big Rock F.P. Hunters at Big Rock were permitted to start scouting and placing stands. Two additional sites were included in the program this year. As of 10/31 harvest levels are: Brunner/FRS (12), Binnie North (1), Freeman Kame (1), Lone Grove (3) and Needham (1).

Staff requested bids from vendors to conduct our first ever deer surveys utilizing thermal drone technology. The surveys will be conducted at 4 sites this winter to evaluate the abundance of deer at locations where management is occurring.

#### Avian Research

Wildlife staff are conducting weekly water bird surveys at Muirhead Springs to monitor fall migration. Increases in waterfowl numbers and species diversity are reflected in lowering temperatures and shortened daylight. Mallard, Canada goose, pintail, gadwall, wigeon, shovelers, black ducks, scaup, ringed-neck, ruddy ducks have all stopped over within the past month as well as several shorebirds including Long-billed dowitcher and Dunlin. Notable highlights were the return of a fall American bittern and an American Avocet. LeContes and Nelsons sparrows, less common sparrows that use grassland and wetland edge habitat, were also seen fairly regularly this past month.