

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
January 10, 2022
County Board Room**

Members Present: Fred Strand, Chairperson; Jeffrey Silbert, David Zepczyk, Larry Fickbohm

Members not in Attendance: Steve Sandstrom

Staff in Attendance: Jason Bodine, Administrator; Lindley Mattson, Office Manager; Steve Probst, Assistant Administrator

Others in Attendance: Kat Klow, DNR, Nikki Marten, WI DNR, Charly Ray, County Board Member,

1. Call to Order of Forestry and Parks Committee Meeting.

This meeting was called to order at 6:01pm.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Approval of the November 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: (Zepczyk, Silbert) to approve and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.

4. Land Acquisition

Bodine presented a map of the 160 acres potential land acquisition near Lost Creek Falls to the committee. Bodine is having conversations with current landowner regarding terms of purchase. Landmark Conservancy has committed to helping with funding. Bodine is asking the committee for formal approval to continue pursuing this land acquisition.

MOTION: (Silbert, Fickbohm) move that we continue to pursue the Lost Creek acquisition from the forest land group through stewardship grants.

5. Resolution. Sale of County Forest Land to the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and withdrawal of land from county forest law.

Bodine presented a resolution and map to the committee in regard to the 706 acres of remaining county forest land within the reservation boundaries to be sold to the Tribe. Recently the Tribe has offered \$1 million for the remaining acreage, bringing the price per acre to roughly \$1,416. All proceeds would go toward the purchase of replacement lands. This sale would require approval from the Forestry and Parks Committee as well as the County Board. Once approved, an application for county forest withdrawal would be submitted to the DNR.

Silbert has a possible amendment to the resolution to take the language from state statute 28:11 on administration of county forest: ‘whereas the sale and repatriation of all county forest lands back to the Red Cliff tribe is viewed as a better and higher use based on cultural, historic and economic grounds’ The “better and higher use” coming from code 28.11.

Upon discussing the amendment, it was decided that although it would not hurt, additional wording does not seem necessary. Bodine added that we currently supply supporting documents as part of the withdrawal application to the DNR so these details are included and therefore not needed in the resolution. Silbert withdrew his amendment based off committee discussion.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Fickbohm) approve the resolution for the sale of the county forest land to the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and withdraw from the county forest and its recommendation to be accepted by the full board. All: Yes. Carried.*

6. Resolution. Knowles Nelson Stewardship Grant for County Forest Land Acquisition.

With the 348 acre land sale to the Tribe nearly complete, we are ready to place an application for the Stewardship grant to move forward on the large Ceres Timber acquisition project including 2,001 acres in the Towns of Bell and Bayfield. Bodine presented maps and a summary of the project. Trust for Public Lands is helping with an application to the Community Forests grant which would cover up to \$600k of the purchase price. Bodine is asking for approval to apply for the Stewardship grant. Would also require approval from the county board.

***MOTION:** (Fickbohm, Zepczyk) forward the stewardship grant application to the full county board with recommendation of approval. All: Yes. Carried.*

7. Monthly Reports. Discussion of general activities, events, issues and accomplishments. Possible action on report(s) only.

a. Forestry (all updates):

- a) 2021 Budget. Ended 2021 at just over \$3.85 million in stumpage revenue. \$850k over budget, which brings forth the budget amendment to the 10% to town account.
- b) Carbon Project. Final project should come mid January and will hopefully be presented at the February meeting.
- c) Red Cliff Land Sale/CFL Withdrawal. Still in process.
- d) Burns/Duquette Trespass CFL Withdrawal. This is still in process as well. Project should be wrapped up in the coming weeks.
- e) Stewardship Project. In addition to the 2,001 acre Ceres Timber project and smaller 160 acre project near Lost Creek, we are still exploring options on the roughly 1,600 project in the Town of Clover. Landmark Conservancy has also expressed an interest in this project.
- f) Mt. Ashwabay SMA Management Plan. Bodine had planned to meet with the user groups mid January but has not finalized the plan. More to come on this.
- g) New Rec Position. The current office manager, Lindley Mattson, has accepted the new rec position. We will be looking to fill her office manager position with some interviews being held later this week.
- h) Historical Sites. We were recently approached by the Cable Historical Society regarding an old school site off Frels Rd. They would like to identify the location with a sign at the foundation site.
- i) Plantation Naming. There has been some discussion regarding honoring Tom Gordon for his long standing dedication to the community. Committee agrees that would be a nice honor and gives the okay for Bodine to explore potential sites.

b. Campgrounds and Day Use Parks: Campgrounds are closed for the season. The Town of Grand View has agreed to plow the parking area at Atkins Lake for winter lake access.

c. Trails and Recreation:

- a) Motorized Trail Updates: Snowmobile trails officially opened December 30. This is the first year all groomers are outfitted with GPS tracking devices as part of the DNR system to produce more accurate grooming records across the state. Still working out the kinks in the system.
- b) Non-Motorized Trail Updates: There are some volunteers interested in sprucing up the old orchard on the Siskiwit Falls property. The apple trees are in rough shape and we are hopeful that pruning them will generate new growth and health. Due to liability, this project will likely be done via a contract.

- i. Recreation Use Agreements. Developing these has moved down on the priority list, will be revisiting later in the month.
- c) Yurt Updates: Bodine presented the occupancy rates for each yurt.
- d) Events: Bodine plans to bring all new and recurring events to the committee for approval. In the past, only new events were brought to the committee with recurring events being approved by the administrator.
- d. Delta Landfill Update: The Town of Delta has agreed to contribute half of all the out of pocket costs for this project, roughly \$37,500. The payments will be made in three equal annual installments, first one has been received.

MOTION: (Silbert, Fickbohm) Receive and place reports on file. All: Yes. Carried.

8. 2022 Forestry and Parks Department Annual Work Plan.

Bodine presented the workplan as well as an executive summary. Below are some highlights.

The annual harvest goals will decrease a bit (by about 13% or just under 700 acres), primarily fueled by a temporary pause in managing the swamp types (hardwood and conifer), as well as a dip in the aspen target. The carbon project is expected to ramp up in the spring and will be at full steam mid-summer, with the first revenue arriving, hopefully, by late Q4. The rec workload will also increase significantly, primarily as it pertains to finding our new legs with the added position. We will be moving forward with two or three land acquisition projects this year as well.

MOTION: (Fickbohm, Zepczyk) forward to the full county board with the recommendation for approval. All: Yes. Carried.

9. Resolution. 2021 Year End Budget Amendment.

Bodine presented a draft of the resolution to the committee that addresses three areas; the 10% payment to the towns; a DNR turkey stamp grant that was applied towards a barrens project; and Pittman Robertson Wildlife Habitat grants that were also applied towards barrens development projects. All expense increases will be offset by an equal increase in revenue. The end result will be no change to the budgeted net levy contribution.

MOTION: (Silbert, Fickbohm) approve the 2021 budget amendment resolution with recommendation of approval to the full county board for approval. All: Yes. Carried.

10. Access Permit Renewal. Charly Ray

This is a renewal of a reciprocal permit. Where we have approved access across county forest land in the Town of Russell and Charly approves the county's access across his 40 acre parcel. The renewal would be for another 10 year period. Bodine recommends approval.

MOTION: (Zepczyk, Fickbohm) approve the 10 year access permit renewal for Charly Ray. All: Yes. Carried.

11. Recreation Use Request. American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation

ABSF is requesting permission to host a new mountain bike event in the Town of Cable on June 4-5. This event was previously known as the Mt. Borah Epic now known as Epic Mountain Bike Fest. This is also the event that was initially being claimed by both CAMBA and ABSF. The two organizations have come to terms. Bodine recommends approval.

MOTION: (Fickbohm, Zepczyk,) approve the recreation use request. All: Yes. Carried.

12. Recreation Use Request. North End Ski Club

These are three recurring events in the Town of Cable; a snowshoe race, ski race and a trail run. Bodine recommends approval.

***MOTION:** (Silbert, Zepczyk,) approve the recreation use request for the North End Ski Club.. All: Yes. Carried.*

13. Committee Members Discussion.

Silbert would like to thank Administrator for granting a disability hunting permit to a constituent.

14. Kate Klow – No comments.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting has been scheduled for **Monday, February 14 at 6:00 P.M.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM

Submitted by,
Lindley Mattson