

**Minutes of the August 13, 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
- ☒ Dale Magnuson

Mike Markgren
Liz Klein
Jay Kozlowski
Greg Peterson
Rachel Thompson
Brian Lehner
Matt Dallman

Others Present:

Chris Gregory
Tim Davison
Craig Morris
Brian DeVries
Tristan Wirkus- virtual
Kimberly Wendt- virtual
Ron Gropp- virtual

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 – Linda Zillmer

Minutes from the previous meeting dated: July 9, 2025

Motion to approve made by: Mr. Neumann Second by: Mr. Evans
Motion carried without negative vote.

Events--

An application for Chequamegon MTB Festival bike event was approved on a motion by: Ms. Wilson
Second by: Mr. Evans
Motion carried without negative vote.

Headwater Rivers Forest Project- Mr. Dallman from Nature Conservancy presented additional information on Wisconsin Forest Legacy Areas and the 26,140 acre Headwater Rivers Forest Conservation Easement proposal. They are asking for Sawyer County to support a proposed conservation easement on former paper company lands owned by Aurora (more details of this proposal can be found in the agenda packet from July 9). Interagency cooperation is desired for the purposes of obtaining a grant. The permanent easement would maintain contiguous forest land open to the public and protect the environment. Discussion and questions by the committee. Concerns included timber management and future transfers of the property and carbon credits, as well as previous concerns about access to gravel which Mr. Dallman stated is negotiable.

Motion to take no action at this time pending further information by: Mr. Neumann Second by: Mr. Evans
Motion carried with two opposed.

Register of Deeds Update--

A written report was provided by Ms. Thompson, who stated that July was an outstanding month for real estate transfers. The department is not asking for a significant budget increase but staff plans to attend training seminars.

Land Records and County Surveyor Department Report –

Land Records—A written RPL report was provided. Mr. DeVries gave an overview of the department's functions. Their budget is office equipment, software and website based.

The department has funding from the Land Information Program Grant, which draws funds from ROD document recording, with the balance funded by the state; part of this funding also covers the Surveyor Department.

Large expenses include aerial photography every five years and LIDAR.

Surveyor—A written report was provided. Mr. Gregory stated his department is responsible for maps of survey and the preservation of survey markers; they are working on restoring over 700 corners lost in the federal forest.

The department budget covers survey marker materials, vehicles and fuel expenses. The cost of aluminum used for the markers has increased.

Forestry –**County Forestry Report—**

Mr. Peterson reported that 9 sales were active in July. There is approximately \$4.7M in sold-uncut timber.

Four out of five ATV trail rehab projects received acceptable bids.

Oak wilt- Several new infected trees were identified in the Couderay and Seeley Forest Blocks; a DNR flight is scheduled.

Carbon credits are in final verification stage and should be for sale in the first quarter of 2026.

The budget is the same as 2025.

Trail 30 Reroute Proposal—

The proposal eliminates conflict with residents and Mr. Peterson recommends.

Motion to approve the proposed reroute for approval by County Board by: Mr. Neumann

Second by: Mr. Magnuson

Motion carried without negative vote.

Parcel Trade Proposal—

Mr. Peterson recommended a proposal to trade a landlocked county forestry 40 for a private 40 acre parcel with access. The timber value is the same.

Motion to approve the parcel trade by: Mr. Neumann

Second by: Mr. Evans

Motion carried without negative vote.

Wisconsin DNR Report-

Mr. Morris, who is replacing Brody Fischer on the committee, gave a report on Oak Wilt flights and upcoming seeding of white pine and oak trees on forest land in the county.

USFS Report- No report

Motorized Trails Report—Mr. Davison reported that Sawyer County Alliance is performing maintenance, brushing, working on Tuscobia culvert issues and getting ready for the winter season.

Non-motorized— No report

Zoning/Conservation Department -

Mr. Kozlowski reviewed a written report. Ongoing projects include the Winter Price Dam with a \$14,000 repair needed (split with Winter). The Land Water Management Plan Advisory Committee has had three meetings. There are seven county owned dams.

The 2026 budget request reflects a 30% decrease in staffing expenses because the state will now fully fund the second conservationist position. Expenses are CIP requests for the Ground Water Monitoring project, the Fish Trap Dam repair, the Birch Lake Dam repair and dam inspections.

USDA Report- No report

Treasurer—Update on In Rem parcels

Mr. Lehner reported that 26 out of 37 parcels are sold and the department is marketing the remaining eleven.

Mr. Lehner asked the committee to look at an In Rem parcel that is a road ROW in Spider Lake and possibly deed it to the town; Mr. DeVries stated that it is not a town road in that location. Mr. Lehner will table the discussion until more is known.

Board Appointed Committee Updates – None

Correspondence, Reports from Conferences and Meetings -- None

Future Agenda Items – Fish Trap Dam land swap

Adjournment – 9:49 am

Next Meeting: September 10, 2025 Time: 8:30am Location: Board Room
Minutes recorded by Liz Klein, County Clerk