



## MARATHON COUNTY FORESTRY/RECREATION COMMITTEE AGENDA

**Date and Time of Meeting:** Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at 1:00pm

**Meeting Location:** Conference Room #5, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

MEMBERS: Rick Seefeldt (Chairman), Tom Rosenberg (Vice-Chairman), Jean Maszk

***Marathon County Mission Statement:*** *Marathon County Government serves people by leading, coordinating, and providing county, regional, and statewide initiatives. It directly or in cooperation with other public and private partners provides services and creates opportunities that make Marathon County and the surrounding area a preferred place to live, work, visit, and do business.*

***Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Mission Statement:*** *Adaptively manage our park and forest lands for natural resource sustainability while providing healthy recreational opportunities and unique experiences making Marathon County the preferred place to live, work, and play.*

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the telephone conference beginning ten (10) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number: Phone Number: 1-408-418-9388 Access Code: 2497 475 8258. Please Note: If you are prompted to provide an "Attendee Identification Number" enter the # sign. No other number is required to participate in the telephone conference. When you enter the telephone conference, PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!

### Agenda Items:

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Public Comment (15 minute limit)** *(Any person who wishes to address the County Board, or one of its committees, during the "Public Comment" portion of meetings, must provide his or her name, address, and the topic he or she wishes to present to the Marathon County Clerk or chair of the committee, no later than five minutes before the start of the meeting.)*
3. **Approval of the Minutes of the Tuesday, September 5, 2023 Committee Meeting**
4. **Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:**
  - A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee
    1. Consider Timber Bids and Award Contracts
    2. Consider Approving Revisions to the Nine Mile County Forest Event and Use Regulations
  - B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration - None
5. **Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee - None**
6. **Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**
  - A. 2024 Parks, Recreation and Forestry Budget Update
  - B. DNR/County Partnership Meeting, Minutes and Discussion
  - C. Ragnar Trail Wisconsin Update
  - D. DNR Liaison Report – Jeff Sorenson

**7. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 at 1:00pm at 212 River Dr., Wausau, WI 54403, Room 5 or via Webex**

- A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence
- B. Future Agenda Items: Consider Timber Sale Extension Requests, Consider Timber Bids and Award Contracts, Agreement with DNR on the Bat Habitat Conservation Plan

**8. Adjournment**

**SIGNED /s/ Thomas Lovlien  
PRESIDING OFFICER OR DESIGNEE**

ANY PERSON PLANNING TO ATTEND THIS MEETING WHO NEEDS SOME TYPE OF SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE SHOULD CALL THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE AT 261-1500 OR E-MAIL [COUNTYCLERK@CO.MARATHON.WI.US](mailto:COUNTYCLERK@CO.MARATHON.WI.US) ONE BUSINESS DAY BEFORE THE MEETING.

EMAILED/FAXED TO: Daily Herald and other News Media Groups  
EMAILED/FAXED BY: Jodi Luebbe  
EMAIL/FAX DATE/TIME: September 27, 2023 9:30 a.m.

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE:  
By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m/p.m.

Members present: Rick Seefeldt (chair), Tom Rosenberg (vice-chair), Jean Maszk  
Staff present: Tom Lovlien - Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Director, Joe Tucker-County Forester,  
Jeff Sorenson-DNR Liaison

1. Call Meeting to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chair Seefeldt at 1:00pm, Rm. 5, 212 River Dr., Wausau. Official notice and the agenda for the meeting was posted publicly in accordance with State statutes.
2. Public Comment – none brought forward.
3. Approve Minutes – **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Maszk to approve the minutes from the August 1, 2023 regular Forestry/Recreation Committee meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
4. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution
  - A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee
    1. Review and Consider Approving Fall Timber Sale Package – The fall timber sale package had been distributed to Committee for review. The county forest sales offer 257 acres of timber on three tracts with an estimated volume of 19,140 tons and 36.0 thousand board feet. Tucker discussed all the sales. The sales will be advertised and the bid opening is October 2, 2023. Questions were answered. **Motion** / second by Seefeldt / Maszk to approve and advertise the fall 2023 timber sale package. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
    2. County Conservation Aids 2023-2025 Project Approval – Lovlien explained that this grant matches fifty percent of State funds with fifty percent of County levy for fish, game, and habitat related projects. His recommendation is to use the funds to help purchase red pine trees to plant next spring at Nine Mile County Forest Unit. Questions were answered. **Motion** / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to approve the 2023-2025 County Conservation Aids project to plant red pine in the Nine Mile County Forest Unit. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
    3. County Forests Citizens Advisory Subcommittee Appointment – Lovlien explained that the forest industry representative position has a recent vacancy. He contacted a few people and put out a press release and received one application. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Maszk to approve Taylor Dorsey to the County Forest Citizens Advisory Subcommittee as the Forest Industry Representative. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
  - B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration – None
5. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee – None
6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports
  - A. Department of Natural Resources Liaison Report – Sorenson has completed 151 of standard hours of time on the County forests. He discussed his work assisting Tucker on the timber sales. He discussed a possible disease find (HRD) that affects pine in the Burma Forest Unit and another oak wilt finding at Nine Mile Forest Unit. There will be an upcoming DNR/Marathon County partnership meeting. Questions were answered.
  - B. Preliminary Results of the County Forest Certification Audit – Lovlien explained that Marathon County is certified under the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) and a subset of counties are audited every year. No Corrective Action Requests (CARS) were found in the counties that are certified SFI and FSC and one Opportunity for Improvement (OFI) was found in counties certified (SFI) and also one under (SFC). Marathon County is due for a field audit in 2025.
  - C. Wisconsin County Forests Association Annual Meeting – September 26-28, 2023 – The annual meeting is being held in Hayward and Friday is the deadline to register.

D. Discuss January 2024 Meeting Date and Time – The January meeting is scheduled for January 2<sup>nd</sup> which is a holiday for staff. This meeting will most likely be held on the date that the Environmental Resources Committee schedules their meeting.

7. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 1:00 pm, Rm. 5 & Webex, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence – none brought forward

B. Future Agenda Items: 2024 Budget Update, Consider Timber Bids and Award Contracts, DNR Partnership Meeting Discussion, 2023 Ragnar Trail Wisconsin Update, DNR Liaison Report, Agreement with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on the Bat Habitat Conservation Plan.

8. Adjourn – **Motion** / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to adjourn the meeting at 1:35 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.

1. Sustainable timber management (timber harvests) will continue following the approved County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the County Forest Law (28.11 Wis. Stats). Some trails may be periodically closed to allow harvesting due to the following:
  - It has become increasingly difficult to manage the timber resource with insect and disease restrictions that prohibit harvesting during specific time periods.
  - Cross country skiing has reduced harvesting in the winter within the core ski trail area.
  - In upland areas of Nine Mile harvesting may only occur between August 15 and November 15 in certain timber stands due to threatened and endangered species guidance. The Department of Natural Resources continues to draft new species guidance each year making timber harvesting from May 1-August 31 more challenging.
  - There are few areas that harvests may occur in year-round.
  - Attempts will be made to minimize conflicts on recreational trail activities.
2. Dispersed recreation such as hunting, trapping, fishing, bird watching, hiking, backpacking and berry picking will continue to occur on all County Forest Lands according to the County Forest Law and Department of Natural Resources seasons and regulations.
3. Mountain biking and horseback **summer** riding season at Nine Mile County Forest begins May 1 to May 15, depending on trail conditions, to October 15 each year. ~~If trail conditions allow opening during the first three weeks of May.~~ Mountain biking and horseback riding will be allowed after 12:00pm daily **the month of May** to accommodate spring turkey hunters.
4. County ordinance prohibits the use of bicycles or riding horses on any designated trail seasonally closed.
5. Snow biking is prohibited on cross country ski or snowshoe trails **except at designated crossings.** ~~due to user conflicts and the biking season being closed. Exception: One winter triathlon event is approved utilizing fat tire bikes. (Approved by Forestry/Recreation Committee May 2019.)~~ **In certain areas snow bikes and snowshoers will be sharing the same trails. The majority of the trails will not be shared, and portions will be double groomed.**
6. Class 1 and 3 pedal assist electric mountain bikes (eMTB) are allowed on County Forest lands. Class 2 throttle actuated E-bikes fall under the definition of a self-propelled motor bicycle and are prohibited by ordinance.
7. Cross country skiing, snowshoeing, **fat tire biking** and snowmobiling are allowed on designated trails when there is sufficient snow cover as determined by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department.
8. **Winter fat biking season coincides with the opening of the cross-country ski and snowshoe trails as determined by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department.**
9. Cross country skiing and snowshoeing are allowed at any time off the designated trails according to County Forest Law.

10. Hiking, walking, or running on ski, fat tire bike and snowshoe trails is prohibited.

11. Up to four high school cross country running races may be allowed at Nine Mile on or before October 15 each year. (Required Conference Cross Country Running Races are approved the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in October, if two Conference events are requested for the same Saturday, one will be held in the AM and one will be held in the PM (Approved by Forestry/Recreation Committee January 2020.)

12. Organizers may apply to hold a special event by completing a Facility Use Agreement form available at the Park office. All events or trail based activities will be considered if the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department receives an application no more than one year prior (365 days) to the year of the event and will receive priority. Any applications received less than six months prior to the event will be considered but may be rejected. If some events or trail-based activities are not approved, Parks, Recreation and Forestry staff will assist in finding a different venue appropriate to be held if possible.

Applications will be evaluated using the criteria below:

- Resource Protection
- Safety
- Potential for User Conflicts
- Number of Events Already Scheduled (cap on events)
- Benefits to the Community
- Revenue Generation
- Date of Requested Event
- Community Support
- Evaluation of Event Plan
- Necessity to close down portions of the facility to the public
- Previously held Events

A maximum of six(6) weekend trail based special events can be held from May through October 15<sup>th</sup>. And of those six(6), only two(2) will be allowed between September 1<sup>st</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup> to accommodate fall hunting seasons. Exception: An Ironbull bike gravel race is approved located on the Snowmobile trail only may occur the Saturday following October 15 each year. (Approved by Forestry/Recreation Committee May 2019.)

13. Charging fees for vehicle parking or admission fees for spectators to any events is prohibited at all County Forest Units under any circumstances.

14. The Park Commission has jurisdiction over the event or program if there is a conflict of use or multiple applications for events on the same date.

15. The Forestry/Recreation Committee has jurisdiction over all land use on the County Forest. Any future changes or additions to these regulations will be presented to the Forest Citizen's Advisory Subcommittee for a recommendation to the Forestry/Recreation Committee. The decision of the Forestry/Recreation Committee will be final.

DATE: September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

TO: Tom Lovlien - Marathon County Forest (MCF) Administrator, Jill Nemec - WI DNR Wausau Team Leader, and Doug Brown – WI DNR County Forest & Public Lands Specialist

FROM: Jeff Sorenson

SUBJECT: (FY 24) Marathon County Forest Annual Partnership Meeting Minutes

**Overview:**

The annual Wisconsin DNR and Marathon County Forest partnership meeting was held on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the WI DNR – Wausau Service Center at 1 pm. Tom Lovlien - Marathon County Forest (MCF) Administrator, Joe Tucker – MCF Assistant County Forest Administrator, Jill Nemec – WI DNR Wausau Team Leader, Brandon Stefanski – DNR Wildlife Biologist - John Hunt, Forestry Technician and Jeff Sorenson - WI DNR/MCF Liaison were in attendance. Joe Schwantes – DNR Woodruff Area Leader was unable to attend due to a previously scheduled family vacation. Hillary Keller – DNR Area Specialist was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict.

**Review of Prior Year's Time Standards and Accomplishments (FY 23):**

*DNR staff provided 664.5 hours to Marathon County Forest (660 were needed). The bulk of these hours came from three individuals, Jeff Sorenson – 423.25 (66.75 - admin., 19.5 - recon., 2.5 regen., and 334.5 - timber sales, John Hunt – 164.75 (109.75 regen, 47 timber sale and 8 other) and Hillary Keller – 38 (internal audit - all admin).*

*The breakdown of these hours went pretty much as planned with the bulk of Sorenson's hours in timber sales, Hunt's in regen with the oak shelterwood scarification dozer work and Keller coordinating the internal accounting review.*

<u>Core Work Areas</u>	<u>DNR staff hours worked</u>
Timber Sale Est./Admin./Closeouts	382.50 hours
Regen	121.25 hours
Administer County Forest Law	113.75 hours
Reconnaissance	39 hours
Other	<u>8 hours</u>
	664.5 hours

**Review of Current Years' Time Standards (FY 23):**

The intent of county hours again is for Sorenson is to use the bulk of his 525 required hours for time standards to assist Tucker with timber sale establishment and then whatever MCF determines to be the highest priority as the year evolves. Hunt has already completed his oak scarification work for the year and has 135 hours total committed to Marathon County time standards. Through August 26<sup>th</sup>, 151.50 time standards hours have been completed with Sorenson providing 123 hours and Hunt 26 hours.

Focus initially this fall should be on sale establishment in Harrison/Hewitt and Kronenwetter forest units and some TSI work for controlling the musclewood via cut stump/herbicide treatment at the Einstein sale.

**Timber Sale Goals and Updates:**

MCF's target annual allowable harvest is ~ 600-625 acres. A discussion was held about MCF not harvesting up to the WisFIRS based allowable cut of 674 acres. Nemec mentioned that the county could utilize the deferral option to decrease the annual allowable cut if needed when stands that are scheduled to be cut don't have to be harvested. Lovlien and Tucker desire to keep a 50 or so acre buffer under the 674 acres to prevent potential unseen future shortfalls.

The allowable cut acreage is typically split between two offerings, one in the spring and fall. Sorenson has been assisting Tucker with all sale preparation (marking, boundary lines and cruising) and writes up the 2460, prospectus and map on at least one timber sale per offering.

No current active timber sales mainly due to the current poor markets. This may have a ripple effect that lasts into the winter logging season.

**Recon Status & Goals:**

MCF approximately 2,000 acres of recon older than 21 years of age with virtually all of it in the aspen cover type. Only the 16–20-year-old recon has any other cover types that need to be updated. MCF's approach to the aspen cover type is to not focus their resources on recon but on sale preparation.

As was done last year, recon efforts will be focused on stands that will be ready for harvest in the next 2-3 years.

**Reforestation and Forest Regeneration:**

John Hunt, DNR Technician out of the Wausau office, has already completed ~ 25 acre of scarification. Cost for the project was approximately \$1,600. Hunt will finish up the rest of the stand this fall.

The scheduled red pine planting adjacent Springbrook Road recently had the site prepped (disc trenched and herbicide treatment) for planting. Next spring the area will be hand planted with red pine plugs in hopes of having a better survival rate and lessen the need for re-planting. The planting will be approximately ~60 acres.

MCF has \$3,600 budgeted for scarification projects for the next fiscal year. There will be ~35 acres of scarification

Potential experimental cutting to control muscledwood and ironwood via a manual waist height cutting method may be done on areas not located in future timber sales.

**Wildlife Program:**

- Nickel-an-Acre Budget
  - Spent \$419.23 on flowages in calendar year 2023
  - Still have \$2,180.77 of the allotted \$2,600 available to spend this year
- Flowages
  - Water levels are very low due to lack of rainfall
  - Wild rice looks great on Lower Leo and Lower Nienow this year
    - Planning on supplemental seeding of rice in struggling flowages of HH this fall
  - Dam inspection was completed by Becher-Hoppe on Bern Flowage
    - We will need to create an Inspection, Operation and Maintenance Plan (IOM)
    - Everything else checked out with some minor recommendations going forward
  - Rule changes pertaining to hunting/trapping at Bitzke
  - Some beaver have been removed by the USDA, but it has been limited this year
- Openings
  - Lack of staff time has limited the ability to work on opening during the summer of 2023
  - Still hoping to complete some openings maintenance during the fall



- Trails
  - Approximately .75 miles of logging roads on Kronenwetter were seeded down to a grass/clover mix in the spring of 2023
- Deer Hunting
  - CDAC
    - The quota/harvest recommendation was set at 7,000 antlerless deer
    - Marathon County will have 1 free antlerless farmland tag with the purchase of each license
    - There are 2,000 private and 500 public land bonus tags available for purchase
    - There will not be a Holiday hunt or extended archery season
    - Applications for current/new members just went through the review process
  - Big Eau Pleine County Park
    - There will be an open archery season in the park starting November 15 and running through the end of archery season

Lovlien proposed to keep expenses under \$2,000 for the remainder of this fiscal year.

No Rx burns are scheduled for the foreseeable future.

#### **Grants & Loans:**

Lovlien reported that there are no SFG grants on the books nor any recent land acquisitions, mainly due to high market prices.

MCF closed out the County Conservation Aids (CCA) archery range grant at Nine Mile this last year and hopes to close out the 2023 CCA Big Eau Pleine boat landing grant this fall.

Lovlien recently applied for a 50/50 grant from the County Conservation Aid program to help pay for the cost of the aforementioned red pine seedlings along Springbrook Rd.

MCF also plans to apply for the \$.50/acre Variable Acreage Share Resolution for \$15,031.

#### **NHC/Endangered Resources:**

MCF is currently awaiting to hear about the status of the Bat Habitat Conservation Plan and then will bring that information to the forestry committee and for other discussion at the local level.

Several species limit logging periods, especially in conjunction with oak, are present at Nine Mile. MCF is exploring timing options with the NHC ecologist.

#### **Forest Health:**

Pockets of oak wilt in Kronenwetter and Nine Mile Forest Units continue to be monitored and treated as needed via rapid response technique. No EAB infestations have been located so far on any County Forest Unit. Potential HRD pockets were found on the Burma Forest Unit and possibly Nine Mile Forest Units. Tests are currently being done by DNR's Forest Health to confirm. Burma also contains a red pine pocket decline area that will be harvested as part of an upcoming sale. Some scattered and minor defoliation (Spongy Moth, leaf rollers and Eastern tent caterpillar) occurred on mainly oak on various forest units.

#### **Invasive Species:**

Buckthorn has been present on both the Kronenwetter trail system and near the chalet at Nine Mile Forest Unit. Currently, any new infestations are documented via GPS and treated by killing seed trees and prevention is also done by requiring that all logging equipment be cleaned prior to entering MCF property.

Honeysuckle is present on the Wisconsin River unit but will not be treated until a regeneration harvest is scheduled.

Garlic mustard is currently present on the Burma trail system and is controlled annually via hand pulling.

**Dozer Projects:**

See Forest Regeneration section.

**Recreation:**

The trial winter fat tire bike season is now permanent.

Village of Rib Mountain posted a map that showed the MCF road system at Nine Mile available for ATV/UTV use. Lovlien requested that be changed and posted MCF to show ATV/UTV use is not allowed.

**Forest Certification:**

**COUNTY FOREST CERTIFICATION CARs/OFI/OBSs**

8/7/23 Rev.

**SFI – 2023**  
**NO CARS**

Opportunities for Improvements (OFI)-

- 1) 3.2.1: Program addressing management and protection of water quality of rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, other water bodies and riparian areas during all phases of management.
  - Please review sold timber sales prior to operations starting to ensure BMPs particularly for RMZs, buffers and such are being applied/applicable and no changes to the sale since established. More guidance to come from WCFA Legislative/Certification committee.

MCF is only SFI certified.

Group discussed evaluating/confirming that BMPs/RMZs still apply to a timber sale at the time it goes active, and noting changes to BMPs if necessary in the sale folder or pre-sale meeting document.

**Open Forum:**

*From Hillary Keller...*

1. *Mention where we are in the internal audit/review cycle (last one was in 2022, so we're good for a while – likely 2027 unless the schedule changes)*
2. *Mention that if there is a potential for county forest land withdrawal, then they should bring Doug Brown and myself into the loop ASAP, and I would be handling the Finding of Fact document if one is needed.*

*I would also appreciate it if you could pass on an additional "Thank You" to Tom and Joe for letting us use the Marathon County Forest for our summer in-service in July (as well as Joe's help with logistics)!*

The group assembled would like to see the 2460 narrative more editable – i.e. spell check, highlighting, and compressing the large gap at the end of the last section.

Last MCF forest certification field audit was in 2020 and next one will be in 2025.

County Forest Roads – no major projects for last two years on the DOT road system. Some minor repairs may be done.

MCF met 2023 timber sale budget of \$305,000 – exceeded currently at \$330,000.

MCF has 21 sales on books with 4 needing extensions. MCF will follow all contract extensions requirements and not give breaks on extensions.

Some interest last year regarding carbon credits with Blue Source now Anew. Lovlien researched and approached County board members in October 2022, but no decision was made on whether to move forward or not. Lovlien again reached out to Anew July 2023, and they responded, “At this point my team has a sufficient number of Wisconsin projects under development or in contracting that we are not taking on new projects of Marathon’s size at this time.” Current carbon markets are very questionable for smaller county forest systems like Marathon.

Tucker proposed some guidance from the DNR about how to group/not group log products when listing for sale. Nemeck said there is no hard and fast rule for how to list the products.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jeff Sorenson*

Jeff Sorenson

WI DNR MCF Liaison

DRAFT