

FORESTRY, LAND, & RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: August 12, 2025

TIME: 8:00 a.m. County Board Room, 2nd Floor, Court House, Rhinelander, WI

PRESENT: Committee Members: Almekinder, Ives, Briggs, Schultz, Sorgel (via Zoom)
Forestry Staff: Nemec, Rady, Tischendorf, Truitt
WDNR: Kristina Wells, Curt Rollman

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Almekinder called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The meeting has been properly posted in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.

APPROVE CURRENT AGENDA WITH THE ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS AT CHAIR'S DISCRETION

Motion by Briggs to approve the agenda with the order of agenda items at Chair's discretion. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion by Briggs to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2025 meeting. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

YTD Stumpage Report - Rady reported July stumpage of \$85,994.51, bringing the YTD stumpage to \$503,947.58. Currently have four active jobs.

Sorgel joined the meeting via Zoom at 8:02 a.m.

Discuss / Approve Sustainable Forestry Grant Application – Indian Village – Nemec provided a summary of the grant application that would provide 100% funding to improve access and parking for hunters as a managed wildlife opening and logging contractors for timber sale management. Additional discussion regarding options if the grant is not approved.

Motion by Ives to apply for the Sustainable Forestry Grant. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.

WDNR REPORTS

DNR Liaison – The Rhinelander ranger station have been out on various fire assignments (Manitoba, Oregon and Colorado). Scarification of Ice Mark Pine is about 85% complete. Mostly complete with dozing wildlife openings in the Town of Lynne to allow access for contracted mowing. Working on fall timber sales for Oneida County.

DNR Wildlife Biologist – Finalized a contractor for mowing of 28 wildlife openings in the Town of Lynne to start within a couple weeks. Antlerless permits will be available starting Monday, August 18, 2025.

Discuss / Approve Spruce Lake Dam Drawdown – Nemec provided background of a small County-owned earthen dam in the Town of Cassian. The department needs to do some repairs to aid in the continued maintenance of the dam. These repairs require a drawdown to the stream bed for a couple of months with no impact downstream; however, there could be potential impact to waterfowl hunters.

While in communications with Rollman, the WDNR realized this would be a great opportunity to improve the habitat for waterfowl including re-seeding for wild rice, although for the best chance of success, this would require a two-year drawdown. Costs for re-seeding would be the WDNR's responsibility.

Motion by Ives to approve the drawdown for two years and re-seed for wild rice. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

WCFA FALL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 25-26, 2025, EAGLE RIVER, WI

Approve Staff/Committee Attendance & Out of County Travel – Nemec explained these are meetings held every spring and fall in addition to the summer tours. Staff and committee are all welcome to attend.

Motion by Briggs to approve attendance and out of county travel for committee and staff. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.

DISCUSS / APPROVE MEMORIAL POLICY

Nemec outlined previous discussions regarding the memorial policy, including proposed memorial/donation walls at some recreational areas. During many hours of research and cost analysis, the decision was made to present a policy for approval that allows cash donations, benches and picnic tables at this time. Donation walls will continue to be explored and hopefully added later on and the policy can be amended at that time.

Discussion regarding trails previously named (by RASTA) within the Washburn Trail system and whether to include these trails in the memorial policy.

Motion by Briggs to approve the memorial policy as discussed (with removing RASTA trail names from the policy). Second by Sorgel. All aye, motion carried.

FRIENDS OF TOWNLINE LAKE PARK (FTLLP) UPDATE

No update provided.

Discuss/Approve Leadership Oneida County Hirschorn Law Bench – Nemec provided an update from FTLLP regarding previously discussed concerns with the donated bench. They are unable to purchase a new plank to replace the engraved one, so the recommendation is to purchase a plaque (paid for by FTLLP) engraved with “Donated by Leadership Oneida County” and place it over the engraving. The consensus regarding the location and securing of the bench is to leave it where it is and use anchors rather than cement footings to secure it to the landscape due to the proximity to the water.

Motion by Ives to approve the replacement plaque and anchors as recommended. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.

ATV PROJECT UPDATE

At Brigg’s request from the last meeting, Truitt provided ATV project updates to the Committee.

Dump Road is a new trail development project (approximately one mile) just north of Pelican Lake that serves as a connector trail. Bowen’s Bus Service was awarded the project and is about 75% complete and should be finished within the next couple weeks. Once finished, the department will replace some gates and the trail will be open for ATV use before the end of the year.

Trail 5 is an existing snowmobile trail on the south end of Minocqua/north end of Lynne that will be turned into an ATV trail from Flowage Road to Manhardt Road approximately 6.5 miles). The Oneida County Highway Department was awarded this project and have started some prep work; however, it has been pretty wet in this area. Expected to start with culvert installation late August/early September and have the project complete before snowmobile season.

Kelly Fire lane to McCord Road rehab of approximately 4-5 miles was awarded to Rynder’s, Inc. Expected to start the end of the month with fill and gravel and should be completed by early fall.

Additionally, the Wisconsin ORV (Off-Road Vehicle) Council will be meeting August 27th to award grant funding for the upcoming year. Truitt submitted several grants for consideration.

2026 BUDGET ITEMS

Discuss / Approve LTE Staffing – Nemec explained these are summer LTE positions that have been requested for several years. No change in hours requested.

Motion by Schultz to approve LTE staffing requests for 2026. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.

Discuss / Approve Forest CIP for 2026-2028

- *2026 – Replace Forestry Work Truck & Plow* – Motion by Schultz to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Sorgel. All aye, motion carried.
- *2026 – Replace Tractor (and Front End Loader)* – Originally was planned for replacement in 2028; however, significant repairs within the past few years has brought it forward sooner. Motion by Briggs to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Sorgel. All aye, motion carried.
- *2026-2028 – Shingle Mill Road Rehab* – Motion by Almekinder to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.
- *2026 – Almon Park Retaining Wall* – Working on getting a professional opinion and estimate on a long-term fix. If an estimate is received and the CIP needs to be adjusted, the department can bring it back to the September meeting. Discussion regarding zoning limitations and options. Motion by Ives to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.

Sorgel left the meeting at 8:57 a.m.

- *2026 – Almon Park Restroom Improvements* – Nemec discussed the difficulty in getting contractors to provide estimates for skylight repairs and/or roof replacement. If an estimate is received and the CIP needs to be adjusted, the department will bring it back to the September meeting. Motion by Almekinder to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.
- *2027 – Replace Forestry Work Truck* – Motion by Ives to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Briggs. All aye, motion carried.
- *2027 – Purchase Boom Attachment for Tractor* – Motion by Ives to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.
- *2027-2028 – Rozell Road Rehab* – Motion by Ives to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.
- *2028 – Replace Backhoe/Loader with Mini Excavator* – Discussion on the versatility/usability of a backhoe versus a mini excavator. The department would be able to utilize a backhoe/loader from OC Highway when needed. Motion by Almekinder to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Ives. All aye, motion carried.
- *2028 – Forestry Shop Repair* – Discussion of options to prevent ice build-up. Motion by Ives to approve and forward to CIP Committee. Second by Schultz. All aye, motion carried.

Briggs left the meeting at 9:25 a.m.

INVOICES PAID REPORT

The committee received the list of invoices paid in July 2025.

Vouchers for the month totaled \$86,160.35 including \$61,737.61 for grant funded and/or reimbursed expenses. Also paid RASTA \$12,450 for July-December trail maintenance, \$1,100 for tractor repairs and \$2,000 for the dump truck chassis tariff surcharge.

Informational only.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW (BUDGET / ACTUAL REPORT)

The committee was provided a copy of the department's year to date budget for review. A few accounts currently show over budget and will need line item transfers to cover negative balances. No concerns at this time.

Informational only.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/MEETINGS

- Next meeting – September 9, 2025
- 2026 Forestry Department Budget
- Cell Tower Lease Agreement – Town of Little Rice
- Winter ATV Trails & ATV Projects Update

ADJOURNMENT

With business completed, Chair Almekinder adjourned the meeting at 9:27 a.m.

ROBERT ALMEKINDER
COMMITTEE CHAIR

TANYA TISCHENDORF
COMMITTEE SECRETARY