

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
February 13, 2017  
County Board Room**

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

**Members Absent:** Larry Fickbohm

**Staff in Attendance:** Jason Bodine, Administrator; Steve Probst, Assistant Administrator; and Pat Bruno, Office Manager

**Others in Attendance:** Joseph LeBouton, WI DNR Liaison

**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.

**Larry Chernoff, member of the Town of Bell Planning Commission.** Presented clarification on Item #6 regarding the Bayfield Regional Conservancy Project proposed in the Town of Bell. In February 2016 the Town of Bell Comprehensive Planning Commission voted to explore the Siskiwit River protection proposed project. In December 2016, the recommendation vote was rescinded, citing that the project is in violation of housing and zoning elements. February 8, 2017 the Town of Bell electors voted to oppose a resolution for a land acquisition. They are requesting respect for the Town's decisions for what is appropriate for the land use, non-support of the BRC's land use proposal and to allow them to decide their own future.

S. Miller called for more comments and none were received. Comments were closed.

**3. Approval of the January 16, 2017 Meeting Minutes.**

<b>MOTION:</b> (Strand, Maki) to approve the minutes as presented. Carried.
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**4. Monthly Reports.**

**A. Forestry**

**1) Department 2017 Budget Update.**

J. Bodine reported timber sale revenues for January are \$406,000; which is unusually high. Revenues are projected to be reduced by 20-25% this year; however, due to the current market stumpage prices. Expenses are normal.

**2) Wisconsin County Forest Association Summer Tour.**

Bayfield County will be hosting the WCFA Summer Tour this year; which is one of three meetings held during the year. All county forestry departments rotate hosting the event and Bayfield County last hosted it about 20 years ago. A typical summer tour includes a business meeting, speakers, and field tours of the forest and forestry related businesses. The summer tour showcases local forest management, as well as recreation as part of the designated stops. Normal attendance is 100-140

people. Mary Motiff, Bayfield County Tourism Director is assisting with planning.

**3) County Fair Booths.**

It has been proposed that the Forestry and Parks Department set up, or be part of, a display booth and bring in various machinery to display at the County Fair. F. Strand suggested an informational and visual display in that passive information, rather than active (staff investment of time manning the booth), is more productive. No action was taken, but will be discussed at future meetings.

**B. Parks.**

Parks are quiet right now and there is nothing to report.

**C. Trails and Recreation**

**1) Snowmobile Trail Updates.**

Two major challenges to the system this year are warm weather conditions and connectivity. Forty percent of 437 miles of trails in Bayfield County are on private land. Re-routes are becoming more scarce and most communities are not in favor of sharing town roads with trails.

**2) FEMA Projects Update.**

The approval for both projects have been received and signed. The projects will be finalized this summer.

**3) Yurt Updates**

The occupancy rates continue to be high (85%) at the Bayfield yurt site and 35% at Cable in January. The spring and summer seasons are already well booked. Feedback left by the occupants has resulted in some minor modifications. Overall, use is exceeding expectations and people are raving about the experience.

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

**5. Recreational Use Request. North Country Trail Association (NCTA).**

The NCTA has requested a re-route to create a more natural walking trail of 24"-32" through an area of young aspen and one water area. The re-route would move the trail off of a fairly wide logging road that has since been blocked to motorized access. If approved, the old trail would be re-opened to motorized traffic.

**MOTION:** (Silbert, Strand) to approve the re-route for the North Country Trail Association. Carried.

**6. Resolution. Bayfield Regional Conservancy (BRC) Land Conservation Project in the Town of Bell.**

The draft resolution is for the same project that was approved at last month's meeting and taking it forward to the full county board. J. Bodine added that the conveyance of the land could come to the County if declined by the Township.

**MOTION:** (Miller, Strand) to send the resolution to the full county board. Yes: Strand, Silbert. No: Maki. Carried.

Discussion: J. Silbert explained that this is contingent on the BRC securing the proper grants and the Town of Bell possibly changing their vote. He went on to say that after reading their plan, this type of conservancy falls in line within the Town's comprehensive plan's protection of natural resources.

Consideration would be given to the citizen's concerns and problems mitigated. J. Bodine added that the Town of Bell board is expected to vote on 2/14/17.

**7. 2016 Department Accomplishment Report.**

All major goals were reached. An estimated 5,000 acres were reforested; planted, scarified, natural regeneration, etc. Some discussion regarding regeneration and monitoring. Bodine stated that monitoring is extremely important, but that more of an emphasis is placed on monitoring stands that require significant inputs (typically planting and seeding) from the Department or where adequate regeneration may be a concern. Those stands that regenerate prolifically, like aspen, aren't monitored as intensively by the Department. But all stands are adequately reforested.

Bodine addressed a question about northern hardwood management and the use of gaps for regeneration. Small gaps sizes on medium to poor quality sites haven't been regenerating as well as predicted. Currently we are experimenting with using larger gaps or groups. Competition from ironwood is a major concern within many of the smaller sized gaps, especially on medium to poor quality sites. Deer browse is also a major concern. Maintaining vertical structure is one goal of all-aged management; keeping a mature stand in place while regenerating it in pieces. The stands that tend to grow soft maple and ironwood are monitored more aggressively. Future reports will include more detailed information on stands that are regenerated naturally. From a logger's perspective, H. Maki objects to the sales that have gaps because of the challenges it presents. J. Bodine explained that silvicultural goals for a particular stand are being met by working with the contractor and the contractor bids accordingly based on those requirements.

J. Silbert asked about monitoring reconnaissance, inventory and would modern technology provide better data? J. Bodine explained that aerial photography, data recorders, tablets and GPS units are all used as part of the process, but do not replace the need to get boots on the ground.

F. Strand pointed out that because of proper forest management procedures the Kirtland's Warbler has successfully nested and produced five young in the middle of county forest land's eight-year-old jack pine plantation. The first successful nesting in Bayfield County.

**MOTION:** (Strand, Silbert) to receive the accomplishment report and place on file. Carried.

**8. Joseph LeBouton, DNR Representative.**

No comments at this time.

**9. Executive Session.**

**MOTION:** (Silbert, Maki) at 6:49 PM to enter in and out of Executive Session pursuant to Wisconsin Statute 19.85(1)(g)(e), for the purpose of considering legal advice regarding strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved and deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session. Carried.

- a) Approval of the June 13, 2016 Executive Session Minutes.
- b) Railroad Grade Issue in the Town of Cable. Discussion and possible action regarding the ownership of portions of the old railroad grade near Cable. 19.85(1)(g)(e).
- c) Potential Land Exchange

**10. Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting will be held **Monday, March 13, 2017 at 6:00 P.M.** at Bayfield County Courthouse, County Board Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 117 E. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Washburn, Wisconsin.

Submitted by,  
*Pat Bruno*