



DATE: November 3, 2025

MEMO TO: Sara Knizhnik, Chair
Operations Committee

FROM: Pati Vitt
Director of Natural Resources

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend approval of an Ordinance approving Amendment #1 (Addendum No. 1) to the Farm License Agreement with Crane Grain Farms at Prairie Stream Forest Preserve and Dutch Gap Forest Preserve (the “Farm License Agreement”) to reduce the licensed acreage amount by 109.42 acres.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED: Conservation

FINANCIAL DATA: Removal of 109.42 acres from the farm program will reduce annual revenue generated by the Farm License Agreement from \$59,565.08 (203.99 acres at \$292.00/acre) to \$27,614.44 (94.57 acres at \$292.00/acre); a decrease of \$31,950.64 annually.

BACKGROUND: The farming program is conducted with farmers to provide cost-effective, interim land use and management of District lands until the District is ready to convert the land to other forest preserve purposes. Under the Farm License Agreement, Crane Grain Farms (the “Licensee”) is the licensee for the farmed portions of Prairie Stream Forest Preserve and a portion of Dutch Gap Forest Preserve (the “Farm License Property”) for the term ending December 31, 2026.

The proposed amendment to the Farm License Agreement would remove three portions of the Farm License Property, as follows:

1. The District has entered into a license agreement with an affiliate of Resource Environmental Solutions (RES), under which RES will implement a wetland mitigation bank with a portion of Prairie Stream Forest Preserve (the “Mitigation Bank License Property”). The Mitigation Bank License Property is located entirely within the Farm License Property. The mitigation bank project is anticipated to begin in late 2025, soon after crops are harvested from the License Property. The proposed amendment would remove all of the Mitigation Bank License Property from the Farm License Property.
2. In addition, District staff recommends that a portion of the Farm License Property that is outside of, but adjacent to, the Mitigation Bank License Property be retired from commercial farming and restored with native plants. That restoration will enhance the success of the mitigation bank. RES has agreed to complete that work for no additional cost, so long as the District pays for the native seed. The proposed amendment would remove this adjacent property from the Farm License Property.

3. Finally, a portion of the Farm License Property lies within the boundary of Dutch Gap Forest Preserve. In 2026, the US Army Corps of Engineers will be implementing an Aquatic Resource restoration project at Dutch Gap Forest Preserve. The proposed amendment would remove this portion of Dutch Gap Forest Preserve from the Farm License Property.

District staff has negotiated the proposed amendment with Crane Grain Farms, which has signed the proposed amendment.

The terms of the Farm License Agreement for areas not impacted by this reduction (the balance of 94.57 acres) will remain in effect until license expiration on December 31, 2026.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Manager of Board Operations and Corporate Counsel

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS
COUNTY OF LAKE)

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
REGULAR NOVEMBER MEETING
NOVEMBER 12, 2025**

MADAM PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Your **OPERATIONS COMMITTEE** presents herewith “An Ordinance approving an Amendment to the Farm License Agreement with Crane Grain Farms at Prairie Stream and Dutch Gap Forest Preserves” and requests its approval.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE:

Date: _____ Roll Call Vote: Ayes: ____Nays: _____
 Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: _____

**LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT
LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**

**AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO
THE FARM LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH CRANE GRAIN FARMS AT
PRAIRIE STREAM AND DUTCH GAP FOREST PRESERVES**

WHEREAS, the Lake County Forest Preserve District (the “District”) previously entered into a farm license agreement with Crain Grain Farms (the “Licensee”) dated January 1, 2023 (the “Existing Agreement”) for the sole purpose of farming pursuant to the District’s Farm Management Program on 203.99 acres of land (the “Licensed Area”) at Prairie Stream and Dutch Gap Forest Preserves; and

WHEREAS, the term of the Existing Agreement expires on December 31, 2026; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the District to approve an amendment to the Existing Agreement in substantially the form attached hereto, to remove 109.42 acres from the Licensed Area so that the separate portions of such removed acreage can be used (i) for the creation and restoration of wetlands and for the creation of a wetland mitigation bank, (ii) for a seeding and natural restoration project, and (iii) for a US Army Corps of Engineers Aquatic Resource restoration project (the “License Agreement Amendment”); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 7b of the Downstate Forest Preserve Act, 70 ILCS 805/7b, the District is authorized to issue licenses for any activity reasonably connected with the purposes for which the District was created;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the Lake County Forest Preserve District, Lake County, Illinois **THAT**:

Section 1: Recitals. The recitals set forth above are incorporated as a part of this Ordinance by this reference.

Section 2: Approval of License Agreement Amendment. The License Agreement Amendment is hereby approved in substantially the form attached hereto. The President and Secretary of the District are hereby authorized and directed to execute and attest to, on behalf of the District, the License Agreement Amendment in substantially the form attached hereto.

Section 3: Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval in the manner provided by law.

PASSED this _____ day of _____, 2025

AYES:

NAYS:

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2025

Jessica Vealitzek, President
Lake County Forest Preserve District

ATTEST:

Julie Gragnani, Secretary
Lake County Forest Preserve District

Exhibit No. _____



Addendum No. 1

Date: September 29, 2025

**Lake County Forest Preserve District
Farm License Amendment at Prairie Stream Forest Preserve**

The licensed acreage, 203.99 acres, for the Farm License Agreement at the parcel of land commonly known as Prairie Stream is amended as noted in this Addendum No. 1.

Acknowledge receipt of this addendum by signing and dating at the end of the page and returning to: Lake County Forest Preserve District, 1899 W. Winchester Road, Libertyville, IL 60048. This addendum consists of 1 page and a map – you may keep the map for your records. Note: this addendum will not impact your 2025 operations or License Fees due to the District; this addendum will take effect January 1, 2026.

- ITEM NO. 1** 109.42 ACRES IS PERMANENTLY REMOVED FROM FARMING DUE TO WETLAND MITIGATION PROJECTS (SEE ATTACHED AERIAL PHOTO).
- ITEM NO. 2** THE TOTAL LICENSED ACREAGE FOR THE 2023-2026 FARM LICENSE (PRAIRIE STREAM) IS REDUCED FROM 203.99 ACRES TO 94.57 ACRES (EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026).
- ITEM NO. 3** THE ANNUAL PAYMENT FOR THE PRAIRIE STREAM LICENSE IS REDUCED FROM \$59,565.08 TO \$27,614.44 (94.57 ACRES AT \$292.00/ACRE), FOR THE REMAINING YEAR OF THE CURRENT FARM LICENSE.

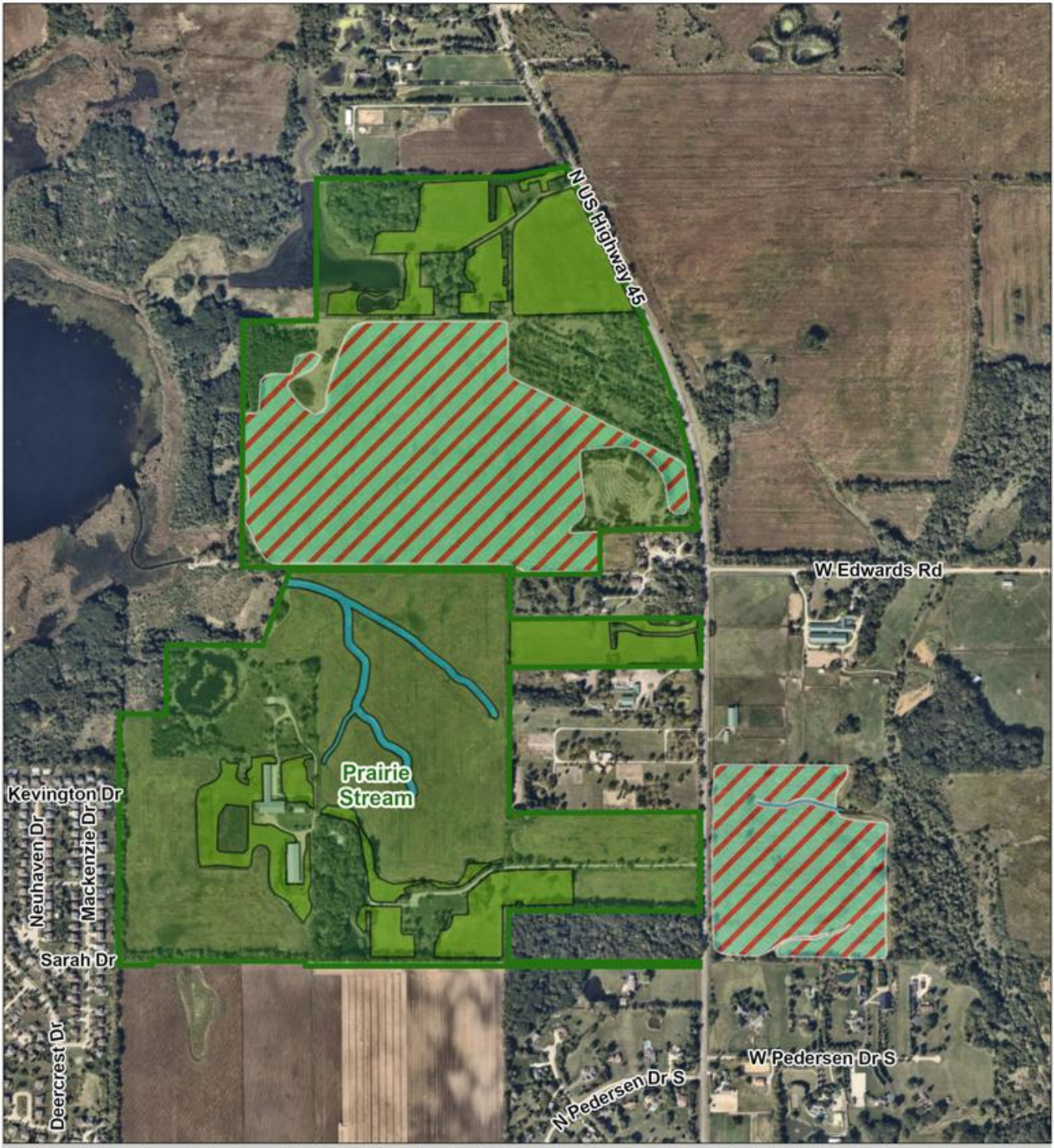
In sum, the Forest Preserve District (District) is reducing the Prairie Stream Farm License Agreement for the fields shown on the attached aerial photo by a total of 109.42 acres. The total licensed tillable acreage for the Prairie Stream parcel for 2026 is 94.57 acres.

Licensee Signature – Michael Daniels

Date

Prepared by Jim Hills

Lake County Forest Preserves Farm Program Farm Reduction - Prairie Stream



Disclaimer: Property Boundaries and other data provided is for general information only and not for commercial purposes. The District provides this data for the user's exclusive use only. Any re-use, transmission, duplication, or distribution without the permission of the District is prohibited. Map sources include: Lake County GIS Division | Basemap: 2024 Aerial

Lake County Forest Preserves

Map Created on 10/13/2025

0 475 950
Feet

N

LEGEND

Forest Preserve Boundaries	Waterway
Active	Forest Preserve Property
Proposed Field Reduction Area	Forest Preserve Easement

Roads