

Members present: Rick Seefeldt (chair), Tom Rosenberg (vice-chair), Jean Maszk  
Staff present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Director  
Others present: Jeff Sorenson-DNR Liaison, Sandi Cihlar, Nancy Stencil

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 – Sandi Cihlar – 203083 Bergen Rd, Mosinee – Cihlar felt a couple things were needed to continue to have a safe and enjoyable experience for snowshoers at Nine Mile. These include accurate maps, updated website information, accurate signage and frequent, clear signage for any shared snowshoe trail alerting users that they are on the same trails as bikes. She thought fees should be comparable and would like to have a portion of the trail dedicated to snowshoers where they wouldn't encounter fat tire bikes.

Nancy Stencil – 223281 Azalea Rd, Wausau – Stencil would also like to see a smaller snowshoe only loop and felt really good signage was needed to alert both the snowshoer and fat tire groups about each other.

Seefeldt read an email from Stacy Morache – Morache believed there is a need to have an area designated for snowshoeing only and if it can't be achieved at Nine mile wondered if improvements to the trail in Brokaw could be considered.

3. Approve Minutes – **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Maszk to approve the minutes from the May 30, 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. Review and Discussion on the Nine Mile Winter Fat Tire Biking Season – Lovlien said about thirty percent of the snowshoe trail is shared with winter fat tire biking. When staff proposed the trial season, there had been some expectations that an area would be groomed with double tracks for having a snowshoe trail and a fat tire bike trail next to each other. The Department fell short this year and the snowshoe trail wasn't signed like it should have been and brush wasn't cut to allow for double tracks. Staff recognizes some work needs to be done on signing, updating the website and getting a portion of the trail double groomed. Staff will also be assessing its season passes and fees more in-depth. The intent is to make a 6k loop with a short ¼ mile section double groomed for fat tire biking and snowshoeing. Snowshoers would only encounter fat bikers on a double-groomed trail for a very short distance, about a quarter of a mile, and then wouldn't encounter any fat bikes. Overall, the trial season went well. The majority of public comments support it and were positive. The majority of public comments, the Nordic Ski Club, IronBull and CWOCC support it. At their last meeting the Forest Citizen Advisory Subcommittee voted 9-1 to recommend to the Forestry Committee their support. Staff supports a permanent season and some of the challenges of the trial season will be fixed.

2. Consider Establishing a Permanent Winter Fat Tire Biking Season at Nine Mile Forest – **Motion** / second by Seefeldt / Rosenberg to approve the establishment of a permanent winter fat tire biking season at Nine Mile Forest with improved signing, accurate maps and updated website. 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

1. Consider Proposed Chapter 16 County Forest Ordinance Revisions – Lovlien discussed the ordinance revisions including language at the Bitzke Bird Trail that “*No person shall hunt within the Bitzke Birdwalk Nature Trail area from September 1 through November 15 or hunt waterfowl which is closed year-round*”. Lovlien noted that trapping would be allowed. The changes noted under (17) Animals on ski trails include adding the word “*designated*” before “ski trails” and adding “*or being groomed for opening*” after “open” for further clarification. Under (18) Hiking, walking, or running on ski trails, the words “*fat tire bike and snowshoe*” were added. The

words “*designated*” and “*or being groomed for opening* for further clarification in this paragraph as well. Definitions were added for Fat tire bike and snowshoe. **Motion** / second by Maszk / Rosenberg to forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 3-0.

5. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee - None

6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. 2023 – 2025 State Budget Update – Lovlien said all the Wisconsin County Forest Association requested forestry items are still in the base budget. The Joint Finance Committee proposes to increase the Forest Administrator Grant, Sustainable Forestry Grants, ATV/UTV Enforcement Aids, and UTV maintenance funds. There is also no change to the stewardship program which will run through June 30, 2026. The Governor has already supported these items so hopefully everything will get through when the budget is signed. Lovlien also noted that monies have been given from a forestry segregated account to pay for shortfalls in the DNR wildlife program. He said that Act 13 Senate Bill 247 was signed by the Governor and sets aside 150 million dollars for towns where they can apply to improve their road systems.

7. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: Tue., Aug. 1, 2023, 1pm, Rm. 5 & Webex, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence – none brought forward

B. Future Agenda Items: County Forest Citizens’ Advisory Subcommittee Appointments, Timbersale Closeout, Consider Entering Into an Agreement with DNR on the Bat Conservation Plan, County Conservation Aids Project

8. 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.