

Members present: John Burke, Mark Chickering, Susan Haug, Paul Klocko, Mike Lane, Dale Heil, Ryan Schleifer, Marcell Wieloch

Excused: Gary Weiland, Greg Klos

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Rec, and Forestry Department staff present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director, Joe Tucker-County Forester

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

I. Minutes

Motion by Wieloch to approve the June 6, 2018 minutes. Motion **carried**.

III. New Business

A. Forest Citizens' Advisory Subcommittee Appointments

Lovlien said that the Forestry Committee had appointed the five returning members of this committee. Carol Mills has resigned so the equestrian representative position is vacant. There has been no response from advertising the vacancy. Lovlien asked members to let him know of any one that may be interested. He asked for other options if he cannot find an equestrian member like a new interest group or another general member. Members suggested an Ice Age Trail representative (general hiking) or adjacent landowner. Burke thought they should try and get an equestrian member back on the Committee. Lovlien will advertise again for the equestrian representative.

B. Review the 2018 Fall Timber Sale Package

Tucker explained that the sale offers 435 acres of timber on seven tracts with an estimated volume of 19,780 tons and 263.0 thousand board feet. Tucker explained that tract 5-18 didn't sell in the spring and is being re-advertised. Tucker discussed all of the sales. The sales will be advertised and the bid opening is October 2nd. Questions were answered.

C. Nine Mile County Forest Oak Scarification and Regeneration Project

Tucker explained that he finished establishing a timber sale at Nine Mile that will be advertised this spring. The sale is predominantly the beginning of an oak regeneration sale of 54 acres also a small stand of over-mature aspen and maple. A good portion of the sale will be regenerated for oak that are along the snowmobile trail. There was a lot of brush in the understory, some red maple, and not many oak seedlings so the DNR scarified to rough up the ground and remove the brush. A lot of the oak forests have brush competition because fires have been suppressed for so many years. Scarification is a good way to mimic the fire disturbance by reducing the litter layer and brush competition. The oak acorn crop is good this year so the seed bed is prepped and there could be up to 3000 seedlings per acre. Staff is looking to do this elsewhere based on what they can manage in terms of coordinating this type of work. Tucker met with the leadership from the ski club about the timber sale to discuss aesthetic and snow management issues along the trail. Questions were answered.

D. Results of the 2018 County Forest Certification Audit

A. Lovlien said the audit is held in four or five different counties every year. There were no corrective actions for either SFI or FSC. There were two minor opportunities for improvement. One was for some ponding of water on a County forest gas tax road and the other for a forester who had his chemical applicator certification lapse. Lovlien said Marathon County will be one of the counties audited in 2020.

E. Forestry Division Timber Sale Revenue Projection for 2018

Last year's net revenue was just over \$243,000. That followed a year with a poor winter and tough markets. To date the revenue is about \$549,000. Lovlien noted 20% goes to the State to pay back an interest free loan and 10% goes back to the towns in lieu of taxes. Currently, there are two active timber jobs and two more may be starting. Lovlien said if it stays dry and a good freeze occurs in December it could be the second highest revenue on record. He said timber contracts are two to three years so fluctuations occur based upon weather and markets. The even flow amount is set at \$245,000.

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

Lovlien said this is the second year a tourism grant has been received from the State to promote grouse and woodcock hunting in Wisconsin. The Leather Camp Forest Unit is an area displayed on an interactive website. The Association is eligible to apply one more year for this grant. This year the amount was approximately \$2,000.

G. Results of the Cross Country Skiing Survey From the 2017-2018 Season

Lovlien said overall the survey showed a positive reflection of skiing experiences. The majority of the customers really liked the grooming while others did not. There were differing opinions on when grooming should occur and also when the trails should open. Lovlien noted that the trails and chalet aren't open until after the last gun deer season and the hope is to be open for the holiday season.

H. Wausau 24 and Wisconsin Endurance Mountain Bike Race Participation and Revenue

Lovlien reported that Wausau 24 had 561 participants and the revenue was \$5411.20. The WEMS race had 75 participants and revenues of \$611.00. Both events were well run.

I. Badger State Games Winter Triathlon Event at Nine Mile Forest January 27, 2019

Burke said this joint venture between the Central Wisconsin Off Road Cycling Coalition (CWOCC) and the Wausau Nordic Ski Club will be a winter triathlon held the day after the cross country skiing events of Badger State Games. The winter triathlon will consist of cross country skiing, biking and snowshoeing. The Forestry Committee has given a one day exception that allows biking at Nine Mile. The bike and ski clubs are going to advertise that there is no early or late bike riding so it will only be during the morning event from 9am to noon on Sunday. Bike riding will only be on existing trails. Most of the single track grooming is going to be done by the clubs and crossing of ski trails will be mostly at ninety degree angles. Lovlien said the event will be evaluated for future years. There will be no resource damage and is a good thing for the community. Burke said the intent is not to bike on ski trails but to utilize existing bike trails/snowshoe trails. Certain trails will be closed but they don't intend on using all of the trails. They may use bike trails that are east of Red Bud Road where there are no snowshoers but that is still to be determined.

J. Member Items

Lane questioned if the County could sell birch seedlings and collect the revenues. Lovlien said in some northern counties there are major issues with theft of birch and he does not want to create problems like that here. Marathon County doesn't have a lot of birch so not a lot of problems either. Questions were answered. Polley mentioned that there will be a presentation on E-bikes at the upcoming Parks Commission and Forestry/Recreation Committee meeting. It is being organized by the Marathon County Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee who want people to understand what the bikes are because there are a lot of misconceptions. This is not a consideration of any policy change it's strictly an educational presentation. Staff's biggest concern would be regulation on certain types of E-bikes. Chickering felt as awareness builds, public opinion changes and right now there is a general non acceptance of E-bikes by the mountain bike community but that is starting to change. Polley also mentioned that there are options for winter bike riding at Big Eau Pleine and that the Ringle landfill is opening its first section of mountain bike trail there this fall.

II. Old Business

A. Nine Mile Forest Bird Survey Completed by Wausau Bird Club

Haug and another member of the Wausau Bird Club completed a bird survey in June and early July to determine if cerulean warblers were present. Cerulean warblers are a State threatened bird and species guidelines prohibits harvesting some timber stands until after August 24 due to nesting birds. No warblers were heard or seen within the harvest area which allows for harvesting on or after July 16. This allowed the logging contractor to move into the sale early. Lovlien thanked the Bird Club for completing the survey. Two male hooded warblers were heard outside of the area which has a different species habitat and staff will have to determine what that means for future timber sales.

B. Ragnar Trail Relay Running Race September 21-22, 2018 at Nine Mile

Lovlien said set up has started for the race. The race will be Friday and Saturday. There will be around 3000 runners. This is the first year there may be some adverse weather including cold and rain. Burke mentioned the organizers are urging people to not come until Friday and that they should bring warm clothes.

C. Update on Feasibility Study Regarding Snow Making at Nine Mile Forest

Burke said the Wausau Ski Club has commissioned a snow making technical feasibility study with HKD out of Utah. HKD has provided them with an initial idea of what it would take to create a snow making venue at Nine Mile of approximately

three kilometers of skiable trail. He noted that this is just in the beginning stages and has to go through an approval process. From getting the County on board as far as wanting to accept a project like this and maintain it over the period of time and the challenges of financing it. The next step is to study the economic feasibility. Trying to decide what snow making can do from a revenue standpoint as well as offset additional expenses that may be incurred as a result of having it. The system being looked at is heavy on infrastructure installation up front which means less operating expense on the other end. What it involves is putting piping in the ground and having head stands every 200 meters or so which makes it easier to just move the snow making equipment around. The other alternative is to build a big pile and move the snow which involves a lot of time and effort and labor in terms of moving the snow. This is cheaper initially but more costly to operate over the long term. This would be a project that can be done all at once or phased in. They will be having a board meeting in the near future and have to decide if they want to continue looking into this. Burke discussed some of the other ski areas that make snow. Lane questioned what the water source would be. Burke said the ground and that question needs to be answered. Is there enough water available? More likely a pond would be built by the north parking lot on the west end. It would be filled during the course of the year and discharged for snowmaking. Snowmaking would run one to two weeks.

D. Remaining 2018 Fall Events at Nine Mile Forest – Ragnar Trail Relay Race - Sept 21-22, Edgar Cross Country Trail Running Race - Sept. 25, High School Bike Race - Oct 6-7, Edgar Cross Country Trail Running Race - Oct. 11, DC Everest Cross Country Trail Running Race - Oct. 13, Mountain Bike season closes October 15, ATV Training - north snowmobile parking lot - Oct 20.

IV. Remaining 2018 Meeting Dates – December 19, 2018 at 6:00 pm.

V. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Wieloch. Motion **carried**. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Thomas Lovlien
Secretary