

FLORENCE COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING
3:30 P.M. - WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2014
LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - LOWER LEVEL
FLORENCE NATURAL RESOURCE CENTER
FLORENCE, WI 54121

PRESENT:

SUPERVISOR / CHAIRMAN	ED KELLEY
SUPERVISOR / VICE CHAIRMAN	ED WENGER
SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER	JOHN HALADA
SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER	LARRY NEUENS
SUPERVISOR / COMMITTEE MEMBER	DON GARDNER
USFS DISTRICT RANGER	HARV SKJERVEN
DNR – COUNTY FOREST LIAISON/STATE LAND FORESTER	HENRY SULLIVAN
FORESTRY & PARKS ADMINISTRATOR	PATRICK SMITH
FORESTRY & PARKS ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR	ANDREW NAULT
FORESTRY & PARKS BUSINESS MANAGER	MARY PODNAR

Absent or excused: none

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Patrick Smith, Forestry & Parks Administrator, called the meeting to order at 3:30 P.M.

2. FORESTRY & PARKS ADMINISTRATOR – CONDUCT ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Smith called for nominations for Chairman of the Forestry & Parks Committee. Supervisor Wenger moved that Ed Kelley be Chairman. It was seconded by Supervisor Neuens. Patrick Smith called three times for any other nominations. There were none. It was unanimously carried to have Ed Kelley be Chairman of the Forestry and Parks Committee.

3. ELECTED CHAIRMAN – CONDUCT ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Chairman Kelley called for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Forestry and Parks Committee. Supervisor Gardner moved that Ed Wenger be Vice-Chairman. It was seconded by Supervisor Halada. Chairman Kelley called three times for any other nominations. There were none. It was unanimously carried to have Ed Wenger be Vice-Chairman of the Forestry and Parks Committee.

4. APPROVAL / MINUTES

It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of April 9, 2014 as read.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

6. AGENCY REPORTS

A. HARV SKJERVEN - USFS DISTRICT RANGER

USFS District Ranger Harv Skjerven reported that today is Silviculturist Bob MacGregor's last day. He expects his position to be filled by August. Skjerven said there is a possibility that he will not have the funds to hire this position because any money that has not been obligated to the Forest Service has to go back to the general fund. He is

optimistic though that he will find the funding. In the meantime, Andy Branch, a Silviculturist from Park Falls will be filling in. They have also hired retired Silviculturist Mark Tyson under contract to write up prescriptions to help keep the forest program running as smooth as possible.

The Stewardship Master Plan is written and ready for review. Administrator Smith gave a copy to Supervisor Wenger for review. Business Manager Mary Podnar will email a copy to the rest of the committee members. Smith asked the committee members to review the plan so they can approve it at next month's meeting.

USFS trails should be open soon. The Morgan Lake Campground is open for ATV use also. Notification was put in the Mining News. Skjerven believes this will increase the use of the campground.

B. HUBER & ASSOCIATES

Tony Derleth was not in attendance but sent an email to Podnar asking her to share a few things. Derleth said the crews have not started back up – but plan to get into the woods the first week of June. All roads have been closed until road limits come off.

C. DNR – HENRY SULLIVAN

DNR County Forest Liaison/State Land Forester Henry Sullivan reported that there have been roughly five or six fires – nothing too big. The fire season thus far has been pretty slow. The department is hoping to be ready to burn either the last week of May or first week of June.

They plan on gearing up for timber sales the first week of June. Chairman Kelley asked if the state will have wood turtle occurrences on their sales. Sullivan reported that every sale by the river will indeed have wood turtle occurrences which means all will be winter sales. USFS Skjerven asked what impact the Long Eared Bat is going to have on future state timber sales. Sullivan explained that the Long Eared Bat has been listed on the state list of endangered species and could possibly be listed on the federal list as well. This would have a serious impact on all hardwood specie summer logging. Department heads from Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and Indiana DNR are sending letters to the US Fish & Wildlife Service saying they want input before these endangered species guidelines are written because of the serious impact it has on forestry and the logging community as a whole.

7. COUNTY FOREST

A. TIMBER SALE UPDATE

Assistant Administrator Andy Nault reported to the committee that timber activity on the county land has been very slow. They do have a job starting tomorrow. He assumes activity to pick up in July.

B. TIMBER SALES SPRING 2014 – ADVERTISE FOR BIDS

Nault passed around the Spring 2014 Timber Sale Location Maps. Approximately 500 acres are scheduled to be bid. Administrator Smith pointed out that on advertised sale #1 (Lake Edith) and advertised sale #6 (Majesty's Special) there are wood turtle occurrences within a two mile buffer of the timber sales. The Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) has put the wood turtle on their endangered species list and has written guidelines to be followed. It states that harvesting cannot be done 984 feet from the water to protect the wood turtle. Therefore, harvesting in these areas cannot be done from May 15th – October 15th. Smith has been fighting to get these guidelines changed as he feels they are much too limiting for the logger and could seriously affect the county's ability to harvest its forest. This will have serious implications not only for Florence County Forests but for the forests of the entire state as well. Sullivan passed around a map showing the location of the wood turtle occurrences. DNR Forestry Supervisor Craig Williams suggested to advertise the sales with the NHC restrictions – but include a "clause" that informs the logger of possible future restriction changes.

After discussion it was moved by Supervisor Wenger, seconded by Supervisor Neuens, and unanimously carried to advertise the sales with restrictions and include the “clause” for possible future changes.

C. LTE FORESTER 2014 - UPDATE

Robert Richard was hired as the LTE Forester. He has been with the department for two weeks now and has been doing a good job.

D. PROCUREMENT POLICY CHANGE

Smith would like support from the committee to approach Personnel for a change in the Administrative Policy regarding procurement limits. Currently, any project that is over \$5,000 must be bid out. This is too restrictive because it is hard to get many types of projects done for under \$5,000. Smith would like to see this amount increased to \$15,000. It was moved by Supervisor Gardner, seconded by Supervisor Wenger, and unanimously carried to support the procurement policy increase change to \$15,000 and send this decision to Personnel.

E. SKI HILL FRISBEE GOLF

Fred Erwin from the Keyes Peak Ski Hill Committee would like to create a Frisbee golf course on Keyes Peak. Erwin will have the Florence schools make the baskets and rings plus he got the chain donated as well. Basically, all the materials are covered. He is also going to try and get each hole sponsored by local businesses. Assistant Administrator Andy Nault has experience in designing Frisbee golf courses and is willing to work with Erwin to get one started. After discussion it was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Halada, and unanimously carried to support the creation of a Frisbee golf course on Keyes Peak.

8. RECREATION

A. PARKS

The crews have been busy getting the parks ready for the upcoming season. The water has been turned on at Lake Emily and the docks are almost all in.

B. COSGROVE LAKE DREDGING UPDATE

Right now Smith is looking at options on how to get this work accomplished. He is trying to figure out the logistics of getting the contractors in & out of the jobsite. Don Augustine has volunteered to be on the site supervising.

C. SKI LODGE RENTAL CONTRACT – UPDATE

Smith received an email from the County’s insurance company suggesting that we require personal insurance from each person renting the lodge. They suggested that each person carry a \$250,000 personal liability policy for any event that is being held such as a wedding, anniversary, birthday, or graduation party. Podnar passed around the Lodge rental packet which gets handed out each time the lodge is rented. One of the required documents that must be signed is the Hold Harmless Agreement which indemnifies and holds harmless Florence County from any damages arising out of the rental. After discussion it was decided not to require the personal liability insurance to rent the lodge. Smith will give a copy of the Lodge Rental packet to County Clerk Donna Trudell and see if there is a county policy that requires personal liability insurance and get back to the committee on this issue.

D. LAKE EMILY PROJECT – UPDATE

The county received more money from the Waterway Commission for the Lake Emily Boat Launch project. They decided not to “dock” the county \$5,000 for not charging a fee for our county owned boat landings. That \$5,000 was given back to us for the project - plus they bumped us from a 40% match to a 50% match. This added up to close to \$11,000 more for this project than anticipated. However, the Waterway Commission did make it clear that we will be docked the \$5,000 if we do not charge a boat landing fee on future projects. Supervisor Neuens would like to see

charging this fee as a future agenda item.

E. TRAP SHOOTING ON COUNTY FOREST LANDS

Smith received a request from a citizen for permission to shoot trap on county forest lands. Florence High School recently started a trap shooting team called the “Florence County Dusters” and this individual wanted to practice with the students on the forest. Smith told him that he didn’t think this was a good idea because shooting trap creates a mess and if you really want the kids to learn – it should be at a shooting range. He said he would bring it to the committee to see how they feel about trap shooting on county forest. It was moved by Supervisor Neuens, seconded by Supervisor Gardner, and unanimously carried to support Smiths decision.

9. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Not much to report other than everyone is busy.

10. COMMITTEE MEMBER’S COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Supervisor Gardner inquired about the crane being used at the boat landing on the Menominee. Smith informed him that it was for the WE Energies Power Plant Project.

Supervisor Neuens pointed out that the kiosks located at the Resource Center need attention. Smith noticed this also and said even though they are older – the weather really does take a toll on them.

Neuens would like to see Forestry & Parks advertise in the Sustainable Forestry Conference pamphlet because it is a big event which is held in Florence.

Supervisor Neuens wants to see an agreement drawn up with the Highway Department regarding equipment use/rental. He would like to see this agreement on the agenda next month.

11. BILLS/REVENUES – FORESTRY & RESOURCE CENTER

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

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

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