

MINUTES
Ashland County Forestry and Recreation Committee
Ashland County Forestry Dept Office
304 West Michigan St, Butternut, WI 54514
April 2, 2014

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Jerry Teague at 9:00 AM.

Members present: Jerry Teague, Carl Kubley, Helen Croteau, Gary Mertig and Frank Kempf.

Others present: ACSA-Bill Chandler, Recreation Officer-Jim Clapero, DNR Liaison-Tom Piikkila, DNR Wildlife Biologist-Seth Jonas, DNR Fish Biologist-Lawrence Eslinger, County Board Chair-Pete Russo, Forest Adm-Chris Hoffman, Assist Forest Adm-Matt Schultz, Forester-Jerome Wotachek, Secretary-Marion Pohl.

The minutes of the March 4, 2014 Forestry and Recreation Committee meeting were approved with a motion by Carl Kubley, second by Helen Croteau. Motion carried.

Snowmobile trail business - Bill C handed out information about the new Wisconsin Trail Pass under WI Act 142. This is a new law that will go into effect on July 1, 2015. Act 142 requires each sled operating on trails to display a WI-Trail Pass to be purchased annually. This is separate from the WI snowmobile registration. Residents and non-residents of Wisconsin will have to have the trail pass sticker. The money from the trail pass will go into the state snowmobile program's segregated fund. The cost of the trail pass sticker will be \$10.00 if you are a member of a snowmobile club. If you choose not to join a club, the cost is \$30.00 per snowmobile. The registration fee will be \$30.00 for 3 years. The non-resident trail pass will be \$50.00. This additional funding is needed to keep the snowmobile program going statewide.

Bill also reported that a groomer operators appreciation dinner was held at Lakewoods Resort recently. This was for groomer operators from Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer counties. Other people attending paid for the dinner. That money was divided up among the counties.

Bill said he asked the City of Ashland for financial assistance to help defray the

grooming costs. The City of Ashland gave them \$2,000.00

The trails are still good, but will be officially closed March 31, 2014.

Recreation Officer's report is attached.

Jim reported that he is investigating illegal cutting of birch twigs on the Ashland County Forest. Chris said about 3 acres were cut on. Frank K asked if the Forestry Dept could help the birch twiggers. Chris said last year some employees of an area factory were cutting twigs in the ROW without a permit. Chris said he did talk to the factory manager that he would work with him and no one responded for a follow-up. Frank K said we need to work with the area factory, and he will contact the factory manager to get a project started. Chris said he would write up a permit for the factory and set up an area for the factory people to cut on. That way Chris would have control of the twig cutting.

Tourism - Frank K reported that Ashland Chamber of Commerce received a mini JEM grant for mural projects. Also the "Birding Festival" will be May 14th- 16th. The Tourism Committee is contacting area restaurants to know which restaurants will be open for people in the area for "birding."

A request for \$1,000 from the Wisconsin County Forests Association was tabled until the May meeting with a motion by Carl Kubley, second by Helen Croteau. Motion carried. The Committee did not receive a formal request and Chris will have it at the May meeting. The money is for the Discover Wisconsin filming of the county forests in Wisconsin.

Fish Biologist's report - Lawrence handed out information on fish surveys done on area lakes and the Spring 2014 sampling plans of area lakes by shocking.

Wildlife Biologist's report - Seth discussed the deer management units. Ashland County would become 1 unit. Also he discussed the changes in the deer kill permits.

Seth said Ashland County will have their openings and trails mowed this summer by a DNR Tech. Frank asked if the openings and trails could be places where people could go to get twigs. Seth said he would be willing to help out.

The Conservation Congress Spring Hearing is April 14th at the Courthouse in Ashland. The deer herd status topic will be discussed then. The Winter Severity Index is 158 - a very severe winter for wildlife.

DNR Liaison's report - Tom P said he has been updating timber sales.

Forest Adm's report - Chris said he received the information requested by the Committee from Bruce Prentice about reimbursing the Conservation Congress delegates for travel expenses attending meetings.

Chris reported that the logging is slowing down as roads bands are posted. The timber sale revenue as of March 31st is \$362,000.

The vouchers were approved and signed with a motion by Helen Croteau, second by Gary Mertig. Motion carried.

The next Forestry and Recreation Committee meeting will be Wednesday, May 7, 2014, 9:00 AM, Forestry Dept office, Butternut, WI.

Jerry T thanked Helen Croteau for her time on the County Board and the Forestry and Recreation Committee and enjoyed working with her.

The meeting was adjourned with a motion by Helen C, second by Carl Kubley. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:47 AM.

Submitted by
Marion Pohl