

## Forestry and Recreation Committee

February 12, 2014

9:30 a.m.

**Members Present:** Chairman Ronald Nye, Michael Klimoski, David Solin, Rick Bina, and Sam Hardin

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Erik Rantala, Tom Lazars, Ted Ave'lallemant, Sean Davison, DNR Forester LTE, and Terry Poltrock

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

1. Call to Order – Chairman Nye called the meeting to order at 9:30 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 15, 2014 meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.
3. Discuss Additional Reservable Sites at Veteran's Memorial Park – Last month, Lazars had informed the committee that he would like to add to additional reservable sites. Last year, the committee agreed that six sites (9, 25, 18, 19, 42 and 43) could be reserved, which went over very well; but when there are large groups camping together, they are spread over the campground. Lazars would like to add two more reservable sites (17 and 31) so that large groups could camp together. Lazars explained that payment is made in advance for reserved sites and that it is non-refundable. Motion by Bina, seconded by Hardin to approve adding sites #17 and #31 as reservable sites. All ayes. Motion carried.
4. Update on Veteran's Memorial Park Beach Restroom Project – Last month, Lazars provided the committee with a preliminary plan for the restroom that needs to be replaced on the beach. It would be a restroom with a three-season shelter and patio area. It would be enclosed with perhaps large windows or doors, which could be opened if the weather and insects allowed. It would be very rustic, so to not be high maintenance, and would not be insulated so it would be shut down for the winter. Last Friday, Rantala and Lazars met with Nate Heuss to discuss preliminary plans. Planned construction would be in 2015 and a grant would be applied for.

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5. 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 \$77,669; to replace the beach restroom at Veteran’s Memorial Park, as the holding tank has cracked - \$138,500, and to make a payment to the general fund and possibly purchase additional acreage - \$337,339; and to carryforward from the capital improvement fund \$63,260, which has been budgeted to complete the restroom in the campground at Veteran’s Memorial Park and the balance to be used for the restroom/shelter facility on the beach at Veteran’s Memorial Park . Motion by Hardin, seconded by Nye to approve the carryforward requests and to forward to the finance committee. All ayes. Motion carried.
6. Langlade County Forestry & Recreation Department Annual Report - Rantala briefly reviewed the Forestry and Recreation Department’s Annual Report for 2013 and asked they review it further and call him if they have any questions. Rantala reiterated that it had been a very good year for the department.
7. DNR Liaison Report – Ave’llemant provided results of the deer mortality study. The research is a partnership of the Department of Natural Resources and University of Wisconsin. In northern Wisconsin, the correct ranking (source of greatest mortality to least) is human hunting, starvation, coyote, wolf and vehicle collision. Human hunting was responsible for about twice as much deer mortality in northern Wisconsin than the other four causes combined. One point that’s important to understand: The mortality figures are percentage of deer that died. On average, 73% of female deer and 47% of the adult bucks in the northern study survived the year. In the eastern farmland, human hunting was again the leading cause of mortality (53% of deer that died), but vehicle collisions were second at 17% followed by starvation (4%) and coyote (2%). Since the density of roads is greater in east central Wisconsin than it is in the north, the higher rate of road-kill is expected. The work also sheds light on winter severity in Wisconsin over the last three years. Last year was notable for snow and cold lasting into May in northern Wisconsin. The meteorological record mirrors winter kill rates of deer in the northern study area: of deer that died, 18% of female deer, 24% of yearling male and 11% of adult male deer died of starvation last year. The previous high among any cohort in the study was 8% of female deer in 2011. Winters are typically much milder in east central Wisconsin. However, last winter was especially harsh and deer did die of starvation in 2013 in the eastern farmland region. Of dead deer documented by the researchers, 12% of female deer, 12% of yearling male and 5% of adult male deer died of starvation near Shiocton last year.

The researchers tracked the fawns daily through summer. The eight-week survival average is 58% for fawns in the northern study area and 76% in the eastern farmland. Of the fawns that die in summer in the northern study area, 79% were taken by predators. Black bears led the way, killing nine fawns, followed by coyote (six) and bobcat (six). Unknown predators accounted for 11 fawns. In the eastern farmland study area, the leading cause of fawn mortality was starvation and other natural causes (50%), followed by predators (36%). Of the deaths linked to predators, coyotes killed 8 fawns, followed by bear (one), bobcat (one) and domestic dog (one). Unknown predators accounted for four fawn deaths.

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Winter severity index (WSI) data in relation to deer mortality are collected by DNR and public participants. A “point” is tallied for each day with: a snow depth of 18 inches or more, and/or temperature below zero at any time in the 24-hour period. Days with both present tally 2 points. A WSI value of 0-50 is considered a mild winter, 50-80 a moderate winter, 80-100 a severe winter, and 100+ a very severe winter. Deer mortality expected at each level are: 10% at mild and moderate levels, 15% at a severe level, and 20% or more at a very severe level. Additional variables adding to mortality include “crusting” of the snow-pack, as well as the total length of time snow covers the ground. Fawn production is also lower after severe or very severe winters, an expected 20%+ reduction in fawn:doe ratio. On February 12, 2014 WSI for the Summit Lake station is at 79 and is expected to reach a record-setting level. The 25-year average WSE for Antigo area is 41 with previous highs of 101 and 112 in '95-'96 and '96-'97 respectively.

Rantala thanked Ave'lallemant for taking the lead in getting LTE foresters at the DNR to assist especially due to staff reductions due to retirement, etc. at the Antigo station. The additional help will be greatly appreciated.

8. Closed Session – At approximately 10:00 a.m., consider moving into closed session pursuant to Section 19.85 (1)(e), Wisconsin Statutes, deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons required a closed session, to discuss possible land purchase. Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Hardin to go into closed session at 10:10 a.m. Roll call vote: Klimoski – aye, Nye – aye, Bina – aye, Hardin – aye, and Solin - aye. Motion carried.
9. Open Session – Motion by Solin, seconded by Klimoski to return to open session at 10:52 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.  
  
Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Hardin to allow Rantala to proceed as discussed in closed session. All ayes. Motion carried.
10. Review Payment of Paid Bills – The committee reviewed the paid Forestry and Recreation Department bills.
11. Review Budget Summary Report - Rantala reviewed with the committee the budget summary report of the forestry department revenues and expenditures through January 31, 2014.
14. Set Next Meeting Date - The next meeting will be scheduled for Thursday, March 13, 2014, at **7:30 a.m.**, in the forestry office conference room, Fairgrounds, Antigo.

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15. Adjournment – Motion by Hardin, seconded by Bina to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Poltrock  
Recording Secretary