

Members present: John Burke, Mark Chickering, Susan Haug, Dale Heil, Paul Klocko, Greg Klos, Mike Lane, Carol Mills, Ryan Schleifer, Gary Weiland

Excused: Marcell Wieloch

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Rec, 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 Burke to approve December 20, 2017 minutes. Motion **carried**.

III. Old Business

D. Discussion on Nine Mile County Forest Event and Use Regulations and Recommendation to the Forestry/Recreation Committee

Lovlien said the Nine Mile County forest event and use regulations policy had been in place since 2002 and was reviewed because of some recent user conflicts. Since 2002 there have been more and more requests for recreational activities and events at Nine Mile. Nine Mile is very popular because it's close to Wausau and has great trails and facilities. Lovlien said it's important to recognize the County forest law, mission and vision statements. Sustainable timber harvests are the number one priority according to the County forest law. Recreational and timber programs can work together just as they have the last 25 years at Nine Mile. User groups work together and compromise and this balances all the different uses. Lovlien said the regulations regarding events and uses can be revised at any time. This is a guide for staff. Lovlien discussed the twelve proposed regulations in-depth. Discussion followed. **Motion** by Burke to approve the Event and Use Regulations and forward the recommendation on to the Forestry/Recreation Committee. Motion **carried** unanimously.

II. New Business

A. 2017 County Forest Division Annual Report

Lovlien discussed some of the program highlights including revenue and expenses, certification, timber management, road and trail maintenance, wildlife management, recreation, public outreach and professional development.

B. 2017 County Forest Law Enforcement Report

Lovlien reported that five tree stands were seized and eight citations were written for various violations. A sale of the tree stands that were seized over the last several years was held bringing in \$711.00.

C. 2008-2017 County Forest Division Expense/Revenue Report

Lovlien reported that over the last ten years almost 4.2 million dollars in gross timber was sold. Before last year, the program was breaking even. There is a lot of timber sold that needs to get cut. The revenue fluctuates each year depending on weather, markets, etc. The timber contracts are normally given three years to harvest.

D. 2018 Spring Timber Sale Package

Lovlien said the spring timber sale package offers 339 acres of timber on seven tracts with an estimated volume of 12, 910 tons and 133.0 thousand board feet. Lovlien discussed the sales. There are two sales in the Kronenwetter Forest Unit, two in the Leather Camp Forest Unit, two in the Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit, and one in the Ringle Forest Unit. The sales will be advertised and the bid opening is April 2nd.

E. Winter Recreation – Trail Program Update

Lovlien said snowmobile trails closed last week and the cross-country ski trails have also closed. Some events that have been held at Nine Mile include the Stomp the Swamp Snowshoe Race, the Badger State Games Cross-Country Ski event, and the Special Olympics cross-country ski event. The Snekkevic Ski Race was cancelled this year.

F. ATV/UTV Sustainable Trail Guidance Document

Lovlien said some of the northern county forests build new trails because they receive a lot of use. Over the last several years some counties have been going to the ATV/UTV Governors Council funding decision meetings to try to get funds for graveling to make trails sustainable. WCFA came up with sustainable trail guidelines to help demonstrate what is needed for protection of water quality, BMP's and keeping the forests certified. There was a certification finding last year on the audit that a trail in northern Wisconsin was eroding into an ash swamp which is being communicated to the ATV/UTV Council. However, there are some members of the Council that don't think they should be paying for gravel and maintenance to fund these trails up to the levels that the counties are required because of forest certification. Lovlien said the County is

following the sustainable guidelines for the trails in the Burma Road Forest Unit and the club is assisting and doing a good job.

G. 2003-2017 Value of Public Land Forest Timber sales in Wisconsin

Lovlien said that since 2009 counties have been receiving from 30 million up to over 40 million dollar's worth of stumpage on the county forest system each year. County forests are the largest public landholders in Wisconsin. Contractors the counties deal with rely on public County forest timber sales for their businesses. State and federal forests are harvesting more acres than they have been in the past.

H. Member Items

Ryan Schleifer commented that a statewide quarantine regarding the Emerald Ash Borer will be going into effect on March 30th. There will no limitations on moving forest products throughout the State. Lovlien said the County will still continue to prohibit firewood from being brought into its campgrounds and forests as firewood is a major mover of insects and diseases. Burke said the ski club along with the County provided free adult ski lessons this year to about 200 people. The Ski club provides instructors and the County provides the equipment. He believes it has been a pretty successful program and sees a number of those people coming back to ski. He also mentioned that a feasibility study is going to be done during the next several months about making snow on a small portion of the area right around the Nine Mile chalet. Lovlien said the ski club brought the proposal to staff and will take a few years to study. Burke said there are two kinds of analysis. One is a technical analysis concerning what it's going to take to actually build it and if it has the necessary resources like water and electricity. There is also an economic analysis if people will pay extra or will it get higher utilization. From a skiers perspective what they would like to ideally see is that skiing be open by the middle of December consistently all the way through until the end of March.

Carol Mills left the meeting at 7:45pm

III. Old Business

A. Land Acquisition – Updates on the Town of Harrison and Town of Rib Mountain Properties

Lovlien said the 40 acres in the middle of the Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit in the Town of Harrison has been purchased and he is in the process of writing a Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant to get 50% of that cost reimbursed. Lovlien is still working with the landowners on the Town of Rib Mountain 120 acre property. Ninety acres of this is swamp and 30 acres is upland. He said this purchase may not happen. The State appraisal is complete. An offer was made to the landowners at the appraised value of \$1600 an acre. The landowners are asking \$7400 an acre. Lovlien said while this acquisition blocks in the forest, and there is watershed and habitat protections he doesn't believe those are good enough reasons to pay above the appraised value.

B. 2018 Spring Bird Survey at Nine Mile County Forest

Schleifer and the Wausau Bird Club are definitely interested in helping Lovlien with the bird survey on a 39 acre timber sale that is at Nine Mile. Lovlien said he will get them whatever information they need to do the survey to determine what species of birds are there.

C. County Deer Advisory Council Update on Preliminary 3-Year Quota

Lovlien gave testimony at the last CDAC meeting on behalf of the Department in relationship to deer browse and deer problems in certain areas of the County. Lane discussed the quota recommendations. A 6500 antlerless quota with 1500 private land bonus permits with no public permits was set. There will still be one free antlerless permit with the gun and one free antlerless permit with the bow so on public or private land a person can harvest antlerless deer. Lane said the Council will continue to ask to split the County and hopefully this recommendation will be revisited by the Natural Resources Board in the future. Another meeting will be held on April 16 to finalize quotas after public comments are taken. Written or on-line comments can be submitted from April 2nd to the 12th.

IV. 2018 Tentative Meeting Dates – June 6, September 19 and December 19, 2018 at 6:00 pm.

V. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Klos. Motion **carried**. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Thomas Lovlien
Secretary