

**Joint Meeting of
Forestry & Recreation and Highway Committees**

December 21, 2015

9:00 a.m.

Forestry Members Present: Chairman Ronald Nye, Michael Klimoski, Sam Hardin, Donald Scupien, and Joe Novak

Members Absent: None

Highway Members Present: Chairman Michael Klimoski, Richard Hurlbert, James R. Jansen, and Pete Pennington

Members Absent: Arlene Bonacci

Others Present: Erik Rantala, Brian Braun, Robin Stowe, David Solin, Jack Andraschko, Rus Cook, Pete Resch, Richard Burby, Larry Schisel, Joe Jopek, and Terry Poltrock

Location: Conference Room, Forestry Office, Fairgrounds, Antigo

1. Call to Order – Chairmen Nye and Klimoski called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Pennington made a motion, seconded by Hurlbert to excuse Arlene Bonacci. 4 ayes, 1 absent. Motion carried. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Public Comment on Agenda Items and Consideration of Requests for Items to be Added to Future Meeting Agendas – There were none.
3. Discuss/Review Augustyn Springs to Summit Lake ATV Trail/Route Proposal – Rantala reviewed this proposal with the committees, and noted that this specific proposal would need both Forestry and Highway Committee approval to make this desired connection. This proposal includes trail on County Forest, and portions of County Highways (J&B) designated as a route. Joe Jopek addressed the committees regarding how this trail/route proposal would affect the Ice Age Trail. With this proposal, approximately 60% of the trail would be on the Ice Age Trail. Joe Jopek stated that in 1988 the Ice Age Trail had to be rerouted for the Augustyn Springs ATV trail. With the current option suggested, 4

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miles of the Ice Age Trail would be affected, which is 1/10th of the Ice Age Trail System. If the new trail/route would follow Hwy. J to Pence Lake Road and use the right-of-way for Hwy. A, the Ice Age Trail would not need to be used. Jopek stated that in 1974 that the Ice Age Trail was named a National Scenic Trail of which there are only eleven in the United States. The current Ice Age Trail agreement does allow for snowmobile trails on the Ice Age Trail as there is no conflict during the winter season. Rantala is looking at options that utilize existing roads that are currently open to motorized traffic and no gates would need to be opened. There are two ways that this project could be funded and maintained under the ATV program. If this project is applied for as a “trail”, development and yearly maintenance funds would be available. If this was funded as a “Troute”, only yearly maintenance funds would be available. Rantala has some concerns about development costs if applied for as a “Troute”, as there is approximately 7 miles to develop. As a troute, other motorized uses could continue; as a trail, ATV’s/UTV’s would only be able to utilize. If a re-route of the Ice Age Trail was necessary, the ATV clubs present at the meeting verbally committed to assist with moving the trail. Jopek stated that the Ice Age Trail would be willing to re-route to the Jack Lake X-C ski trail. Rantala also stated that garlic mustard has been found in the area, and the Forestry Department has been treating. The earliest this project could be applied for is the April 15th grant deadline, with a decision on funding in August by the ORV Council. Additional permits will need to be applied for as well. Rantala stated that this trail would be contingent on receiving grant funding. Without grant funding, there would be no way to maintain the trail.

Motion by Pennington, seconded by Jansen to approve the ATV route on Hwy. B from Bass Lake Road south to the Ice Age Trail and from State Hwy. 45, 4,500 ft. east on Hwy. J contingent upon successful grant funding for the ATV trail. 4 ayes, 1 absent.

4. Discuss Criteria for ATV Trail/Route Requests – Chairman Klimoski reviewed the following criteria to be considered for trail/route requests:
 - Safety both for riders and automobiles.
 - Must show an absolute need to use Highway.
 - Club or individual must do all legwork that goes into establishing a route, including but not limited to getting permission on private property in writing and presented to the committees with application.
 - Must show on a map beginning and end of route and presented to committees at time of request.
 - Route is specifically established to connect trails.
 - All gates or otherwise walking and hunting trails that are mowed and kept up for that purpose are off limits for ATV or other vehicular traffic.
 - The distance that a County Highway can be used to connect two trails will be ½ mile.
 - All trails and routes shall be signed according to State Statutes, no exceptions.
 - It is up to the clubs to monitor signs when one is damaged or gone. It has to be replaced in a timely manner.
 - Any damage to any sensitive areas – the trail or route will be closed.

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- Any trail that goes through an area with invasive species present and it is determined that the invasive is spreading either by ATV or truck traffic, the Department will have the authority to close the trail at any time.
- Passing all these criteria does not guarantee permission for a route will be granted.

Rantala and Braun stated that some of these criteria would only apply to either Forestry Department or Highway Department, whoever has jurisdiction.

Robin Stowe, corporation counsel, stated that ATV routes should only be used to connect to established, funded trails. Langlade County should follow State Statute 23.33, which states the municipality must follow DNR regulations for signage and maintenance as the municipality is liable. Recreational immunity would probably not work for ATV routes if these routes were to serve as “transportation” rather than connecting recreational trails. The municipality should only open roads for routes if they connect trails, then recreational immunity would apply. An ordinance should state that routes would be purely for recreational use not multi-use. Routes/trails must work within the confines of the Forestry recreational plan in order for recreational immunity to apply.

The committees suggested having all requests for routes/trails in by November 1 and having a joint committee meeting of both Forestry and Highway so that individuals are not being sent back and forth to committee meetings. It was suggested to have the above-listed criteria added to the policy and application process for Highway.

5. Adjourn Highway Committee Meeting – Motion by Hurlbert, seconded by Jansen to adjourn the Highway Committee meeting at 10:25 a.m. 4 ayes, 1 absent.
6. Discuss Expired Timber Sale Contracts – Rantala stated that the committee met on December 2 to review timber sale contracts that would expire on December 31, 2015. Eleven of the sales extended were winter sales. In a normal winter, the loggers would have had six weeks to complete these sales after they have been initially reviewed for extensions in November. Due to the uncommonly warm winter and above normal precipitation, Rantala recommended extending these winter sales until this spring and possibly later if winter does not materialize. Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Novak to extend the eleven winter sales until May 1 to complete with no increase in stumpage. All ayes. Motion carried.
7. Adjournment – Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Scupien to adjourn at 10:35 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Poltrock
Recording Secretary