

# Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee

## Meeting Minutes

### January 18, 2023

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The monthly meeting of the Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee was called to order at 3:01 pm Wednesday, January 18, 2023.

**Present from the Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee:** Phil Schneider, Terry DuSell, John Kalepp, Jerry Biller, Philip Unterschuetz

**Also present:** Ashley Heath – Interim Forest Administrator/Admin Coord., Jerrad Macholl – Assistant Forest Administrator, Heidi Woldhuis – Office Manager, Mike Zimmer – Parks Manager, Pat Zimmer – WI DNR

**Present from the Public:**

George Sihsmann, Don Mansky, Dave Williams

**Approval of Minutes:**

*Motion by DuSell and second by Kalepp to approve December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 meeting minutes; Motion carried*

**Public Comment:**

- Update on ATV and Snowmobile Trails

**Parks and Recreation Report:**

Mike reported on the following:

- Snowmobile clubs working to open trails
  - State has requested clubs upload expenses regarding storm damage cleanup into the SNARS program
  - Most trails are open at this time
- Working with Tom Hall regarding emergency funding eligibility
- Weirgor ATV Trail
  - Working with Minocqua grading regarding hauling and spreading gravel
  - No frost on the new trail development, needs to be frozen down to get equipment in and out
- Inventorying damage within the campgrounds. Have yet to get to all the campgrounds
- Well has been drilled at Josie Creek campground
  - Ditching to the clubhouse will be completed in the Spring.
  - Additional costs will occur to complete the project.

**Timber Sale Report:**

Jerrad reported on the following:

- Ted Strzok –
  - Finished River Rd. Moved into the sale next to it, is mostly cut already.
  - Hauling more wood than in past years
  - Working through Skinner Creek Rd Sale
  - North Bergseth Rd sale – pulled out hopeful for colder weather
  - Moved into Mansfield Rd N. – most of the sale is laid down
  - Shark Remark – Weirgor Rd. working through the last 35-40 acres
  - Hauling wood from sales from last winter
    - Hause Rd and Minnette
  - Hauling wood from around the Ski Trail area

# Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee

## Meeting Minutes

### January 18, 2023

---

- Wood off of Slack Road that needs to be hauled
- Northwest Hardwoods
  - Moose Ear Road – possibly done by spring
  - Notorious B.I.G. sale – Minette Rd
- Tom King
  - North of Serly Camp
- R.M. Bay
  - Elk Knuckle - lump sum sale, the potential to finish this winter
- Futurewood
  - Felix Rd sale
- Revenue is at \$354,844.20

#### **Administrator Report:**

Ashley reported on the following:

- Jerrad accepted the Forest Administrator position pending County Board approval
- Dane Gravesen will be appointed as the Assistant Forest Administrator pending the County Board Meeting.
- Posting will be put out to hire a new Forester

#### **Public Lands AdHoc Committee Updates:**

Jerrad received a call from Doug Brown regarding communication around Ordinance language. Jerrad will continue to revamp the ordinance to meet the criteria for implementing the ordinance.

#### **Summer Interns:**

- Discussed posting for summer interns
- 3 interns for campground/parks maintenance requested
- Recreational use has massively increased resulting in increased summer maintenance needs
- Storm Clean up needs

#### **Annual Report:**

Jerrad shared the Annual Report data. Completed the year with record timber revenue and the majority of the year with reduced staffing.

Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
January 18, 2023



**2022 County Forest Report**  
TO: RUSK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

I. This is to convey to you a report of the operations and accomplishments of the Rusk County Forestry Department for the calendar year of 2022.

II. Parks and Recreation

1. Parks and boat landings were maintained by the Forestry and Parks Department staff
2. Josie Creek Shooting Range was maintained by Forestry and Parks Department staff
3. Chippewa River Recreation area was maintained by Forestry and Parks Department staff
4. Three recreation grants completed and submitted valued at \$206,383.62

5. CAMPGROUND REVENUE

CAMPGROUND/PARK	2019	2020	2021	2022
Dispersed Camping Permits	\$ 855.00	\$ 1,191.00	\$1,490.00	\$1,671.00
Remote Sites	\$ 987.00	\$ 1,178.00		
Audie Lake Campground	\$12,284.57	\$20,674.18	\$25,956.00	\$25,162.00
Josie Creek Park	\$12,986.00	\$22,164.75	\$24,889.00	\$24,603.00
Murphy Dam Campground	\$ 5,280.82	\$ 9,500.00	\$11,807.00	\$11,149.00
Perch Lake Campground	\$10,902.90	\$20,622.25	\$27,354.00	\$26,116.00
Pavilions + Clubhouse Rent	\$ 120.00	\$ 192.00	\$ 766.00	\$1,130.00
Dump Station	\$ 165.75	\$ 289.00	\$ 493.00	\$446.00
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$43,582.04</b>	<b>\$77,225.18</b>	<b>\$92,225.00</b>	<b>\$90,277.00</b>

6. Dispersed Camping Permits Issued: (Regular Camping Season and Gun-Deer Season)

YEAR	2019		2020		2021		2022	
# OF PERMITS ISSUED	Regular	21	Regular	40	Regular	75	Regular	80
	Deer Season	25	Deer Season	18	Deer Season	25	Deer Season	20

7. The cross-country ski trail system in the Blue Hills was maintained by the Blue Hills Trails Association.

8. State-Funded Rusk County ATV/UTV Trails.

32 miles in the Blue Hills were maintained by the Rusk Riders ATV Club

2021-2022 Trail Maintenance Cost: \$26,311.04 (overspent by \$122.90)

Reimbursed by the State ATV Funds: \$26,188.14 (Grant Award Amount)

9. State-Funded Rusk County Snowmobile Trails.

318.7 miles of Rusk County Snowmobile Trails were maintained by Rusk County Snowmobile Clubs in the 2021-2022 Season.

THE BREAKDOWN IS AS FOLLOWS:

	Miles	Maintenance	Supplemental
TOTAL	318.7	\$95,610	\$ 81,366.93

**TOTAL PAYMENT FOR SNOWMOBILE 2021-2022 MAINTENANCE: \$176,976.93**

*Motion by DuSell, Second by Biller to forward to County Board. Motion Carried*

# Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee

## Meeting Minutes

### January 18, 2023

---

**Storm Damage Funding:**

Jerrad shared estimated costs for clean-up on county land following the storm. The estimated cost submitted to Emergency Services from the Forestry Department came out to \$89,905.00

<b>Debris Removal - December 2022 Storm - Rusk County Forest</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
Josie Creek Campground and Shooting Ranges		\$12,000.00
Community Park		\$1,000.00
Audie Lake Campground		\$4,000.00
Perch Lake Campground		\$1,000.00
Murphy Flowage Campground and picnic area		\$2,000.00
Dodson Disk Golf		\$1,200.00
Matlock Fishing Pier		\$400.00
Bucks Lake ATV Trailhead		\$600.00
Amacoy Lake Boat Landing and picnic area		\$400.00
16 other boat landings		\$5,000.00
Hunter Walking Trail	11.86	\$5,930.00
County Forest Roads	20.26	\$10,680.00
Snowmobile/ATV on County Forest	72	\$36,000.00
Ski Trails	19.39	\$9,695.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$89,905.00</b>

**Out-of-County Travel:**

WCFA Climate Workshop – February 8<sup>th</sup>, Hayward  
 J. Macholl, D. Gravesen, J. Moore

WCFA Spring Meeting – March 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> Rothschild, WI  
 J. Macholl, D. Gravesen, M. Zimmer, J. Moore, N. Wilson, P. Schneider

*Motion by DuSell, Second by Unterschuetz to approve out-of-county travel for J. Macholl, D. Gravesen, J. Moore to attend WCFA Climate Workshop and J. Macholl, D. Gravesen, M. Zimmer, J. Moore, N. Wilson, P. Schneider to attend WCFA Spring Meeting. Motion Carried.*

**Announcements:**

Schneider mentioned concerns regarding members of the public having been blocking the dry hydrants at boat landings. Question regarding signage postings near the hydrants. Fire Departments are responsible for posting the signs as they are responsible for the hydrants. Additionally, County Forest Department does not maintain landings during the winter.

WCFA is working with an attorney regarding land disputes in the state.

**Budget Review:**

The budget report was made available to committee members in the committee folder on the server for review.

Rusk County Land and Forestry Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
January 18, 2023

---

**Review and Approve Bills:**

*Motion by DuSell, Second by Kalepp to approve the December AP report; Motion carried.*

**Adjourn:**

*The meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m. Motion carried.*

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. LEC Board Room.