



Planning & Land Management Department Memorandum

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

LAND MANAGEMENT

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Restoration

Weed Management

Staff continued to focus primarily on Chemical Weed Management at nearly every preserve in June, totaling over 490 hours. Target species this last month were cut-leaved teasel, crown vetch, poison hemlock, reed canary grass, tansy, giant ragweed, and others.

When staff have not been walking the prairies and woodlands spraying weeds, technicians continued mechanical control of biennial and annual weeds, like sweet clover and giant ragweed. Combined, staff spent over 200 hours in July using a large 15-foot mower to control invasive species.



The prairie is in full bloom at Bowes Creek Woods, showcasing a three-year-old restoration.

Seed Harvesting & Planting

Seed collection continues with many species including blue joint grass, bottlebrush grass and lead plant. Weekly volunteer seed collections kicked off in earnest in July with harvest events at Hoscheit Woods, Dick Young, and Chicago Premium Outlets.

Wildlife

Reptile Conservation and Research Projects

July was a busy month for turtle conservation work. The field season ended for the veterinary students from the University of Illinois Wildlife Epidemiology Lab. Conditions in the field were perfect to release the 6 Blanding's turtle hatchlings that NRM staff were head-starting from 2024. Four of the head-starts were fitted with radio transmitters to allow staff to track their survival. Clutches from the eggs collected in 2025 began hatching. Many of these hatchling's will be released into the wild this summer without head-starting, however staff will be head starting approximately 60 hatchlings. This will be our first attempt at large scale, in-house head-starting.

Staff continued to conduct snake surveys. There were two notable discoveries this month. Smooth green snake eggs were discovered at two survey locations and a milk snake was observed in a location where they have not previously been observed. Smooth green snakes are listed as a species in greatest need of conservation and were recently considered for listing as threatened in Illinois. Evidence of their presence and reproduction is encouraging.

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Deer Management Program

The application period for the 2025/26 deer management program was from 7/1-7/21. There were 143 applications submitted. Thirty-four groups or individuals were selected in the lottery to fill available spots in the program. In total 73 individuals will participate in the program this year if everyone meets program requirements.

Avian Research

Wildlife staff finished kestrel banding in July. A total of 38 kestrels were banded this season with Kane County's banding permit. An additional 9 Kane chicks were banded under Cook County's banding permit. For the first time, we were able to partner with Campton Hills Township staff to band chicks from nest boxes within Campton Hills Township Open Space properties.



Smooth green snake eggs.



Milk snake.



American kestrel.