

Members present: Tom Rosenberg (vice-chair), Jean Maszk, Rick Seefeldt (chair)  
Staff present: Tom Lovlien - Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley - Director  
Others present: Luitenant Michael Van Offeren

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 December 5, 2023 regular Forestry/Recreation Committee meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination
  - A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee
    1. 2023 Department Year In Review – Polley highlighted some of the accomplishments from the previous year. The gross timber sale revenue in 2023 was \$495,764 and the net to the County was \$347,034. In 2023 the even flow amount was \$305,000. A few of the other highlights include Marathon Park water system update, treating and removing ash trees, completed timber sale at Big Eau Pleine Park, increased recreational programming, new playgrounds, Nine Mile garage renovation, ADA kayak launch installed at DC Everest Park, boat launch work, implemented a Fat Tire Bike season at Nine Mile, completed amendments to the County Forest Comprehensive Work Plan, and established a trial archery deer hunt at Big Eau Pleine Park.
      2. 2024 Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Workplan – Polley highlighted some of the work planned which includes Eastgate Hall renovation, dump station installation at Dells of the Eau Claire Park, Nine Mile septic system replacement, Amco and Marathon Park Campground playgrounds, build skatepark, treating and removing ash trees, planning the Department consolidation, and ice arena feasibility study. Polley discussed upcoming small County and City projects. Some forestry work includes administering timber sales, planting 60,000 red pine trees on 60 acres, and establishing another timber sale at Big Eau Pleine Park. Staff will also be working on the Rib Falls Master Plan, Big Rapids Dam Removal, County CORP Update, AED/Save Station Grant and Athletic Park Clubhouse Review. Motion / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to approve the 2024 Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Workplan. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution
  - A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee - None
  - B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration - None
6. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee – None
7. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports
  - A. Parks, Recreation and Forestry Law Enforcement Annual Report – Van Offeren reported on law enforcement activity in the forest units. There were forty-seven complaints of which the majority were for camping registration violations, noise and littering complaints. Other complaints were for entering prohibited areas, pay tube break-ins, domestic animal violations, and wild animal complaints. He discussed citations and written warnings that were given. Questions were answered.

B. WCFA Media and Marketing Campaign – Keep Wisconsin Forests Thriving – A video from You Tube was played which is being used as outreach to get recognition of the WCFA name in preparation for their License Plate project. The hope is to have WCFA license plates available this fall or by spring of 2025.

C. Update on Timber Sale Harvest Activity on County Forest Lands – Lovlien said the weather is having a great effect on winter timber sale revenue. There are eleven sales that need to be cut this winter that will expire at the end of 2024. Currently, only three are being worked on. Five sales have been active so far and two of those will be closed this winter for sure. An estimate of forty percent of the evenflow revenue may be received from those five sales and if two or three are cut this coming summer/fall then the revenue could be close to the evenflow amount. Questions were answered.

D. Winter Recreation Program Update – This has been a poor weather winter with hardly any snow and warm temperatures. Nine Mile is closed for winter recreation, snowmobile trails are closed, and the outdoor ice rink is closed. Sylvan Tubing Hill is currently open.

E. Department of Natural Resources Liaison Report – As of December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 the DNR had completed approximately 393.5 hours of 660 time-standard hours for 2023/2024. Sorenson finished up the field work on an 87-acre hardwood sale in the Harrison/Hewitt forest unit. The upcoming winter months will include recon, helping the County Forester with sale administration and musclewood and ironwood control on the Einstein sale.

F. Governor Evers Announces Approval of Largest Forest Conservation Effort in State History – Lovlien discussed a press release which announced the approval of an additional conservation easement covering 54,898 acres of the Pelican River Forest which completes one of the largest conservation projects in Wisconsin history. Altogether, over 67,000 acres of the Pelican River Forest will be protected, ensuring the forest will remain open to the public in perpetuity for outdoor recreation activities such as fishing, hunting, skiing, trapping, and hiking.

8. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 1:00 pm, Rm. 5 & Webex, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence

B. Future Agenda Items: 2023 County Forests Annual Report, Forestry Division Expense/Revenue Report, 2023 Timber Stumpage Payments to Towns, Timber Sale Closeouts, Update on the WCFA Meeting in Madison

9. Adjourn – Motion / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to adjourn the meeting at 2:00 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.