



**DATE:** April 6, 2026

**MEMO TO:** Sara Knizhnik, Chair  
Operations Committee

**FROM:** Pati Vitt  
Director of Natural Resources

**RECOMMENDATION:** Termination of the Farm License Agreement with Crane Grain Farms, LLC at Prairie Stream Forest Preserve.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS SUPPORTED:** Conservation, Organizational Sustainability

**FINANCIAL DATA:** The District entered into a four-year Farm License Agreement with Crane Grain Farms, LLC (the “Licensee”) covering the years 2023 through 2026 (the “License Agreement”). The annual license fee is \$59,565.08, for a total agreement value of \$238,260.32, excluding real estate taxes, which are billed separately and vary each year. The Licensee is currently in default of the License Agreement for failure to pay past due license fees for 2024 and 2025 and taxes for 2024. The chronology of remittance and default follows:

- Year 2023: Licensee paid the 2023 license fee and applicable taxes in full.
- Year 2024: Licensee made one payment of \$14,710.32 towards the license fee leaving an outstanding balance of \$50,274.48 for that year (remaining license fee and unpaid 2024 Taxes).
- Year 2025: No payments have been made, leaving the full annual license fee balance of \$59,565.08, plus any applicable 2025 real estate taxes (to be determined).
- Year 2026: Due to wetland restoration projects beginning in 2026, the total acreage of the license granted under the License Agreement was reduced from 203.99 acres to 94.57 acres per an amendment to the License Agreement approved on September 29, 2025. The fee for Year 2026 per the amended License Agreement is \$27,614.44.

As of March 11, 2026, Licensee has an outstanding balance with the District in the amount of \$109,839.56, from years 2024 and 2025, excluding any unpaid real estate taxes for year 2025.

**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.

As stated above, Licensee has defaulted under the License Agreement. The District contacted Licensee on several occasions in efforts to rectify the outstanding balances due without success. A default letter dated March 23, 2026 was sent via certified mail to Licensee listing Licensee’s defaults and demanding compliance within ten days.

Ten days have elapsed since the default letter was sent, but Licensee has not cured the defaults. Under the License Agreement, if Licensee does not fully cure the defaults within that 10-day period, then the District can immediately terminate the License Agreement and take possession of the licensed property.

Due to the substantial outstanding balance, Licensee's failure to remain current on the required license and property tax payments, and Licensee's failure to cure the defaults, District staff recommends terminating the License Agreement.

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

**MOTION:** Motion to terminate the License Agreement between the Lake County Forest Preserve District and Crane Grain Farms, LLC for the parcel commonly known as Prairie-Stream Row Crop, dated January 1, 2023, and to terminate the Licensee's right to possession of the licensed premises.

**APPROVED:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  Roll Call Vote: Ayes: \_\_\_\_ Nays: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Voice Vote Majority Ayes; Nays: \_\_\_\_\_