

**Minutes of the July 9, 2025 Meeting of the Sawyer County
Land, Water & Forest Resources Committee
of the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors
Board Room, Sawyer County**



Voting Committee Members (X) Present:

- ☒ Chair: Steve Kariainen
- ☒ Vice Chair: Randy Neumann
- ☒ Kay Wilson
- ☒ Jim Evans- Virtual
- ☒ Dale Magnuson

Mike Markgren
Liz Klein
Jay Kozlowski
Greg Peterson
Amy Wiersma
Brian Lehner

Others Present:

Brody Fischer
Tim Davison
Stacey Hessel- Virtual
Greg Morris
Brian DeVries
Tristan Wirkus

Call to Order – Chair Kariainen called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Certification of Compliance with the open meeting law was met. Roll Call was taken; a quorum was met.

Meeting Agenda – Set

Public Comments – None

Minutes from the previous meeting dated: June 11, 2025

Motion to approve made by: Mr. Neumann Second by: Mr. Kariainen

Motion carried without negative vote.

Events--

An application for CAMBA Kids Adventure MTB Camp was approved on a motion by: Ms. Wilson

Second by: Mr. Evans

Motion carried without negative vote.

Register of Deeds Update--

A written report was provided by Ms. Thompson

Land Records and County Surveyor Department Report –

Written reports were provided. Mr. DeVries introduced the new Real Property Lister Tristan Wirkus and briefed the committee on a meeting with the Novus Consortium- if two counties leave the cost for the remaining counties will increase; there are other alternatives.

Forestry –

County Forestry Report—

Mr. Peterson reported that there are 13 active sales in June, approximately \$5M in sold-uncut timber. Oak Wilt restrictions come off July 15. Four out of five ATV/UTV Trail project contracts were awarded.

The committee considered the direct timber sale of Tract 38-21 to Roger Hoyt and accepted his offer of \$36,105 on a motion by: Mr. Neumann Second by: Mr. Magnuson
Motion carried without negative vote.

Matt Dallman from the Nature Conservancy, Ron Gropp from Wisconsin DNR, and Forrest Gibeault from Aurora Sustainable Lands presented a proposal to grant a Conservation Easement to the DNR on lands owned by Aurora in southern Sawyer County in the towns of Draper and Winter.

The landowner (Aurora) and DNR are seeking county support for their application for federal Legacy funding which favors cooperation between local units of government.

Discussion followed and questions about timber management, carbon credits, the affiliation between Aurora and ANEW, funding sources, access roads, public use, potential restrictions on town access to gravel in Draper, and comprehensive plans/impact of a conservation easement permanently preventing development on lands within a town were raised.

Mr. Dallman stated a gravel site for municipal use may be a negotiable talking point if federal Legacy regulations don't preclude it.

A motion to table the discussion for further research was made by: Mr. Neumann Second by: Ms. Wilson
Motion carried without negative vote.

Wisconsin DNR Report- Be alert for signs of Oak Wilt and report it.

USFS Report- No report

Motorized Trails Report—Mr. Davison reported that Sawyer County Alliance mowing and brushing will begin after Oak Wilt restrictions are lifted July 15. The Alliance is updating maps and concerned about confusing signage on LCO routes. A new trail through private land will connect north and south trails on Hwy 77 by Twin Lakes Road.

Non-motorized— No report

Zoning/Conservation Department -

Mr. Kozlowski stated that conservation specialist Natalie Erler has had aquatic plant training. Water levels are up from the recent rain. The Price Dam gate needs repair, 50/50 split with Town of Winter.

USDA Report- No report

Nelson Lake/Lenroot Boat Landing—Brett Danielson spoke to the committee about a proposed boat landing rehab project that requires leveling the road on county land at Nelson Lake. The Town of Lenroot approved the project; it requires a Shoreline Alteration Permit from zoning and a letter of concurrence from County Forestry. Mr. Kozlowski and Mr. Peterson have no issues with the proposed project. It also requires a little work from the County Highway Department.

Motion to approve a Shoreline Alteration permit on County-owned land for the Nelson Lake Boat Landing by:
Mr. Neumann Second by: Mr. Evans
Motion carried without negative vote.

Whitefish Lake Property Owner Pat Wier spoke to the committee on the history of the Whitefish Lake/Big LCO water level, which was a foot higher for 50-70 years until 2021. He cited the issues lake property owners are facing with the low water levels and the negative effects such as erosion, poor water quality, impact to the wetlands and fishery, higher water temperatures, lower dissolved oxygen levels and milfoil overgrowth. The whitefish fishery is one of only

seven in Wisconsin. Riparian owners may have rights after 20 years of precedent. The WI Property Owners Association is asking the DNR and County to raise the gates at the Billy Boy Dam.

The DNR has not set a date for a public hearing yet.

Groundwater Mapping Presentation-

Amy Wiersma of the WI Geological and Natural History Survey gave a presentation on groundwater mapping with a two-year proposal for Sawyer County that is timed to save money because it would run concurrently with LCO groundwater mapping and Sawyer County is already scheduled for Surficial Mapping so that would not be an additional cost.

The goal is to identify aquifers, runoff directions, soil permeability and recharge rates, and the mapping can be used to manage wellheads, landfill sites, and protect the drinking water source.

The estimated cost over two years is \$106,000; Burnett just paid \$250,000 for the same mapping. Mr. Kozlowski would ask for the funding as a CIP item in his department budget.

Underwater parcel—

Mr. Markgren stated that he spoke with another County Administrator on underwater parcels and the recommendation was to do nothing.

Motion to take no action and leave the underwater parcel to the owner by: Mr. Neumann

Second by: Ms. Wilson

Motion carried without negative vote.

Treasurer Sale of IN REM Parcels—Mr. Lehner reported that six of the advertised parcels sold at or above asking price; the remaining 31 are now eligible to be relisted at reduced prices, which the committee viewed in May.

Motion to accept the bids on six parcels by: Mr. Neumann Second by: Mr. Magnuson

Motion carried without negative vote.

Motion to approve relisting 31 unsold parcels at reduced rates by: Mr. Neumann Second by: Mr. Magnuson

Motion carried without negative vote.

Board Appointed Committee Updates – None

Correspondence, Reports from Conferences and Meetings -- None

Future Agenda Items – Conservation Easement Request

Adjournment – 10:20 am

Next Meeting: August 13, 2025 Time: 8:30am Location: Board Room

Minutes recorded by Liz Klein, County Clerk