

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
April 10, 2023  
County Board Room**

**Members Present:** Fred Strand; Jeffrey Silbert; Larry Fickbohm; Charly Ray; Steve Sandstrom

**Staff in Attendance:** Jason Bodine, Administrator; Steve Probst, Assistant Administrator; Cassie Taylor, Office Manager

**Others in Attendance:** Joseph Lebouton, WI DNR; Tessa Levens, Mark Sherman, Elizabeth Andre, Kate Ullman, Mike Radtke, Sam Christman, John Kotar, Cindy McDonnell, Katherine Jenkins, Chuck Finn, Donn Christensen

**1. Call to Order of Forestry and Parks Committee Meeting.**

This meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM.

**2. Public Comment:**

Public Comment opens at 6:02 PM. Tessa Levens speaks in opposition to spring timber sale offering tract 4-23, adjacent to her property. Eight citizens in attendance speak against the spring timber sale offering, tract 27-21, Ashwabay block. John Kotar offers his services as a retired forest ecology professor, to assist with current and future timber sale development. Public comment closes at 6:31 PM.

**3. Approval of the February 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes.**

*MOTION: (Fickbohm, Ray) Receive minutes as presented and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.*

**4. Approval of the March 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes.**

*MOTION: (Silbert, Sandstrom) Receive minutes as presented and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.*

**5. Presentation: Erika Lang, Landmark Conservancy.** Partnering with Landmark Conservancy regarding the transfer and management of land along the Lake Superior shoreline in the Town of Bayfield. One of the reasons for a transfer of ownership now is due to the deadline for a grant application. Memorandum of Understanding between Bayfield County and Landmark Conservancy lays out roles and responsibilities of both Landmark and the County. Bodine adds that Landmark has been a consistent partner; Brownstone Trail will require a lot of work but the MOU has us moving in the right direction. Silbert inquires about liability and Erika confirms that liability transfers with ownership. Fickbohm adds that he spoke with Bob Anderson in highway regarding potential to obtain state funds because of proximity to Hwy 13. Also asks about presence of hazardous materials on Maki property and Erika confirms that a Phase I Site Assessment was conducted, nothing found. Discussion is had regarding existing structures and plans for them, potential for native vegetation and shrub plantings at site, and workload implications and cost to forestry department.

*MOTION: (Silbert, Sandstrom) Forward Memorandum of Understanding and transfer of ownership proposal to Executive Board for approval. All: Yes. Carried.*

- 6. Resolution: Application for a Stewardship Local Unit of Government (LUG) Grant.** This is a 50/50 match grant that would potentially provide around \$200k for restoration work on the Brownstone Trail. Awards are decided by the DNR. Deadline for application is May 1. This is one of the reasons for the transfer of ownership now. Landmark would provide most of the heavy lifting in grant development, but the county would be the applicant.

*MOTION: (Fickbohm, Ray) Forward resolution and recommend grant application to Executive Board. All: Yes. Carried.*

- 7. Resolution: Amendment to the 2020-2024 Bayfield County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.** The following information would replace the current language (under the City of Bayfield section, which is where the Brownstone Trail is listed now):

#### BROWNSTONE TRAIL

##### Existing Facilities:

Established in 1996 by Landmark Conservancy in partnership with private landowners who own the majority of property that the trail traverses, this approximate 2.25 mile trail connects the City of Bayfield's historic downtown at the corner of Wilson Avenue and S. 3rd Street to Pikes Bay Marina and Port Superior located in the Town of Bayfield. The trail is a highly used, public trail that travels alongside Lake Superior on an old railroad grade. Uses are non-motorized in nature and include walking, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. The trail passes over brownstone cliffs and through a forested area of the shoreline that is home to native trees and shrubs as well as wildlife including migratory birds. Like other lakeshore areas, various sections of the Brownstone Trail and its lakeside slopes have been impacted by natural and man-made causes through the years. Therefore, at times, sections of the Brownstone Trail may be closed or re-routed.

##### Recommended Improvements:

- Additional rest/seating areas along the trail
- Improved walking surfaces where needed through regrading, placing gravel or other appropriate materials, fixing drainage, installing stairs, etc.
- Stabilizing and restoring eroded areas on and adjacent to the trail through a variety of actions including purchasing property nearby to achieve restoration goals
- Creating additional public trailheads
- Creating community park/natural areas adjacent to the trail with appropriate infrastructure such as signage, pavilions, parking areas, bathroom facilities, green space, additional trails, benches, EV charging stations, etc.
- Invasive plant removal and control activities
- Native plantings
- Connecting Brownstone Trail to Salmo Trail

*MOTION: (Sandstrom, Silbert) Forward amendment to County Board with recommendation for approval. All: Yes. Carried.*

- 8. 2023 Spring Timber Sale Offering.** A total of 33 sales, covering 2,312 acres, will be included in this offering. The total minimum bid value is nearly \$1.2 million. This includes the sale located within the Ashwabay SMA. Of the 33 sales, 6 are re-offers. The re-offers cover 274 acres and have a min bid value of roughly \$89k. Discussion is had regarding the complexity of the Ashwabay SMA sale.

***MOTION: (Silbert, Ray) Approve 2023 Spring Timber Sale Offering. All: Yes. Carried.***

**9. Monthly Reports.**

- a) Forestry (all updates): Stumpage revenue for the month of March was just over \$465k. Current total timber sale revenue is just under \$1.05 million. The revenue received last month was about average, as is the current pace (which is slightly above last year). Expenses are on target.
  - a. Carbon Project. ACR is still reviewing project. Meeting to discuss marketing – it’s rare for nearly all carbon revenues to be reinvested in green projects. Hopefully this will resonate with potential buyers. Local interest from XCEL and Birkie to invest.
  - b. Land Acquisition Projects. Sand River still on hold as we await award announcement from NOAA. Agreement with TPL has been extended for one more month. If there is another delay in NOAA award, next steps may need to be strategized. Hoping for an announcement in the next 1-2 weeks.
  - c. 2022 Accomplishment Report. Plan to present during May meeting.
  - d. Forest Carbon Offset Reserve Fund (FCOR). COR was recently approved. Will need to start drafting guidance documents for primary programs listed in FCOR: recreation, land acquisition, and forest management.
  - e. Sustainable Forestry Grant. DNR has advised us not to apply, as storm damage projects are being considered the highest priority.
- b) Campgrounds and Day Use Parks. Hope to open campgrounds by mid-May. Coordinating with Highway on various projects including overflow parking area at Twin Bear, repairs to retaining walls at Twin Bear, and grading at Delta Lake and Twin Bear.
- c) Trails and Recreation.
  - a. Motorized Trails: Snowmobile trails closed March 31. Expecting total maintenance expenses to be at an all-time high, due to the heavy snowfall and grooming required.
    - i. Motorized Grant Applications. Deadline for DNR motorized grant applications is April 15. Currently working on routine annual maintenance applications. No special projects this year. Currently working with Alliance and ATV clubs to identify potential projects for 2024 - will require planning and numerous site visits over the course of this summer/fall.
  - b. Non-Motorized Trails: Starting to prep for trail projects: touch ups to Lost Creek Falls trail, Siskiwit Falls trail improvements and construction, orchard maintenance at Siskiwit Falls, and plan development at Fire Hill. Working with Bayfield Nordic and Corny Trails Club to determine whether Siskiwit orchard ski trail makes sense. Also updating rec use agreement with CAMBA and Birkie. Expecting work on Cable SMA plan to begin late spring.
  - c. Yurts. Current occupancy rates presented by Bodine. Ray inquires if there is a conservation easement at Jolly property, preventing a yurt from being placed there. Bodine states that there isn’t an easement, but there are ordinances and rec restrictions in place. Big Rock is still being considered for possible location of fourth yurt.
  - d. Events. Nothing new to report.

***MOTION: (Ray, Sandstrom) Receive reports as presented and place on file. All: Yes. Carried.***

**10. 2023 Town Road Aid Projects.** Bodine's recommendations for Town Road Aid distributions are presented. Town of Russell's aid amount is noted to be higher than usual. This is because of the tremendous amount of recent logging near Peterson Hill Road, requiring significant repair.

*MOTION: (Silbert, Ray) Approve recommended Town Road Aid funding. All: Yes. Carried.*

**11. Recreational Use Request: Cable Natural History Museum.** Northwoods geology walk/hike at Siskiwit Falls property in July 2023. Expecting a dozen or so participants who will be guided by one of the museum's naturalists. Bodine recommends approval.

*MOTION: (Ray, Fickbohm) Approve recreational use request. All: Yes. Carried.*

**12. Land Use Request: Iron River Area Chamber of Commerce.** Northern Pines Sled Dog Race Committee requesting permission to establish another 3/4 mile section of trail. New trail would connect to previously approved network and would eliminate dual use issue on existing trail. Bodine recommends approval.

*MOTION: (Ray, Silbert) Approve land use request. All: Yes. Carried.*

**13. Committee Members Discussion.** Sandstrom inquires about trail buffers at Ashwabay and how to ensure loggers are precise in their cutting. Steve Probst indicates that he will be paying extra attention to this sale. Bodine adds that trees are marked and harvest requirements are detailed. Discussion is had regarding plans for Pigeon Lake. Bodine adds that department is working with Green Fire for development of more interpretive signage and educational materials.

**14. Joseph Lebouton:** Appreciates the thoughtful and attentive response of committee members to public opinion regarding the Ashwabay sale.

The next Forestry and Parks Committee meeting has been scheduled for **Monday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 P.M.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

Submitted by,  
**Cassie Taylor**