

Members present: John Burke, Mark Chickering, Dale Heil, Mike Lane, Paul Klocko, Carol Mills, Ryan Schleifer, Gary Weiland, Marcell Wieloch

Excused: Greg Klos, Susan Haug

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

Motion by Wieloch to approve June 6, 2017 minutes. **Motion carried.**

II. New Business

A. Subcommittee Appointments/Introduction of Members

Lovlien said two applications for the forestry industry representative were received. The Forestry Committee will officially appoint Ryan Schleifer as the representative at their October meeting. Schleifer gave some history about himself and his job as a procurement forester for Verso.

B. 2017 Fall Timber Sale Package

Lovlien said the fall timber sale offers 512 acres of timber on eight tracts with an estimated volume of 16,385 tons and 644.0 thousand board feet. Lovlien discussed some of the sales. He is expecting interest because of the amount of logs. The sales were advertised and the bid opening will be held on October 2nd. Short discussion on oak wilt followed.

C. Results of the County Forest Certification Audit

Lovlien said Marathon County is SFI certified. All counties are certified under a group certificate and every year the audit is on a small group of different counties. The auditors found some erosion control issues on UTV/ATV trails and some issues with worker supervision in Iron County. Lovlien mentioned that as County employees, they don't supervise the loggers in the woods. There was high praise from the certifiers where standards were exceeded and overall it was a great audit.

D. Potential Land Acquisition in the Town of Harrison

Lovlien said he was contacted to see if the County was interested in purchasing 40 acres in the middle of the Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit. This is probably the highest priority acquisition because of its location. The County forest law prohibits permanent easements into these areas so the owners are only allowed access through an access permit. Lovlien is moving quickly so he is going to order an appraisal, assuming the Town of Harrison approves the purchase, and then subsequently apply for a Knowles Nelson Stewardship grant. The Forestry Committee concurred. Staff is following its 15-year Comprehensive Plan to attempt to acquire 2000 acres every plan period.

E. Press Release – Wisconsin County Forests Association Receives Tourism Grant

Lovlien said the Wisconsin County Forests Association received about a \$7300 grant to update its website showing where there are good areas to hunt for grouse and woodcock in various counties.

F. Fiscal Year 2017 Time Standards Summary

Lovlien said the DNR has oversight over all the county forests and there is a liaison forester to help the counties manage their forests. Time standard hours are based on a formula that every county receives for technical assistance from the liaison. Marathon County receives 668 hours/year. Last year Marathon County received 802 hours because of the County Forester vacancy.

G. Priority Based Budgeting Process and Development of 2018 Budget

Lovlien said priority based budgeting is a new tool the County adopted to rank its programs based on being the healthiest, safest and most prosperous County in the State. The Department fared pretty well. Two of the highest

ranked programs were Nine Mile Recreation and the Eastbay Sports Complex. A majority of the other programs fell into the second highest rankings. A few programs were ranked low but some of these support the higher ranking programs. The Department can look for efficiencies in the low ranked programs.

H. County Deer Advisory Council Initial Recommendations on Three Year Population Goal

Lane said the Deer Advisory Council met in August and decided to maintain the population for Marathon County for the next three years. They decided to adjust the boundaries as Marathon County is one unit and some areas have a higher deer population. The County was split into two units which had to be split on previous unit boundaries. Previous units 62A and 62B were lumped together which is basically the area east of Highway 39 and south of Highway 29. That will be one unit and the rest of the County will be another. The goal for the two units were to maintain. They can issue different antlerless quotas for the two different units but still arrive under the maintain goal. This year's quotas were set at the spring meeting. One antlerless tag is issued with a bow license and one with a gun license. No bonus tags will be issued for this year's hunting season. Public comments are being reviewed and a final decision will be made at the October 3rd meeting. This will be submitted to the DNR. Discussion followed about Chronic Wasting Disease.

I. Marathon County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Comments to the Deer Advisory Council

Lovlien said an over population of deer cause problems with forest regeneration. Small trees are browsed and don't regenerate. In his comments, Lovlien requested the Deer Advisory Council to reduce the population south of Highway 29 and offer a significant amount of free antlerless and bonus permits. Marathon County's second leading industry is the forest industry.

J. Big Eau Pleine County Park Project – Deer Exclusions

Lovlien said the County would like to develop scientific data for forest regeneration. There have always been deer in the Big Eau Pleine Park and no hunting seasons are currently allowed. Staff is going to install two 75' X 75' fences where control points will be installed within the fence and also outside the fence so they can take measurements to get scientific data. It is an ongoing project as the data won't be available for a couple of years. Staff may do this type of project in other County forests as well.

K. Resignation of DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp

Lovlien reported that DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp resigned to take a position in the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. The Governor will be appointing a new DNR Secretary shortly.

L. Member Items

Lovlien said the Department is buying a Harley Rake in the hopes to smooth out trails for low snow conditions to get some extra days at the end of the season to ski. They are also buying a new roller to pack it rather than grooming. Burke said the County will operate the equipment and they will have volunteers helping to pick rocks off the trails. The intent is to create the smoothest surface possible so that a minimal amount of snow is needed in order to make it a skiable surface. The rollers are sometimes better than the groomers and pack it down more to get a good initial base is the goal. Lovlien mentioned the contractor is back to finish spraying for invasive species at Nine Mile, Kronenwetter, and Burma Forest Units. Chickering mentioned that Sylvan Hill Bike Park is immensely popular. It shows how organized the Central Wisconsin Off-Road Cycling Coalition has become as it was built by a professional trail building company.

Old Business

A. Update on the Potential Land Acquisition in the Town of Rib Mountain

Lovlien reported that the purchase of this 120 acres is underway. The Town of Rib Mountain has approved the purchase and the appraisal is complete. The appraisal is at the DNR for review. It's mainly wetland with some upland but fits in well with fulfilling the obligation in the plan to add additional lan00750d for forest use and water quality protection.

B. Update on the 2017-2019 State Budget on Forestry Programs

Lovlien said the State budget is to be signed tomorrow. None of the Governor's ninety-nine partial vetos affect forestry programs, however the biggest effect is that the forestry mil tax was eliminated. There was a twenty five dollar tax on every \$150,000 home that went into funding both County and State forest programs. This amounted to about 90 million dollars a year which the Governor has backfilled with general purpose revenue for the next two years. After that time, forestry will have to compete with social programs, transportation and all other programs. They will have to show the value of the forest management in Wisconsin so that funding can be maintained. Lovlien mentioned the County Forest law that covers the 10% payments to towns in lieu of taxes and the 30 cents an acre that the State pays the towns was not affected in this budget.

C. Ragnar Trail Relay Running Race – September 22-23, 2017

Lovlien said the race organizers are setting up their course and village. He said it's a two day overnight relay race where they are expecting about 2900 participants. It is a family oriented event where people recreate and camp. People are shuttled there because of parking limitations. It is a very well run event that leaves the area cleaner than before they came. Their contract has been renegotiated this year and the County will receive about \$12,500 in revenues from the event.

D. Emerald Ash Borer Detections in Wisconsin

Lovlien reported the Emerald Ash Borer was detected in five new counties which include Chippewa, Green Lake, Marinette, Waupaca, and Waushara. Every County to the south of Marathon County has the borer. Lovlien expects it to be found in the Marathon County within a year. This will lead to the County being quarantined at some point.

IV. 2017 Meeting Dates – December 20, 2017 at 6:00 pm.

V. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Burke. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Thomas Lovlien
Secretary