

## **MINUTES**

Eau Claire County

### **• Committee on Parks & Forest •**

Monday, March 8, 2021

**4:00 p.m.**

Virtual Meeting

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

Others Present: Josh Pedersen – Director, Jody Gindt – Supervisor, Winnie Parker – Administrative Specialist III (Committee Clerk), Kyle Johnson – DNR County Forest Liaison, Erika Gullarud – Fiscal Associate, Geoff Goodland, Mike Lea, Lynn Thompson, Erik Keisler, Jay Plummer, Joelene Smith.

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Chair Selljes called the meeting to order at 4:00pm and confirmed public posting of the meeting.

Verbal roll call was taken by the committee clerk and is noted above under present.

No members of the public were present.

The committee reviewed the minutes from the January 1, February 8, and March 1, 2021 meetings. Supervisor Christopherson moved to approve the minutes as amended. The minutes passed unanimously.

Corrections and comments continue on the 15-Year Plan.

#### **205.1 Recycling and Sustainability Coordinator**

##### **700**

**715** Express in this section the intent to develop an access plan to map and provide criteria for restricted and non-restricted area goals to publish in the next few years.

##### **800**

**805** Add language to be more inclusive. Take “people” out and replace with text “to be enjoyed and benefitted by present and future generations.”

**810.6** Add a statement in this area regarding the review process for deviations which is documented by the DNR. Any deviations from BMP document in timber sales prospectus are reviewed by one (1) DNR representative and two (2) county representatives. The committee will be informed of deviations made including an explanation as a supplement to the maps showing deviations from the BMP.

**815.1** The language is vague in this area regarding county harvest of firewood for sale. In wind areas, timber will be salvaged by what ever means practical. Trees at Harstad and Coon Fork, historically, have been used for firewood sales. There have been recent modifications how this is currently done. Parks and Forest Department orders a semi-load of firewood and processes the load ourselves.

**815.14** Insert language here such as “The Committee will work closely with the Recycling and Sustainability Coordinator to reach the county’s 2025 carbon neutral goals by addressing these issues.” Designate someone in the Parks and Forest Department to address issues of climate change and sustainability. Discussion around adding and mandating these duties to the Recycling and Sustainability Coordinator might not be feasible as we do not know their job description, background in forestry practices, and knowledge of the various species already in the forests. A multi-use approach is most ideal. The wording of the introduction and last paragraphs in this section need to be adjusted. The Committee will rely on Josh and Kyle to help clear up the wording.

**820** Kyle Johnson and Jacob Tumm have made considerable contributions to this section.

**825.5.7** Eau Claire County will continue to manage 73 acres of a natural white pine stand as stated.

**825.7.2** Add a sentence that encourages volunteerism.

**830.1** Spell out High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) in this section.

**830.3.5** Discouragement of airboats, including non-sound airboats on “wild lakes” of which, at present, are not being enforced.

**835.2** Review and add nonspecific cutting restrictions. Define “good visual and aesthetic practices” so going forward the committee is aware of what to do. The “practices” as stated fail to address how to handle these restrictions. Being more specific would be helpful.

**900 Deer Hunting and TR** – Joelene has observed less restrictive behaviors in the past several years for deer hunting activities happening simultaneously with cross country skiing. She suggests that there needs to be a change in the county code.

**930.1 Note on hunting** Waysides are not open. Tower Ridge has restrictions around this special use area. Please mention waysides here and refer to code where there is a list.

**930.5** E-bikes are worth mentioning in this document because they are growing in popularity. Even though they have a “motor” they still require peddling for forward motion. While they do not allow for more damage and/or maintenance to trails, E-bikes should be added in this area as a sub-section under mountain bikes.

**930.5** Amish buggies are not a motor vehicle and do not require a vehicle license, yet they take up space and additional individuals who use the facility without paying the usual parking fee. The Committee will confer with other townships who actively engage with this population to see how they address this issue. Express an intent in the language in this section to consider actively pursuing this issue and identify appropriate action. Also, because the Amish are fare minded people, the Committee could reach out to those in our area and get their ideas about what could be done about this issue.

**940** It has been the county's long-term goal to pursue a comprehensive county-wide joining of all recreation trails.

**940.1 Hiking Trails** Riverview wayside hiking trails do not necessarily need to be mentioned here.

**950.1** Explore enforcement.

**950.2** Because of increase in recreation activities, insert stronger language here as to the need of adding additional staff.

**1000** Attachments

**2000** Due to time restraints, this section will be taken up at the beginning of the next meeting April 12, 2021, at 5:00pm virtually. In addition, Joelene thanks the Parks and Forest team, especially Josh Pedersen, for their efforts in working on this exhaustive document.

**Eau Claire Energy Easement Request** There was brief discussion regarding this standard easement request. Joe Knight moved to approve the easement. All in favor, none opposed.

**Eau Claire National Rifle Club Annual Report** They are required to provide an annual report. NRC is fiscally viable and has seen less public participation lately. They have investigated a tax-exempt status but are still required to pay taxes. At their annual meeting, the board choose to sell ammunition for six (6) electronic targets to be used at events which allows for electronic scoring and greatly enhances events. Last year the ECNFC worked on updating their sound mitigation and plans go forward to lower firing mark by installing a berm and sound filter on the range. In April and May this big effort will be done primarily through volunteer efforts. They hope to get a grant to offset the cost which is around \$11,000. Even though they have not yet been awarded the grant, they plan to keep moving forward on this project as much of the materials needed are on site. Stelljes has offered for them to use the Tower Ridge sand produced by dredging in this project.

**Beaver Creek Free Park Days** Joe Knight moves that the Eau Claire County Parks and Forest observe Earth Week for the entire week of April 19 – 25 by having the parks open and free on those dates. Those spearheading this effort to participate in Earth Day for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row will use volunteers to put up signs at each of the parks and take them down after the week is over. Beaver Creek Reserve appreciates this partnership and believe it is a great way to showcase the gems that the county has to offer. All approved, none opposed.

**Segregation of Duties with Park Entrance Fee Collection** In the 2018 Financial Audit, several corrective measures to improve various "best practices" were identified. One of those items were the collection, handling, and processing of the Annual and Daily Park Passes as well as the Tower Ridge Winter Passes. Best practices dictate that more than one person be present throughout this process. In order to comply with the suggestions of the audit, it is proposed that the monies be collected and taken directly to the treasury who would count and process these passes. Job descriptions need to be changed and Human Relations approval is required. Aside from that, any other revenue will be handled much the same way.

**Real-time Payment Machines** Many state parks and other municipalities are using these types of machines which are proven to be very reliable. The Committee is keen to allow for a few machines to be installed in such a way as to discourage vandalism yet this year if monies could be allocated to

this endeavor. Erika discussed how “carry forward” finances are typically used for already existing or incomplete projects from the previous year. Josh will look further into the cost, possible rental, and budget.

**ATV Weight Limits and Lengths** - The Committee needs to take a “straw poll” today in order to get back to the WCFA as to whether or not Eau Claire County would support the changes being discussed at the state level. The definition of UTV based on weight has increased from 2,000 lbs. to 3,000 lbs. Legislation is coming soon, so the timing of responding to this issue is of the essence. These types of machines are becoming bigger and more powerful which is a concern for the soil and water quality, erosion, and the like. There is a concern about losing grant monies because of multiuse trails. Other counties (4 or 5 of them) do have weight restrictions and do not support this proposal. Even though the county has little voice “at the table” it is the county that maintains these trails. Additional weight will cause problems and have increase cost to maintain these trails. Missy Christopherson moved that Eau Claire County does not support weight increase beyond the 2,000 lbs. All in favor, none opposed.

**Directors Report** The project timeline for the septic field replacement project is scheduled for May 1 – June 31, 2021. Please let Josh know your priorities for capital improvement projects as they need to be submitted by Matt Theisen. A few priorities that Josh mentioned were the office at Coon Fork and Lake Altoona Park Improvement Project. Please bring what you see as a priority to the next meeting for discussion.

**Committee Updates** Most recent Timber Sales (2008) have been cancelled in 2012 due to wet conditions. Information is still being gathered.

The next meeting date was set for April 12, 2001, at 5:00pm, virtually.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:53pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,



Winnie Parker

Committee Clerk

Administrative Specialist III – Parks & Forest