

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Chippewa County Board of Commissioners, held at the Chippewa County Courthouse, 319 Court St., Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan on the 14th day of November, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Scott Shackleton, Don Cooper, Ted Postula, Don McLean, Jesse Knoll and George Kinsella

ABSENT: Jim Moore

The following preamble and resolution was offered by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Kinsella.

RESOLUTION NO. 11-18

RESOLUTION BY THE CHIPPEWA COUNTY MICHIGAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Chippewa County recognizes the importance of the lands contained within the more than 2 million acres of the Ottawa and Hiawatha National Forests as an exceptional natural resource capable of producing a sustainable supply of timber products on an annual basis which provides economic, social and environmental benefits to county residents; and

WHEREAS, these lands are owned by the federal government under the assumption and obligation that the natural resources would be properly managed and utilized as a base for the local and regional economies; and

WHEREAS, the United State Forest Service has failed to address the negative impacts of unemployment, loss of tax base, school funding and the deterioration of the overall local and the regional economies created by the Forest Service's refusal to manage the forest land as a productive, sustainable timber resource; and

WHEREAS, the United States Forest service has failed to manage the national Forests as a sustainable resource that greatly contributes to the wood, papermaking, packaging, furniture and building material industries throughout Michigan. This has forced these industries to secure raw material from outside the U.S. and has also caused numerous businesses to close and lay off workers or to relocate outside of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, the United State Forest service has failed to manage Ottawa and Hiawatha National Forests by allowing more timber to be lost to mortality than is harvested. The combined average annual timber mortality on the Ottawa and Hiawatha National Forest during the past five years is 206 million board feet; and

WHEREAS, since 1986, when the first Land and Resource management Plans (Forest Plans) were adopted on the Ottawa and Hiawatha National Forests, the U.S. Forest Service has never sold the Allowable Sale Quantity of timber in the Forest Plans; and

WHEREAS, last year the Ottawa and Hiawatha harvested less than half of the timber required to maintain forest health. For example, on the Ottawa National Forest the 2006 Forest Plan authorizes an average Allowable Sale Quantity of 90 million board feet, yet it is only selling an average of 41 million board feet per year or approximately 45% of the Allowable Sale Quantity. On the Hiawatha National Forest the 2006 Forest Plan authorizes an average annual Allowable Sale Quantity of 109 million board feet, yet it is only selling an average of 42 million board feet per year or approximately 38% of the Allowable Sale Quantity. Since 1999, the Forest Plans on the Ottawa and Hiawatha National Forests authorized harvest of a total of more than 1.98 billion board feet. But only 930 million board feet of timber has been sold or approximately 47% of the Allowable Sale Quantity. This translates into reduced revenue, jobs and economy to local communities from direct Forest Service payments and a significant reduction in raw materials that are needed to sustain the local forest industry.

WHEREAS, for every one million board feet of timber that is harvested, it provides enough raw materials to sustain 11 direct jobs and goes to also help support other indirect jobs. In 2010, the Ottawa and Hiawatha National Forests cumulatively fell short of annual ASQ by more than 115 million board feet, which equates to a loss of 1,,265 jobs; and

WHEREAS, Michigan has lost both paper mills and saw mills, a large number of logging contractors and trucking firms, there are other factors that play into the loss of these businesses, however declining harvest opportunities on the National Forest lands is the number one and primary reason for the loss of many of these employers; and

WHEREAS, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THE CHIPPEWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, recognizes that the Ottawa and Hiawatha Federal Forests are an exceptional natural resource that have the capacity to provide timber, recreational and environmental benefits for everyone provided that the lands are properly managed as a sustainable, renewable timber resource, and are managed with consideration to the local communities which rely on the economy generated; and

