



Natural Resource Management Department Memorandum

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

LAND MANAGEMENT

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Restoration

Tree and Brush Clearing with Chemical Weed Management

Staff continued to make tree and brush clearing a primary focus. The field crew spent most of the last month of winter clearing and treating invasive woody brush and trees. Staff cleared brush and trees at Braeburn Marsh, Forested Fen, Rutland, Chicago Premium Outlets Wetland, and Fox River Shores Forest Preserves. Simultaneously, contractors continued to clear trees and brush from numerous preserves including Bliss Woods, Hannaford Woods, and Big Rock Forest Preserves.

Our crew continues to take an Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) approach to invasive species control, which focuses on eliminating these pests at every stage of their life cycles. During the winter months, this typically means spot-application of selective herbicide application following cutting. This type of chemical follow-up prevents spring re-sprouting, which saves time, money and effort in the long run.

Seed Planting

The final prairie planting efforts of the winter occurred in early February. Staff wrapped up planting the remainder of Mill Creek Greenway, a process that will result in the entire 269 acre preserve now restored to natural area. Just two years ago, there were over 200 acres of farmland that have all been converted to tallgrass prairie.

Wildlife

Avian Studies & Nest Structure Program

In February, wildlife staff wrapped up the 2024-2025 winter owl survey season. Barred owl, Eastern Screech & Great-horned owls were all detected throughout several Kane County properties. Staff participated in another

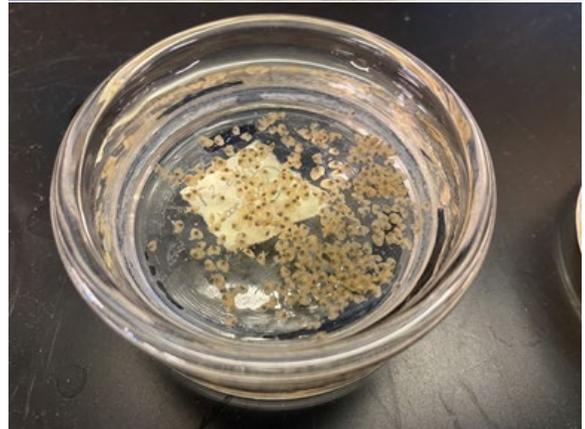


Staff was busy last month completing clearing projects at multiple preserves. Photos above feature Aurora West (1), CPO Wetlands (2), and Fox River Shores (3).

raptor banding training with researchers at Millikin University: Red-shouldered, Red-tailed hawk and American kestrel were banded. Additionally, staff was trained on obtaining blood samples for health screening analyses. Staff is working on prepping the field and volunteers for another year of American Kestrel nest box monitoring. Boxes are being cleaned out by staff and volunteers; new boxes are being constructed & there are plans to relocate boxes that have not been successful for several years.

Mussel Conservation

We continue to receive good news from our partners at the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County Urban Stream Research Center (USRC). There are two ongoing mussel cohorts from 2024 at USRC. Both are looking healthy and growing, including our first ever cohort of ellipse. We have approximately 114 Giant Floater Mussels, which are approaching release size, and 2,378 Ellipse at USRC.



Photos of Giant Floater mussels (1) and Ellipse mussel cohort(2).