



# MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION AGENDA

**Date and Time of Meeting:** Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 2:00pm

**Meeting Location:** Conference Room #3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health directives, Marathon County encourages Commission members and the public to attend this meeting remotely. To this end, instead of attendance in person, Commission members and the public may attend this meeting by telephone conference. If Commission members or members of the public cannot attend remotely, Marathon County requests that appropriate safety measures, including adequate social distancing, be utilized by all in-person attendees.

Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the telephone conference beginning five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number: 1-408-418-9388.

Access Code: 620 217 626

If you are prompted to provide an "Attendee Identification Number," enter the "#" sign. No other number is required to participate in the telephone conference

When you enter the telephone conference, PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!

The Public Comment portion of the agenda has been temporarily suspended, pursuant to Marathon County Resolution # R-18-20, dated March 17, 2020, because the technology necessary to afford the public the opportunity to address the County Board, or its subgroups, during public Comment is difficult to guarantee, if a large number of individuals have elected to call in.

## **Park Commission Members** - Gary Gisselman (President)

Commissioners: Connie Conrad, John Durham, Allen Opal, Pat Peckham, Rick Seefeldt, Dennis Smith

***Marathon County Mission Statement:** Marathon County Government serves people by leading, coordinating, and providing county, regional, and statewide initiatives. It directly or in cooperation with other public and private partners provides services and creates opportunities that make Marathon County and the surrounding area a preferred place to live, work, visit, and do business. (Last updated: 12-20-05)*

***Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department Mission Statement:** Adaptively manage our park and forest lands for natural resource sustainability while providing healthy recreational opportunities and unique experiences making Marathon County the preferred place to live, work, and play.*

## **Agenda Items**

- 1. Call to Order – Park Commission**
- 2. Special Recognition of Outgoing Commission Members**
- 3. Approval of the Minutes of the February 4, 2020 Park Commission Meeting**
- 4. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:**
  - A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee
    1. None
  - B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration
    1. Review and Propose Policy Revisions to Marathon County 15 Year Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan Chapter 900
    2. Approval of Resolution to Participate in a State Motorized Recreation Trail Aids Program
- 5. Policy Issues for Discussion and Committee Determination for Consideration by Environmental Resources Committee**
  - A. None

**6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**

- A. Project Update –Spring Clean Up, Water Systems, Dells of Eau Claire Park, Boat Launches, Parking Lots, MPB #1, Routine Maintenance
- B. Program Update –Warming Shelter in East Gate Hall, Elections in MPB #2

**7. Announcements**

- A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – May 5, 2020, 2:00pm at 212 River Dr., Wausau WI 54403
- B. Future Agenda Items -

**8. Adjourn**

Signed /s/ Jamie Polley  
Presiding Officer or Her Designee

*Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation in order to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 715-261-1500 or e-mail [infomarathon@mail.co.marathon.wi.us](mailto:infomarathon@mail.co.marathon.wi.us) one business day before the meeting.*

FAXED TO DAILY HERALD

THIS NOTICE POSTED AT THE COURTHOUSE

(Email/Fax City Pages, Marshfield News, Midwest Radio Group)

Date April 2, 2020 Time 11:00 am

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

By Jodi Luebbe

By \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAFT**  
**MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION**

Date and Time of Meeting: February 4, 2020 at 2:00 pm

Meeting Location: Conference Room 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403

Park Commissioners present: Connie Conrad, Gary Gisselman, Pat Peckham, Rick Seefeldt, Dennis Smith

Excused: John Durham, Allen Opall

Staff present: Jamie Polley-Parks, Recreation, Forestry Director, Greg Freix-Assistant Director of Operations

Others present: John Beatty, Alan Christensen – Town of Ringle Chairman

**1. Call to Order** – President Gary Gisselman called the Park Commission meeting to order. Official notice and the agenda for the meeting was posted publicly in accordance with the State statutes.

**2. Public Comment Period** – Alan Christensen, Town of Ringle Chairman, requested that because the Town of Ringle is plowing a Mountain Bay trailhead parking lot in Ringle and not charging the Park Department for doing so, that the fee the Department is charging for use of that area during their Harvestfest event be reduced or waived. Polley thought as a cooperative agreement it could be waived and would look into.

**3. Approval of Minutes of the January 7, 2020 Park Commission Meeting – Motion** by Smith, second by Seefeldt to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2020 Park Commission meeting. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

**4. Operational Functions Required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:**

B. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee to Forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for its Consideration

1. Adoption of a Revised Appendix A – Parks, Recreation and Forestry (PRF) Casual, Seasonal and Temporary Wage Rates – Polley explained that each year it is getting more and more difficult to attract seasonal staff. As the Park Department was posting positions for the 2020 season it was recognized that departments were posting different wages for positions of similar nature. It was also recognized that all County departments except for the PRF Department follow the Countywide Shared Classifications of Chapter 9 of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual. An Appendix A for the PRF Department has been adopted for some time that list specific rate steps based on years worked for all seasonal PRF Department positions. The current Appendix A limits flexibility of staff to adjust wages based on the market. The Countywide Chapter 9 sets a maximum rate for all positions allowing flexibility for position rates within an allocated budget. In working with Employee Resources it was determined that the PRF Department still needs a separate Appendix due to the number of different payroll codes there are, however replicating the format of the Countywide Chapter 9 would establish consistency among departments and give the PRF Department flexibility in seasonal hiring. Polley discussed the updated Appendix A and said that it would better align the Department with the County’s pay plan as well as giving the Department flexibility with their budgeted amount to adjust the seasonal rates. Questions were answered. **Motion** by Peckham, second by Conrad to adopt the revised Appendix A of the PRF Department Casual, Seasonal and Temporary Wage Rates and forward to the Environmental Resource Committee for their consideration. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

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

**6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**

A. Project Update – Nine Mile Cross Country Trails: Grooming operations continue around the clock based on heavy customer use, weather changes and events. Big Eau Pleine Park and Eau Claire Dells Campground: Firewood processing operations are underway in the south unit (BEP) firewood storage area. Routine Operations/Programs: Snow Removal Operations; Urban forestry program-tree trimming, removals; Building and structure maintenance; Shelter reservations and Special Events, Equipment maintenance and repair, Sports Facilities (Marathon Park Indoor Ice Arenas)

B. Program Update – Chinese New Year – UW Extension organized the County’s first ever Chinese New Year celebration. Our department was a partner for the event and assisted with the facility and day of activities. The event was very successful with over 765 people attending and another 50+ vendors and performers. The event was action packed with performances, cooking demonstrations, Mandarin lessons, martial arts demonstrations and much more. Badger State Games & Ironbull Winter Triathlon – Nine Mile County Forest Recreation Area hosted the 2020 Badger State Winter Games (BSG) Nordic Skiing on Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup> and the Ironbull Winter Triathlon (also a BSG event) on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. Prior to each event the area received a great deal of snow so our grooming staff worked around the clock to make sure the trails were groomed and ready for the events. The events went very well and staff has received many nice comments on the quality of the trails. BSG Nordic Skiing offered 12 events for participants to compete in. According to the online results, 382 people participated. The first Winter Triathlon for Ironbull included Nordic skiing, fat tire biking and snowshoeing. There were 25 individual participants and 7 teams.

**7. Announcements**

A. Next Meeting Date & Time, Location – tentatively April 7, 2020 at 2:00 pm, Rm 3, 212 River Drive, Wausau WI 54403. (The March 3, 2020 meeting may be cancelled depending on the need for a meeting.)

B. Future Agenda Items – none brought forward

**8. Adjourn–Motion** by Smith, second by Peckham to adjourn at 2:30pm. Motion **carried** by voice vote, vote reflected as 5-0.

**AGENDA SUMMARY**

2. We will recognize and say thank you to the Commission members who are not running for re-election on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

4B1. Discussion and Possible Action to Review and Propose Policy Revisions to Marathon County 15 Year Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan Chapter 900

County Forest Administrator, Tom Lovlien, is currently in the process of updating the County's 15 Year Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Chapter 900 addresses recreation in the County Forest. Tom will be in attendance at the meeting to walk the Commission through the Chapter. The Commission will be reviewing Chapter 1000 at a future meeting. The Commission is also asked to review all Chapters 100-800 at your convenience and offer any policy change suggestions prior to adoption of the plan by the County Board. The target date for adoption by the County Board is November of 2020. Chapter 100-900 can be found at

<https://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/ParksRecreationForestry.aspx> (Scroll to the bottom of the page).

The Commission is asked to review Chapter 900, discuss possible policy revisions to the chapter and recommend approval of the revised Chapter 900 to the Environmental Resources Committee and County Board.

4B2. Discussion and Possible Action Approving a Resolution to Participate in a State Motorized Recreation Trail Aids Program

Marathon County has 29 snowmobile clubs that maintain and manage over 790 Miles of snowmobile trails. The State of Wisconsin has established a program to aid the snowmobile clubs in maintaining the trails. Under the guidelines of the program the County is required to designate a position to oversee the grant program. Marathon County has a designated Motorized Recreation Coordinator. The grants to participate are due on April 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. The grant requires that the county approve a resolution that acknowledges participation in the program.

Attached is the Resolution for the Commission's review. The Commission is asked to recommend approval of the Resolution to Participate in a State Motorized Recreation Trail Aids Program to the Environmental Resources Committee.

6A. Project Update

**General Spring Park Cleanup:**

Staff has commenced park cleanup on locations where snow melt and firm soil conditions allow. Gates will be open as each park road is deemed safe and no further snow is expected.

**Water Systems:**

Meters and plumbing components are being installed for spring activation of water systems; restrooms, fountains, irrigation systems, etc.

**Eau Claire Dells Campground:**

Site remediation and road repairs are underway from the electrical upgrade last fall.

**Boat Launches:**

Piers are being installed as snow melts and flood waters are subsiding

**Parking Lots:**

Spring cleanup; sweeping, blowing and grading operations are underway.

**MPB #1:**

New dasher board installation is scheduled for mid-May.

**Routine Operations/Programs:**

Snow Removal Operations as needed

Urban forestry program; tree trimming, removals, stump grinding,

Building and structure maintenance.

Shelter reservations and Special Events – On Hold

Equipment maintenance and repair

Sports facility maintenance

6B. Program Update**East Gate Hall:**

Since the social distancing regulations were enacted East Gate Hall has served as an alternate site for Catholic Charities Warming Shelter. The facility has been a great temporary space with enough room for 25+ people, bathrooms and a serving kitchen. The Warming Shelter has now found a more long term facility with the YWCA and will be moving out of East Gate Hall by April 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Elections:**

Due to the Warming Shelter in East Gate Hall and the schools being closed, the City has moved the election sites that were originally at East Gate Hall and Wausau East High School to the Multi-purpose Building #2 in Marathon Park on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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CHAPTER 900

RECREATION

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## **900 RECREATION**

Recreation is an integral part of the management of the Marathon County Forest and recreation uses are referenced in most of the previous chapters. Due to the tremendous growth in recreational demands over the duration of the last several planning periods, this Plan recognizes the importance of more intensive recreational planning and emphasizes its importance with a separate chapter.

## **905 PLANNING**

In addition to this Plan, the Marathon County Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) also guides the recreation program. This plan is revised every five years and is made part of this Plan. The Marathon County Outdoor Recreation Plan includes, but is not limited to, activities on the County Forest. It incorporates campgrounds, parks and boat landings, recreational maintenance and development plans and other recreation surveys and reports. The Outdoor Recreation Plan, Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), public input, and other local or regional planning documents will be used as resources in recreational planning and development efforts. The responsibility for recreational planning, development and maintenance on the County Forest will rest with the Committee.

## **910 AUTHORITY**

The Marathon County Code of Ordinances and s. 28.11 Wis. Stats, authorize the Committee to provide recreational opportunities for the public. This authority is further recognized in the mission statement for the County Forest Plan (Chapter 100), which specifically identifies outdoor recreational opportunities. This mission statement also charges the Committee to conduct activities in a manner that prevents or minimizes environmental damage and degradation of natural resources.

Maps of the recreational facilities managed through the Marathon County Forest program are appended or referenced in Chapter 1000.

## **915 ENTRANCE AND USER FEES**

The Committee is empowered and shall have responsibility for establishing entrance, camping and other user fees on recreational facilities maintained by the County Forest. Camping, entrance or other fees shall be comparable to fees charged by (similar private facilities, other adjacent counties) and are subject to periodic change by the Committee or Commission. Fees, where appropriate, will be utilized to assist in the maintenance of recreational facilities.

**920 RECREATIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS**

It is permissible for the Committee to contract with clubs or individuals to provide for recreational maintenance or services to the public. As part of the Plan, the County contracts for the following services:

1. Snowmobile trail grooming and maintenance.
2. ATV trail grading and maintenance.
3. Mountain bike trail grooming and maintenance.
4. Nordic ski trail grooming and maintenance.

**925 RECREATIONAL USE PERMITS FOR ORGANIZED EVENTS**

Any event on the Forest which is advertised to the public, for which a fee is charged, or is otherwise organized as an event, requires a permit or authorization by the Committee. Permits may be issued by the Committee provided the use is consistent with management activities and will not cause resource damage. Appropriate levels of event liability insurance is required.

**930 EXTENSIVE RECREATIONAL USE OF THE FOREST**

Extensive recreation includes those informal activities for which the County generally does not provide a facility or service. These uses include activities such as hunting, fishing, picnicking, horseback riding, photography, nature study, hiking and others. These uses do not require a permit but must be conducted in compliance with ordinance. The Forest Administrator and the Committee shall periodically review such uses and enact ordinances as necessary to protect from resource damage.

**930.1 HUNTING AND TRAPPING**

The entire County Forest is open to hunting and trapping with the exception of areas which are developed for high public use, such as Shooting Range Park, within 300 feet of the Nine Mile trailhead, chalet and maintenance garage or other areas designated by the Committee. In addition, Bitzke Waterfowl Refuge is closed to hunting and trapping from September 1 through November 15. From November 16 through August 31 the refuge is open to all hunting and trapping seasons designated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with the exception of waterfowl hunting which is closed year round.

The Marathon County Code of Ordinances regulates activities relating to hunting. Refer to Chapter 1000 for a full text of the Ordinance or it may be found here: <http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/departments/countyclerk/codeofordinances>. In general the following activities are regulated:

1. Tree Stands
2. Ground Blinds
3. Elevated Platforms (Freestanding)
4. Access Trail Identification
5. Shooting Lanes
6. Target Shooting
7. Trail Cameras
8. Waterfowl Blinds
9. Watercraft
10. Motorized Use

#### 930.2 FISHING

All lakes and streams within the forest are available for fishing unless otherwise listed in state regulations.

#### 930.3 PICNICKING / DAY USE

Picnicking and other day uses, outside of established facilities is allowed. The Marathon County Code of Ordinances also regulates day use. In general, the following activities are regulated:

1. All litter, trash or rubbish must be removed.
2. Cutting or harvesting vegetation is not permitted.
3. Fires may not be left unattended unless the ground is 100% snow covered.

#### 930.4 CAMPING

A permit is required to camp on the County Forest. Permits are available from the County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Office and on the County website. In general, the following activities are regulated:

1. Littering or site destruction is not allowed.
2. The Committee will set the permit fee.
3. The maximum permitted time period is 14 days for any location.

#### 930.5 MOTORIZED TRAVEL

The Marathon County Code of Ordinances regulates motorized uses on the County Forest. In general the following regulations apply to motorized travel outside of a developed recreational trail system.

1. It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle on a trail designated closed with a gate, earthen berm, sign, or other closure.
2. Two-wheeled motorized travel (motorcycles, mini bikes, dirt bikes) is not permitted anywhere on the County Forest unless the machine is street legal and operating on a County Forest Road (gas tax).

#### 930.6 OTHER USES

Other uses of the County Forest are permitted provided they are not specifically addressed with the County Code of Ordinances. The County Board may, at any time, enact ordinances to protect the forest should damage begin to occur.

### **935 INTENSIVE RECREATION AREAS/USES**

Intensive recreation includes those uses for which the County provides a trail or facility. The Marathon County Forest has developed sites and areas to accommodate a fairly high degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other recreation activities that are not compatible with the intent of the developed facilities.

The Committee and the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department has noted a marked increase in demand for recreation facilities. Marathon County may attempt to develop additional facilities and will maintain its currently developed facilities.

#### 935.1 CAMPGROUNDS

There are no designated camping areas on County Forest.

#### 935.2 YOUTH CAMP

There are no youth camps on County Forest.

#### 935.3 PICNIC / DAY USE AREAS

There are no designated picnic or day use areas on County Forest.

#### 935.4 SWIMMING AREAS / BEACHES

There are no designated formal swimming areas on County Forest.

#### 935.5 BOAT LANDINGS

There are no boat landings on County Forest.

##### 935.5.1 Undeveloped Water Access Points

One undeveloped water access point for canoes and boats currently exists at the Wisconsin River Forest Unit. This is used routinely to hand launch boats or canoes but has not been developed for boat trailer launching. This site is not routinely maintained and may be closed if erosion damage becomes severe. All new sites for developed water access must be reviewed and approved by the Committee.

#### 935.6 SKI/TUBING HILLS

There are no ski or tubing hills on County Forest.

#### 935.7 SHOOTING RANGE PARK

The archery and gun range was developed and is maintained and administered by the Marathon County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department on the south end of the Nine Mile Forest Unit. The Committee will cooperate with the Commission to assist to the extent possible in the maintenance of the land and facilities within the park boundaries.

### **940 RECREATION TRAIL ACCESS**

This trail network provides access for many recreational opportunities in the Forest. An important role of the Forest is to provide sustainable recreational trails that do not cause long-term natural resource damage and that are compatible with other uses. The Committee has the authority to open, close, or relocate trails. Non-motorized use of groomed snowmobile trails is not recommended due to serious safety concerns. Trail systems are identified in Chapter 1000.

### **945 DEMAND DEVELOPMENT/EXCLUSION**

If a deficiency exists in trail mileage for a given user group, the Committee will receive recommendations and evaluate new trail proposals, with full consideration for resource protection, safety and potential for user conflicts due to County Forests being multiple use areas. An existing trail may be reclassified to satisfy demand consistent with the Fifteen-Year Plan or Comprehensive

Outdoor Recreation Plan. Trails may be closed or their use designation changed if they fail to satisfy the intended purpose or are found to be contributors to resource degradation.

**950 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

Requests for recreational trails will be reviewed by the Committee. Groups requesting specific trail development or use must present a plan for the long-term funding and maintenance of proposed trails.

Beginning in 2002 the Committee adopted a policy to restrict new trail expansion for all user groups at Nine Mile County Forest Recreation Area due to the density and trail mileages that currently exist. Improvements and reconstruction of trails within the same footprint will be considered by the Committee. Relocation of some trails for resource protection will also be considered. In this case the rerouted sections will be permanently closed and allowed to revegetate naturally. Total trail mileage will remain the same following the rerouted sections. Trail connections to Rib Mountain State Park will be considered to allow new trail development for connection to the State Park.

Construction or maintenance of any recreational trail in which the activity would increase the erosion potential of one acre or more of land is subject to state and federal stormwater runoff requirements (NR216, Wis. Adm. Code and s. 283.33, Wis. Stats.). Construction or development for silvicultural purposes is presently exempt from these requirements. Recreational trail development in Marathon County meeting these parameters will employ best management practices for water quality (PUB-FR-093-2010) to mitigate any adverse impacts. In addition, an erosion control plan will be prepared for each project depicting the location of the project and surrounding wetlands and what erosion control measures will be employed.

**955 ORGANIZED TRAIL USE/SPECIAL EVENTS**

The Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department reserves the right to impose a bond for damage to the forest. Organized trail uses and group-sponsored activities must protect Marathon County with \$1,000,000 liability insurance coverage and provide a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage. Organizers may apply to hold special events by completing a Facility Use Agreement form. Special events will be considered by the Committee based upon the Nine Mile County Forest Event and Use Policy. Both the Facility Use Agreement Form and Event and Use Policy can be found in Chapter 1000.

## 960 DESIGNATED RECREATION TRAILS

Designated recreation trails are those for which the County provides a designated trail and/or facility. The County currently provides trail systems that accommodate a high degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other activities on these trails that are not compatible with the intent of the development.

Whenever possible, multiple uses of various trail systems are encouraged and are subject to policy review of the Committee. The Committee will consider the primary purpose for which trails were developed and regulate use for the safety and enjoyment of the public and maintenance and protection of the Forest, including temporary or permanent trail closures. Wherever possible, attempts will be made to avoid user conflicts. Recreational users, however, will frequently encounter forest management activities instrumental to the existence and future of the County Forest. Management activities adjacent to designated recreation trails will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Where deemed necessary, alterations may be made to accommodate the recreational use. Trail systems are identified in Chapter 1000.

### 960.1 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

The Marathon County Forest is a multiple use forest. Non-motorized recreation trails are a legitimate use of the forest. Design and maintenance of these trails may highlight natural features present on the Forest, should minimize damage, and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. It is the policy of the Committee to manage non-motorized recreation trails on the County Forest.

#### 960.1.1 Hiking Trails

##### 960.1.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails

All portions of the County Forest are open to hiking or foot travel unless marked with signs closing an area.

##### 960.1.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails

###### Bitzke Bird Walk

This 1.9-mile walking trail in the Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit meanders through a series of wetlands and flowages created for wetland animals. Designated as a waterfowl refuge by the Department of Natural Resources in 1985, the area has a history which includes logging, fire,



draining, and agriculture. As farming failed, nature began to reclaim the wetland. Aspen trees grew up on surrounding uplands which provided food for beaver. This trail is open to the public year round, but because of the refuge status, the public is required to stay on the marked trail from September 1 through November 15 and to abide by posted regulations. Maintenance of the walking trail is shared between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the County.

#### Boy Scout Hiking Trail

This 10.2-mile trail, of which 7.5 miles are designated, in the Nine Mile Forest Unit primarily follows an existing snowmobile and cross-country ski trails. The nature trail was built by the Boy Scouts to fulfill a need for a sanctioned metered course in the North Central Wisconsin area. Merit badge requirements make it compulsory that a scout travel a pretabulated course in compiling part of the mileage necessary for the award. A map of the Boy Scout hiking trail can be found in Chapter 1000.

### 960.1.2 Mountain Bike Trails

#### 960.1.2.1 Undesignated Mountain Bike Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for recreational bicycle use. Off-trail mountain bike use is prohibited to minimize the potential for erosion or other environmental damages.

#### 960.1.2.2 Designated Mountain Bike Trails

##### Nine Mile Forest Bike Trail

It is the policy of the Committee to provide public designated mountain biking opportunities at Nine Mile County Forest. There are approximately 33.45 miles of trails, including over 13.45 miles of single track and 20 miles of cross-country ski trails designated open for bicycling. The trails open May 1 – May 15 to October 15 each year depending on trail conditions. During the first three weeks of May, trails open at Noon to allow safe and quality spring turkey hunting opportunities. Biking at Nine Mile requires the user to purchase a trail pass. A map of the designated bike trails can be found in Chapter 1000. Maintenance of the single track trails is primarily completed by volunteers of the Central Wisconsin Off Road Cycling Coalition (CWOCC) with approval by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Maintenance of the cross country ski trails is primarily completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department.

### 960.1.3 Equestrian Trails

#### 960.1.3.1 Undesignated Equestrian Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for recreational horseback trail riding except in the Harrison-Hewitt, and Bern Forest Units along with the Nine Mile cross-country and bike trails where horseback riding is prohibited. Off-trail horseback riding is also prohibited to minimize the potential for erosion, introduction of exotic species, and other environmental damage.

#### 960.1.3.2 Designated Equestrian Trails

It is the policy of the Committee to provide public designated horseback riding trails at Nine Mile, Kronenwetter, and Leather Camp Forest Units. The snowmobile trail, approximately 10 miles at Nine Mile Forest, is signed and designated as a horseback riding trail. Additionally, both the Kronenwetter and Leather Camp Forest Units have approximately 18 miles designated for horseback riding although these trails are not signed. Maintenance of the equestrian trails is completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. A map of the designated equestrian trails can be found in Chapter 1000.

### 960.1.4 Ski Trails

#### 960.1.4.1 Undesignated Cross Country Ski Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for cross-country skiing. Undesignated cross-country ski trails are not signed or maintained. Off trail cross-country skiing is permitted on the County Forest.

#### 960.1.4.2 Designated Cross Country Ski Trails

It is the policy of the Committee to provide designated cross-country skiing opportunities in the County Forest. Nine Mile Forest offers 19.5 miles of regularly groomed ski trails that offer both skate skiing and diagonal skiing and facilities which provide a variety of terrain and scenery. Additionally, Marathon County also maintains ski trails at Sylvan Hill. Cross-country skiing on Nine Mile designated trails requires the user to purchase a trail pass. Donations are accepted at Sylvan Hill. Dog use on groomed cross-country ski trails is prohibited when such trails are open for skiing except while hunting in accordance with Department of Natural Resources regulations.

Maintenance of the cross country ski trails is primarily completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Volunteers from the Wausau Nordic Ski Club also provide assistance preparing the trails for the cross country ski season with approval by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. A map of the designated cross country ski trails can be found in Chapter 1000.

#### 960.1.5 Snowshoe Trails

##### 960.1.5.1 Undesignated Snowshoe Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for snowshoeing except on the Nine Mile cross-country ski trails. Undesignated snowshoe trails are not signed or maintained. Off-trail snowshoeing is also permitted on the County Forest.

##### 960.1.5.2 Designated Snowshoe Trails

It is the policy of the Committee to provide public designated snowshoeing opportunities on the County Forest. Nine Mile Forest offers approximately 6.7 miles of signed snowshoe trails which include a variety of terrain and scenery. Snowshoeing on designated trails requires the user to purchase a trail pass. Generally, no maintenance is required on snowshoe trails. If required, it would be completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. A map of the designated snowshoe trails can be found in Chapter 1000.

#### 960.1.6 Other Non-Motorized Use

All County Forest trails are designated for non-motorized use except by permit, posted as closed, or as otherwise designated by the Committee. Gates and/or barriers will be constructed and strategically located to allow optimum maintenance while restricting motorized vehicular travel. Trail maintenance may be conducted in cooperation with the DNR Wildlife Manager.

#### 960.1.7 Future Non-Motorized Trail Systems

The development of additional non-motorized trail systems will include careful consideration of public demand, analysis of user conflicts and potential damage to the natural resource. New trail proposals will be evaluated as indicated in Section 945.

Non-motorized trail systems generally are not supported by statewide grant programs. The County will require proof of an organized club, or user group, with the ability to assist with maintenance

and support of the trail and associated facilities. Appropriate trail passes, or other user fees, may be implemented as indicated in Section 915.

## 960.2 MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

Motorized travel on trails can be legitimate use of the forest if these trails are designed and maintained in a manner to minimize damage to the environment and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. It shall be the policy of the Committee to consider opportunities for the following motorized trail use:

1. Snowmobiles.
2. All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's).
3. Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV's)

### 960.2.1 Designated Snowmobile Trails

Designated snowmobile trails are those recognized by the Committee as the official trails within the County. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department manages the snowmobile trail system in Marathon County. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the following snowmobile/ATV clubs for trail maintenance:

1. A & H Sno-Mobilers
2. Athens Sno-Pak
3. Birnamwood Trail Riders
4. Eau Pleine Riders Inc.
5. Elderon Sno-Angels
6. Emmet Sno-Drifters
7. Frankfort Freedom Riders
8. Glandon Snow Barons
9. Green Valley Stump Jumpers
10. Hamburg Rainbow Riders
11. Hatley Snowmobile Club
12. KK Riders
13. Kelly Snowshoes
14. Krecji City Cruisers
15. Little Rose Riders
16. Midnight Riders

17. Nutterville Sno-Nuts
18. Peplin Unlimited
19. Pike Lake Wilderness Unlimited
20. Poniatoski Dare Devils
21. Rib Knights
22. Rib Riders
23. Rothschild Urbanaires
24. Rozellville Wilderness Riders
25. Shantytown Snowmobile Club
26. Spencer Swamp Stompers
27. Stratford Sno-Runners
28. Trailmates Snowmobile Club
29. WI Valley Sno-Jets

The Marathon County Code 7.09 regulates snowmobile trails. A summary of rules and regulations relating to snowmobile trails is as follows:

1. All groomed snowmobile trails are closed to cars and trucks unless vehicle use is approved by Marathon County.
2. The Motorized Recreation Coordinator will make determinations to officially open and close snowmobile trails based on snow, trail maintenance conditions, and information provided by the clubs.
3. Snowmobile trails used for logging access during snowmobile season will be posted with signs warning users of activity and every attempt will be made to leave at least 3 inches of snow pack on the trail. However, they may be plowed down to the trail base in certain circumstances.
4. Trail width shall not exceed 16 feet.

Marathon County recognizes the following categories of snowmobile trail:

#### 960.2.1.1 Trail Types

The County recognizes several different classifications of snowmobile trail:

State Funded Trails – these are State approved and funded trail miles on designated trails that are part of a Statewide network of trail systems. Snowmobile registration fees, trail pass sticker

fees and gas tax allotments fund grants that support maintenance, rehabilitation and development of these trails. There are approximately 791 miles of funded trails in Marathon County, with approximately 42.28 miles on County Forest Lands.

Unfunded Club Trails – these are segments of trail that are maintained to the same standards as a funded trail but do not meet the State’s eligibility requirements for a funded trail system. There are approximately 67 miles of unfunded trails in Marathon County, with approximately .11 miles on County Forest lands in the Leathercamp Forest Unit. It is recommended that the County continues to apply for grants to include these in the funded system.

#### 960.2.1.2 Trail Maintenance

Marathon County contracts with Marathon County snowmobile clubs to groom the funded snowmobile trails. The County will maintain State trails in cooperation with the Marathon County Snowmobile Council and snowmobile clubs with funds provided by the DNR. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department will coordinate and administer the County-wide snowmobile trail program under s. 23.09(11) and (26) and 350.12(4), Wis. Stat., Natural Resources Code NR 50.09, and County General Code 7.09.

The County shall inspect and monitor bridges and other infrastructure on the trail system and attempt to secure funding from grants, or other sources, to periodically replace or rehabilitate as needed.

DNR’s Trail Signing Handbook will be used as the guide for posting standardized signs and will assist in promoting uniformity for trail signing throughout the County. Only trail signs that provide information for safety, regulations, or trail directions will be permitted. Private and business signs are not authorized on the Forest. All trail signs must be mounted on wooden or metal posts.

#### 960.2.1.3 Future Snowmobile Trails

The Committee shall have jurisdiction over any trail development proposals. It is recommended that future trails be considered only after careful consideration of costs, benefits and impacts and as part of a larger planning effort.

Marathon County deems that the existing number of snowmobile trail miles is sufficient to satisfy public demand.

Proposals to relocate trails or to make adjustments to the existing trail system will be encouraged where there are concerns of public safety or environmental damage. Unfunded and club trails may be evaluated for maintenance funding application.

#### 960.2.2 Undesignated Snowmobile Trails

There are no undesignated snowmobile trails on County Forest. Snowmobile use is permitted on designated trails only.

#### 960.2.3 Designated ATV Trails

Designated ATV Trails are those recognized by the Committee as official trails within the County. These may lie on County, private, or other agency lands. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the following snowmobile/ATV clubs for trail maintenance:

1. Mid-Wisconsin Trail Blazers Club

There are numerous types of designated ATV trails managed by Marathon County.

##### 960.2.3.1 Trail Types

The County recognizes several different classifications of ATV trail. Maps are appended in Chapter 1000 for reference.

1. Funded Winter ATV Trails – State funded snowmobile trails on the County Forest are also designated and funded as winter use ATV trails. There are approximately 699.5 miles of winter funded ATV trail managed by Marathon County, with 42.28 miles on County Forest lands.

Designated snowmobile trails are open for winter ATV use during the snowmobile season if the air temperature is 28°F or colder. ATV's are permitted on designated snowmobile trails on County Forest 10 days following the opening of the trails. The trails remain open until the snowmobile trails are closed or if the trail base can no longer support ATV use.

2. Funded Summer ATV Trails – these are trail systems funded for only summer use. These trails are open from May 1 – September 30. There are approximately 20.75 miles of summer use ATV trails managed by the County with 11 miles on the County Forest.
3. Funded Year Round ATV Trails - these are trail systems funded for both winter and summer use. There are approximately 699.5 miles of year round funded ATV trails managed by Marathon County with 11 miles on the County Forest.
  - a. The Burma Road Forest Unit trails are designated for year-round use. Summer trails are open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. May 1 through September 30 and winter trails are open from December 1 through March 15. Burma Forest ATV/UTV trails are open Dec. 1 – March 15 regardless of air temperature.
4. Funded UTV Trails – UTV’s, or side by sides, are not allowed on snowmobile/winter ATV trail systems. Marathon County allows for UTV’s on 20.75 miles of the trail system within the County with 11 miles on the County Forest. (Burma County Forest Unit and Edgar to Fenwood Trail.)
5. Funded Troute/Hybrid Trails – The ATV/UTV program does not allow for full maintenance funding on ATV/UTV trails that are open to highway traffic (cars, trucks, etc.) ATV trails with this dual use that were maintained and funded prior to August 1, 2012 are still funded at 100% of the annual per mile maintenance rate. Trails funded after August 1, 2012 allow for partial funding under the following categories:
  - a. County Forest Gas Tax Roads – these are gas tax roads used as a connector to trails or services and are funded at a rate determined by the full per mile funding rate, less gas tax funding rate, not to exceed 50% of the full maintenance funding rate. Marathon County maintains 0 miles of County Forest Road Troutes.
  - b. Hybrid Trails – these are trails designated as ATV trails, opened after August 1, 2012, that also permit highway vehicle traffic. These are funded at 50% of the annual maintenance funding rate. Marathon County maintains 0 miles of Hybrid/Troute trails.



c. Club Trails – These trails are not funded under the State ATV program. In some cases these are trails that are maintained and may be added as a funded trail at a future date. Marathon County recognizes 0 miles of club trails.

d. State Trails – There are no State trails either funded or unfunded in Marathon County.

6. Undesignated ATV/UTV Trails

There are no undesignated ATV or UTV trails on County Forest. ATV and UTV use is permitted on designated trails only.

960.2.3.2 ATV Trail Maintenance

For the purpose of ATV trails, the term sustainability is intended to mean the development of a trail surface that is maintainable. It appears evident there are no circumstances where an ATV trail can be considered sustainable without intensive maintenance. Of primary importance, trail surfaces need to be conducive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion.

The County has contracts with local clubs and organizations for the grooming, brushing, signing, and maintenance of these trails. Funding for maintenance is provided by the State ATV program.

The County shall inspect and monitor trails, bridges and other infrastructure and attempt to secure funding from grants, or other sources, to periodically replace improvements or rehabilitate trail surfaces or bridges as needed.

960.2.3.3 Future ATV Trails

The use and popularity of ATV's and UTV's increased dramatically over the period of the 2006-2020 County Forest Plan. Increased usage of trail systems proved a tremendous need for much higher levels of trail maintenance in order to manage environmental damages.

The Marathon County Forest has ten different Forest Units with Burma Forest being the only one with summer ATV/UTV trails. During the last planning process 2006 – 2020 it was determined that no new summer ATV trails would be considered due to the reasons below:

1. Unsuitable soil types
2. User conflicts
3. Small forest units without capability to connect trail systems to other counties/trail systems.
4. Only looped trail opportunities
5. Maintenance issues
6. Impacts on natural resources
7. Impacts on other users/user groups

It shall be the policy of the Committee to continue to allow summer ATV/UTV use at Burma Road. No other summer ATV/UTV use shall be approved.

It is critical that trail layout and design is done in such a way as to prevent erosion and soil loss. Trails must be developed sustainably. For the purpose of this plan, sustainability is defined as follows:

**Sustainability** – For the purpose of ATV trails, the term sustainability is intended to mean the development of a trail surface that is maintainable. It appears evident there are no circumstances where an ATV trail can be considered sustainable without intensive maintenance. Of primary importance, trail surfaces need to be conducive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion. Trails will be built with a slight crown and appropriate ditching to allow for adequate and proper water dispersal. To this end, the construction/development and maintenance of ATV trails are to comply with the **WCFA ATV/ORV Trail Standards**, which is appended in Chapter 1000 to this Plan.

#### 960.2.4 Designated Motorcycle Trails

There are no designated motorcycle trails on County Forest.

#### 960.2.5 Other Motorized Recreational Vehicle Trails

1. Designated

There are no designated other motorized recreational vehicle trails on County Forest.

Other motorized recreational use on the County Forest is prohibited.

## 2. Undesignated

There are no other undesignated motorized recreational vehicle trails on County Forest. Other motorized recreational use on the County Forest is prohibited.

### 960.2.6 Recreational Access with Persons with Disabilities

The Committee supports recreational access for persons with permanent disabilities. Federal and State disabled access guidelines will be met when required.

Requests for access in non-motorized areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis and be limited to ATV's/UTV's or snowmobiles. No other motorized access will be allowed. Permits may be granted if:

1. The Permittee provides proof as disabled under DOT or DNR guidelines. Requires Class A, B or C disabled hunter permit or disabled DOT license plate.
2. The requested use will not damage soil or vegetation in the area of use.
3. The requested use will not endanger other users.
4. The requested use will not significantly impact other users of the Forest.

Additionally, if a permit is granted, the ATV/UTV or snowmobile must be clearly marked with a sign provided by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department that reads "Disabled" or "Disabled Hunter". The permit shall be limited to a specific entry point and area. The permit shall not exceed two weeks.

Permits are granted by the Committee under County General Code 16.08(9)(c). A copy of the permit can be found in Chapter 1000.

## 960.3 RECREATION TRAIL PERMITS

### 960.3.1 Storm Water Discharge

In general, any trail construction or rehabilitation activities that disturb one acre or more of land will require a Storm Water Discharge Permit. There have been instances of inconsistent application of permit requirements Statewide. In order to further define the County's understanding and implementation of permit requirements, the following current acceptable process will be used for determining when a permit is needed.

1. The 1 acre threshold will be determined by measuring/estimated new disturbance or disturbance of previously grassed surfaces.

2. Periodic grading of impervious or non-grassed trail surfaces is not considered disturbance.
3. Restoration of water filtration/diversion devices, such as sediment traps or catch basins is considered maintenance and not disturbance.
4. Reconstruction of previously grassed ditch lines as part of trail rehabilitation is considered disturbance.

#### 960.3.2 Chapter 30

Permits are required for new bridges or culvert crossings of navigable waterways. These permits will either be classified as general or individual depending on specific site conditions. These permits are not required for culvert or bridge crossings of non-navigable or intermittent streams, nor or they required to install a clear span bridge over wetlands.

#### 960.3.3 Wetland Fill

Permits are required at any time that fill is placed in a wetland. Permits are available to fill small wetlands for recreation trail purposes. Wetland fill must be less than 10,000 square feet and the permit does not require wetland mitigation. Clear span bridge and boardwalks placed on pilings generally do not require a wetland fill permit. Puncheon style bridges do require a permit.

### **965 RECREATION PROGRAM FUNDING AND GRANTS**

#### 965.1 RECREATION AREA FUNDING

Funding for recreation areas is generally fee based. Aid for Development of Local Parks (ADLP) funding is available for facility development or enhancement but there is normally a very high level of competition for these funds.

#### 965.2 RECREATION TRAIL FUNDING

##### 965.2.1 Non-motorized trail systems

At this time, there is very limited access to any grant funds that will assist with non-motorized recreational trail maintenance. The County relies on user fees and/or funds maintenance out of the Parks, Recreation and Forestry operating budgets.

##### 965.2.2 Motorized trail systems

There are numerous grant programs available to offset motorized trail system costs. Marathon County utilizes the following funding sources:

1. Snowmobile Maintenance - \$300/mile
2. ATV Summer Maintenance - \$600/mile
3. ATV Winter Maintenance - \$100/mile
4. UTV Maintenance - \$100/mile
5. ATV Rehabilitation - 100% grants
6. ATV Development - 100% grants

**PARTICIPATION IN STATE MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAIL AIDS PROGRAMS**

**WHEREAS**, Snowmobile and ATV clubs in Marathon County have acquired easements and developed trails on private land for public snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trail use; and

**WHEREAS**, Marathon County has designated lands that it manages for public snowmobile, ATV and utility terrain vehicle (UTV) trail use; and

**WHEREAS**, said public trails are eligible for grant funds pursuant to provisions of 23.09(26) and 23.33 of the Wisconsin statutes for development, maintenance, administration, or other costs.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Marathon County Board of Supervisors does hereby authorize the Wausau and Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department's Motorized Recreation Coordinator and/or the departments Designee to perform all required administrative tasks necessary to allow the snowmobile and ATV clubs of Marathon County to fully participate in the State of Wisconsin's motorized recreation trail aids programs.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

MARATHON COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

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ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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