

Members present: Tom Rosenberg, Rick Seefeldt

Staff present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Director, Joseph Tucker-County Forester

Others present: Joseph Schwantes-DNR NR Area Supervisor-(via web-ex), Jean Maszk-County Board Member-(via web-ex), Sandi Cihlar-Marathon County Resident

1. Call Meeting to Order – The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Seefeldt at 1:30pm, Rm. 3, 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 Road, Mosinee - Cihlar explained that she and another family had been startled by a biker while they were on the snowshoe trails at Nine Mile which made feel vulnerable and unsafe. She is aware of a proposal by CWOCC asking that fat tire biking be allowed at Nine Mile which would include sharing some of the snowshoe trails. She supports fat tire biking but asks Committee to consider if these two are compatible on shared trails. She wondered if some of the snowshoe or fat tire bike trails could be separated or if an alternative could be found so snowshoers could have a choice if they wanted to go on the same trails as fat tire bikes. Lovlien explained that currently fat tire biking is not allowed at Nine Mile but there was an approved triathlon that included snowshoeing, biking, and skiing and a person was cleaning up after the event. CWOCC has approached staff about a proposal to do a fat tire biking trial season in 2022-2023 which will be brought forward to the Committees in June and July. He noted that a policy was instituted that no new trails will be built at Nine Mile unless others are closed because of the density of trails currently there. They will continue to study the proposal to see if there are any alternatives.

3. Approve Minutes – **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2022 regular Forestry/Recreation Committee meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 2-0.

4. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Timber Sale Closeouts: Wilson Forestry LLC – Contracts #700-21 – A closeout summary was previously provided. Lovlien reported that the estimated number of tons was 3431 and 2758.63 were cut. Total revenue for this sale was \$68,579.72. Lovlien’s recommendation is to close out Contract #700-21 and return their original Letter of Credit and the balance in the account. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to close out Contract #700-21 and return their original Letter of Credit and the balance in their account. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 2-0. Wilson Forestry LLC – Contract #701-21 – A closeout summary was previously provided. Lovlien reported that the estimated number of tons was 950 and 1079.05 were cut. Total revenue for this sale was \$23,199.56. Lovlien’s recommendation is to close out Contract #701-21 and return their Letter of Credit and balance in their account. **Motion** / second by Seefeldt / Rosenberg to close out Contract #701-21 and return their Letter of Credit and balance in their account. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 2-0. Wilson Forestry LLC – Contract #705-21 – A closeout summary was previously provided. Lovlien reported that the estimated number of tons was 2485 and 3802.94 were cut. Total revenue for this sale was \$44,697.67. Lovlien’s recommendation is to close out Contract #705-21 and return their cash bond and balance in their account. **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to close out Contract #705-21 and return their cash bond and balance in their account. 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

1. 2021 County Forest Division Annual Report – Lovlien discussed some of the program highlights including revenue and expenses, certification, timber management, road and trail maintenance, wildlife management, recreation, public outreach, and professional development. **Motion** / second by Seefeldt / Rosenberg to accept and approve the 2021 County Forest Division Annual Report and forward to the Environmental Resource Committee. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 2-0.

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 Report – Lovlien reported that over the last ten years over four million dollars in gross timber was sold. The net is the amount of revenue to the County after the twenty-percent payment to the State for interest free loans and ten-percent payment to the townships. The forestry program is revenue producing and contributes to the overall economy in Wisconsin. The County sets an even-flow budget because timber revenues fluctuate each year depending on weather, markets, etc. Timber sale contracts are typically two or three years.

B. 2021 Timber Stumpage Payments 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. He said it's a payment in lieu of taxes for towns to recoup some of their monies if it was taxable property, it doesn't make up all of it, but it does help the towns. He also said that the State is also increasing their payments to towns from thirty-cents up to sixty-three cents an acre which will get the payment near if it was taxable property.

C. Wisconsin Paper, Forest Production Industry's Federal Grant Application – Lovlien explained that federal grants are available for different businesses through the Governor's Office. The forest products industry needs help because of the Verso mill closing. Almost twelve million dollars has been raised and the State is going to provide eight million dollars which makes them eligible to apply for a one hundred-million-dollar grant. Everyone is hopeful that the State of Wisconsin is successful on receiving this grant.

D. 2021 Wisconsin Act 128 Signed Into Law – Lovlien said the Wisconsin County Forests Association has been working with different legislators to try to increase the threshold in which timber sales can be sold directly. The threshold used to be \$3,000 or less and now the limit is \$10,000 and/or less than 500 cords. These sales can either be sold direct or publicly advertised. The law was signed to keep up with inflation and will help the County to sell some sales in certain cases.

E. DNR/County Forest Time Standards Allocation for FY 2023 – 2027 – Lovlien said the DNR offers both field and technical help to Counties. Every five years all the county forests in the State use formulas to determine how much assistance the DNR will give them. The State has had their number of hours they can spend on County forests capped at 46,000 for many years. Marathon County generally receives in the range of 600 to 700 hours. Marathon County's calculations showed the need for 744 hours but because of the cap it was prorated down to 660 hours for each of the next five years. That is a minimum limit and is within ten hours +/- of what the County has been receiving for the last few years.

F. Scribology Video Telling the Story of Forestry in Wisconsin – Lovlien said one of the things the Wisconsin County Forest Association (WCFA) tries to do is advocate and educate for forestry. The WCFA Executive Director worked with a company to produce a short whiteboard video animation that tells the story of how the County Forests in Wisconsin are an integral part to the health and management of the State's vast forested resource. It is available on the WCFA website and on You-Tube. Committee members suggested showing the video to the Marathon County Board at their next informational meeting on March 17.

7. Next Meeting Date, Time, Location: April 5, 2022, 1:30pm, Rm. 5 and WebEx, 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence – Schwantes reported that the Forestry Team Leader position was filled and will start on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The vacant Forest Liaison position should be filled by this summer. The DNR has contributed about two-thirds of its hours for this fiscal year. The Emerald Ash Borer has been confirmed in Lincoln County for the first time. Lovlien noted that the summer tour will be held on June 23 and 24<sup>th</sup> in Ladysmith. Polley has been asked to be on a panel at the Governor's Conference on tourism and will speak on Nine Mile and the Rib Mountain State Park Master Plan.

B. Future Agenda Items: Review and Consider Approving Spring Timber Sale Package, Timber Sale Closeouts, Carbon Markets

8. Adjourn – **Motion** / second by Rosenberg / Seefeldt to adjourn the meeting at 2:45pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 2-0.