

FOREST, PARKS, AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Douglas County Board of Supervisors

Monday, September 30, 2019, 9:30 a.m., Forestry Headquarters
9182 East Hughes Avenue, Solon Springs, Wisconsin

Meeting called to order by Chair Liebaert.

ROLL CALL: Present – Mark Liebaert, Mary Lou Bergman, Joseph Moen. Absent – Nick Baker, Steve Long. Others present – Scott Melton, Chris Rydberg, Marion Rydberg, Clint Meyer, John Krawza, Jr., Jim Latvala, Greg Kessler, Craig Golembiewski, Jon Harris, Cheryl Westman, Committee Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to approve the minutes from the August 26, 2019, meeting, with correction to page 1, Log-a-Load dates should be October 3rd and 4th, 2019. Motion carried.

Department Reports:

Budget: Harris reviewed the budget for the time period ending August 31, 2019.

Forest Management Operations: Golembiewski reported 5 active timber sales; 2 hauling; October auction coming soon; WDNR finishing furrowing and site prep, with planting in spring; timber stand improvement in progress and gravel crushing project completed last week.

Parks and Recreation: Meyer attended ORV council in Wausau last week, new winter trail miles were recommended along with trail maintenance grants for approval; Wild Rivers Trail gravel project completed; Sept 8th park campgrounds officially closed; Sept 17th, NBC volunteers removed large rocks and cut Black Locus clumps at Lucius Woods Park; park winterization in progress; and contractors starting soon on Anna Gene Park pavilion project.

ACTION ITEMS/REFERRALS:

Discounted Campground Camping Rate for Resident Veteran Request: Citizen (Robin Krawza) requesting a resident veterans/disabled veterans discount on camping fees in all campgrounds be given with proof of residency and military service as a show of appreciation (\$5 per camping night fee discount suggested). Established rate sheet included in packet. Discussion regarding how approval of request for one group opens the door to requests by others and how will it be decided who is more deserving. No action taken.

Campground End of Season Closing Date Extension Request: Citizen (Robin Krawza) also requesting Douglas County keep the campgrounds open until the second weekend in October instead of one week after Labor Day, allowing visitors to enjoy the fall weather. Suggesting additional park campground advertising in the spring. Gordon Dam Campground already offering off-season camping opportunity since October 2012. Discussion on pros and cons of extending closing date with revenue cost-benefit concerns expressed.

ACTION: Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to refer to next month's agenda for further discussion, department staff to present campground closing date policy options for recommendation to committee for implementation in 2020. Motion carried.

County Forest Land Memorial Signage Request (National Wild Turkey Federation): Map included in packet identifying proposed sign location. Example sign template distributed including proposed sign wording. Requesting "Steve Rydberg Memorial" sign be installed commemorating the wild turkey habitat improvement project of planting thousands of American Highbush Cranberry plants on county forest land.

ACTION: Motion by Liebaert, second Bergman, to approve signage request, with department staff approval for final design, signage wording, and location. NWTF to be responsible for all sign upkeep and maintenance. Motion carried.

Easement Acquisition: Release of Capital Reserve Funding: Map included in packet identifying parcel in Town of Summit. Release requested in an amount not to exceed \$1,500 to acquire access easement from landowner. Easement will assist with future timber sale access.

ACTION (REFERRAL/RESOLUTION): Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to approve easement acquisition in an amount not to exceed \$1,500, and forward to Administration Committee and County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Withdrawal and Sale of Property: Map distributed identifying 3 properties (approximately 55 acres total) a buyer would like to purchase from the county at an average above market rate of no less than \$4,500 per acre. Proceeds would allow the county to complete the Upper St. Croix Forest Land Acquisition Project, which would serve as a higher and greater overall benefit to the citizens of the county. Any additional proceeds to be designated for future county forest land acquisition. Permission requested to authorize Liebaert and Harris to finalize negotiations with buyer.

ACTION (RESOLUTION): Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to approve withdrawal of up to three identified parcels from County Forest Law, subsequent sale of parcels to buyer at a minimum average of \$4,500 per acre, with proceeds designated for the Upper St. Croix Forest Land Acquisition Project, any additional proceeds designated for future county forest land acquisition, and authorize Liebaert and Harris to negotiate with buyer to finalize the sale, and refer to County Board. Motion carried unanimously.

Reforestation Program Funding Policy: Reviewed. Non-lapsing disaster recovery fund established August 2011. Later designated as a Reforestation Reserve Fund. Department requesting clarification of fund use purposes for general forest improvement and reforestation needs. Funding to be used to assist with offsetting significant annual budget increases. Suggesting annual funding mechanism be 10% of annual gross timber sale revenues. Discussion on two additional options: (1) Designate 1% of the 15% Timber Sale Revenue Reserve disbursement identified in the Douglas County Declaration of Unassigned General Fund Prior Year Surplus policy; and (2) To reduce the Timber Sale Revenue Reserve disbursement to 14% and add a 1% reforestation disbursement to the Douglas County Declaration of Unassigned General Fund Prior Year Surplus policy; further discussion on capping the fund at a specific amount.

ACTION: Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to refer item to next month's agenda. Motion carried.

Pesticide Ordinance #1.17 Exemption Request (Department): Invasive Buckthorn (approximately 20 acres) identified near Bellwood Pit East Road on county forest land. Requesting permission to chemically treat the site for up to three years with an herbicide in an attempt to control and minimize further spread – Application for Pesticide Ordinance Exemption Request and map identifying treatment location in meeting packet.

ACTION: Motion by Liebaert, second Moen, to approve Pesticide Ordinance #1.17 exemption request by the department for up to a three year time frame. Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/CORRESPONDENCE/UPDATES/REPORTS:

Gravel Crushing Request (Town of Solon Springs): Letter and pit location map in meeting packet. Department currently has a contractor crushing gravel in the Erickson Creek Pit located on county forest land. Town of Solon Springs requesting to crush up to 11,000 tons of gravel from the same pit using the same contractor to be utilized to reinforce roads adjacent to county forestry land. Handouts distributed of the

existing permitted non-metallic mines county-wide and on county forest land (list and map). Establishing a county forest land specific non-metallic mine policy in the future discussed.

ACTION: Motion by Liebaert, second Moen, to approve a one-time request from the Town of Solon Springs to crush up to 11,000 tons of gravel from county mineral resources in the Ericson Creek Pit, to be stockpiled clearly separate from county stockpiles, charge a \$.50 per ton royalty fee for all produced gravel with all proceeds designated for future county forest land acquisition. Motion carried.

WCFA Executive Director Update: Jane Severt retiring, with Rebekah Luedtke, selected as the new Executive Director of WCFA. Press release in meeting packet outlining her background, noting she will be starting mid-October.

2019 Log-a-Load for Kids Charity Event on County Forest Land (Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association): Event occurring this Thursday and Friday. Map identifying location in meeting packet.

ACTION: Motion by Bergman, second Moen, to extend the meeting beyond the two hour time limit. Motion carried.

Wildlife Update Report (WDNR Wildlife Biologist) – Presentation: Greg Kessler reported deer season CWD herd health testing for northern region to occur; deer impacts on forest regeneration; collecting hunter harvested ruffed grouse for West Nile Virus research; and new bear management plan soon to be implemented.

Park Creek Pond Dam Improvement Project Update: Meyer reported project went well and all dam inspections have been completed; awaiting approval letter. Park Creek Pond has been refilled to the target elevation.

October 22, 2019 Timber Sale Reminder: Reminder issued to attend the October 22, 2019, timber sale meeting starting at 6:00 p.m.

WDNR County Forest Liaison: WDNR working on timber sales for the county and reported on recent meetings attended.

Future Agenda Items: Reforestation policy; Campground end of season closing date extension request.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Moen, second Bergman, to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Submitted by,

Cheryl Westman, Committee Clerk