

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
February 18, 2019  
County Board Room**

**Members Present:** Fred Strand, Chairperson; Jeffrey Silbert, Vice-Chairperson; Harold Maki, Larry Fickbohm and David Zepczyk

**Staff in Attendance:** Jason Bodine, Administrator; Steve Probst, Asst. Administrator; Lindley Mattson, Office Manager; Mike Amman, Forester

**Others:** Tom Piikkila, 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 Chairman F. Strand at 6:00 P.M.

**2. Public Comment.**

Chairperson Strand called for public comment. After repeating the call no one came forward. Closed public comment.

**3. Approval of the January 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes.**

*MOTION: (Zepczyk, Maki) to approve the minutes as presented. All: Yes. Carried.*

**4. Timber Sale Process Review. Discussion regarding the general practices and procedures applied by the Department when establishing a new timber sale.**

Mike Amman, County Forester, presented a power point to provide a brief, general overview of the timber sale establishment process. From goal development, stand selection and NHI review, to prescription development and all associated field work, to the final write-up. A copy of the power point was provided to each committee member.

**5. Maple Tapping Permit. Discussion and possible action regarding the development of a permit system to allow the tapping of trees for sap collection in designated areas on the county forest.**

J. Bodine proposed starting a small non-industrial maple tapping program within the Bayfield County Forest. The overarching goal of the program is to provide another recreational opportunity for the public. The department would select and designate the areas that could be tapped, with a focus on stands of lower quality so there would be little to no impact on timber value/sales. Three stands were presented as being potential stands for the first year, locations off Echo Valley, Star Route and/or Friendly Valley roads. This is being presented as a pilot program, 6-10 permits would be issued during the pilot year (2019 if possible) Permit holders would be hand selected by the Department. With there being some administrative expenses, it was proposed a fee of \$25-\$50 to offset costs.

Fickbohm had concerns that there may not be much interest if we don't allow boiling on site as it may be too much work to haul sap out of the woods. Silbert agreed it maybe a lot of work to haul sap out of the woods but he is not in favor of boiling in the woods, referenced the Iron River Fish Hatchery's program which also forbids boiling on site. Continued discussion on the number of permits given and applicants would be hand selected by staff. Was suggested to keep permit fee low as applicants may not

get much of a return on their harvest. Committee would like Administrator to continue to work on the project and bring back a summary.

***MOTION:** (Maki, Silbert) To proceed with the pilot program for maple syrup plots within the Bayfield County Forest, with no more than five permits for the pilot year. All: Yes. Carried.*

**6. Monthly Reports. Discussion of general activities, events, issues and accomplishments. Possible action on report(s) only.**

**A. Forestry (all updates)**

**a. 2018 Budget**

2018 was a very successful year. Timber sale revenues ended at \$4,562,243.45, exceeding the budget by a little over \$1.3 million. Still waiting on some 2018 reimbursements so they may end up in the 2019 budget.

**b. 2019 Budget**

Starting 2019 well, timber sales for January were well above normal, just over \$388,000. Expenses are as expected.

**c. Sustainable Forestry Grant**

We were approved for the grant; two drones were purchased, and remaining grant funds will be used to purchase additional batteries.

**d. DNR Pitman-Robertson County Forest Wildlife Grant**

Our application was approved, and we were awarded the full \$12,000, with a deadline to use the funds by June 30, 2019. Our project focus is in the Barnes Barrens area, with an emphasis on jack pine seeding.

**e. Breeding Bird Survey Modeling Project**

2008-2011 a total of 1,200 breeding bird point counts were conducted, across all forest types. One goal of the survey was to create a useful and approachable model that could be used by the Department to develop a better understanding of the potential impacts of forest management on breeding birds. The Department approached the University of Minnesota-Duluth, Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) to discuss potential options for summarizing the survey data. As part of the agreement, NRRI would clean up the data set, summarize and analyze all the data, develop an app/model and provide additional recommendations for future study. J. Bodine demonstrated how to use the app for the committee as well as others in attendance.

**f. Superior Days**

Chairman Strand presented an overview of Superior Days. Superior Day discussion included payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) to townships, was an agency issue brought to Superior days again this year. Ongoing discussion with the Joint Finance Committee and Legislation on how much should be budgeted and by whom. DNR is supportive of it, in general, if the legislature would appropriate the money. One thing we learned is that the thirty cents per acre that is currently being paid, is set by state law. But, in our budget we can have a supplemental payment that can be approved in the biannual budget, we would like to move forward but are unsure if the governor would leave it in. We have been working on it for a couple years but feel there is more support than we have had in the past. We will continue to work for it.

**B. Parks (all updates)**

Parks are still closed for the season. Reminder letters were sent to all seasonal campers, should begin to see revenues coming in. Balances due March 22, 2019.

**C. Trails and Recreation (all updates)**

**a. Motorized Trials**

Latest snow storms have had a positive impact on trails. Snowmobile clubs are reporting best conditions in years.

**b. Non-Motorized Trails**

Cross country ski trails are also benefitting from the snow. Groups are actively grooming and reporting above average use.

**c. Yurts**

J. Bodine presented occupancy rates for the yurts in January; Evergreen 61% Terra Cotta 71% Cable 45%

**d. Events**

No recurring events for January. Mt Ashwabay is looking to do the Skijoring event the first weekend in March. Expected to be approved as it was last year and event is expected to be comparable.

**e. Bayfield County Local Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

LCORP is set to expire the end of this year. The Department will also collaborate with the Tourism Department to make sure the document is complete. Once compiled, an updated version will be presented to the Committee for approval. The plan will also need to be approved by the Board before submitting to the DNR.

**f. Recreational Trail Aid Program (concept)**

J. Bodine proposes the development of a recreational trail aids program, structured like the Town Road Aid Improvement Projects. Dedicate a certain percentage of stumpage revenue for recreation-based projects. Proposing 1-2% with a cap. This program would target non-motorized trail development; prioritize new trail development, trail improvements, parking lot development and/or improvement, signage, possible equipment purchases (if used primarily on the trails), etc. It would be available to organizations that have a valid rec use agreement with the Department.

Committee discussed and liked the concept, would like Administrator to continue developing the idea with a target of getting it on the 2020 budget.

**g. WI Costal Management Grant**

**i. Fire Hill Project**

The application for the acquisition of this 107 acres of land was submitted to WI Coastal on November 1. If awarded, the remaining funds would be contributed by Landmark Conservancy either through a stewardship grant and/or additional fundraising. If successful, the land would be deeded to Bayfield County and will become another excellent addition to the parks program.

**ii. Siskiwit Falls Project**

The current grant was extended to September 30, 2019. We are still waiting to hear back from the State Historical Preservation Office with regards to what, if anything, needs to be addressed before we can start some of the improvements. In regard to the new grant application to WI Coastal for additional upgrades and improvement to the primary access trail along the east side of the Siskiwit River, this project has been recommended for full funding. This project would include boardwalks, gravel and minor adjustments of the trail to improve accessibility and sustainability. The project was estimated at \$60,000 and would require a 50% match, if officially awarded the match would be accomplished through a combination of capital project funds and/or an RTA grant from the DNR.

**h. FEMA Grant/Projects**

**i. Motorized Trails**

Nothing has officially been awarded. Minor incidental requests for additional information are still coming in from FEMA. Hope to hear something soon.

**ii. Landfill**

Same as motorized trails.

*MOTION: (Maki, Silbert) Receive the monthly report and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.*

**7. Town Road Aid Program Review. Discussion and possible action regarding the town road aid program.**

J Bodine provided a table showing costs associated with the program, approximately \$80,000/year, to date nearly \$500,000 has been spent since 2010. This aid program has been well received by the towns and has significantly improved many town roads that provide primary access to county forest lands.

H. Maki explained the benefits of the program in regard to timber sales and encouraged the increase of funds by 1%.

Discussion by committee, all in agreement that the program is making a difference in the town roads accessibility. Putting forward another 1% will help with timber sales, making the roads more accessible for contractors. Also discussion to remove the cap on the program funds, which is currently \$80,000/year.

*MOTION: (Maki, Zepczyk) To increase the Town Road Aid Program to 3% for the 2020 budget, with no cap. All: Yes. Carried.*

**8. Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant for County Forest Land Acquisition. Discussion and possible action regarding the recent approval of a Bayfield County Stewardship grant application to purchase 510 acres of land.**

This was approved by JFC on February 7. The hitch being the Bibon Swamp needs to be included as part of the match properties, but will not be awarded any match value. So, to purchase the 510 acres of land, we need to include the three previously identified match properties, as well as the 3,040 acre Bibon Swamp, but will get no compensation for the Bibon as part of the grant. Since the agreement has changed significantly, it will need to be re-addressed by the County Board. As it stands, the project would be valued at about \$638,000. The grant award would be roughly \$485,000 and the rest would come from the county in the form of cash. This cash match would come from the two previous land sales to Red Cliff. So, this project would still result in no new out of pocket expense to the county.

J. Bodine presented a resolution to the committee that would accept the grant, as awarded, and amend the 2019 budget. There is approximately \$175,000 in timber sales that could be extracted immediately from the properties and up to \$250,000 in the next 10 years. The properties have both positive timber value in addition to public use value if enrolled in Bayfield County Forest Land.

*MOTION: (Silbert, Fickbohm) Approve and recommend to the full county board, the adoption of the resolution pertaining to the Stewardship Grant.*

**9. Trespass on County Forest Land. Discussion and possible action regarding a trespass on county forest land located near Long Lake in the Town of Iron River.**

A potential unauthorized use of county forest land was recently brought to our attention. The area in question is located south of West Long Lake Road in the Town of Iron River. The trespass includes, but is not limited to, encroachments of the house, deck, garage, and driveway, and also includes clearing, maintenance and manipulation of the grounds. In addition, a portion of county land located north of

West Long Lake road has been cleared for equipment/vehicle storage. The department has attempted contact with the landowner but has not heard back yet.

**10. 2018 Forestry and Parks Department Budget Amendment(s). Discussion and possible action regarding the amendments.**

J. Bodine presented a resolution to amend the 2018 budget. Roughly \$285,000 needs to be amended to the budget primarily to account for overages pertaining to the payment to towns and storm damage projects. In total, expenses would increase by \$302,747.97. Revenues would also increase by the same amount, thus resulting in a zero net change to the budget.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Maki) Approve resolution on the budget amendment for the Forestry and Parks Department and pass the recommendation to the full county board. Discussion: None. All: Yes. Carried.*

**11. Tom Piikkila, DNR Representative, Comments.**

Tom, DNR Forester at Washburn Ranger station. He has been busy setting up timber sales on County Forest property, a few sales in Barnes area and one in the Echo Valley area.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 P.M

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting will be held **Monday, March 11, 2019 at 6:00 P.M.** at Bayfield County Courthouse, County Board Room, Second Floor, 117 E. 5th Street, Washburn, Wisconsin.

Submitted by,  
**Lindley Mattson**