



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 28, 2025

TO: Forest Preserve District Planning and Utilization Committee

FROM: Patrick Chess, Director of Natural Resources
Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Presentation and Approval of a Bid for Native Seed Purchases to Restore Lands at Various Preserves

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Committee with information to consider the approval of a bid for native seed purchases for 2025/26 Natural Resource Management restoration projects.

BACKGROUND:

Native plants are the basis of all native ecosystems, and therefore are the basis of our work in the Natural Resource Management department. Our native insects coevolved with these plants, and cannot survive on imported plants. In turn, all of our fauna that prey upon our native insects cannot do so if those insects are not present, due to non-native or low-diversity plants occupying the space of our native plants.

This year's seed bid represents a project-driven approach to determining seed needs. This is the fourth-year mixes were bid by option with seeds bagged by species. This approach both maximizes value and ensures quality of the delivered product. All of the seed specified in our bid is slated to go onto the ground this winter, to support ongoing restoration projects.

The bid was publicly advertised with six vendors responding. The bid was advertised with the following three projects:

Project 1 – Rutland North Forest Preserve: 133 species to be sown across an approximately 172-acre field at Rutland North Forest Preserve in Hampshire. The restoration is a new agricultural-to-tallgrass prairie restoration, located across the entirety of the preserve. This will result in the retirement of the remaining agricultural land on site, in accordance with the specifications laid out through the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation grant that helped with the initial acquisition.

Project 2 – Johnson's Mound Forest Preserve: 78 species to be sown across an approximately 87-acre field at the Elburn preserve. This planting is an agricultural-to-tallgrass prairie conversion that will retire a hillside above Blackberry Creek.

The qualified, lowest bid for each species was tabulated, with awards for each project going to all five vendors. The qualified lowest bids are as follows:

Project 1 – Agrecol LLC – 11 species: Bid of \$16,521.00

Genesis Nursery – 5 species: Bid of \$12,079.08

Millborn Seeds – 42 species: Bid of \$35,079.62

RES Great Lakes – 17 species: Bid of \$10,700.75

Spence Restoration Nursery – 15 species: Bid of \$19,848.60

Shooting Star Native Seed – 43 species: Bid of \$42,082.60

Total: 133 species - \$136,311.65

Project 2 – Agrecol – 6 species: Bid of \$8,420.00

Genesis Nursery – 2 species: Bid of \$2,960.00

Millborn Seeds – 31 species: Bid of \$26,244.00

RES Great Lakes – 5 species: Bid of \$3,415.00

Spence Restoration Nursery – 11 species: Bid of \$5,433.60

Shooting Star Native Seed – 23 species: Bid of \$27,081.00

Total: 78 species - \$73,553.60

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funds totaling \$85,000 were budgeted in Fiscal Year 2025/26 in the Construction & Development Restoration Account (03-31-31-7060) for the ICECF Grant Project (#21015). Those funds were received through the ICECF acquisition grant to fund a portion of the site restoration, at an average of \$500/acre, for seed purchase. All \$85,000 budgeted are currently available to cover a portion of the total of Project 1 (\$136,311.65).

Funds totaling \$240,000 were budgeted in Fiscal Year 2025/26 in the General Fund Native Seed and Plants Account (#01-31-31-6035). Sufficient funds totaling \$240,000 are available in this account, for the remaining expense of Project 1 at \$51,311.65 and the total of Project 2 at \$73,553.60, for a total expense of 124,865.25. The total cost of both projects is \$209,865.25.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Committee approve the bids for Projects 1 and 2 of this native seed purchase, with seed from each project coming from six different vendors. The total purchase from Agrecol is for 17 species at a total cost of \$24,941.00. The purchase from Genesis Nursery is for seven species at a total cost of \$15,039.08. The purchase from Millborn is for 73 species at a total cost of \$61,323.62. The purchase from RES Great Lakes is for 22 species at a total cost of \$14,115.75. The purchase from Spence Restoration Nursery is for 26 species at a total expense of \$25,282.20. The purchase from Shooting Star Native Seed is for 66 species at a total expense of \$69,163.60. The grand total for all purchases is for 211 species at a total expense of \$209,865.25.

ATTACHMENTS:

County Locator Map

Rutland North Project Area Map

Johnson's Mound F.P. Project Area Map

Bid Abstract