

Members present: Rick Seefeldt (chair), Tom Rosenberg (vice-chair) Jean Maszk

Staff present: Tom Lovlien - Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley - Director, Jeff Sorenson - DNR Forest 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 September 3, 2024, 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 - None

5. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Consider Timber Bids and Award Contracts – We had 15 bids on four (4) tracts on the county forest lands and one sale, tract 10-24, at Big Eau Pleine County Park. Four (4) of the Five (5) sales, the high bidder was Flannel Fleet and one (1) was Midwest Hardwoods. It is our recommendation to award tract 6-24, 7-24, 8-24, and 9-24 to the highest bidders which total \$249,659.80. The Park Commission will approve tract 10-24 at Big Eau Pleine Park Sale at their November 5, 2024, meeting. **Motion** / second by Maszk / Seefeldt to approve the Fall 2024 Timber Bids and Award Contracts. Motion **carried** by voice vote; vote reflected as 3-0. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to reject the Fall 2024 Timber Bids from Yoder Lumber for failure to provide bid bonds. Motion **carried** by voice vote; vote reflected as 3-0.

2. 2025 Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department Budget Update – Jamie Polley, Director, explained that the department was directed by the County Administration to present a zero-increase budget for operations for the 2025 budget. Included in that budget, however, was an all-staff 3% increase to salaries. Personnel is our biggest expense across all areas. We currently have two vacancies; one we are in the process of hiring and the other we are in the process of figuring out the best use of that position. We have \$1.5 million in revenue that our department brings in. Even though we increased salary by 3%, we were able to decrease operations enough that the budget was only at 1% increase when submitted for both operations and salary expenditure.

3. Consider Investigating Land for Sale in the Town of Reid for an Addition to the County Forest – We have been approached by an individual who wants to sell his 41-acre parcel which is adjacent to the Kronenwetter Forest Unit at the end of Kline Road. This Aspen and Red Maple parcel does align with our County Forest Comprehensive Use Plan. If approved to start the investigation process, we would need to get a resolution from the Town of Reid to purchase the property. We would need this resolution for the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Grant application, which, if awarded, would pay 50% of the cost. In the meantime, we would send Joe Tucker, Forester, to do an estimate of the timber value. Once we have all these components in place, we would put a resolution together to start the application process for the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Grant. Then we would have the property appraised. Forestry, Environmental Resources, Finance and Property, and the County Board all must approve to apply for the grant and then approve to purchase the property. Questions were answered. Committee was in consensus to have Lovlien pursue investigating the land for sale in the Town of Reid for an addition to the County Forest.

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. Department of Natural Resources Liaison Report – Jeff Sorenson, DNR Liaison, reported that John Hunt started scarification on a recently-sold red maple stand, tract 8-24, because it was inundated with muscle wood and iron wood. Scarification cuts the plant below ground level and digs up the roots which in turn exposes the mineral soil, mixes up the ground and leaf matter and mixes the organic matter. This mix of organic and mineral soil allows the seed to germinate, giving us the best chance to get a fair amount of red maple and basswood. If we cut as is, we would not be able to get anything to regenerate. All the merchantable timber remains for the logger to harvest for the sale. The annual partnership meeting was held the beginning of September with a new team leader from the DNR, Jordan Truitt.

B. Ragnar Trail Wisconsin Update – Ragnar had their 5<sup>th</sup> year race in a row at Nine Mile with 1649 participants. Each participant is charged \$12.79 and the total revenue to the county for the event alone was \$21,000. We had three (3) vendors for \$500 each, which netted another \$1,500 in revenue. The Chalet was rented for the weekend as well. All totaled, the county realized approximately \$25,000 in revenue. There are two divisions for the Ragnar Trail Wisconsin: the under 40 division and the master's, which is the over 40 division. There are eight (8) person teams made up of women, men, and mixed. In addition, they have teams which are only four (4) people. This year they had a new two-person team called an ultra-ultra team that ran each of the three loops as well as the long black loop. Another new event was held on Saturday only, called the "Sprint," in which four (4) person teams sprinted the two short loops. Because Nine Mile is a forest unit, we have active logging happening simultaneously. We were able to work it out with the logger to have the trails cleared and leveled the Wednesday prior to the race. They moved out of the immediate area of the race and cut an area that didn't have any effect on the racecourse. They took Friday off and came back in on Monday to resume logging operations. We don't have timber sales every year at Nine Mile while Ragnar is going on, but we hope that if we do, we will be able to continue to work together in the future with the organizer and the loggers like we have this year and in years past to collaborate for all involved.

8. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: Tuesday, November 5, 2024, 1:00 pm, 212 River Drive, Wausau, WI 54403, Room 5, or via Webex

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence – Chair Seefeldt may not be here next month. Nine Mile tree removal is taking place at the shelter and sand has been delivered for the new septic system, which is being paid for from ARPA money. Then you may be seeing some of the new upgrades to the Chalet being done as well. Our last tour was September 15, 2022, and so let's shoot to have another tour for late summer or early fall of 2025.

B. Future Agenda Items – Consider Timber Sale Extension Requests, Consider Timber Bids and Award Contracts, DNR Liaison Report, Update from Fall WCFA Meeting, DNR Partnership Meeting Minutes and Discussion, Potential Land Purchases – Town of Reid.

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