

Lincoln County Forestry, Land and Parks Committee
Minutes of Monday, May 11, 2026 @ 8:00 A.M.
Lincoln County Service Center, Room 257
801 N. Sales St., Suite 106, Merrill, WI 54452 **715-539-1034**

Members Present: Greg Hartwig, Norbert Ashbeck, Don Nelson, William Bialecki, Andy Zelinski, Norbert Ashbeck (virtual)

Absent: none

Members Excused: n/a

Visitors: Luke Williams, Amy Krueger, Lee Rahlf, Paul Russell, Jeff Weber, Craig Schwocho, Tadd Wegner, Karry Johnson, Lee Rahlf, Bill Groth, James Wilson, Steve Dassow, Nick Syryczak, Hesston Meier, Nick Behrens (virtual), Robbin Gigl (virtual)

1. Call meeting to order. The Lincoln County Forestry, Land and Parks Committee met on Monday, May 11, 2026, in Conference Room 257, Lincoln County Service Center. The meeting was called to order by Hartwig at 8:00 a.m.
2. Election of Officers – Vice chair and Secretary. Bialecki nominated Ashbeck for Vice Chair. All Ayes. Motion Carried. Zelinski nominated Bialecki for Secretary. All Ayes. Motion Carried.
3. Approve minutes of April 13, 2026. Motion to approve Zelinski, second by Bialecki. All Ayes. Motion Carried.
4. Review year to date budget report. The Committee reviewed year to date budget report and placed on file.
5. Comments from members of the public or invited guests. None.
6. Russell Property – Discussion and possible approval on landowner interested in selling to the county. Williams reported that foresters completed a reconnaissance of the Russel property to evaluate timber resources. They identified two timber sales ready for harvest. The eastern timber sale is approximately 85–90 acres of northern hardwoods and red maple of fair to poor quality. Access is from New Wood Road, but the access road is wet and would require frozen-ground operations. The western timber sale is 31 acres of red maple and aspen coppice and is adjacent to a sale being prepared for fall 2026.

Williams distributed an appraisal showing a land value of \$275,000 for the full 280 acres. He noted that the land acquisition account has just over \$100,000 available. Mr. Russel stated that keeping the property available for public recreation is important to his family and is the reason for offering it to the County. He also has a meeting scheduled with the Tomahawk School Board to discuss donating the western portion for use as a school forest.

Wegner voiced support for establishing a school forest, noting that Tomahawk does not currently have such a resource. Williams explained that he discussed with Mr. Russel the County's potential interest in purchasing only the eastern 120 acres due to the immediate timber return, while allowing the western portion to go to the school district. He also expressed concern about drawing the land acquisition account down to zero but suggested the option of earmarking timber sale revenue back into the account. Hartwig raised the idea of using the value of the timber harvest as the purchase price.

Mr. Russel will discuss the options with his family and report back.

7. Approve 2027 preliminary budget. Williams noted that he kept the budget largely consistent with last year and included a 4% placeholder for the wage study. He also added \$20,000 to contracted services due to uncertainty with the county surveyor position. Hartwig had several questions that Williams will review with Finance, and Williams will report back at the next meeting. Hartwig then made a motion to carry the budget item over to next month until Williams can provide the answers, and the motion passed with all ayes.
8. Approve 2027 CIP/Capital Outlay. After discussion, Zelinski made a motion to approve the 2027 CIP/Capital Outlay, seconded by Bialecki, and the motion passed with all ayes.
9. Set minimum bids, authorize advertising and set sale date for tax delinquent properties. Williams shared a power point presentation of photos and valuation of the tax delinquent properties. Discussion followed.

Property 1-25: Minimum bid \$5,300 by Hartwig, second by Nelson. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Property 2-26: Minimum bid of \$22,700 by Nelson, second by Hartwig, All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Property 3-26: Minimum bid of \$118,600 by Hartwig, second by Zelinski, All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Property 4-26: Minimum bid of \$1,000 by Bialecki, second by Hartwig, All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Property 5-26: Minimum bid of \$ 193,360 by Nelson, second by Hartwig, All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Property 6-26: Minimum bid of \$40,000 by Nelson, second by Zelinski, All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Property 7-26: Minimum bid of \$40,000 by Hartwig, second by Zelinski, All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Property 8-26: Minimum bid of \$150,400 by Bialecki, second by Nelson, All Ayes. Motion Carried.

10. Approve resolution to apply for a grant from the American Trails 2026 Trail Fund for surfacing of the Trout Capital Trail at the Prairie Dells. Williams reported that the Trout Capital Trail, which runs from Prairie Dells Road to the new bridge across the Prairie River, has been constructed but remains native soils and is currently wet and muddy. He stated that gravel surfacing is needed and that he intends to apply to the American Trails 2026 Trail Fund to cover the cost of materials. County staff and equipment would complete the work. Hartwig made a motion to approve, Zelinski seconded. All ayes; motion carried.
11. Approve resolution to authorize a land exchange between Lincoln County and Loka and Sons Excavating LLC. Williams reported that following the last meeting, he consulted with Corporation Counsel and was advised to draft a resolution for committee review prior to forwarding it to the County Board. Bialecki made a motion to approve, Zelinske seconded. All ayes; motion carried.
12. Review and consider approval of bids for the Cranefoot Lake ATV trail rehabilitation project. Williams reported that three bids were received for the project and that Becher

Hoppe submitted the low bid. Hartwig made a motion to award the project to Becher Hoppe. All ayes; motion carried.

13. Review and consider approval of chemical site preparation for Spring 2027 planting site. Williams reported that no bids were received for the project. He stated that the project will be re-advertised next month.
14. Review and consider approval of bids to replace the 2006 Komatsu Wheel Loader. Williams distributed a bid comparison table showing that five bids were received. Weber emphasized the importance of service, equipment quality, resale value, and reliable access to parts, noting that McCoy has demonstrated these strengths in the past. Bialecki made a motion to purchase the replacement loader from McCoy, Zelinski seconded. All ayes; motion carried.
15. Open and Award Timber Sale Bids. Williams announced bid opening procedure, bids were opened and read. We received 53 bids on 12 timber sales totaling \$972,826.75. One timber sale received no bids. Motion by Bialecki second by Zelinski to approve awarding sales to the highest bidder pending checking for mathematical errors. All Ayes. Motion Carried.
16. Approve committee attendance for WCFA Summer Tour in Wood County – June 18 & June 19. Discussion followed. Motion to approve Bialecki, second by Zelinski. All Ayes. Motion Carried.
17. WDNR Report. Groth said with the dry weather they have been staffing fire and working on timber sale establishment on county land as conditions allow.
18. Review Administrator's written report. Williams asked if anyone had any questions on the report. Discussion followed. Report placed on file.
19. Close timber sales.

Smola Brothers	T016-21	Close and return Letter of Credit.
Biewer Sawmill	C099-24	Close and refund bond.

Williams recommended closing and refunding bonds. Motion by Bialecki, second by Zelinski to close sales per Williams recommendation. All ayes. Motion carried
20. Set next meeting date. The next Forestry, Land & Parks Committee Meeting is set as follows: Monday, June 8, 2026 at 8:00 a.m., LCSC Conference Room 257
21. Adjourn. Motion to adjourn meeting by Nelson, second by Bialecki at 9:55 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Amy Krueger & Luke Williams