

FLORENCE COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING
3:30 P.M. - WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2013
LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - LOWER LEVEL
FLORENCE NATURAL RESOURCE CENTER
FLORENCE, WI 54121

PRESENT:

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

ED KELLEY
ED WENGER
JOHN HALADA
LARRY NEUENS
HARV SKJERVEN
HENRY SULLIVAN
PATRICK SMITH
MARY PODNAR

Absent or excused: Don Gardner

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 Halada, 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 July 10, 2013 as read.

4. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

5. AGENCY REPORTS

A. HARV SKJERVEN - USFS DISTRICT RANGER

USFS District Ranger Harv Skjerven reported they have two more sales to sell by October 1, 2013 in order to make their target. The Forest Service should have all of FY14 sales either marked or under contract by October 1, 2013 as well. They are getting a little behind on marking because USFS Bob MacGregor has been called to Montana on fire assignment.

Tentatively, they plan to budget the same amount of money as last year minus 5% due to sequestration. Chairman Kelley asked if stewardship was going to have any effect on the budget and if he was looking into this any further. Skjerven said he, Administrator Smith, and others plan on meeting at the end of the month. Skjerven explained that there are many details about stewardship that must be ironed out. Supervisor Wenger was concerned with how stewardship affects our towns. He stated they were trying to pass a law so towns are not cut of the 25% funding from these sales. Smith said these and the other issues will be addressed at this meeting.

Skjerven said he plans on filling Hal Thede's Reforestation Technician position this fall. He stated this position will be based in the Florence office.

B. HUBER & ASSOCIATES

Tony Derleth reported to the committee that they have two crews working in the county and will start a third on Monday. The forest health is real good – there has been a lot of success with seed crop. However, the rain has been hard on the roads. The roads were beat up this spring and summer. So much so that they had to put up a berm on Hemlock Road. Thousands of dollars were spent on this road last year and this spring and summer it was destroyed. The gate going into Price Lake Road was closed as well. This road is in better shape than Hemlock Road, but until it dries, Derleth plans on keeping it closed.

The loggers are healthy and happy. The markets are very good. The log markets are great and the pulp prices should be coming up soon.

Karen is recovering from surgery on her knee. She wants to get back to work as soon as she can.

Henry Sullivan, DNR-County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester wanted to let Derleth know that Jeff Pennucci, DNR manager for the Pine Popple Wild Rivers would be contacting him in the near future regarding the roads that are closed. The State holds easement on these roads and would like them open for public access. Derleth referred to the easement agreement before closing them. According to Derleth, the easement agreement allows the roads to be closed for up to one year for maintenance. Huber & Associates goal is not to have these roads closed, especially to hunters. They would like to see the deer population go down for the health of their forests. The problem is they cannot afford to continue to repair them year after year.

C. DNR – HENRY SULLIVAN

Henry Sullivan, DNR-County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester reported to the committee that an offer has been made for the Wildlife Biologist position in Florence. He was unsure as to when that person would start. They will be interviewing for the Team Leader position on August 21st & 22nd with the goal of having that person reporting to work on October 1, 2013.

Soon they will have approximately 350 acres established for their State Land Sales. With some help from Crandon, Sullivan believes they are well on their way to meeting the 503 acre goal.

Sullivan passed around a map detailing the 2014 prescribed burns for the Spread Eagle Barrens area. The departmental work for this burn is being done right now.

6. LAND SALES

A. ADVERTISE FOR BIDS

Forestry & Parks Administrator Patrick Smith is requesting permission to put Parcel #3 (*the only parcel that did not receive a bid*) out for bids. Smith has received interest for this parcel since the last land sale. He would like to advertise in the newspaper and on the county website. It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to approve advertisement for this sale.

7. COUNTY FOREST

A. TIMBER SALE HARVEST - UPDATE

Administrator Smith stated that things are picking up and the crews have been busy. There are nine active sales in the county right now.

B. JOINT POSITION FORESTRY/HIGHWAY

Bob Butterfield has accepted the Forestry/Highway Common Laborer position. He will begin his employment on August 26, 2013.

C. SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY GRANT APPLICATION

An application has been drafted for a Sustainable Forestry Grant to improve access to the Bessie Babbit Block of the Florence County Forest. The application includes all project costs. It was moved by Supervisor Halada, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to approve the submission of this application.

8. RECREATION

A. POWER LOADING ORDINANCE

Currently, the county has an ordinance against power loading on county boat landings which is enforceable by our Sheriff's Department. Supervisor Neuens has been investigating as to how towns can have this same enforceable ordinance on their boat landings if they so choose. The departments Neuens questioned about this issue have told him that "this was not their area" and sent him in a different direction. He believes that as a County Board – they should have the ability to make this kind of ordinance happen. It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to request an opinion from Zoning & Personnel as to how to get power loading ordinances applicable to other township boat landings if the townships so choose. The question of how the County Ordinances can be adopted but townships and enforced by the Sheriff's Department as a whole is also a question to be answered.

B. COSGROVE LAKE CHANNEL WORK

Lake owner, Don Augustine approached Administrator Smith about the possibility of working together to dredge out a channel between the Little Cosgrove and Big Cosgrove Lakes. The county does have a boat landing on Little Cosgrove Lake. However, you cannot get a boat across the channel due to the low water levels. Cosgrove Lake does not have a lake association therefore they cannot apply for a grant. They are asking the county to take on this project as a "grant writer" to apply for the necessary grant. The county would have to apply for all permits before a grant would be awarded. There is also the possibility that engineering may need to be involved for these permits which could become costly.

Supervisor Neuens questioned whether all the people who live on both these lakes want this dredge work to happen. Augustine said he contacted 15 of the 20 houses that were located on Little Cosgrove and 14 out of 15 said yes they want this work to be done and 1 said no. On Big Cosgrove Lake, Augustine said out of the people he was able to contact 14 said yes and 11 said no. Reasons for the no votes included concerns about additional boat traffic, more fishing pressures, and the possible entrance for invasive species. There were 9 people on Big Cosgrove Lake that said they didn't care what happened. So out of the two lake chain, 49 out of 80 homeowners were contacted.

Augustine felt confident that Little Cosgrove could raise \$3,000 and Big Cosgrove could raise \$4,000 for this project. Recently retiring from an Engineering Firm with 35 years of construction background, Augustine explained why he believed this would be an easy project if they could get access through one of the properties. Augustine spoke with Butterfield's Landscaping and received a verbal quote of \$5,500 to get this work done. They believed they could have it completed in a day or so.

Smith said it was necessary to have a permit before a grant could be applied for. However, Augustine was told by the grant specialist that the permit did not necessarily have to be paid up front. He said when you apply for the permit you can say that the grant has been applied for. Smith said his understanding of how the process works was that this permit isn't going to be a "general" one – rather it would be an "individual" one which means they could require engineering. If they do, these engineering costs need to be paid up front.

Supervisor Neuens & Wenger both expressed concern about the county paying for this project. Augustine asked Smith if they could set up a place where donations could be deposited. Augustine felt confident between the two lakes they could come up with the match if awarded this grant. Smith told Augustine that he would have to take this issue to the next Audit & Budget meeting. Chairman Kelley said he sits on the Audit & Budget Committee and would bring this issue up to them but believed it would be tough sell. Augustine said he would talk with the township to see if they could set something up for them instead.

Smith told the committee that a decision did not have to be made right away. The Waterway Commission group meets quarterly and their next meeting is in December. The Waterway Commission is very similar to the ATV or Snowmobile Council. One of the things they do is award grants around the state to help provide public access to lakes.

Supervisor Neuens recommended Augustine put together a letter and send to everyone who lives on the both lakes to see if they are in favor of this project. He may also want to poll whether or not they want to start an association. Augustine was willing to do this and said he would get the results back to committee for the next meeting.

9. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Administrator Smith passed around an essay he received written by a young girl who wrote about camping at Lake Emily.

Supervisor Neuens asked if there was any progress on the beach issue at West Bass. Smith said no as he was also looking into the same issue at Keyes Lake. Smith wants to address the problem with the retaining wall at Keyes Lake as well.

Smith reported that the Parks & Ski Hill Assistant sliced her fingers last week. She is not on light duty, but is limited as to what she can do.

Forestry & Parks intern, Kyle Trudell, has one week left. Smith has been very pleased with his work and his willingness to do whatever has been asked of him.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER'S COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Supervisor Neuens heard at the UWEX meeting that the department would be moving downstairs.

Neuens asked Smith if he would be planning a Fall Tour. Smith thought it would be a good idea to go around the county and see the projects they are working on. They will plan on something in September.

Chairman Kelley said the USFS wants to hold their fall meeting in Florence. Smith is waiting to hear more about the planning process.

11. BILLS/REVENUES-FORESTRY & PARKS/RESOURCE CENTER

Chairman Kelley stated that there was one bill that was questioned by the Audit & Budget Committee – but it has since been resolved and paid. Supervisor Wenger expressed his interest in every department having an itemized list such as the Forestry & Parks one. Chairman Kelley said he would bring this request to the next Audit & Budget meeting. It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, 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 Halada, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 5:23.

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