

Members present: Arnold Schlei (c), James Bove

Excused: Rick Seefeldt

Also present: Tom Lovlien-Forest Administrator, Jamie Polley-Director, Chad Keranen-DNR Liaison

Call meeting to order – Meeting called to order by Chairman Schlei at 12:30pm, Rm 3, 212 River Dr., Wausau.

Public Comment Period – None

Approve Minutes – **Motion** / second by Schlei / Bove to approve the minutes from the October 1, 2019 regular Forestry/Recreation Committee meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, no dissent.

Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

A. County Forest Land Acquisition Updates – CERES and Romatowski Properties – The DNR is reviewing the appraisals for both the CERES and Romatowski properties. Lovlien is hopeful that by the December meeting he will have both of the certified appraisals so that he can start negotiating with the landowners on the two properties.

B. Wausau 24 and NICA High School Race Participation and Revenue – Lovlien reported that the Wausau 24 Race had 458 mountain bike and 47 trail run participants. The NICA High School Mountain Bike Race had 212 campers and 706 racers. Revenues were around \$10,000. Both races were well run and staff expects them to return next year.

C. County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2021 – 2035 Survey Results – Lovlien said input on the plan was taken over a month long period and less than 10% responded to the surveys. Lovlien listed some themes. There is general support for sustainable forestry and replanting; support for keeping forests open to all multiple uses including hunting, hiking, and recreational opportunities; concerns over excessive development and that protections need to be in place to minimize environmental degradation; concerns over invasive species and how to manage them; expand recreational opportunities that allow for more mountain biking, winter fat biking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing; general support for snowmaking capabilities for skiing at Nine Mile which is under a feasibility study right now by the Nordic ski group; some suggested adding new trails others say no new trails; limiting additional motorized use of the forest; conserving and protecting forests for all species of wildlife; and balancing all uses on county forests. Some people want more and some people want less and staff's job is to develop a plan that protects the forest, compromises and balances all of the different uses while following the intent of the County Forest Law.

D. County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan Chapter 200 Section 215.2.3 Other Funds – Lovlien said Bove had raised a question under the section that says Committee will consider donations, endowments and other gifts whether real estate, equipment or cash and whether the County Corporation Counsel is the best person to be consulted to ascertain if such gifts benefit the County. The Corporation Counsel's Office is the appropriate office to ask whether or not something is a gift or endowment. Lovlien said it is boiler plate language. Bove thought it was redundant because as a Committee they have the option to ask Corporation Counsel's opinion on anything that they feel they need to. He felt there were other and better options and that they always have the right to retain Corporation Counsel's opinion if needed. **Motion** / second by Bove / Schlei to strike the sentence pertaining to Corporation Counsel. Motion **carried** by voice vote. Lovlien clarified that the entire plan requires DNR approval. If there is anything that they need included for legal purposes the DNR will let them know.

E. Wisconsin Forest Products Week – Lovlien explained that Wisconsin Forest Products Week is October 20-26. Wisconsin's forests are very important to Marathon County and the State with over 17 million acres, 24 billion in goods and employing over 60,000 citizens. It's the second leading employer in Marathon County next to agriculture.

F. National Forest Products Week – Ninety-six percent of the nation's industrial wood comes from domestic supplies. Wisconsin is number one in the nation for papermaking and has been for the past sixty years.

Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee

1. Review Timber Bids and Award Contracts – A second bid opening was held on November 4th. Lovlien said they have to advertise and open bids twice and then are allowed to sell the sales over the counter. A total of four bids were received with one bid on tract 6-19, one bid on tract 9-19, and two bids on tract 8-19. The high bids received on tracts 6-19 and 8-19 were above the advertised values. Lovlien recommends awarding those contracts to the high bidders. Lovlien explained that the bid on tract 9-19 was below the advertised value and the County is allowed to sell the sale if it's above that value. There had been a case in the past where bids were not over the advertised value and because of the amount of bidding and the markets at that time staff made a case to sell sales. Lovlien stated with the amount of bids, winter only work, poor markets, and the amount of staff time it takes to set up the sales his recommendation is to award the sale. **Motion** / second by Schlei / Bove to award tract's 6-19 and 8-19 to the high bidders. **Motion carried** by voice vote, no dissent. **Motion** / second by Bove / Schlei to award tract 9-19 to the high bidder. **Motion carried** by voice vote, no dissent.

2. County Forest Land Acquisition – Committee Discussion on Priorities for Blocking – Lovlien said a question arose at the last meeting on how priorities are determined for land acquisition and if farm land could be purchased and reforested. Lovlien said the first priority for acquisition is anything that blocks in the existing County forest along with if there is timber of value that could be harvested. The acquisition maps are currently in the County Forest Plan. The plan can be amended at any time with County Board and DNR approval. Lovlien said planting different species would involve the soil type and determining what species would grow on the site. Keranen discussed the costs involved to plant trees and some of the challenges they have had in planting on farm land in the northeastern part of the County. Bove was interested in this because the western part of the County doesn't have many County owned recreational forest lands and he would like to see more but understands there were challenges. Lovlien said with some of the farms closing it may be an opportunity to get some forested land along with farm land. They can look at properties as they come up for sale.

B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration - None

Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – December 3, 2019 at 12:30pm, 212 River Dr., Rm. 3

A. Announcements/Requests/Correspondence – none

B. Future Agenda Items – 2020 County Forest Work Plan, 2020 County Forest Wildlife Work Plan, Resolution: Application for County Forest Acreage Share Payment, 2020 Forestry/Recreation Committee Tentative Meeting Schedule.

Adjourn – **Motion** / second by Bove / Schlei to adjourn at 1:15 pm. **Motion carried** by voice vote, no dissent.