

Forestry and Recreation Committee

January 8, 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, Cody Brauner, Chris Arrowood, Joe Jopek, Jack Andraschko, Rus Cook, Dave Peterson, Pete Resch, Drew Kelly, 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 Novak, seconded by Klimoski, to approve the minutes of the December 2 and December 21, 2015 meetings. 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 specifications for the 4 x 4 utility vehicle with tracks for Veteran’s Memorial Park and the timeline for the Augustyn Springs to Summit Lake ATV Trail/Route.
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 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 (\$700/mile) would be available, but the only motorized use would be ATV/UTV traffic. If this was

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funded as a “Troute”, only yearly maintenance funds (\$300/mile) 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. 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 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. With the current option suggested, 4 miles of the Ice Age Trail would be affected, which is 1/10th of the Ice Age Trail System. Signage and labor would be needed to move the Ice Age Trail. The Ice Age Trail does not have the additional funding to move the trail on their own. Jopek would request some assistance from the forestry department with mapping out and flagging. Approximately ½ to ¾ miles would need to be moved and the segment would need to be renamed as it would no longer be on the old railroad grade. 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). Andraschko stated that the ATV clubs would be willing to pay the development costs in order to keep the trail multi-use. 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. Questions were also raised regarding an ATV patrol. Dave Peterson stated that the snowmobile patrol through the Sheriff’s department is paid by a DNR grant, which receives its funding from snowmobile registration funds. After much discussion, it was decided that Rantala should meet with the ATV clubs to come up with a tentative agreement for development of the ATV trail/route and moving of a portion of the Ice Age Trail over the next month.

5. TIP Update – Review Invasive Species Management Plan – Chris Arrowood addressed the committee and stated that he, Erik Rantala and Cody Brauner have been working on a 17-page invasive species management plan since October and will be ready for input soon. Arrowood stated that the main reason invasives are spread is recreation and going off-trail is the main culprit in spreading invasive species. The plan provides suggestions to curb the spread of invasives such as planting woody vegetation to block trails and more signage at trailheads to educate groups. Arrowood stressed that this plan contains only recommendations; such as a prioritization tool for combating invasives. Arrowood stated that he has made over 11,000 contacts this past year and that education is key. Arrowood also informed the committee that the Emerald Ash Borer is spreading at a rate of 6 miles/year.
6. Discuss Lands for Sale – Rantala informed the committee that he was contacted about two properties that are for sale. The first is in the SE1/4 of Section 34; T32N-R9E in the Township of Vilas. The property is 120 acres, which has a cabin and garage on it and the asking price is \$259,000. The second property is in Section 24; T34N-R11E in the Township of East Elcho, which is the Racine County Boy Scout Camp. This property is

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480 acres and the asking price is \$1.85 million. 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. 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. The committee requested that Rantala continue to investigate this property.

7. Approve Application to WisDOT for City/County Bike-Ped Plan – Rantala informed the committee that Sarah Repp, Angie Close and a representative from North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning have been meeting to develop an alternative transportation program plan for bikes and pedestrians. Rantala explained that they are requesting a grant from WisDOT to cover 80% of the cost of the plan and the other 20% of the plan would be covered by North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning. There would be no cost to Langlade County. Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Scupien to forward a request for grant funding from WisDOT for a City/County Bike-Ped Plan to the Finance Committee for approval. All ayes. Motion carried.
8. Discuss Logger Payment on Invoices and When Interest Accrues – Rantala explained to the committee that currently when a logger is invoiced for stumpage that they have 60 days to pay before interest is accrued. Rantala has spoken with loggers and other county administrators and usually interest accrues after 30 days. Rantala is also requesting a change to the timber sale contract language as the language is not clear and states that interest accrues 60 days after the stumpage is recorded. Motion by Klimoski, seconded by Scupien to approve the language change to the timber sale contract stating that interest will accrue 30 days after the logger is invoiced for stumpage and the change will take effect on July 1, 2016. All ayes. Motion carried.
9. Review 2015 Timber Sale Harvest Volumes and Revenue - Rantala reviewed the 2015 wood volume harvests with the committee.

Rantala stated that it was a good year again in 2015. He handed out a summary of the wood harvests for the past 14 years. In 2015, there were 35,512 total cords cut. There were 13,065 cords of hardwood pulp cut. The hardwood logs were down 6,830 board feet from 2014 to 2015 at 1,350,680 board feet. Rantala reported that the timber sale scale charges, which are the total value of material cut, scaled, and actually removed off the County Forest, is at \$2,206,145 for 2015. In 2014, the timber sale scale charges were at \$2,480,627.

The actual timber sale revenue for 2015 is \$1,851,502 compared to \$2,579,977 for 2014. The timber sale revenue figure is the actual revenue from payments made on the scale charges during the year, and it does not include the prepayments on timber sales or credit balances. Rantala also mentioned that \$205,722.14 will be returned to the townships as

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severance payments for those townships that have county forest in them, on a proportional basis.

10. Administrator Report – Rantala stated that the DNR lands that were previously discussed as being for sale will not be going to the Natural Resources Board until February after field review recommendations are considered in the next few weeks.

Timber sale activity – Twelve active sales, only a couple of which are in typical winter ground. Production has been slower in December due to warm temperatures and lots of precipitation.

Spring timber sale set-up – Over 500 acres are set up, and nearly all of it marked. The foresters have been taking advantage of little snow cover and are doing a good job of getting things ready for the spring timber sale.

The range building siding was completed in December and the project turned out well. The project was funded by lead money. The retaining wall at the 100 yard range is failing and has been closed off. It will be fixed this spring as the materials did not come in until this week. The pistol range is now open. The range did show an increase in donations for 2015, which is attributed to the work done at the facility this year.

The ski chalet exterior is complete, and work on the interior should be completed in the next week or two. Spychalla's donated an additional \$2,500 towards the project to ensure the interior was completed.

The snowmobile trails remain closed. The clubs have working hard to freeze up swamps. Lakes have a variable amount of ice on them, safety is the 1st priority.

11. Review Paid Bills - The committee reviewed the paid Forestry and Recreation Department bills for December.
12. Review Budget Summary - Rantala reviewed with the committee the budget summary report of the forestry department revenues and expenditures through December 31, 2015.
13. Set Next Meeting Date – The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 8:30 a.m., in the forestry office conference room, fairgrounds, Antigo.
14. Adjournment - Motion by Novak, seconded by Scupien to adjourn at 10:33 a.m. All ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Poltrock
Recording Secretary