

Lincoln County Forestry, Land and Parks Committee
Minutes of Monday, July 13, 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,

Absent: none

Members Excused: none

Visitors: Luke Williams, Amy Krueger, Lee Rahlf, Robbin Gigl (virtual), Sam Dardouk, Fatmeh Dardouk, Andy Geiss (virtual), Logan Muenchow, Brian Muenchow, Jim Wise, Pam Theilen-Wise, Paul Russel,

1. Call meeting to order. The Lincoln County Forestry, Land and Parks Committee met on Monday, July 13, 2026, in Conference Room 257, Lincoln County Service Center. The meeting was called to order by Hartwig at 8:00 a.m.
2. Approve minutes of June 8, 2026. Motion by Zelinski, second by Bialecki, to approve the minutes. All ayes. Motion carried.
3. Review year to date budget report. The Committee reviewed year to date budget report and placed on file.
4. Public comments Sam Dardouk addressed the committee regarding his regarding the circumstances that led to his tax delinquency.
5. Open and award tax delinquent land sale bids Williams opened and read the bids for the tax-delinquent land sale that were due on July 10. They were as follows:
 - **Property 1 - Minimum Bid \$5,300**
 - Brian Hoffman – \$8,000.00
 - Aleksandra Sakhnevich – \$7,770.00
 - Joseph Brzezinski – \$20,100.00
 - Elizabeth Kurth – \$5,600.00
 - James Scheffler – \$6,001.00
 - James Wise – \$20,500.00
 - Evan Held – \$22,364.00
 - **Property 2 – Minimum Bid \$22,700**
 - Brian Hoffman – \$36,000.00
 - **Property 3 – Minimum Bid \$119,600**
 - Fatmeh Dardouk – \$119,000.00 – Bid did not meet the minimum
 - **Property 4 – Minimum Bid \$1,000**
 - Austin Peterson – \$1,500.00
 - **Property 5 – Minimum Bid \$193,600**
 - Tom Hofacker – \$197,650.00
 - **Property 6 – Minimum Bid \$40,000**
 - No bids received
 - **Property 7 – Minimum Bid \$40,000**
 - Joshua Muenchow – \$46,001.00
 - **Property 8 – Minimum Bid \$150,400**
 - James Scheffler – \$160,010.00

A motion was made by Hartwig to accept the high bids as presented. Zelinski seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.

6. Set the new minimum and establish sale date on unsold tax-delinquent properties. Bialecki made a motion to advertise both unsold tax-delinquent properties at their existing minimum bid amounts. Nelson seconded the motion. Discussion ensued regarding Property 6 having been advertised four times without receiving a bid. An amended motion was made by Nelson to reduce the minimum bid on Property 6-26 to \$20,000 and to keep Property 3 at the same minimum. The amended motion was seconded by Hartwig and passed with all ayes.

During this agenda item, the Committee moved on without setting a sale date. At the end of the meeting, the Committee addressed this oversight and set a new sale date of August 10, with bids due to Forestry by 4:00 p.m. on August 7. This motion was made by Nelson, seconded by Bialecki, and passed with all ayes.

7. Discussion Regarding Timber Sale around Underdown Campground and Future Development Williams reported meeting with the horse club, who noted the campsites are too small for modern horse trailers and requested wider sites. He also explained that a recent survey showed portions of two sites extend onto private property. Most trees in the area are mature aspen, and Williams recommended cutting them to allow a full redesign, including correcting the sites across the property line. He suggested using timber sale revenue for campground improvements and noted that cutting the pine on the north side of the road could also be considered. The Committee was favorable to the concept and to using timber sale revenue for these improvements. Williams will investigate whether the use of timber sale revenue for these improvements is permitted.
8. Review and Possible Approval of Resolution to Apply for a Sustainable Forestry Grant to Improve a Forest Road off Armstrong Creek Road Williams discussed the project and stated that the scope is to turn the road into an all-season route to improve harvesting access. He noted it provides access to nearly 1,000 acres and an estimated 330 MBF of ash. Current road conditions have delayed planned timber harvests in the area. The road would be surfaced with material from the Armstrong Creek pit, with County staff completing the work. The grant is 100% reimbursable. Once improved, the road would be opened to the public; it is currently blocked due to poor conditions. A motion was made by Nelson to approve the resolution as presented. Bialecki seconded the motion, and it passed with all ayes.
9. Consideration of Request to Allow Komatsu to Host a Forestry Equipment Demonstration on Smola Enterprises Tract #003-26 Williams informed the Committee that Dan Thurs of Roland Machinery requested permission to host a Komatsu forestry equipment demonstration on Tract #003-26, a Smola Enterprises timber sale. The event is planned as a three-day demonstration and is expected to draw approximately 150 loggers. Roland Machinery carries umbrella insurance coverage and previously hosted a similar event in 2019. A motion was made by Nelson and seconded by Hartwig to allow Roland Machinery to host the demonstration, contingent upon meeting insurance requirements and signing a hold-harmless waiver. The motion passed with all ayes.
10. Discussion and Possible Approval to Solicit Bids for 75 Acres of Pine Release Spraying in Fall 2026 Williams informed the Committee that while the Forestry Department typically conducts only site-preparation spraying, follow-up release treatments are sometimes necessary. He explained that the 2024 red pine planting is experiencing competition from hardwoods and grasses, and a release treatment is warranted to reduce this pressure and improve seedling growth. A motion was made by Zelinski and seconded by Ashbeck to solicit bids for the 75-acre release treatment in fall 2026. The motion passed with all ayes.
11. Consideration of Resolution to Enroll Parcel #02634071319999, Acquired Through Land Exchange, into County Forest Law Williams informed the Committee that the land exchange with Brent Loka had been completed and that he would now like to enroll the recently acquired parcel into County Forest Law, as it is well suited for enrollment. A motion was made by Nelson and seconded by Zelinski to approve the resolution. The motion passed with all ayes.

12. Discussion Regarding Firewood Situation in Campgrounds Williams informed the Committee of the current firewood process, which includes renting a firewood processor, purchasing firewood, and having shop staff cut, split, and haul it to the campgrounds, where it is placed in the firewood barns. Signage instructs campers to take no more than one-day supply, but several instances have occurred where the firewood was depleted very quickly, implying theft or overuse. Williams noted that bundling and selling per unit could be considered, though logistics, cost, staff time, and the possibility of continued theft were concerns. After discussion, Nelson made a motion to no longer provide firewood beginning in 2027 after the existing inventory is used up. Hartwig seconded the motion. Williams stated that discontinuing firewood may reduce camper use and noted forest pest concerns associated with firewood being moved into northern Wisconsin; however, this concern was discussed but determined not to change the recommendation given that much firewood is already moved throughout the state. The motion passed with all ayes.
13. WDNR Report Bill Groth reported that the DNR recently completed the marking on a county timber sale and has started on another.
14. Review Administrator's Report The Administrator's Report was reviewed and placed on file. Williams noted that the Ruffed Grouse Society asked Lincoln County to host a Ruffed Grouse Management Area (RGMA) workshop in September focused on evaluating RGMA conditions. He stated that the request reflects Lincoln County's strong historical work in this management area.
15. Close Timber Sales Williams recommended closing the following timber sales and refunding the associated bonds: Smola Enterprises T026-24, Russ Thums T014-21, and Central Wisconsin Lumber T008-22. Motion by Bialecki, second by Ashbeck to close the sales per Williams' recommendation. All ayes. Motion carried.
16. The committee may consider a motion to adjourn into closed session (roll call vote required), pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 19.85(1)(e), "Deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session", to include the Forest Administrator and any other Board Supervisors wishing to remain, to wit: Discussion of negotiation terms and strategy regarding potential land acquisition with the Russell family. A roll call vote was taken, and the Committee entered closed session. Paul Russell was present in closed session for a portion of the discussion.
17. Reconvene to open session The committee reconvened in open session. Bialecki made a motion, Ashbeck seconded, and the motion passed on a roll call vote.
18. Possible action as a result of closed session A motion was made by Bialecki to provide a \$25,000 down payment, plus the stumpage revenue when the scheduled timber harvest is completed, pending attorney review. Nelson seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all ayes.
19. Set next meeting date. The next Forestry, Land & Parks Committee Meeting is set as follows: Monday, August 10, 2026 at 8:00 a.m., LCSC Conference Room 257
20. Adjourn. Motion by Nelson, second by Bialecki to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried with all ayes.

Minutes prepared by Luke Williams