

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
January 15, 2018
Emergency Operations Center**

Members Present: Shawn Miller, Chairperson; Fred Strand, Vice-Chairperson, Harold Maki; Jeffrey Silbert and Larry Fickbohm

Staff in Attendance: Jason Bodine, Administrator and Pat Bruno, Office Manager

Others in Attendance: Joseph LeBouton, WI DNR Liaison and Jeremy Oswald, Apostle Islands Sled Dog Race Representative and Bayfield County Board Supervisor

1. Call to Order of Forestry and Parks Committee Meeting.

The meeting of the Forestry and Parks Committee was called to order by S. Miller at 6:00 P.M.

2. Public Comment.

S. Miller called for public comment. There being no members of the public in attendance, Chairman Miller closed public comment.

3. Approval of the December 11, 2017 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: (Strand, Maki) to approve as presented and in the Dropbox. All: Yes. Carried.

4. Monthly Reports.

A. Forestry

1) 2017 Budget Update.

The final timber sale net revenue for 2017 was \$5.01 million. It is the second highest amount to date. J. Bodine noted that unless markets make a strong rebound, future revenues are predicted to be about 20% lower. However, the Department's program changes could still generate double the amount of stumpage revenues in the future.

The 10% to the Towns checks were mailed last week. A budget adjustment for the 10% to the Towns fund will be necessary to align with the actual revenues received. Expenditures were on target and under budget.

2) New Position Update.

Caleb Brown, who has a masters degree from Purdue University, has accepted the forester position and will start on February 1. Jason Holmes will assume the Inventory and Analysis Forester position duties at that time. The added person will make the office space tight. The office will eventually need to be re-designed.

Field data collection training will be held tomorrow; conducted by Andrew Stoltman from the WI DNR.

3) Red Cliff Land Acquisition Update.

Red Cliff tribal members will present the proposal for land acquisition at the January County Board meeting along with a resolution and withdrawal from county forest land prepared by J. Bodine. If

approved, the process to withdraw the property from county forest land will begin. The \$80,000 proceeds could be incorporated into a Stewardship grant.

4) Department 10-Year Strategic Planning Update.

The County Administrator has requested that each department consider and complete a questionnaire. Once complete by the department head, a draft will be brought to the Committee for consideration at a future meeting.

B. Parks.

All seasonal sites are reserved for 2018 at both Twin Bear and Delta campgrounds. There was discussion of the potential to add camping at other lakes; however, footprints and access are barriers to potential campgrounds. Big Rock campground had a record year in 2017, possibly due to the U.S. Forest Service's Birch Grove Campground's closure after the storm damage in 2016. Big Rock will be the focus of improvements as are outlined in the year's work plan.

C. Trails and Recreation.

1) Motorized Trail Updates.

The early snow, excellent club maintenance and new re-routes have been well received. The Department is working with the Barnes Club to improve a portion of Trail 31, Alliance members in Mason on a re-route of Trail 4 east to Ashland County and Cable club members on a potential re-route in that area. The Mason area re-route is completed.

With fewer active clubs and more private landowners opting out, maintaining continuity is becoming increasingly more difficult.

2) Non-Motorized Trail Updates.

Ashwabay and North End Ski Club and the American Birkie are actively grooming ski trails. A section of mountain fat bike trails are being groomed in Cable also. Many events are scheduled for the year. Lost Creek Falls trail continues to be heavily used. The Department will be working with Wolfson to develop a recreation use agreement for dogsled trails up north.

3) Yurt Updates.

The year finished with a net revenue of \$25,545.37; double the budgeted amount with a 62% average occupancy. Winter rentals remain strong. The Department will be working soon with the contractor who constructed both yurts to develop the third yurt.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Fickbohm) to receive and place the monthly reports on file. All: Yes. Carried.*

5. Recreational Use Request. American Birkebeiner Association.

- A.** BirkieTour (8th annual): January 14, 2018. Cross Country Ski Event.
- B.** The Gitchi Gami Games: January 20-21, 2018. Junior National Qualifier, Cross Country Ski Event.
- C.** Wisconsin Nordic Ski League Championships: February 11-12, 2018. High School Championship, Cross Country Ski Event.
- D.** American Birkebeiner (44th annual), Kortelopet and Prince Haakon: February 23-24, 2018. Cross Country Ski Event.
- E.** Fat Tire Birkie (6th annual): March 10, 2018. Mountain Bike Event.
- F.** Birkie Trail Run and Trek (16th annual): September 29, 2018. Running Event.
- G.** The Double Pole Derby: December 29, 2018. Cross Country Ski Event.

MOTION: (Silbert, Fickbohm) to approve all these events, A.-G. for the Birkie Association. All: Yes. Carried.

6. Recreational Use Request: Bayfield Chamber and Visitor Bureau.

J. Bodine received a request from the Bayfield Chamber and Visitor Bureau to use the Sand River pit and various existing trails on county forest land in the Town of Bayfield for the 23rd annual Apostle Islands Sled Dog race on February 3-4, 2018.

MOTION: (Maki, Strand) to approve the request. All: Yes. Carried.

7. Access Permit Renewal Request. Oliver Hanson.

J. Bodine received a request from Oliver Hanson to renew a 10 year temporary access permit on an existing trail in the Town of Barnes. Some of the trail is accessible by vehicle and the other by ATV or walking. He has expressed an interest in selling the property to the County.

MOTION: (Maki, Strand) to approve from Oliver Hanson. All: Yes. Carried.

8. 2017 Budget Amendment.

J. Bodine reported that the DNR has approved the Barnes land acquisition grant. The landowner has been contacted and if a price is determined, J. Bodine will prepare a letter of intent and will bring it to the Committee next month.

A resolution has been prepared to adjust (increase of \$190,989.23) the 10% to the towns and a draft resolution has been prepared.

MOTION: (Strand, Maki) to approve the resolution and forwarding to the county board. All: Yes. Carried.

9. 2018 Work Plan.

The formal document summarizes the planned goals and objectives for all three major programs managed by the Department: county forest, county parks, and recreation/state funded motorized trails. The Executive Summary addresses the highlights of the annual plan.

The plan addresses an adjustment in management goals for northern hardwoods. In general, many sites are not responding to traditional forms of management. The 2018 goal is about 400 acres less than the target for 2017. Red pine management is going to be solid until rotation age has been reached. Most remaining stands of jack pine are over mature, which will be addressed in the next few years. Scrub oak will be maintained at a constant balance. To date, emerald ash borer has not been discovered on Bayfield County forest land.

MOTION: (Silbert, Fickbohm) to approve the 2018 Forestry and Parks Work Plan as presented by Jason Bodine at this time. All: Yes. Carried.

10. Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant for County Forest Land Acquisition.

The Committee may want to consider new information that has come in recently regarding the grant. At the last meeting, the Committee approved Option 2. Since that meeting, the DNR has been made aware of numerous, very large projects that are in the process of development. The recommendation for a successful grant application is to apply for the largest grant at one time rather than split up into multiple

grant applications over time (Option 2).

J. Bodine put together an application that would utilize all five match properties: Bismark Lake (84.25 acres), Battle Axe Rd (80 acres), Blueberry Rd (80 acres), Happy Hollow Rd (17 acres) and the Bibon Swamp (3,040 acres); totaling 3,301.25 acres. The estimated grant value of these match properties is roughly \$2.68 million. In addition, the \$80,000 from the sale of 80 acres to Red Cliff will be included. Another 80 acre sale to Red Cliff for \$80,000 will be presented to the full county board at the next meeting and could also be included in a Stewardship grant. Combining the match properties with the \$160,000 would produce just under \$3.0 million in funds for land purchases.

The parcels under consideration would solidify the blocking and many have immediate timber management potential. Negotiations with Ceres Timber have reached an agreed upon price of \$1,215/acre; higher than the initial discussions for 3,050 acres. The total purchase could be around 2,350 acres. The total grant values will be dependent on the appraised values of the match properties. If the valuation is good, another parcel could be added. If the appraisals are lower than expected, a parcel could be removed. In addition to the land purchase, additional grant expenses for appraisals, fees, etc. could be \$50-55,000; some of which is available in the land acquisition account. In anticipation of additional expenses, J. Bodine has prepared a resolution authorizing the purchase and another \$20,000 in county funds. If the grant is approved by the DNR, the out-of-pocket expenditures are refunded by the grant. If not approved, the out-of-pocket expenses would come from an expense account; a budget amendment resolution to either add to the expense budget or increase revenues to offset the expense. A contingency is included in the resolution to authorize unforeseen costs expenditure of \$20,000. If this application for the stewardship grant is denied, smaller grant applications may be submitted.

This grant application includes a purchase valued at \$2,919,050 dollars plus the \$40-50,000 set aside to cover expenses.

***MOTION:** (Strand, Fickbohm) to approve as presented and forwarded to the full county board at their next meeting. Roll Call Vote: Maki: Yes, Strand: Yes, Fickbohm, Yes, Silbert: Yes. Carried.*

11. County Forest Blocking Modifications.

The blocking boundary is an arbitrarily placed line that attempts to identify county forest lands to define the area of focus. As part of the Stewardship grant process, all lands purchased or used as a match, must be located within board approved county forest blocking boundaries. The 17-acre parcel off Happy Hollow Rd is the only parcel not currently located within the blocking boundary. This is a good time to look at all boundaries and make other adjustments like what would be done with the Happy Hollow Rd acreage. A blocking around the Bibon swamp would be added also. If approved, the county's 15-year comprehensive plan would require an update.

J. LeBouton added that it is easier to communicate a smoother line versus a broken line from a mapping perspective.

***MOTION:** (Fickbohm, Silbert) to accept the changes in the blocking boundaries as presented. All: Yes. Carried.*

12. Joseph LeBouton, DNR Representative.

Nothing to report.

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 P.M.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting will be held **Monday, February 12, 2018 at 6:00 P.M.** at Bayfield County Courthouse, County Board Room, Second Floor, 117 E. 5th Street, Washburn, Wisconsin.

Submitted by,

Pat Bruno