

MINUTES
Ashland County Forestry & Recreation Committee
Ashland County Forestry Dept
304 West Michigan St, Butternut, WI 54514
February 7, 2018

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Gary Mertig at 9:00 AM.

Members present: Gary Mertig, Carl Kubley, Pat Daoust, Marty Vitek and Kathy Schutte.

Others present: ACSA-Bill Chandler, Recreation Officer-Jim Clapero, DNR Wildlife-Jenna Kosnicki, DNR Fish-Zach Lawson, DNR Forester-Sara Stack, Forest Administrator-Chris Hoffman, Assistant Forest Administrator-Matt Schultz, Secretary-Marion Pohl, Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce-Mary McPhetridge and Mellen Snowmobile Club-Bill Nigh.

The minutes of the January 3, 2018 meeting were approved with a motion by Pat Daoust, second by Kathy Schutte. Motion carried.

Snowmobile/ATV business - Bill C. reported that Trail 13 going north to Ashland is now open. The trail was not open before due to lack of snow. Bill said snowmobile traffic throughout the county has been heavy. No complaints on trail conditions. Bill said the Glidden SnoBears Club have a 6-mile club trail (trail 13-A) that is a shortcut in the Town of Gordon that they worked on to open.

Gary M. asked Mary P. how much snowmobiling revenue brings in to the county. Gary said Price County advertises their revenue number and was wondering where this figure comes from. Mary said she would find out from Price County where they get their figures.

Mary P. asked about the Bad River Casino Trail and if there is any progress. Bill replied that the Bad River Reservation got 3/4 of a million dollars from the ATV program and they were going to start last July 2017. But from the July 2016 storm, the abutments were washed out and had to replace them. They are looking for money from the Transportation Dept.

Bill Nigh of the Mellen Snowmobile Club came to the meeting to answer any questions from the Committee about the letter that was sent out last month about grooming the trails. There were no questions asked. Bill N. commented that the trail from Clam Lake to Glidden gets a lot of use, so naturally the trail would not be good all the time. Bill N. said some weekend grooming has been helping.

Recreation Officer's report - Jim C. reported lots of snowmobiling traffic. There have been some complaints and the complaints taken care of.

DNR Fish Biologist report - Zach L. discussed the flood damage cleanup on many streams affected by the July 2016 storm and other flooding. The cleanup project is huge (silt and debris removal and terrain) and the DNR is looking for money. A meeting is being formed to discuss and plan how to do the cleanup and making a plan for future flooding.

DNR Wildlife Biologist - Jenn K. reported that she has no update on the DNR re-alignment. Jenna said she knows the county wildlife openings may be decommissioned unless the County Forestry Department can fund the maintenance of the wildlife openings themselves.

DNR Forester/Liaison - Sara S. reported that logging conditions are good now. Sara said there isn't much recon to do. Sara also reported that the Gypsy Moth may be increasing, but not so much around here. We still need to keep a watch out for the moth. Sara said the DNR will be giving out permits for birch harvesting on state forests.

Forest Administrator's report - Chris H. reported the January revenue is at \$112,000. The 10% to the towns and ½% to Town of Gordon totaled around \$81,000. The vouchers are ready for approval.

Chris reported a large attempt of theft on birch twigs happened on the county forest last month. The people were apprehended and charged with a multitude of fines. Chris said Matt and Jerome found piles of twigs and spray painted them with red paint. The thieves were quite angry when they saw what was done.

Kathy S. said she gets calls from people who want to know where to get a permit for birch twigging. Chris replied that no permits are given out for the county, federal, state or tribal forests.

Chris discussed the #3 paper machine shut down at the Flambeau mill in Park Falls. Chris said this hurts everyone including our timber sale revenue. No wood is being accepted because of the shutdown. Butch Johnson is not even taking his own wood. Also Verso in Fifield has stopped taking wood as their wood yards are filled up.

The vouchers were approved and signed with a motion by Marty Vitek, second by Kathy Schutte. Motion carried.

Gary M. asked about the video export expense voucher. Chris said the tech person who installed the security cameras came to export video on a certain day for the Sheriff's Department and then showed Matt & Jerome how to export the video.

The next Committee meeting will be Wednesday, March 7, 2018 at 9:00 AM at the Forestry Department Office, Butternut, WI.

The meeting was adjourned with a motion by Pat Daoust, second by Kathy Schutte. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Submitted by
Marion Pohl