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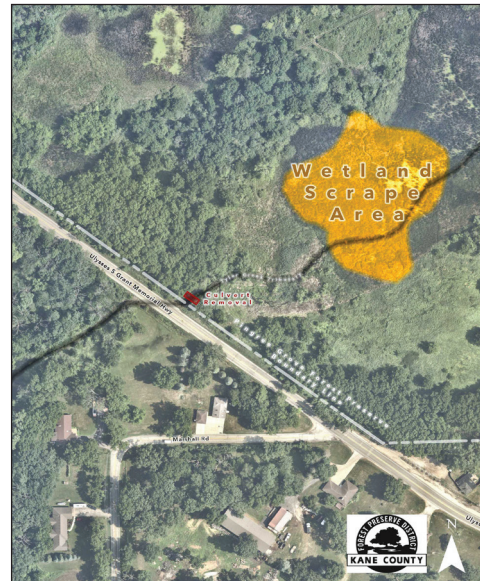
Wetland scrape project to begin Aug. 17 at Pingree Grove Forest Preserve

Habitat improvements aimed at improving turtle and waterfowl habitat

GENEVA, IL — Turtles, waterfowl, and several state-listed threatened species, including Yellow-Headed Blackbirds, are just some of the species expected to benefit from a long-planned wetland scrape project, about to get underway at Pingree Grove Forest Preserve.

A contractor will begin work at the 438-acre site, Aug. 17.

Pingree Grove Forest Preserve includes one of the largest wetland complexes owned by the Forest Preserve District of Kane County. The 85-acre marsh once had significant patches of open water dispersed among the wetland vegetation, and provided habitat for now-threatened species like Yellow-Headed Blackbirds.



Over time, much of the open water was lost due to dense growth of invasive species like Narrowleaf Cattail, Reed Canary Grass and Common Reed. An interspersions of open water and emergent vegetation are vital for migratory waterfowl and marsh birds.

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In preparation for the wetland-scrape project, Reed Canary Grass and Common Reed were chemically treated across the site. Beginning Aug. 17, an obsolete berm and culvert will be removed where water enters the marsh near Illinois Route 20. A small basin and riffle will be created to capture silt and stabilize the location where water enters the marsh. The contractor will also use amphibious and long-reach equipment to remove dense cattail growth and substrate to a maximum depth of three feet across a two-acre area in the southern section of the marsh.

“This is a project that was proposed during the 2017 Land Acquisition & Preserve Improvement Referendum. We’ve been working toward it for a long time, due to its complexity and our desire to protect the species currently using the habitat as we seek to enhance it. Staff spent several years working with regulatory agencies and contractors to acquire the pre-project data and permits necessary to get to this point,” said Wildlife Biologist Bill Graser.

“The location of the wetland scrape was carefully selected to maximize the benefits of the habitat enhancement, and minimize the potential impacts to wildlife that exist there. The construction window was chosen because it is outside of the season when marsh birds are breeding, and before reptiles and amphibians are inactive and vulnerable, in the cold season. Extensive marsh bird surveys and aquatic sampling for reptiles were conducted in and around the project area. We plan to continue monitoring after construction ends to learn about what species utilize the enhanced area of the marsh,” Graser said.

The wetland scrape component of the project will begin Aug. 17 and will conclude on or about Sept. 30.

For more information about the project or the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, visit www.kaneforest.com, on social media search @forestpreserve, or call administrative headquarters at 630-232-5980.

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