

Members present: Rick Seefeldt (chair), Tom Rosenberg (vice-chair), Jean Maszk-(via-webex)  
Staff present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Director, Joe Tucker-County Forester  
Others present: 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 Maszk / Rosenberg to approve the minutes from the January 31, 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. Timber Sale Closeouts  
Rodney Hix Forest Products Contract #686-19 – A closeout summary was previously provided. Lovlien reported that the estimated number of tons was 3360 and 4471.50 tons were cut. Total revenue for this sale was \$46,990.33. Lovlien’s recommendation is to close out Contract #686-19 and return their original Letter of Credit. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to close out Contract #686-19 and return their original Letter of Credit. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.  
  
Futurewood Corporation #667-18 – A closeout summary was previously provided. Lovlien reported that the estimated number of tons was 1830 and 2848.24 tons were cut. Total revenue for this sale was \$56,645.79. Lovlien’s recommendation is to close out Contract #667-18 and return their original Surety Bond. **Motion** / second by Seefeldt / Maszk to close out Contract #667-18 and return their original Surety Bond. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
    2. Review and Consider Approving Spring 2023 Timbersale Package – The spring timber sale package had been distributed to Committee for review. The county forest sales offer 330 acres of timber on four tracts with an estimated volume of 17,720 tons and 528.0 thousand board feet. Tucker discussed the sales and explained how they determine which areas are going to be harvested. The sales will be advertised and the bid opening will be on May 1, 2023. Questions were answered. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Maszk to approve and advertise the four spring 2023 timber sales. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
    3. Review Lake States Forest Management Bat Habitat Conservation Plan Information and Summary – Lovlien explained that bats have been listed as federally endangered on March 31 and the WCFA has been working with the DNR on how to continue to manage the forests. The County can sign on to the Lake States Bat Conservation Plan which is a way to receive incidental take coverage and be sure that Marathon County Forest is in compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act with respect to the federally listed bat species. County park lands can also be added and enrolled on the same application. The application and/or resolution will be brought back to the Forestry/Recreation Committee and Parks Commission for approval. Questions were answered. **Consensus** by Committee to send in application.
    4. 2022 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 Rosenberg / Maszk to accept and approve the 2022 County Forest Division Annual Report and forward to the County Board. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.
    5. Discuss and Consider Approval on Department of Natural Resources Request to Construct up to 30 Exclosures to Compare Oak Regeneration Success – The DNR made a request to construct exclosures in oak dominated County forests to compare the growth due to deer browsing. There is no County financial commitment and the DNR will do all the maintenance on the exclosures which will be in place for a minimum of three years. Staff supports this research and wanted to inform Committee because it involves building something and leaving it in the forests. **Motion** / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to support the DNR research. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.

6. Discussion and Recommendation from Forest Citizens' Advisory Subcommittee on Hunting and Trapping at Bitzke Birdwalk Nature Trail Between Sept. 1 and Nov. 15 – Lovlien gave history on the Bitzke Birdwalk area. Up until 2019 the area had a wildlife refuge status but DNR removed it unbeknownst to Lovlien which meant that people could hunt and trap there. A decision has to be made whether to allow hunting or trapping in the future. Staff feels there could be some conflicts if it is opened to hunting between Sept. 1 and Nov. 15. They don't want to promote it as a nature trail if hunting is allowed. The Forest Citizens' Advisory Subcommittee made a motion to recommend a county forest ordinance be created to continue to prohibit hunting at the Bitzke Birdwalk Nature Trail between Sept. 1 and Nov. 15, keep it closed to waterfowl hunting year round, and allow trapping during all statewide seasons determined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Questions were answered and discussion followed. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Maszk to create an ordinance that prohibits hunting between September 1 and November 15 and post signs again. Trapping would be allowed and waterfowl hunting would continue to be closed year-round. 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. Forestry Division Expense/Revenue Reports – Lovlien explained the ten-year synopsis showed over that period revenue from timber stumpage was \$820,394.00 over expenses and the nineteen-year synopsis showed timber stumpage revenues of \$1,043,778.00 over expenses. The reports don't include any 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. 2022 Timber Stumpage Payments to Towns – 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. He said it's a payment in lieu of taxes for towns to recoup some of their monies if it was taxable property. The State also increased the acreage share payments from thirty cents to sixty-three cents an acre as well.

C. Wisconsin North Central Forest Health Workshop September 13, 2023 – Tucker was approached to present on oak wilt and oak regeneration on work that has done at Nine Mile as part of the State and Federal forest health workshop tour on September 13<sup>th</sup>. Lovlien said that any one was welcome to come and listen to the presentation.

D. Information Sign to be Installed at Nine Mile Forest Laurel Road Parking Lot – As part of educating the public, the sign being installed will say entering county forest please remember hunting occurs year-round per state regulations, wear bright colors, respect private property, respect and be courteous to others, dogs must be under control, leashes are encouraged and enjoy the forest. The sign will be installed by April 14 because that date is the first youth turkey season. If dogs get on to private property landowners have the option to contact the Sheriff's Department.

7. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: Tues., May 2, 2023, 1:00pm, Rm. 5 & Webex, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence – none brought forward

B. Future Agenda Items: Timbersale Closeouts, Review Timber Bids and Award Contracts, Timber Bid Summary, WCFA Summer Tour Location and Dates, Timber Sale Extension Requests

8. Adjourn – **Motion** / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to adjourn the meeting at 2:10 p.m. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.