



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 30, 2026

TO: Forest Preserve District Planning and Utilization Committee

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

VIA: Dave Petschke, Chief Financial and Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Presentation and Approval of Bids for Nine Tree and Brush Clearing Projects

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Committee with information to consider the approval of bids for invasive brush and tree clearing at portions of Aurora West, Bowes Creek Greenway, Johnson's Mound, Meissner-Corron, Schweitzer Woods, Raceway Woods, Settler's Hill Golf Course, and McLean Road Fen Forest Preserves.

BACKGROUND:

The objectives of these projects are to remove non-native brush and small mesic trees in degraded oak woodlands, as well as from large scale tallgrass prairie restorations.

Woody invasive species, such as common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp.*), are some of the primary threats to biodiversity in Kane County's forests. These species create a thick mid-story cover that prevents light from reaching native understory plants. They also grow very well in shade; oak saplings do not. This adaptation prevents the regeneration of native trees. Grassland invasive species, like callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), have similar impacts to prairie communities by choking out the native grasses and forbs.

Mechanical removal of these invasive species, combined with chemical follow-up, will help to restore the ecosystems to a healthier condition. This, in turn, will provide better habitat quality for the entire suite of wildlife that these preserves support.

Contractors were sought to bid on clearing projects across numerous heavily infested forest preserves. Projects are as follows:

- **Project 1 – Aurora West Forest Preserve in Aurora.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on approximately 63.5 acres of restored prairie.
- **Project 2 –Bowes Creek Greenway Forest Preserve in Elgin.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on approximately 14.4 acres of floodplain woods and grassland surrounding retention ponds.
- **Project 3 – Johnson's Mound Forest Preserve in Elburn.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on approximately 19.7 acres of mesic sugar maple woodlands.

- **Project 4 – Johnson’s Mound Forest Preserve in Elburn.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on approximately 11.9 acres of mesic sugar maple woodland.
- **Project 5 – Meissner-Corron Forest Preserve in St. Charles.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on approximately 6 acres of tree line separating a new acquisition from the preserve.
- **Project 6 – Schweitzer Woods Forest Preserve in West Dundee.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on approximately 17.9 acres of grassland and oak savanna plantings.
- **Project 7 – Raceway Woods in Carpentersville.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on 7.8 acres of high quality oak woodland.
- **Project 8 – Settler’s Hill Golf Course in Geneva.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on 18.7 acres of out-of-play natural areas.
- **Project 9 – McLean Road Fen Forest Preserve in South Elgin.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on 1.1 acres of tree lines.
- ~~**Project 10 – Virgil Forest Preserve in Virgil.** Tree and brush clearing will focus on 1.1 acres of tree line along a ditch.~~

The District publicly advertised the bid and received 12 responses. The qualified, lowest bids for each option were as follows:

- **Project 1 – Aurora West Forest Preserve.** Bid of \$17,992.09, submitted by Bluestem Ecological Services of Marengo, IL.
- **Project 2 – Bowes Creek Greenway Forest Preserve.** Bid of \$15,811.78, submitted by Bluestem Ecological Services of Marengo, IL.
- **Project 3 – Johnson’s Mound Forest Preserve.** Bid of \$31,739.85, submitted by Semper Fi Land Service of Sugar Grove, IL.
- **Project 4 – Johnson’s Mound Forest Preserve.** Bid of \$23,776.20, submitted by Semper Fi Land Service of Sugar Grove, IL.
- **Project 5 – Meissner-Corron Forest Preserve.** Bid of \$11,945.70, submitted by Semper Fi Land Service of Sugar Grove, IL.
- **Project 6 – Schweitzer Woods Forest Preserve.** Bid of \$18,218.08, submitted by Bluestem Ecological Services of Marengo, IL.
- **Project 7 – Raceway Woods Forest Preserve.** Bid of \$11,963.72, submitted by Semper Fi Land Service of Sugar Grove, IL.
- **Project 8 – Settler’s Hill Golf Course.** Bid of \$17,854.39, submitted by Bluestem Ecological Services of Marengo, IL.
- **Project 9 – McLean Road Fen Forest Preserve in South Elgin.** Bid of \$5,953.86, submitted by Semper Fi Land Service of Sugar Grove, IL.

• ~~Project 10 – Virgil Forest Preserve. Bids withdrawn.~~

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funds totaling \$100,000 were budgeted in Fiscal Year 2026/27 for tree-thinning projects at several preserves. Funds totaling \$100,000 are available in the Natural Resource Management Tree and Brush Thinning budget, Account #01-31-31-7063, to cover the majority of project 1 (\$17,992.09), project 3 (\$31,739.85), project 4 (\$23,776.20), project 5 (\$11,945.70), and project 6 (\$18,218.08) at a total expense of \$103,671.92. The remaining \$3,671.92 will be covered by the Natural Resource Management Weed Management budget (01-31-31-7064) which had \$140,000 budgeted in Fiscal Year 2026/27 of which \$84,360.68 remain available.

Funds totaling \$35,000 were budgeted in Fiscal Year 2026/27 for Donated Lands Management (01-31-31-7066). Sufficient funds totaling \$35,000 are available to cover project 2 at a total expense of \$15,811.78.

Funds totaling \$100,000 were budgeted in Fiscal Year 2026/27 for the Raceway Woods Landscape Scale Restoration Grant project. Sufficient funds totaling \$35,949 are available in the Raceway Woods Landscape Scale Restoration Grant project, Account #03-31-31-7060 Project #21016, to cover project 7 at a total expense of \$11,963.72. This project is funded in part through a \$50,000 grant from the US Forest Service for landscape scale restoration projects.

Funds totaling \$330,000 were budgeted in Fiscal Year 2026/27 for the Settler's Hill Golf Course Natural Areas Management project. Sufficient funds totaling \$29,282.80 are available in the project, Account #03-31-31-7060 Project #21005, to cover project 8 at a total expense of \$17,854.39.

Funds totaling \$200,000 were budgeted in Fiscal Year 2026/27 for the Stearns Road Natural Areas Improvement project. Sufficient funds totaling \$129,473.36 are available in the Stearns Road Natural Areas Improvement project, Account #03-31-31-7060 Project #21014, to cover project 9 at a total expense of \$5,953.86.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Committee approve the contracts for invasive tree and brush removal at portions of Aurora West, Bowes Creek Greenway, Johnson's Mound, Meissner-Corron, Schweitzer Woods, Raceway Woods, Settler's Hill Golf Course, and McLean Road Fen Forest Preserves to the two separate qualified, lowest bidders as follows:

- Projects 1, 2, 6, and 8 – Bluestem Ecological Services of Marengo, IL for a total contract cost of \$69,876.34.
- Projects 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9 – Semper Fi Land Service of Sugar Grove, IL for a total contract cost of \$85,379.33.
- The total cost for all nine projects is \$155,255.67.

ATTACHMENTS: *Bid Abstract*
 County Locator Map
 Project Area Maps