

FORESTRY, LAND, & RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: March 6, 2013

TIME: 9:00 a.m. Committee Room 1, 2nd Floor, Court House, Rhinelander, WI

PRESENT: Chair Baier; Committee Members: Martinson, Shidell, Sorensen
Forestry Staff: Bilogan, Bradley, Fiene. Corp Counsel: Brian Desmond

OTHERS: Lester Felbab and Bill Welsh, OCATVA. Guy Hansen, RASTA.
Jon Leith, DNR. Dennis Lawrence and Fred Heider, NCWRPC.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER— At 9:00 a.m. Chair Baier called the meeting to order, noting that it had been properly posted in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.

APPROVE CURRENT AGENDA WITH THE ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS AT CHAIR'S DISCRETION— It was moved by Sorensen, seconded by Martinson, to approve the current agenda with the order of agenda items at Chair's discretion. Motion carried.

APPROVE MINUTES OF THE February 6, 2013 FORESTRY COMMITTEE MEETING— It was moved by Sorensen, seconded by Martinson, to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2013 FLR Committee meeting. All aye. Motion carried.

EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARD:

Bill Breivogel was recognized for his 20 years of service as an Oneida County employee.

FOREST MANAGEMENT:

- a) YEAR-TO-DATE TIMBER STUMPAGE REVENUE REPORT—
Fiene reported that the year-to-date stumpage revenue was \$262,235.74.
- b) TIMBER SALES FOR DISPOSITION—It was moved by Sorensen, seconded by Shidell, to act on the following timber contract as follows:

Contract # 1562 held by **Fink Forest Products** was **closed** as satisfactorily completed, and return cash deposit in the amount of \$7343.00

Contract # 1563 held by **Fink Forest Products** was **closed** as satisfactorily completed, and return cash deposit in the amount of \$15,980.62

Contract # 1564 held by **NW Hardwoods** was **closed** as satisfactorily completed, and return cash deposit in the amount of \$20,425.00

All aye, motion carried.

5-YEAR OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL PLAN PROCESS

Bilogan emphasized there is no additional charge for this document other than the existing County membership fee. He added that public input is key and will be requested at future Forestry Committee meetings. Fred Heider, NCWRPC Planner, gave a brief overview of the process for creating a 5-year plan, which allows eligibility to apply for DNR outdoor recreation grants. The plan is a comprehensive overview of outdoor recreational

opportunities in the county. It provides demographics, trail plans and current recreation. The public is surveyed regarding satisfaction of current recreation and requests for new activities. The committee will then go over goals and objectives. This year the plan will highlight the more developed communities with more resources. The plan is coordinated with the towns so that information for all the areas of the county are available in one document.

Baier commented that a major goal should be creating a continuous corridor through Oneida County to allow ATVs to travel from Langlade or Lincoln counties all the way up to the UP.

Sorensen asked Bilogan about a recent newspaper article that stated Oneida County was behind other counties in ATV development.

ONEIDA COUNTY ATV PROGRAM AND ATV RIDING OPPORTUNITIES

Bilogan explained the difference between ATV Routes and Trails. Routes are roads or right of ways alongside a road and trails are off-road. Funded trails are official trails for which a municipality, whether county or town or even a federal entity, receives state money to maintain said trails. Club trails are not officially recognized trails and it may be hard to pinpoint whether the trails are legal, so Forestry does not include them in the mileage count.

Oneida County has 30.3 miles of funded trails. Any town can put an application to Madison for funded trails, by the way. It doesn't have to be the County Forestry department. We contract out trail maintenance to the private clubs, we get the money in from the state and turn over 100% to the clubs for maintenance. Bilogan gave an overview of the requirements for a club to be recognized by the Committee. There are only two clubs recognized by the County, Little Rice Riders and the OCATVA/Enterprise.

In response to a question by Sorensen, Bilogan stated that Vilas has no trails at all, possibly one or two routes. Sorensen stated that the newspaper headlines about Oneida County being behind neighboring counties with regard to ATV commitment was quite erroneous.

Bilogan stated that despite what people think, ATV'ers do not come here en masse looking to ride trails in winter. This has been tested multiple times. What we do have is many locals who want to use ATV's to get from home to the lake or to a local restaurant.

When ATV riders do come in spring, summer or fall, there are limitations as to where the trails can be made due to wetlands and/or landowner reluctance to allow ATV traffic. Oneida County has very little federal forestland which might allow trails; the Highlands state forest area does not allow ATV's, which a huge chunk of Oneida County. There had been a proposal to build an Oneida County corridor through the State Forest, however the cost was prohibitive and the state denied the request.

Bilogan commented that there is an excellent place for an ATV trail connection in and near McNaughton, however the Biking Association insisted it was going to build bike trails and refused to relinquish their easement. It has been approximately been eight years and no bike trail has ever been constructed.

Bilogan stated that a great deal of Oneida County land has corporate owners who are willing to offer easements for snowmobile trails, but are not willing to have ATV's, due to liability issues.

Bilogan added that other counties may be counting club trails in their mileage so reported total miles in counties may not be comparing apples to apples.

Bilogan went on to explain that more than 500 miles of Oneida County ATV road routes are on town roads and only the towns are the entities authorized to open their roads to ATVs. A town must have an ordinance in place listing the exact route and the routes must be signed. It took multiple phone calls and emails over four weeks to get the ordinance information from the towns. This all comes back to the issue of whether road routes are counted in the ATV trail total.

Oneida County does not provide maps of the of road routes opened as trails because there are liabilities that can arise. Burnett County lost a lawsuit because they had documented road routes and then were found liable when a rider was killed.

There is no action necessary for this agenda item, it was informative only, due to questions about the newspaper article.

Martinson asked the NCWRPC whether they work with recreational clubs. There has been some minor assistance with motorized clubs helping with grant applications and more interaction with the Silent Sports clubs.

Sorensen asked whether the NCWRPC keeps records of time/money spent on each project. They count internally, but have nothing separated by county. Shidell asked whether they could get that itemized to see where the fee is going. They responded that they would start tracking that information going forward.

Shidell summed up the problem with developing new trails; no recognized groups are coming forward to request new trails, the state is balking at going through there, and a language/liability issue because we are not taking care of signage and definitions and structure all in the same way. John responded that the definitions are in place, but he thinks the towns are not always aware that road routes must be signed. Road routes have their place but should not be the answer to ATV trail development issues. Shidell agreed that the county should not put out maps because rules and definitions are not followed consistently by the towns.

APHIS ANNUAL CONTRACT

The contract for nuisance beaver control been approved by Corp Counsel and by the Administration Committee. Shidell moved to accept the contract and Martinson seconded. All aye, motion carried.

ALMON PARK SHELTER PROJECT

Bilogan provided several alternatives to choose from, both pre-fab and stick built. Corp Counsel stated that the design/build option is no longer permissible by state law. After discussion of pricing for kits versus stick-built shelters, it was determined that the stick-built option will be the best value for the County. Getting an approved design plan is the first step in the process; once that is complete, bids can be requested. Shidell moved that Bilogan research and obtain shelter design plans at a reasonable cost. Martinson seconded. All aye. Motion carried.

STAFF TRAINING & CERTIFICATION

There are three training opportunities upcoming; Wisconsin Hazardous Materials Training, Pesticide Application Training and MSHA (Mine Safety & Health Admin) / First Aid Training. Sorensen moved that Bilogan work out the details and send employees as he sees fit. Shidell seconded. All aye, motion carried.

VOUCHERS & LINE ITEM TRANSFERS FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH—Moved by Sorensen and seconded by Shidell to approve payment for the listed vouchers. All aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS—

Les asked what years are covered by the five year plan. (2014-18)
He commented that towns get around the signing issues by making one road a “corridor road” and the rest are personal access. John was not aware that option was available to ATV’s; he knew snowmobiles have that option.

Guy asked whether electricity will be added to the pavilion. John will have it in the plans so that even if there is a delay with budgeting, it will be ready to hook up when necessary.

ADJOURNMENT—With business completed, it was moved by Sorensen, seconded by Martinson, to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 a.m. All aye. Motion carried.

GARY BAIER
CHAIR

JILL BRADLEY
RECORDING SECRETARY