

Members present: Jean Maszk, Rick Seefeldt (chair)

Excused: Tom Rosenberg (vice-chair)

Staff present: Tom Lovlien - Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley - Director

Others present: LeRoy Knase

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 Maszk / Seefeldt to approve the minutes from the January 30, 2024 regular Forestry/Recreation Committee meeting. **Motion carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 2-0.

4. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Request for Motorized Access Permit by Persons with Disabilities – Mr. LeRoy Knase – Lovlien said Knase had recently requested an ATV disabled access permit that Lovlien declined because it was contrary to current policy and ordinance. Knase discussed his request. Lovlien clarified that Knase was asking for ATV motorized access to Leathercamp, Kronenwetter and Ringle Forest Units for approximately seven and a half months beginning June 1 to be able to scout and hunt deer. His request also includes installing game cameras starting August 1. Lovlien explained to Committee that the current permit is limited to two weeks, is limited to a specific entry point and area described on a map and an ATV is not to be used to scout territory. The current ordinance for trail cameras allowed in the woods is seven days prior to any bear or deer season to seven days after any bear or deer season which is approximately from Sept. 1 through Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>. Lovlien said there are many hunters and other people using the county forests and he has concerns regarding safety, access, conflicts with other users, and the precedent this could set. Discussion followed and Committee members asked questions. Seefeldt said Corporation Counsel would review Knase’s request, offer a legal opinion and Committee would make a decision at a future meeting. Knase will be invited back after all the information is gathered and the Committee is ready to make a decision.

5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. 2023 County Forest Division Annual Report – Lovlien discussed some of the program highlights including revenue and expenses, certification, timber management, road and trail management, wildlife management, recreation, public outreach, and professional development. **Motion** / second by Maszk / Seefeldt to accept and approve the 2023 County Forest Division Annual Report and forward to the County Board. **Motion carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 2-0.

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. Forestry, Division Expense/Revenue Reports – Lovlien explained the ten-year period showed over that period revenue from timber stumpage was \$850,968 over expenses and the twenty-year period showed timber stumpage revenues of \$1,153,241 over expenses. The reports don’t include recreation programs which are tracked in separate budgets. The forestry program is paying for itself with timber stumpage revenues and helps with tax levy relief.

B. 2023 Timber Stumpage Payment to Townships – Lovlien explained that each year the County is required by State Statute to return ten percent of all timber proceeds to towns that have County forests. Lovlien discussed the acreage the towns have and their associated payments. It's a payment in lieu of taxes for the towns.

C. Update on Wisconsin County Forests Association Meetings in Madison – WCFA gave recommendations at the meetings for wetland and waterway permit consistency, support of forest markets, restoring DNR Division of Forestry budget cuts, and eligibility for county forest administration grant.

D. Department of Natural Resources Liaison Report – As of February 24<sup>th</sup> the DNR had completed approximately 460.75 hours of 660-time standard hours for 2023/2024. Sorenson attended WCFA Spring conference in Madison on February, finished paperwork for March timber sale bid letting, and assisted the County Forester with marking of spring 2025 Oak thinning in the Kronenwetter Forest Unit. He will be assisting the County Forester with spring timber sales in Burma and Kronenwetter Forest Units.

8. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: Tuesday, April 2, 2024, 1:00 pm, Room. 5 & Webex, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence – none brought forward

B. Future Agenda Items: Review and Consider Approving Spring 2024 Timber Sale Package, Timber Sale Closeout, Department of Natural Resources Liaison Report, Consider ATV Motorized Disabled Access Permit Request

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