

MINUTES OF May 14, 2025, IRON COUNTY FORESTRY & PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Scott Erickson, chair, at the Iron County Forestry Conference Room, 607 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave N., Hurley WI 54534. Forestry/Parks Committee members present include P. Hanson, W. Thomas, S. Erickson, M. Loreti, T. Hiller, and Eli Ladwig, Logger Representative. Others present during the meeting included: Eric Peterson, Forest Administrator; Tana Osterman, Highway Office Manager; Larry Youngs, County Board Chair; Katy Broquard & Ryan Peasley.

Eric Peterson verified proper public notice of the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes.** Motion by P. Hanson, supported by W. Thomas, approving the minutes from March 12, 2025, as written. All in favor, motion carried.

**Public Comment:** No public comments were made.

**Chairman Report:** See attached report.

**Administrator's Report:** See attached report.

**DNR Report:** Katy reported

- Time Standards are at 1,911 hours or 77% of commitment.
- June 28<sup>th</sup> is the DNR Fiscal Year end.
- DNR staff has been doing field work and fire staffing.
- Attended WCFA Spring Conference and worked Earth Day Programs at Hurley and Mercer.

Ryan reported

- New Foresters hired – Mercer Ranger and Mellen Public Lands Forester.
- Fire Season started slow but has gotten quite busy.
- Thanks to Highway and Forestry for fire staffing the dozer for standby needs.

**Logger Representative Report:**

- Many loggers went south to participate in storm clean up from last fall's hurricanes.
- Regional mill inventories are low but they are not panicking – yet.
- Sawlog markets are all over the place with tariff concerns effecting demand and pricing.

**Review and approve 2024 Forestry & Parks Annual Report:** Motion by W. Thomas, supported by T. Hiller, to approve the 2024 Forestry & Parks Annual Report as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

**Gravel Pit Royalty Adjustment.** Discussion held regarding the royalty fee for gravel pits. The Highway Department previously approved a \$0.25 per yard fee reduction for towns. The current fund balance is \$118,000, which will be used for stripping, reclamation and property acquisition. An additional \$30,000 - \$40,000 is projected to be added this year.

Motion by W. Thomas, supported by P. Hanson, to approve a \$0.25 royalty fee reduction. All in favor, motion carried.

**Vehicle Transfer - 2017 Ford F-150.** Discussion held regarding the transfer of Truck #26 (2017 F-150 4x4 Extended Cab) to the county fleet.

Motion by M. Loreti, supported by T. Hiller, to transfer the vehicle to the Zoning Department, which will result in Human Services gaining an additional jeep. All in favor, motion carried.

**WisDot Hwy 122 Project (Trail 2 Impact)** Discussion on WisDot's proposed project affecting Hwy 122 near Trail 2. The state plans to acquire approximately 400-500 sq feet of land to gain ownership of the sidewalk accessing Saxon apartments. The project will not impact Trail 2. Construction is expected to begin in 2027, pending funding availability, with a likely start date in 2028.

### **Motorized Recreational Trails & Routes Ordinance Update**

Discussion on revising the ordinance, revisions include:

- Trail Opening / Closure – The Forest Administrator to provide a public service announcement
- Added language regarding Unclassified Recreational Vehicles (URV) to the sections on:
  - Big Game Hunting
  - Hunting Purposes
  - Trapping Purposes
- Public Land (b) No person shall operate any MRV on public lands, trails, or roads **designated as closed** to vehicles by a sign, physical barrier or gate (either open or closed) placed by the Federal, State, County or Local government agency controlling the lands.
- Damage by MRV – No person shall operate any MRV in such a manner as to cause intentional soil displacement, soil erosion, soil or water pollution or other environmental damage on any authorized trail, roads, land or waterbody.
- Creating a local fine schedule, so funds remain with Iron County
- Suggested removal of Tribal Land penalties, Tribal jurisdiction.
- Eliminating reference to children under age 16 (covered by state law)
- Don't allow motorcycles, no funding.
- Omit the County Trunk Highways section, as it is regulated by the Highway Department ordinance already.

Motion by T. Hiller, supported by W. Thomas, to approve the revised Motorized Recreational Trails & Routes Ordinance and forward it to the Law Enforcement Committee. All in favor, motion carried.

### **Review of Parks, Navigable Waters and Forests, and Large Public Gatherings Ordinance.**

Discussion on restructuring the Ordinance.

- Dividing into separate sections
- Creating a citation structure and associated fines
- Removing Sheriff's Department references
- Eliminating Weber Lake (not under Forestry jurisdiction) from Boating Sec 12-1-2 © (1)
- Separating regulations on camping and public gatherings

**Closed Session**

Motion by W. Thomas, supported by P. Hanson, to move to closed session per Wis Stat. Sec 19.85(1)(e) to discuss potential property acquisition. Roll call vote: P. Hanson, T. Hiller, W. Thomas, M. Loreti, E. Ladwig and S. Erickson. All in favor, motion carried.

**Return to Open Session**

Motion by W. Thomas, supported by M. Loreti, to return to the open session. Roll call vote: P. Hanson, T. Hiller, W. Thomas, M. Loreti, E. Ladwig and S. Erickson. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion by T. Hiller, supported by W. Thomas, to forward the property acquisition to the Finance Committee. All in favor, motion carried.

**Approval of Bills.** Motion by P. Hanson, supported by M. Loreti, approving the bills as presented. All in favor, motion carried.

**Set Next Meeting Date.** The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 16, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Forestry Conference Room.

Chair S. Erickson adjourned the meeting.

tlo/ejp

## Administrator's Report

### Forestry Committee Meeting – May 14, 2025

2025 YTD Timber Sale Receipts -- \$553,934.35 vs. \$529,522.97 in 2024      Difference - \$24,411.38 (4.6%)

#### Forestry Activity

- 5 Logging Crews working on ICF.
- 6 active sales (hauling, closeouts, etc.)
- Spring road restrictions were lifted April 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Optimism for the carbon market through 2025.
- Quarterly check in with Anew scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup>.

#### Spring Timber Sale

- 17 sales offered for bid over 2,193 acres.
- Estimated sale volume of 863MBF and 34,771 cords.
- Estimated minimum sale value of \$725,803.00
- Bid opening June 5<sup>th</sup> at 9 am.

#### County Parks

- Lake of the Falls park opened May 1<sup>st</sup> for the fishing opener.
- Saxon Harbor, Weber Lake, and Schomberg opened May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- New campsites at Lake of the Falls should be ready to use for Memorial Day weekend. 15 sites. *New*
- Saxon Harbor has 2 – 28' slips open for the season.
- Docks installed at Saxon on May 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Low water depth and sedimentation in the channel at Saxon Harbor is causing issues for larger sailboats.
- 2 slip holders can barely get their sailboat in the water but then wouldn't be able to sail out of the marina.
- USACE has been surveying, and we are tentatively scheduled for dredging in 2026.
- Iron County will have some dredging in the boat lift well and along the transient wall as well for 2026.

#### County Forest Roads

- Spring grading begins next week.
- Gravel crusher has started in the Oma Pit.

#### Wildlife Openings

- Wildlife opening mowing will begin next week.

#### Recreation

- ATV trails opened May 9<sup>th</sup> for the season.
- Ross Peterson added gravel to ¾ mile + on Trail 77 in Pence.
- Steve Altman to gravel ½ mile + of Trail 10 along County J.
- ATV clubs have been grading trails.
- ICF crew fabricated 12 16' gates for placement at major trail intersections.

#### Miscellaneous

- Hosted the spring Rec Council meeting.
- Presented to the Towns Association at Town of Oma.
- Participated in WCFA Administrator's Quarterly Conference Call.