

Members present: Taylor Dorsey, Carmen Engleman, Dale Heil, Paul Klocko-(via webex), Greg Klos, Mike Lane, Aaron Ruff-(via webex)

Members excused: John Burke, Susan Haug, Gary Weiland, Marcell Wieloch

Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Rec, and Forestry Dept. staff present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation and Forestry Director

Others Present: Pat Peckham

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

I. Minutes

Motion by Klos to approve the June 7, 2023 minutes. Motion **carried** unanimously 7-0.

II. New Business

A. Forest Citizens' Advisory Subcommittee Appointments

Lovlien welcomed Taylor Dorsey as the Forestry Industry representative. Dorsey gave information about herself and members introduced themselves.

B. Review Fall 2023 Timbersale Package

The fall timbersale package had been distributed to Committee for review. The county forest sale offers 257 acres of timber on three tracts with an estimated volume of 19,140 tons and 36.0 thousand board feet. Lovlien discussed all the sales. The sales will be advertised and the bid opening is October 2, 2023. Questions were answered.

C. Results of the 2023 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. One Opportunity for Improvement (OFI) was found in counties certified (SFI) and also one under (FSC). Marathon County is due for a field audit in 2025.

D. Nine Mile County Forest Event and Use Regulations Revisions

Lovlien said revisions to the regulations include an updated date for harvesting related to DNR species guidance, updated mountain biking and horseback riding dates, and clarifications for the fat tire bike and snowshoe trails and season. **Motion** by Engelman to accept the changes to the Nine Mile County Forest Event and Use Regulations and move them on to the Forestry/Recreation Committee. Motion **carried** unanimously, 7-0.

E. Nine Mile Septic System Replacement Project

Polley explained that last year staff submitted an ARPA funding request for the septic system at Nine Mile. It has technically failed for what it was built for. It was installed to accommodate 500 people and over the years it has been found out that it is undersized so the use has been limited. Also included in the project are improvements to enhance areas within the chalet. The project has a good chance of getting funded. The system is still functioning and can be used as long as it doesn't fail completely.

F. County Conservation Aids Project – Nine Mile Planting

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.

G. Big Eau Pleine Archery Hunt Approved

The Department has worked with the DNR and gone through the County process to change the ordinance to allow an archery hunt at the Big Eau Pleine. The benefits of controlling the deer population are to manage disease, reduce crop damage, and for forest regeneration. There is a lot of information about the hunt on the Department's website page. It will be in the entire park, is for crossbow and bow hunting only, will start November 15th and end on January 7th. Staff has already put a press release out and signage warning park users. Requirements include being in an elevated platform, 100 feet from a trail or center of a road and 100 yards from designated use area like campground, beach, and parking lots. Staff would like to know the effectiveness of the hunt and is asking hunters to fill out a short questionnaire. More information will be put out closer

to the start of the hunt. Lovlien said they aren't getting many trees regenerating and hopes the hunt will help with that for the future of the park. Questions were answered.

H. Member Items

Lane discussed how duck hunting is allowed at Big Eau Pleine Park in a blind that is placed below the ordinary high watermark. Polley mentioned that was also the case at Ashley Park which is undeveloped.

III. Old Business

A. Status on Voluntary Carbon Projects

Lovlien reached out to Anew Climate Solutions to see if the County's project was still feasible. They told him that they currently have a sufficient number of Wisconsin projects and were not taking on any new projects of our size at this time. Lovlien said Anew Climate Solutions may be the only company right now that would purchase county forest carbon credits at this time. The voluntary carbon market program is relatively new and over time more will become known about it. Lovlien will continue to monitor the program and will bring this back to the Subcommittee if the County becomes eligible.

B. Final Approved DNR Antlerless Harvest Quota for 2023 Season Including Gun Deer Seasons

Lane reported that the Marathon County Deer Advisory Council proposed decreasing permits on private lands and increasing permits on public lands. It was the only proposal from a Council in Wisconsin that was revised. The State increased the number of permits on the private lands only from 1800 to 2000. Lovlien said there are 2000 bonus private permits and 500 bonus public permits in Marathon County. He was glad to see 500 public permits because there's some areas in the forest units where they aren't getting tree regeneration. Lovlien noted the gun deer seasons are as follows: Youth Deer Hunt: October 7-8, 2023, Gun Deer Hunt November 18-26, 2023, Muzzleloader: November 27-December 6, 2023, Statewide Antlerless Hunt: December 7-10, 2023. Marathon County has never been included in the Antlerless Only Holiday Hunt which is December 24, 2023-January 1, 2024.

C. Nine Mile Forest Recreation Area Remaining Fall Events

The remaining fall events are the Ragnar Race from Sept. 18-25 with the event taking place on Friday and Saturday. The trails along the race will be closed Friday and Saturday only and will re-open on Sunday. Other events include Wausau West cross-country race on September 28, Mosinee cross-country race on October 14 and the IronBull Granite Grinder Bike Race on October 14, 2023.

D. Winter Fat Tire Biking Permanent Season Update

A permanent fat tire biking season has been approved by the Forestry/Recreation Committee. Staff has met with CWOCC and snowshoers. The Department has a summer and winter biking agreement with CWOCC. CWOCC will be responsible for signing trails and all the winter grooming at Nine Mile. Polley is working with an Eagle Scout to sign the snowshoe trail.

E. 2023 – 2025 Final State Budget Approved

Lovlien reported that the State Budget was approved. Included in the budget was an increase for the administration grant and sustainable forestry grant annually, an increase of \$550,000 annually for ATV/UTV enforcement aids to \$1.3M, double per mile reimbursement for UTV trail maintenance from \$200 to \$400, and no changes to Knowles Nelson Stewardship Program.

F. Oak Wilt Expanding at Nine Mile Forest

Lovlien said staff has used a girdle and herbicide process at Nine Mile to stop the spread of oak wilt. There are two or three pockets that will be treated this year. The main way the disease moves is through the interconnected root system and it can also be spread by insects as well. Questions were answered.

IV. 2023 Remaining Meeting Date – December 13, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

V. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Klos. Motion **carried** unanimously 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Thomas Lovlien - Secretary