

FLORENCE COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING
3:30 P.M. - WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 2014
LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - LOWER LEVEL
FLORENCE NATURAL RESOURCE CENTER
FLORENCE, WI 54121

PRESENT:

SUPERVISOR / CHAIRMAN
SUPERVISOR / VICE CHAIRMAN
SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER
SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER
SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER
DNR – COUNTY FOREST LIAISON/STATE LAND FORESTER
FORESTRY & PARKS ADMINISTRATOR
FORESTRY & PARKS ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
FORESTRY & PARKS BUSINESS MANAGER

ED KELLEY
ED WENGER
JOHN HALADA
LARRY NEUENS
DON GARDNER
HENRY SULLIVAN
PATRICK SMITH
ANDREW NAULT
MARY PODNAR

Absent or excused: none

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Ed Kelley, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M. Kelley noted that Supervisor Larry Neuens was not in attendance. (*Neuens arrived at 3:40 P.M.*)

2. APPROVAL / AGENDA

It was moved by Supervisor Gardner seconded by Supervisor Halada, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as posted.

3. APPROVAL / MINUTES

It was moved by Supervisor Halada, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of June 11, 2014 as read.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Assistant Administrator Nault reported that the Northern Saddle Club contacted him and wanted the Forestry & Parks Committee to know that the Hall's Creek Trail has been selected for the Wisconsin Trail Quest contest. There are five trails that are selected throughout the state. Horse Club members are required to ride all five trails to qualify to win. They are excited about the potential this has for our county – people from throughout the state will be riding this trail.

5. AGENCY REPORTS

A. HARV SKJERVEN - USFS DISTRICT RANGER

USFS District Ranger Harv Skjerven was unable to attend the meeting. However, he asked Business Manager Mary Podnar to share with the committee that the Stewardship Agreement has been signed by all parties. The filling of Bob MacGreor's position is moving along on schedule. Also, they hope to have Hal Thiede's position filled by this fall. Fire activity out west is quiet for now. However, they are scrambling to keep the recreation program at Florence running at full speed without the help of Larry Vassar due to his tree falling accident. The Eagle River staff has been asked to step up and pitch in this summer to help out.

B. HUBER & ASSOCIATES

Tony Derleth reported that they currently have five crews running - two are in Florence County. Both the business and markets have been real good. Karen Gardner should be back by the end of this week – she has been off for two months.

Huber & Associates is working with the state on issuing agricultural deer permits again this year. They would like to issue 150 doe tags. You must have a valid hunting license in order to receive this permit. Hunting with this agricultural deer permit begins during bow season. Derleth said he would answer questions regarding this issue.

C. DNR – HENRY SULLIVAN

DNR County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester Henry Sullivan passed around and discussed the DNR Forestry Fiscal Year 2015 high profile work priorities and the Forest & Florence team goals summary. He pointed out that “County Forests” are first on the priority list. Another priority he felt was pertinent from the list involved “State Lands.” Sullivan believes this will help address the need to upgrade roads in the county.

Currently, the state does not have any active timber sales going on primarily because of the “winter only” cutting restriction. Three sales are actively being worked on right now. Crews from both Florence and Forest counties will be meeting on Wednesdays to work on state timber sales establishments throughout the summer. These sales are located in Spread Eagle, the north side of LaSalle Falls, and the north side of the Pine River. The LaSalle Falls sale will be interesting as the state would like to work with the county on this sale as both have property that butt up to each other. Sullivan has been working with Nault on a proposal.

Sullivan pointed out the difficulty of harvesting state property near rivers due to the “Visual Horizon” restriction. It states harvesting cannot be done on any land that is “visible” from the river.

6. COUNTY FOREST

A. TIMBER SALE UPDATE

Assistant Administrator Andy Nault reported to the committee that the county currently has three active sales with one more starting on the 15th. He believes even more will begin once the oak wilt restrictions come off.

Smith reported that there is an issue with one of the sales with the county. A contractor has been trying to get a specific sale cut. This contractor asked Smith if he could possibly sub-contract the sale out which would mean the subcontractor would cut all checks to the county. The current contract for this sale does not allow anyone but the contractor to write checks to the county. Smith would like to see this sale cut because it was bid at such a high price - \$70,000.00 above the next bidder. Sullivan said the state would allow an amendment to be signed to allow a subcontractor to cut and pay for the sale. Smith wants to follow-up with the counties corporate council. If not - this sale will most likely go back to the county and have to be re-bid. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to support subcontracting this sale and long as the counties attorney approves the decision.

B. WCS GRANT APPLICATION-UPDATE

Everything for the tree planting WCS grant has been sent in. Smith is waiting for grant approval.

C. LAND ACQUISITION

Smith passed around maps and created a PowerPoint presentation detailing the Pine River Lumber properties that are going up for sale in the county. Smith received a phone call from Dick Connor on Monday asking him if the county would be interested in these properties. Connor wanted to sell it to the county because he believes the land

would be well managed. There are roughly 1,500 acres going up for sale. Many of these acres are either in close proximity or butt up to county forests. There is also an ATV/Snowmobile trail that runs through one of the properties in which the county does not have easement rights to. If this land is sold to a private party – this trail could get cut off.

Smith did not talk with Connor's about the cost of this acquisition. However possibilities of paying for the land would come through stewardship funding with the state. The county would receive half of the appraised value of the land. He could also apply for a 0% interest loan with the state which would be paid back through timber revenues. Smith fully understands the up-front cost for this acquisition, however - he believes it would pay for itself with future revenues. It was agreed upon by Smith and the committee members that opportunities like this do not happen often - if ever. Therefore, it was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Halada, and unanimously carried to support Smith in pursuing this acquisition and to report back to the committee actual numbers.

7. RECREATION

A. COSGROVE LAKE DREDGING - UPDATE

Smith has the contractor lined-up and work should be completed within the next couple of weeks.

B. BOAT LAUNCH FEE

Smith has not had time to work on the boat launch ordinance. Supervisor Wenger asked why there needed to be a boat launch fee and suggested a cost/benefit analysis be conducted. Smith explained that if we wanted grant money from the Waterways Commission – we need to start charging a fee.

Joe Buchanan was present at the meeting and said he has been working with the Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition (WRISC) for the past month on creating such an ordinance. WRISC would like to see the money used towards invasive species equipment such as boat washes at the landings. Smith said he will follow-up with Conservation Specialist Margie Yadro but feels that launch fees for the Forestry and Parks committee would be used for boat landing up-keep.

C. LAKE EMILY BOAT LAUNCH PROJECT UPDATE

Smith showed the committee pictures of the completed project. He also showed pictures of the finished retaining wall at Keyes Lakes Park. Supervisor Neuens questioned whether there should be handrails on the wall and Smith said there were not any before but he would follow-up.

D. FISHER LAKE PARK

Smith informed the committee that a new volleyball court has been put in at Fisher Lake Park along with new landscaping. He recommended the committee members to stop over and look at it.

8. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

The 2014 Campground Revenue / Days Camped report was passed around.

9. COMMITTEE MEMBER'S COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Supervisor Neuens was asked to share with the committee concerns about the quality of the road that leads to the Keyes Peak viewing area and to the area waterfalls. These are beautiful views – but the roads are in rough shape.

Supervisor Neuens would also like Smith to check into the legalities of selling and/or serving alcohol at the Keyes Peak Lodge. Should the county have a liquor license? Smith will follow-up.

Supervisor Halada was approached by the Long Lake Lakes Association and would like to county to set up an

emergency fund to help pay the electricity charge to run the aerator in the lake. He would like to see it as an agenda item for next month – and even possibly have Fish Biologist Greg Matzke speak about the issue.

10. BILLS/REVENUES – FORESTRY & RESOURCE CENTER

Smith would like the Resource Center’s cleaning person bill considered a standing bill so this person can get paid every two weeks versus once a month. It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to approve this bill as a standing one to be paid every two weeks.

It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Halada, and unanimously carried to approve bills being paid for Forestry and Parks and the Florence Natural Resource Center for June.

11. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:02.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Podnar, Business Manager
Florence County Forestry and Parks