

Members present: John Burke, Mark Chickering, Susan Haug, Dale Heil, Greg Klos, Mike Lane, Carol Mills, Marcell Wieloch

Excused: Paul Klocko, Jeff Lawrence, Gary Weiland

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department staff present: Tom Lovlien - Forest Administrator, Dan Fiorenza – Park and Recreation Manager

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 June 7th, 2016. Motion **carried**.

## II. New Business

### A. Subcommittee Appointments/Introduction of Members

Lovlien said that Forestry/Recreation Committee had approved all the returning members to the Forest Citizen Advisory Subcommittee. They also appointed Carol Mills to the Subcommittee to represent equestrian interests.

### B. Introduction of Dan Fiorenza – Park and Recreation Manager

Lovlien said Fiorenza has been with the Department running operations for twenty two years and has taken over most of Krueger's duties. The Department looked at how they are providing services and have done some restructuring within the Department hoping to gain some efficiency.

### C. Big Eau Pleine Park Equestrian Trails and Overnight Camping

Fiorenza said that staff had been discussing how much use the trails at the park can handle in general. The Health Department notified staff that horse camping should not be allowed there. The area had been an overflow area for general campers and grew into a camping area for the horse trailers. Staff is recommending a day use area for local residents of Marathon County versus a destination location. Some of the reasons the Health Department cited were that there was not a proper water supply for camping and restrooms. Fiorenza said it was a matter of the Park Department managing the area incorrectly and not any kind of user abuse. Lovlien cited the Health Department requirements for horse camping and said that staff wants to keep the trails open for horseback riding to serve the local users. Mills mentioned that some people that stay overnight have their own water supply, generators, and restrooms in their trailers. Fiorenza said it was because of State Codes. Staff doesn't feel they have the land base to have a destination location it was a decision to avoid the conflicts of having all the users there at the same time because there is not the capacity. Mills asked if there would be any reconsideration if money was available to make these improvements the Health Department wants. Fiorenza said it will revert back to a day use area for local residents.

### D. Remaining Cross Country Running Race Dates at Nine Mile Forest

Lovlien said there are six races at Nine Mile this fall. Five races will occur by the time the mountain bike and horse trails close on October 15<sup>th</sup>. It had been decided that if there was a sectional race within a one week time period after October 15<sup>th</sup> that it would be allowed similar to how they allow the horse and bike trails to open early if it's dry out in the spring. That was a compromise that was worked out. There will be one additional sectional race this year on October 21st at Nine Mile. The inner trails will be used so it shouldn't be too much of a problem with hunting.

### Old Business

#### B. Ragnar Trail Relay Running Race – September 23-24, 2016

Fiorenza said the organization has these types of relay running races all over the country. There will be over 2200 runners from many different states for the event that starts on Friday and ends Saturday at Nine Mile. It's good for the County and staff hopes the event returns. Lovlien said no one will be allowed to park at Nine Mile but will be shuttled in from a different location. Staff has met with the organizers of the event and they seem very well organized.

### New Business

#### E. Big Eau Pleine Park Safety and Sanitation Harvest

Lovlien said a vegetation management harvest has been established east of the main road and within 100 feet of the

trails. Four bids were received and Tigerton Lumber received the sale. Chickering asked if there would be any consideration for single track trails. Lovlien said that would take a lot bigger sale and at some point they may want to look at that. Lovlien said the loggers will be required to remove the tops on the single track trails where they cross the other trails.

**F. County Forester Position Discussion and Recruitment**

Lovlien said that Doug Brown, County Forester has accepted a position of County Forest Specialist with the DNR. The County has approved filling the Forester position and Lovlien hopes to have someone hired by December. The DNR Forest Liaison will be helping the County with more time this fall. Lovlien said the County Forester position is a technical position and he would like to have someone with experience.

**G. 2016 Fall Timber Sale Package**

Lovlien said there are four sales on about 256 acres on this fall bid opening and most of the sales are out of the heavy recreational unit areas. Lovlien summarized each of the sales. He said bids will be opened on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**H. Article – Deer Seriously Threatening Northwoods Oak Trees**

Lovlien said a deer fence enclosure was installed around several acres in Bayfield County. Inside of the enclosure the red oaks regenerated while outside of the enclosure they didn't. The deer population is so high in some areas that they cannot regenerate oak. The article is eye opening because some of the deer advisory councils in that area were out voted by other CDAC members who want to see more deer. Some areas in Marathon County they cannot get oak to regenerate. At some point if people want oak and other species to regenerate, the deer population will have to be reduced. Discussion followed.

**I. Lake Wausau Drawdown to Complete Repairs to Rothschild Dam**

Lovlien said that the drawdown was supposed to be initiated a week or two ago so the Rothschild dam could be fixed. The drawdown has not started yet. There will be a federal meeting tomorrow so it may happen yet this fall or it could be delayed. The Park Department plans on fixing boat landings and change out piers when the water is drawn down.

**J. Article – 2016 “State of Birds” Report**

Haug reported there are 119 bird species of concern in Wisconsin. That is about fifty percent of birds in decline. Most of it is due to habitat destruction, wetlands being filled, tempered forests being cut down and grasslands being converted to other uses. There was an Audubon study which said that climate change is going to affect 55% of the birds and where they will migrate. The birds will have to go further north to find food and they are not going to be able to line up their migration with food sources. These food sources will bud and hatch out at different times so all that will play a part in bird decline. Lovlien noted that when staff does management activities on county forests and parkland they are required to follow DNR requirements regarding concerned, threatened and endangered species.

**J. Findings of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Audit**

Lovlien mentioned that the County Forest is certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative whereby a third party audits how the County manages its timber sales, recreation, wetland, and wildlife. They come to Wisconsin every year to complete a field certification audit in a few counties. It is a group certification under the County forest system so what they find in some areas affects all the counties. In the last two years the auditors did not find any minor or major non-conformances. This year they found one minor non-conformance and one opportunity for improvement. The minor non-conformance had to do with using an incorrect number on the SFI logo and the opportunity for improvement was for justifying what they doing in aspen clear cut blocks. Lovlien said it is good to have a third party look at how the County is managing to a set of principles and criteria that meets sustainable forestry and wildlife habitat. Heil said the certification is important for the County because it helps market their product.

**K. Michigan Tech Asking for Input on Forest Biomass Survey**

Burke explained that a student from Michigan Tech. contacted him about a survey they are doing on biomass use and public perception on what it does to the forests by some of the user groups. Burke asks that members share with their

constituents if they are interested in filling out the survey in the next couple months. The student is interested in this area because of the local biomass plant. Lovlien mentioned that the plant is running on less biomass right now. He said there are DNR biomass guidelines and because of these guidelines there is more than enough biomass left on sites.

**L. Member Items**

Haug said the Bird Club is going to reprint the bird checklist. They also might produce a map of bird hot spots in Marathon County. She mentioned that a Bird City summit will be held the last weekend of October and there will be a WBCI Wisconsin bird conservation initiative. Events include a tour at the Everest County Forest, Birds and Beer, talks, tour and reception at Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum. Everyone is welcome. She is continuing to work on the feral cat issue.

Lane questioned if Lovlien was receiving comments on logging at Nine Mile. Lovlien said he has not received any calls. He believes this group has done a lot of education and taken information back to their user groups. He said they as foresters have also learned from the user groups about things like snow management along the trails and other techniques to lessen the impact. He believes having a sale at Nine Mile regularly is good to keep the forest healthy and protect the resources. Burke thought it helped they went to irregular clear cuts with some trees left and that people realized that the trees come back and in some cases improved the activity they are doing. It's part of a process of getting used to it and that it's done responsibly.

Lovlien said Chief State Forester Paul De Long has taken a position with the American Forest Foundation. His last day is September 30<sup>th</sup> so there will be a new Chief State Forester for the DNR. Lovlien also noted that Single Track Magazine voted Nine Mile as the most popular bike trail in Wisconsin.

Mills asked about the criteria the Health Department wanted for the camping area and wouldn't they want those amenities for day time use. Lovlien said there is a pit toilet at the parking area but not water. Mills questioned if horse group money could be used to improve day use. Staff agreed.

**III. Old Business**

**A. DNR Considers Northern Forestry Office Update**

Lovlien said the final report was submitted to the DNR Secretary. A total of up to 45 positions could be moved to Hayward, Wausau or Rhinelander. The report will be submitted as part of the 2017-2019 State budget. From there the Legislature and Governor will decide whether or not to make it part of the budget. If it makes it through the budget, the Forestry Division will determine potential sites and building areas.

**C. Schira Property Training Burn and Demolition of Buildings**

Lovlien said there was a training burn on the Schira property in July where they burnt the house and garage. All that's left is the foundation, slab, pole shed and some small buildings. Some areas will have to be filled in plus concrete will be removed. Once this is done the land will return to the wild. Lovlien hopes the work will be finished by October 31<sup>st</sup>.

**D. Marathon County Wildlife Biologist Position Update**

Lovlien said a DNR Wildlife Biologist for the Marathon County area could be hired by November 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. The person will be involved with deer hunting right away.

**IV. Remaining 2016 Meeting Date - December 21, 2016 at 6:00 pm.**

**V. Adjourn**

**Motion** by Burke to adjourn, motion **carried**. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Thomas Lovlien  
Secretary