

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: December 4, 2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director for Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: Authorization to enter into Agricultural Lease Agreements for the benefit of Milwaukee County Land

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

Milwaukee County Parks requests authorization to enter into Agricultural Lease Agreements with individual farmers for the benefit of Milwaukee County land.

POLICY

§ 59.17(2)(b)3., Wis. Stats., states that the “county board may continue to exercise the authority under s. 59.52(6) with regard to land that is zoned as a park...”.

Wisconsin State Statutes:	
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	
Specific Adopted Budget:	
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County Parks manages 708 acres of agricultural land for the purpose of growing and harvesting agricultural row-crops, vegetable crops, and hay. The agricultural lands held by the county are located within designated primary environmental corridors as defined by Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). A primary environmental corridor is defined as “concentrations of significant natural resources at least 400 acres in area, at least two miles in length, and at least 200 feet in width.” The majority of these sites are located along the Oak Creek, Ryan Creek, and Root River and are prone to high water tables or seasonal flooding. In addition, keeping these lands in production deters invasive plant species from overtaking the land.

Milwaukee County Parks leases this land to both farmers and non-profit community-based organizations. Each lessee is responsible for working with Milwaukee County

Parks on the development of a Conservation Plan specific to their parcel(s) to reduce soil loss, achieve water quality goals, and protect the natural resource base. Milwaukee County Parks' Natural Areas section manages all agricultural leases for the department.

The term of each lease is selected based on factors such as the conservation method, the crop rotation cycle, and the likelihood that the parcel may cease to be available for farming. Rent payments vary due to the size of the parcel and were developed based on United States Department of Agriculture and State of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection fair market value rates for southeastern Wisconsin. Leases are subject to Milwaukee County's Agricultural Land Lease Policy as adopted by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors on September 29, 1994, and revised in January 2010, January 2020, and again in June 2024.

Related File No's:	24-1067, 24-505, 22-1105, 21-1038, 21-88 , 20-864 , 19-896 , 19-888 , 16-574 , 15-767
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [strategic plan](#):

3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability

FISCAL EFFECT

This Revenue has already been budgeted.

TERMS

Each of the following three-year lease terms commence on January 1, 2026, and conclude on December 31, 2028.

<u>Lessee</u>	<u>Annual Rent</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Lease Term</u>
D&S Farms	\$992.40	8.41	3 Years
James Crayton	\$10,545.6	96.8	3 Years*

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Brian Russart, Natural Areas Supervisor – Milwaukee County Parks
brian.russart@milwaukeecountywi.gov

PREPARED BY:

Robert Senglaub, Contracts Manager, Milwaukee County Parks

APPROVED BY:

Guy Smith, Executive Director Milwaukee County Parks *Guy D. Smith*

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

Fiscal Note

1a, 1b- Draft Leases

2a, 2b - Lease Parcel Maps

3 - Parks Ag Lease Policy

4 - PowerPoint

CC: David Crowley, County Executive
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Sheldon Wasserman, Committee on Parks & Culture Chairperson
Steve Taylor, Committee on Parks & Culture Vice Chairperson
Priscilla Coggins-Jones, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Jack Eckblad, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Felesia Martin, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Juan Miguel Martinez, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Anne O'Connor, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services
Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS
Vince Masterson, Fiscal & Strategic Asset Coordinator, DAS
Pamela Bryant, Capital Finance Manager, Comptroller's Office
Justin Rodriguez, Capital Finance Analyst, Comptroller's Office
Allyson R. Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB
Sandy Saltzstein, Research and Policy Analyst