

**FLORENCE COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**3:30 P.M. - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 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  
USFS DISTRICT RANGER  
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  
HARV SKJERVEN  
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.

**2. APPROVAL / AGENDA**

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

**3. APPROVAL / MINUTES**

It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of December 11, 2013 as read.

**4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None

**5. AGENCY REPORTS**

**A. HARV SKJERVEN - USFS DISTRICT RANGER**

USFS District Ranger Harv Skjerven reported that they are moving closer toward a stewardship project. The proposed piece of land they are looking at is called Grub Hoe and it is roughly 300 acres. Money earned from this sale would go towards the next cutting. The intention of this project is to help get wood out in the market for our industries and provide work for outside local contractors. DNR-County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester Henry Sullivan expressed concern about potential liability issues. Both Skjerven and Smith were unsure as to how much this sale was going to cost. Details of the agreement are still being ironed out and will be reported back to the committee.

Smith wanted the committee to be aware that he changed the SRS / 25% fund election. New projections came out after last month's committee meeting. Smith said that USFS Finance now projected Florence County's check to be under a \$100,000 which means we do not have to give 15% to Title II or Title III funding – it can all go the school.

Skjerven has not heard anything regarding USFS funding – he is assuming there will be a reduction.

**B. HUBER & ASSOCIATES**

Tony Derleth was not in attendance.

**C. DNR – HENRY SULLIVAN**

Henry Sullivan, DNR-County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester gave a slide presentation reviewing DNR timber sales statuses, 2014 harvest goals and recon goals. The department is currently working on a setting up a sale by Jennings Falls called Jennings South.

It is possible the DNR will hire a new class of foresters this winter – with fifteen more being hired before July.

Sullivan explained to the committee that there are two stand alone state natural areas in Florence County – one being Haly Creek Swamp and the other being the Spread Eagle Barrens. DNR Endangered Species group is considering being the property manager on these areas versus local Wildlife Biologist Josh Martinez. If this happens, management on this property would be handled through the Rhinelander office versus locally. These discussions are taking place and he wanted the committee to be aware. The county has a rider on the deed to this property and should be involved with these types of discussions. Smith will find out more details and report back to the committee.

**6. COUNTY FOREST**

**A. TIMBER SALE UPDATE**

Assistant Administrator Andrew Nault reported to the committee that there is one active timber sale, one sale that is in the process of wrapping up, and one possibly beginning on Friday. The unusually cold weather has slowed everything down.

**B. ACCESS ISSUES**

Smith said the department has been notified of some access issues on the county forest. Three different issues have come to light in the last two months. Sullivan said these seem to arise just before the gun deer season. Slides of maps were shown and addressed. After discussion it was recommended by the committee to remove berms from existing roads to allow public access to the same areas that neighboring landowners currently have access to. This will help to eliminate two of the complaints.

The issue of permanent deer stands on county forests was also addressed. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to all adjacent county forest landowners in the area of where the complaint was taken and explain the rules of permanent deer stands.

According to the County Forest 15 Year Plan all roads must either be open to all public to travel with motor vehicles or closed. Currently, some gates on the county forest allow only the private party access. It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to notify neighboring landowners with gates located on county property that these gates must be moved back to the property line. This decision was made to correct any potential issues in the future.

Another complaint discussed was the cutting of trees on the county forest to maintain a roadway. The committee talked at length and decided that the landowner should receive a letter from the department stating that they need prior approval before that sort of thing can happen. Sullivan did not feel that the damages were enough to warrant a citation.

**C. COUNTY FORESTER POSITION UPDATE**

Interviews were conducted on Monday, January 6, 2014. The hiring team decided Eric Brolin was the top candidate. It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to recommend hiring Eric Brolin at \$18.00 per hour with the option for pay increase at his 6 month and 1 year evaluation to the Personnel Committee.

**D. SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY GRANT UPDATE**

Smith informed the committee that we received just shy of \$37,000 for this grant. It was less than we asked for but Smith believes we should still be able to get everything done. A major portion of this grant was for road work on the county forest and the other portion was for a spot on the Discover Wisconsin show through the Wisconsin County Forest Association (WCFA). Smith spoke with WCFA Executive Director Jane Severt about not receiving the full grant amount – and she was okay with taking less money for the episode. Smith said if the road work comes in under budget – the difference would go to the WCFA.

**E. MEMORIAL REQUEST**

Smith received a phone call from Bill Majewski, former Administrator Dave Majewski’s brother, and asked if the Forestry Committee would be interested in designating a portion of the county forest to Dave with signage. The committee was interested but wanted more details on things such as costs, location, etc. Supervisor Gardner would like to see some sort of criteria set up because even though he believes this is a good idea – he doesn’t want to see it get out of hand for the future. Smith will email Bill back and get more details to bring back to the committee.

**7. RECREATION**

**A. LAKE EMILY LANDING GRANT/ORDINANCE CHANGE - UPDATE**

Bids will be going out soon for work on this grant. The request for the re-instatement of the \$5,000 to the Waterways Committee was denied. This means either there will be \$5,000 less for this project or the county will need to charge a boat landing fee. Smith will talk more about this at next month’s meeting.

**B. LAKE EMILY WALLEYE SPAWNING REEF**

The Lake Emily Association came to Smith and asked for help with putting in a walleye spawning reef in the lake. The reason Forestry & Parks is involved is because the place they want to put the reef is located close to the campground. According to Fisheries Biologist Greg Matzke this is the best location for it. A permit was signed by Smith for this project and he said he would help the association with the grant process.

**C. COSGROVE LAKE DREDGING - UPDATE**

The engineering work has been complete for this project and permits have been sent in.

**D. RIFLE RANGE IMPROVEMENTS**

Wildlife Technician Anna Jahns was made aware that the state has money available for rifle range improvements. She currently has LTE Nick Neuens working on improvement proposals.

**E. SKI HILL**

The season has been going well so far. The hill was shut down a few days due to the cold weather. The Ski Hill Committee was hoping to get the old equipment from Norway Mountain – but nothing has happened yet.

**8. RESOLUTIONS**

Smith passed around copies of the resolutions that needed to be passed. He wanted it noted that he would like Eric Brolin’s name to be added to them once/if Personnel approves his hiring. It was moved by Supervisor Gardener, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to send these resolutions on to the County Board for

approval.

**9. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

Smith passed around the 3 year DNR Audit report for the years 2010-2011-2012. He felt the audit went well.

He informed the committee that the Sustainable Forestry Conference will be held April 10, 2014 and wanted to know who was interested in attending. There will also be a WCFA Board of Directors meeting next Friday, January 17, 2014 in Minaqua. All were welcomed to attend.

The Personnel Committee requested a “Year in Review” from each department. Smith has been working on this – basing it off the department’s Annual Work Plan.

**10. COMMITTEE MEMBER’S COMMENTS & CONCERNS**

Supervisor Neuens requested that some time in the future – a report be generated that tells what was learned from the conferences the committee members attend. Neighboring counties are doing this and he would like to see Florence County follow suit.

**11. BILLS/REVENUES–FORESTRY & PARKS/RESOURCE CENTER**

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

**12. ADJOURNMENT.**

It was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:14.

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