

## Forestry and Recreation Committee

February 11, 2016

8:30 a.m.

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

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Erik Rantala, Dave Solin, Fred Heider, North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; Josh Waukau, DNR liaison; Joe Jopek, Jack Andraschko, Rus Cook, Dave Peterson, Pete Resch, Renate Bromberg, Joe Hermolin, Karen Trembath, and Terry Poltrock

**Location:** Conference Room, Forestry Office, Fairgrounds, Antigo

1. Call to Order – Chairman Nye called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Minutes - A motion was made by Klimoski, seconded by Hardin, to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2016 meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.
3. Public Comment on Agenda Items and Consideration of Requests for Items to be Added to Future Meeting Agendas – Novak addressed the committee regarding the Augustyn Springs to Summit Lake ATV Trail/Route and the grand opening of the ski chalet at Veteran's Memorial Park.
4. Discuss/Review Augustyn Springs to Summit Lake ATV Trail/Route Proposal - Rantala reviewed this proposal with the committee. This proposal includes trail on County Forest, and portions of County Highways (J&B) designated as a route. Also, the Town of Upham has committed to opening Koepenick Road and Pence Lake Road as a route to make this connection. Rantala is looked at options that utilized existing roads that are currently open to motorized traffic and no gates needing to be opened. Rantala expressed concern if development costs were accepted from ATV clubs they would feel some ownership of the logging road especially when used by logging trucks even though the

## Langlade County Forestry & Recreation Committee Minutes – 2/11/16

current membership stated there would be no ownership of the logging roads. 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 (\$700/mile) would be available, but the only motorized use would be ATV/UTV traffic. If this was funded as a “Troute”, only yearly maintenance funds (\$300/mile) would be available. As a route, other motorized uses could continue; as a trail, ATV’s/UTV’s would only be able to utilize. 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 15<sup>th</sup> grant deadline, with a decision on funding in August by the ORV Council. Additional permits may 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. Joe Jopek addressed the committees regarding how this trail/route proposal would affect the Ice Age Trail. Signage and labor would be needed to move the Ice Age Trail. If a re-route of the Ice Age Trail was necessary, the ATV clubs present at the December 21, 2015 meeting verbally committed to assist with moving the trail. It was also stated that ¾ of the proposed trail/route would be on snowmobile trail (approximately 4 miles). After much discussion, motion by Klimoski, seconded by Hardin to allow the trail but to apply for DNR grants for both development and maintenance. 3 ayes, 2 nays. Motion carried.

5. Langlade County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2017-2021 – Fred Heider, North Central WI Regional Planning Commission, reviewed the process of updating the Five-Year Recreation Plan for 2017-2021. Langlade County must have this plan in place in order to be eligible for recreation grants. Since Langlade County is a member of the Commission, the plan will be prepared at no cost. Each plan consists of: 1) an overall description of the county’s demographics, 2) Outdoor recreation needs established based upon public input. Forestry & Recreation Committee decides how to gather public input from NCWRPC staff consultation. Possible ways to receive public input: informal survey of staff observations, survey all outdoor recreation groups, contact own and city officials about existing facilities and needs, and an open house meeting. 3) Forestry & Recreation Committee creates goals and objectives based upon public input to be used as guidelines in formulating the outdoor recreation plan projects, and 4) Create recommendations for improving the recreation system over the next five years. Heider stated that he plans to use a paper survey, Survey Monkey, and a public hearing. Heider will return to the March meeting with 15 questions to be reviewed by the committee that can be used in the survey process.
6. MFL Acreage Fees – SB434 – Rantala updated the committee on the changes that were approved by the Senate yesterday to the Managed Forest Land Program. Under the program, landowners sign up and agree to forestry management practices and plans to log timber. They also pay fees, in lieu of ad valorem property taxes, that are less than what they would have been taxed. Current law requires those property owners reserve no more than 160 acres as closed, or private, while the rest is kept open for public recreation. The amended would double the 160-acre cap for non-industrial landowners to 320, rather than the original proposal to eliminate the cap. Other provisions include: ensuring property owners are signing a contract when entering the program and can withdraw if

## Langlade County Forestry & Recreation Committee Minutes – 2/11/16

they do not agree with changes; allowing owners to lease out their closed land for recreational use; and directing that the closed-acreage fees go to the parcels county and municipality or town rather than the DNR, as current law requires. That provision is coupled with an end to the timber harvest yield taxes local governments now receive. Counties would receive 20% and municipalities would receive 80% of the closed acreage fee. The county would receive approximately \$33,316.00. The bill will now go to the Assembly.

7. Discuss Lands for Sale – Rantala stated that DNR lands for sale will go to the Natural Resources Board on February 24 for approval of lands to be sold. Of the original 13 parcels indentified in Langlade County to be sold, only six will be sold – four parcels will be offered to Langlade County and two to the public.

Camp Lyle Property - The property is in Section 24; T34N-R11E in the Township of East Elcho. This property is 480 acres and the asking price is \$1.85 million. The DNR is interested in 120 acres on this property. There are structures on the property including a main lodge, pavilions, shower building, toilet buildings, storage building and 14 small cabins. This property was harvested within the last 15 years, and there is a 60 acre swamp on the property. There are two beautiful lakes on the property. If this property were to be purchased by Langlade County, it would be mostly for recreational purposes, as the timber on the property at present time is not ready to be harvested (20-30 years). Options for this property would include a campground and additional trail opportunities. This would be a grant eligible, which would be 50/50 cost share.

Another property came to Rantala's attention yesterday, which if it becomes available, would be a property worth being investigated by Langlade County. If more information becomes available, an emergency meeting could be held within the next two weeks.

Rantala stated that there are 200 acres of county land that are not in the county forest program, which have been identified for sale, if there would be a need.

Motion by Scupien, seconded by Klimoski to excuse Joe Novak at 9:35 a.m. 4 ayes, 1 nay.

8. Grogan Property - Rantala reminded the committee that he had been contacted by Dennis Grogan, who has 160 acres for sale in the Town of Summit with an asking price of \$240,000. There is an ATV and snowmobile trail that crosses this property. In the past, he has allowed loggers to cross his property to remove timber from county lands. Rantala explained that a road could be built around this property for logging purposes and a possible ATV trail. There are 50 acres of 20 year old aspen on the property, which will not be able to be cut for 20-25 years. The rest of the property has little timber value, but a small lake is present. There is a cabin on the property, if Langlade County were to purchase the property, Langlade County would then exclude the cabin from the sale of the property, which is in the south east corner of the property. Rantala informed the committee that a Stewardship grant for up to 50% of purchase price, could be applied for due to the recreational aspects, continued access to county land, and adding land within

## Langlade County Forestry & Recreation Committee Minutes – 2/11/16

the county forest boundary. At the October 31, 2014 meeting, the committee had stated that Rantala should offer Mr. Grogan \$950/acre. Rantala stated that Grogan is now willing to accept the offer of \$950/acre. Hardin reminded the committee that an appraisal had been done on this property. Rantala will investigate whether the appraisal would be considered valid as it is more than one year old. Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Scupien to table this matter until the March meeting.. 4 ayes, 1 absent. Motion carried.

9. Black Brook Lease Extension - Rantala reminded the committee that he had met with representatives of American Transmission Company (ATC) in September. Project will need to relocate right-of-way, as well as extend lease on current substation for three years, ending in 2018. New right-of-way will extend 50' south of existing right-of-way, everything must be cleared and will need to grant easement on this new right-of-way, possibly sell the easement. County will receive timber sale revenue as well. This project will be done over three years: 2016 – clearing, 2017 – construction, and 2018 – abandon existing line. The clearing phase will be in the winter of 2016. Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Hardin to extend the lease with American Transmission Company through 2018. 4 ayes, 1 absent. Motion carried.
10. Discuss Increasing Clothing Allowance for Forestry Department Staff for 2017 – Rantala informed the committee that he met with the Personnel Committee on February 4, 2016 regarding the clothing allowance that the forestry department staff has received for the past 37 years to have it included in the Employee Handbook. Rantala would like to increase the amount from \$125 to \$200 for 2017 as it has not been increased since 2004 and the price of a good pair of work boots is more than \$200. The Personnel Committee referred the matter back to the forestry and recreation committee so that the amount of the clothing allowance could be listed in the Employee Handbook. Rantala stated that the clothing allowance can be used to purchase work boots, blue jeans, work shirts, etc., as foresters' clothes get damaged and covered in paint during the day-to-day timber management activities. Also, the amount is given in the employee's paycheck so it is taxed. Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Nye to increase the amount of the clothing allowance for the forestry department staff to \$225 for 2017. 4 ayes, 1 absent. Motion carried.
11. Discuss Carry Forward Request for 2016 - Discuss Carryforward Request - Rantala informed the committee that he is requesting to carryforward excess timber sale revenue to: replenish the recreation fund to \$100,000, which would be \$15,459.11 and to carryforward from a miscellaneous revenue account \$8,233.49, which was the remainder of the amount Langlade County received for the lead reclamation project at the bow and gun range. Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Scupien to approve the carryforward requests and to forward to the finance committee. All ayes. Motion carried.
12. Langlade County Forestry & Recreation Department Annual Report - Rantala briefly reviewed the Forestry and Recreation Department's Annual Report for 2015 and asked they review it further and call him if they have any questions. Rantala reiterated that it had been a good year for the department.

**Langlade County Forestry & Recreation Committee Minutes – 2/11/16**

13. DNR Liaison Report – Josh Waukau, DNR liaison, updated the committee on several DNR items.
14. Administrator Report – Rantala stated that Verso filed for bankruptcy the first week of February. Verso will be paying loggers on time and in full since the date of filing. DNR has implemented a policy for producers, that they will extend payment of delivered wood to Verso for a total of 90 days. NLEB-USFWS announced the final rule that identified Endangered Species Act protections for the northern long-eared bat due to White Nose Syndrome. 1) With WNS zone, incidental take is prohibited if it occurs within a hibernacula, 2) If it results from tree removal activities and the activity occurs within .25 miles of a known, occupied hibernacula, 3) The activity cuts or destroys a known, occupied roost tree or other trees within a 150 foot radius from roost tree during the pup season, which is June 10-July 31. Annosum was found in Marathon County, and now parts of Langlade are included in the 25 mile buffer. Langlade County has been treating over the last 4-5 years in anticipation of this being an issue closer to the County Forest. Timber sale activity – five active sales, things have slowed up a bit this week. Had a good January and early February. Winter ground has been tough to freeze, in some cases they have not been able due to the amount of water in woods. Spring Timber Sale Setup – Over 1,200 acres are set up, and more than half of that is marked. Foresters have been taking advantage of little snow cover and are doing a good job of getting things ready. The ski chalet was dedicated this past Saturday. There was a very good turnout, and the parking lot was full. All the snowmobile trails are open. Clubs have done an excellent job working with the little snow we have had. It was a good decision to not open right away as the trails have a pretty good base. Sheriff's Department has been out patrolling and has issued a number of citations.
15. Review Paid Bills - The committee reviewed the paid Forestry and Recreation Department bills for January.
16. Review Budget Summary - Rantala reviewed with the committee the budget summary report of the forestry department revenues and expenditures through January 31, 2016.
17. Set Next Meeting Date – The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 2016 at 8:00 a.m., in the forestry office conference room, fairgrounds, Antigo.
18. Adjournment - Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Scupien to adjourn at 10:18 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Poltrock  
Recording Secretary