

MINUTES

Eau Claire County

• Committee on Parks & Forest •

Monday, March 1, 2021

5:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Members: Kevin Stelljes, Joe, Knight, Missy Christopherson, Gary Gibson, Tami Schraufnagel

Others: Josh Pedersen – Director, Jody Gindt – Supervisor, Jake Tumm – Forester, Winnie Parker – Administrative Specialist III (Committee Clerk), Kyle Johnson - WDNR Liaison Forester, Laura Hurd – Parks & Forest Advisory Board, Mike Lea – Parks & Forest Advisory Board

Kevin Stelljes called the meeting to order at 5pm and confirmed public posting of the meeting.

No members of the public were present.

Director Pedersen gave the sequence of events for completion of the 15-Year Plan.

- County Forest Specialist, liaison who oversees state and county public land, review
- Required wording revision
- Approval from the Committee
- Public comment period
- Forward completed document to the County Forest Specialist

Chapter 100

115 There is a member from WCFA who represents Eau Claire County's interest on the Silvicultural Guidance Team.

120 Consult with Corporation Counsel for the correct interpretation of "enforce" vs "review." It was clarified that the Counsel as a whole has authority, but individuals do not.

125.1 Eau Claire County, historically, provides more revenue (15%) than is required by state statutes (10%). It was resolved to have the document reflect what we are currently paying and review these rates every five (5) years. The next review will be in 2026, and a reminder will be added to staff calendars.

125.1 The statement about 1963 is redundant, mentioned in two places. One of the two will be removed. Also, an explanation regarding the change from the 10-Year plan in 2005 to the 15-Year Plan will be added to the text.

125.3 Text will be added to the document here regarding how climate change affects the forest and the use and maintenance of roads and culverts for environmental events such as flash flooding.

Wording in this section should reflect a more balanced educational approach. Educate the public on the pro's and con's on various forestry practices.

The question was then raised as to the educational efforts of the department. The educational efforts are on-going by the staff who take opportunities when they come up, most frequently by the local schools.

Also, in this section, change of the word "conflict" to "concern." When the public witnesses clear-cutting, for example, they are concerned, and it is in our best interest to educate the public about best forest management practices.

Finally, Kevin Stelljes votes to take the word "trend" out of the language and to add "species that include..., have all gained foothold..." Josh reminded the Committee that this document came from a "canned" program and although we have some discretion as to the wording, much of the verbiage must remain the same.

Chapter 200

205.1 The Parks and Forest Department should work with the recycling and sustainability coordinator regarding policies related to the counties goal of being as carbon neutral as possible. Also, the question was raised as to whether we could sell our carbon credits as a means of revenue. Joe Knight will work with Josh on the verbiage in this section.

220.1 ACCOUNTS – Wording should reflect that "under the guidance of best practices dictated by our central finance department." Also, we will then remove the account number listing as it is too vast and restrictive to include in this document. A more general statement will be made.

225.1 It was noted that any staff person is capable of writing Violation Notices. Joe Knight mentioned that we have, at this time, a limited staff. In 2019 we had more staff to handle both the park maintenance, clean-up, and enforcement. In 2020 those numbers were reduced. While we do have a few more staff in 2021 than in 2020, it was suggested that we should consider adding a position to the payroll to oversee enforcement. This person could also do ATV patrol, etc. By doing so, 25% of their salary could come through the grant program.

230 Although the Expo Center and Lowes Creek Park are not a part of the Forestry 15-Year Plan per say, they will be mentioned in this section as property the department manages.

Chapter 300

300.2.6 With regards to inventory of the forest, no survey has been conducted and the county would probably have to hire this to be done. Kyle Johnson stated that this is not something the DNR has the capacity to do. Joe Knight suggested that possible we could ask a grad student to conduct a study. Kevin Stelljes suggested that we should add a statement that expresses our intent and desire to conduct a survey.

300.3.2 Add language in this section that expresses the Parks and Forest intent to be proactive in not only taking opportunities to educate the public when they arise, but to also log when doing so. Tammi Schraufnagel suggested that we could add something like a podcast to our efforts. Kyle Johnson shared that the DNR already has wonderful podcast that address a variety of topics that could be added, periodically, to the face book page.

Chapter 400

415 The Forestry Committee has used a stewardship committee as a vetting tool within county forest land acquisitions.

460.1 The DNR likes to see a two to one (2:1) ratio as a starting point when the county entertains the options to sell or trade property. In addition, the transaction should always benefit the public when considering such dealings. The DNR has a three-level review process for these types of contacts. Most counties seem to be using this 2:1 ratio as a starting point.

460.6 The text in this section should reflect that sale proceeds would be used to buy additional forest land.

Chapter 500

Land Management Use – Advertising is done via Newspaper, website, and direct mailing of bid packets to our active logger list. These advertising options adequately satisfy the DNR’s expectation.

505.8.3 Currently there are two (2) year contract that give loggers options for extensions. Often there are sales that do go beyond four (4) years; therefore, we have added language for a built-in increase.

505.8.5 “Other cost” vs “Unforeseen cost”

505.8.7 Payment Schedule – The Committee discussed the merits and logistics of billing more frequently. It was determined that billing once per month was the most ideal considering best practices to maximize cash flow. Contractors in “good standing” means those who are current on payments, following the contract as stated, carry current insurance and have on file up to date w-9’s, etc. Currently, Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Department’s contractors are all in “good standing.” A report of aged invoices could be maintained on “Report Central” for the committee’s review.

505.8.15 After discussion regarding “wetlands and 15-foot filter strips of land” and hearing from Kyle Johnson from the DNR, it was decided to leave the language here as is.

520.4 Military Maneuvers – When ROTC groups and the like want to use Lowes Creek or Tower Ridge Parks we suggest that LL Phillips be used instead as it is the better option for the public while they are in use. Also, a written agreement is necessary prior to any events such as these which enables the Parks and Forest Department to inform the appropriate individuals and allows for any preparation necessary.

Page 25 A fee of \$200 is the common standard, but the Parks and Forest Department may elect to waive or increase these fees as deemed necessary.

Chapter 600

610.3.11 Spraying for gypsy moths is not actually spraying, but rather a release technique of pheromones which suppress the outbreak of insects according to Kyle Johnson from the DNR. If an actual outbreak of insects happens, then insecticides would be used at the descension of DATCP who's responsibility it is to notify the public when such an event is taking place. It was decided that the committee will make every effort to notify the public when spraying should occur.

Page 600-7 DATCP is the organization responsible for surveys. The last survey was taken in 2004.

610.5.3 When it comes to invasive species, Jacob Tumm indicated that the Parks and Forest approach to fighting these sorts of "battles" should be focused primarily on the ones we can "win." The department continues to look for areas where the problems with invasive species can either be mitigate or eradicated to preserve optimal forest health within a reasonable cost benefit and not let the invasive species get a foot hold.

Page 600-9 Assessing infection sites are ongoing as foresters are in the field.

It was decided that next week's meeting (March 8, 2021) would reconvene at 4:00pm rather than 5:00pm to further discuss the rest of the 15-Year Plan as well as items on the regular agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.

The next meeting date was set for March 8, 2001, at 4:00pm, virtually.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Winnie Parker
Committee Clerk
Administrative Specialist III – Parks & Forest