

Members present: John Burke, Mark Chickering, Dale Heil, Paul Klocko, Mike Lane, Mary Ann Mynsberge, Gary Weiland, Marcell Wieloch

Excused: Susan Haug, Greg Klos, Jeff Lawrence

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department staff present: Tom Lovlien - Forest Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Lane.

I. Minutes

Lane asked for comments. **Motion** by Wieloch to approve the minutes of March 16th, 2016. Motion **carried**.

II. New Business

A. Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Short-Term Reorganization

Lovlien said due to recent retirements, injuries, maternity leave, and promotions the Department is down a total of six positions. Dan Fiorenza who was the Operations Supervisor took a short term position and moved into Ken Krueger's position. Staff is managing the best it can and will be working on a long-term reorganization plan for the future. There will be more retirements in the next couple years so a transition plan is needed. Lovlien asked that the user groups give staff a little time to get back to them if they don't receive answers to questions right away.

B. September 2016 Subcommittee Appointments

Lovlien said the six Committee members terms that expire on September 1st are Chickering, Burke, Klos, Haug, Lane and Mynsberge. He asked that those members let him know if they would like to stay on the Committee. Chickering and Burke said they would remain on the Committee.

C. 2016 Spring Timber Sale Summary

Lovlien said forty-three bids from fifteen different contractors were received and all six sales were sold. It was one of the strongest bid openings they have had in a long time. Heil said the County had good timing on the bid opening because the markets tightened up after that. Discussion followed.

D. 2016 Timber Harvest Activity at Nine Mile

Lovlien said there is a pine sale active for another couple weeks in Nine Mile. Following that sale there will be another job along 'Main Street' and 'C' followed by a sale which will be active in the middle part of Nine Mile. No questions were raised.

E. Rib Mountain Adventure and Wisconsin Endurance Mountain Bike Race Reports

Lovlien said the Rib Mountain Adventure Race had two hundred and fifty three racers. They are planning on finding a different location next year but will return to Nine Mile in the future. The WEMS race only had thirty-five racers most likely because of the weather forecast. Comments were made that there seem to be a lot more recreational bike riders at Nine Mile than in the past.

F. DNR Considers Northern Forestry Office

Lovlien said as part of the last State budget the Division of Forestry was required to develop cost estimates and a timeline for the possibility of relocating the Division north of Highway 10. A letter was submitted from the greater Wausau area which showcased the quality of life provided here. Lovlien said the Wausau area is in the running. Senator Tiffany wants them in Rhinelander and he is the legislator that introduced the idea. Lovlien reiterated that this is just a proposal and may or not happen.

G. DNR Policy on Allowing Overnight Placement of Portable Tree Stands on State Lands

Lovlien said staff was looking as a County to potentially change its policy in County forests. Currently right now State forests don't allow overnight tree stands of any sort and the County policy is that tree stands can be left in the woods from September until the last day of the deer season in January as long as the stand is not up in the tree and the person

has their name, address and phone number written on it. It also can be chained to the base of the tree and locked. Older people want to be able to leave their stands up in the trees because they are having a hard time in the dark especially without making a lot of noise and is dangerous. The ordinance was passed a long time ago and there was lots of discussion. Sometimes to be consistent with the State, the County will follow the States policy because the public doesn't always know what lands they are on. However at the Conservation Congress meeting the public was opposed to allowing overnight placement of stands and against allowing stands overnight on DNR lands north of Highway 64 during a more restrictive time period between the firearm and muzzle loader seasons. However, the public supported a rule change which asked if they supported a three-year trial period. It was noted however that many voters who opposed the measures said they voted yes to a trial period because they were more preferable to a permanent rule. Lovlien said the County is going to stay put with its policy until the State decides what it's going to do. He felt it was the best way rather than changing the policy and maybe changing it back in the future. The County's policy has been working pretty well for the last fifteen years and he will explain to those wanting it changed that the County is waiting for the State to set their policy and the County will revisit it later. Wieloch said people had asked about what if someone else was in their stand when they arrived at it. Lovlien said legally if they weren't there someone else could utilize it because it is on public land. Lane thought that would be claiming someone else's property. Lane did not think it would be as big of a problem as people are making it out to be. He felt the average person that spots someone in a tree would leave. There is nothing to say they couldn't go up in a tree right next to that person but those kinds of things would happen no matter what. He can't see changing anything right now. Wieloch said people were afraid the DNR was going to change the policy no matter what so they went with the trial period. Lovlien said Department staff is continuing to confiscate illegal tree stands but the amount is way down from what it used to be.

H. 2017 Priority Based Budgeting for County Departments

Lovlien said all of the County departments have to describe each of their programs and assign dollar amounts and employees to them for the 2017 budget. Staff came up with twenty-five programs with four in the forestry division. This information was sent to a consultant for review and comment. Eventually the County Board could rank every program. If the County runs out of money the lowest ranked programs may disappear or require funding from elsewhere. Lovlien said at that time the Board members need to hear from the public if they are concerned about any of the lower ranked programs that would be up for elimination.

I. Member Items

Lovlien had distributed a schedule of the cross-country running races at Nine Mile for the late summer and fall. He mentioned that if a race has two dates the first date is for setup and the second date is the race day. Staff had met with the High School's Athletic Directors and agreed that only one race would be approved after October 15th. Sectionals or Regional Finals happen after the 15th but not every year. The high schools wanted to potentially have more races after that but staff told them about the October 15th deadline that other groups are abiding by. Sometimes staff moves up the biking date by a few days so staff may give them the same consideration for one extra race on a day. If there happens to be two different schools that need a race day after the 15th they have agreed one school will have it in the morning and one in the afternoon so that the race only affects one extra weekend day.

III. Old Business

A. Ragnar Trail Relay Running Race – September 23 and 24, 2016

Lovlien said staff met with the organizers of the race and as of a month ago they already had 1600 runners signed up. They are looking to limit the race to 2500 runners or 350 teams. They have done quite a few of these races around the country and are well organized. Because of the lack of parking at Nine Mile there may be a potential shuttle area from the Granite Peak Ski Hill. The event will have beer sales, wine tasting, camping, and things to do for the family. This will be by far the largest event that has ever taken place. Significant revenues will be realized and it is a good thing for the community. Volunteers are essential for the event and CWOCC is one organization involved. Chickering said the race group is also very green with recycling and other progressive things.

B. County Deer Advisory Council Antlerless Quota Recommendations

Lane said the Council decides if the County should either increase, decrease, or maintain the deer population and

accomplishes this mostly by regulating the antlerless permits. The big change this year is that on public lands there won't be any bonus tags available. The \$12 permit in Marathon County will only apply for private lands but with the archery and gun license the public will get one free tag. Lane said overall the past couple years at the meetings what they have heard is that on public lands people aren't seeing deer. They figure there is too much pressure on the public lands because everyone wanted to cut way back on tags so that was what was done. The Council voted to maintain which could create a problem next year if enough antlerless deer aren't harvested. In 2017 they will be able to vote again to increase, decrease, or maintain the deer population. A lot depends on how many people use the antlerless tags. Lane said what would happen then is they would have to increase the amount of tags. The problem with that is if they are not issuing them on public lands it's being forced on private landowners and they can shoot what they want. Heil asked if that was what drove earn-a-buck. Lane agreed especially in the southern counties. Wieloch said that was one program that really worked. The people who didn't like that got their legislators to change it so now they are stuck and don't have it available as a tool. Lane thought that could change after what happened in Waupaca County where they proposed an antlerless only season. Klocko said he knew someone in Waupaca County who would see thirty to forty deer a day. Lovlien said there are certain areas on the County forest where there is a problem regenerating oak. For that reason he voted for having public land permits. He believes as a public lands manager they have to have some antlerless permits available for people. The public still can shoot an antlerless deer with their gun and bow license. He said they will see what happens as they had a warm winter last year so there could be a bunch more deer this year. Discussion on CWD followed.

C. Schira Property Training Burn

Lovlien said the training burn was supposed to occur on May 14th but it was way too dry. He is waiting for them to reschedule and hopes it will be this summer yet so he can have the buildings removed before winter. Questions were answered.

D. Emerald Ash Borer Found in Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids

Lovlien said the borer was found in Stevens Point in April and then in Wisconsin Rapids. The City of Wausau is discussing Emerald Ash Borer management options for the City street trees. Lovlien believes the borer will be found in Marathon County soon. Heil discussed the regulations for moving wood in quarantined areas.

E. Marathon County Wildlife Biologist Position

Lovlien said the position has been unfulfilled since last July. It won't be filled by this July unless there is a lateral transfer. If this does not happen the best they can hope for is to have the position filled by late fall of 2016. Lovlien said some supervisor positions are opening up that people are moving into which may be causing the delay in filling this position.

IV. Remaining 2016 Meeting Dates – September 21, and December 21, 2016 at 6:00 pm.

V. Adjourn

Motion by Weiland. to adjourn, motion **carried**. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Thomas Lovlien
Secretary