



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 20-0348, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED CONTRACT AMENDMENT**

**Department(s):** Department of Resource Management

**Vendor:** Openlands, Chicago, Illinois

**Request:** Authorization for the Forest Preserves of Cook County (the “Forest Preserves”) to extend contract

**Good(s) or Service(s):** Continued ecological restoration services including but not limited to invasive removal, brush clearing, herbicide application, and prescribed burning by Openlands at Deer Grove West Woodland and Wetland Nature Preserve (“Deer Grove West”), utilizing funds administered through the O’Hare Modernization Mitigation Account (“OMMA”). This renewal is for an extension in time only; there is no cost to the Forest Preserves associated with continuation of the project.

**Original Contract Period:** 11/17/2015 - 11/16/2020

**Proposed Contract Period Extension:** 11/17/2020 - 11/16/2025

**Total Current Contract Amount Authority:** None

**Original Approval:** 11/17/2015

**Previous Increase(s):** N/A

**This Increase Requested:** N/A

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** N/A. The Forest Preserves may provide in-kind staff support for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of projects.

**Accounts:** N/A

**Contract Number(s):** N/A

**Concurrences:**

The Chief Financial Officer has approved this item. Final amendment is subject to legal review and approval.

**District(s):** 14

**Summary:** In 2015, the Forest Preserves’ Board of Commissioners approved the planning (Board Item #15-0159) and implementation of a largescale ecological restoration project to facilitate restoration of valuable remnant wetland

communities and the surrounding watershed at Deer Grove West (Board Item #15-0620). The Forest Preserves and Openlands desire to extend their partnership to continue work at Deer Grove West for the next five (5) years at no cost to the Forest Preserves, per the terms of their existing agreement.

The project is funded via the O'Hare Modernization Mitigation Account, which provides mitigation of off-site wetland impacts associated with the airport expansion under the O'Hare Modernization Program. Openlands, in conjunction with the Chicago District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has served as the contracting agent and financial administrator for the project, which has been implemented at no cost to the Forest Preserves since 2015.

Ongoing work at the site has focused on improving the ecological function of existing wetland and upland plant communities through removal of invasive species, canopy thinning to increase ambient light levels, natural revegetation of the site with diverse native species, and hydrological restoration initiatives. Management practices are consistent with objectives for restoring and improving wetland function through restoration of wetland habitats and the surrounding watershed. Restoration strategies include goals for the conservation of existing vegetative and wildlife resources, including at least thirteen state-listed threatened or endangered plant and animal species which are documented at the site.

To date, approximately 250 acres have been restored through this successful partnership with Openlands and the support of other stakeholders such as the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission and the Deer Grove Natural Areas Volunteer stewardship group. As a result of these collaborative efforts, Deer Grove West was awarded Platinum Accreditation, the highest accreditation possible, from the Chicago Wilderness Excellence in Ecological Restoration Program in 2019.

Situated in northwestern Cook County, Deer Grove was the first property acquired by the Forest Preserves, beginning with 500 acres in 1916. The Natural and Cultural Resources Master Plan determined Deer Grove West to be among the top four priorities for restoration in the Forest Preserves.