

Information for Visitors to Meetings of the Board of Natural Resources

I. Who are the members of the Board of Natural Resources?

The Board of Natural Resources consists of 18 citizens appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Georgia Senate. There is one member from each of the 13 congressional districts of the state. There are four “at large” members and one additional member from one of the coastal counties (Chatham, Bryan, Liberty, McIntosh, Glynn, and Camden Counties). The members are appointed for seven-year terms, which are staggered so that there is a continuity of experienced members on the Board. Each January the Board elects its officers, which consists of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary

II. What are the Board's Powers and Duties?

By law (O.C.G.A. § 12-2-24), the Board has the power to establish the general policies to be followed by the Department of Natural Resources that is administered by the Commissioner of Natural Resources. It also enacts the rules under the Administrative Procedures Act that governs the Department’s regulation of activities such as environmental protection and wildlife management.

The Board does not manage or administer the Department, which is the responsibility of the Commissioner and the various Division Directors. The Board does, pursuant to law and subject to the approval of the Governor, appoint the Commissioner of the Department and the Director of the Environmental Protection Division. It also by statute approves the appointment by the Commissioner of the Director of the Pollution Prevention Assistance Division. By its own policies, it approves the appointment of all Division Directors. The Department consists of the Environmental Protection Division, the Coastal Resources Division, the Wildlife Resources Division, the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division, the Historic Preservation Division, and the Pollution Prevention Assistance Division.

The Board does not issue environmental permits or make regulatory decisions in environmental matters. Further, it is not legally empowered to alter or modify permits or licenses.

If you are unhappy with a decision of the Commissioner or of a Division Director concerning a permit or license, you may be entitled to a hearing before an administrative law judge. In order to obtain a hearing, you should file a written request with the Commissioner or the Division Director (whoever made the decision) within 30 days of the date of the decision with which you are unhappy. You may obtain a set of the procedural rules to follow in filing an appeal by going to the Department’s web site at www.gadnr.org. A telephone call will not preserve your right to a hearing. The Commissioner or Division Director will request the Chief State Administrative Law Judge to assign a judge to hear your case. The Administrative Law Judge is solely responsible for hearing the appeals under the Administrative Procedures Act. An appeal of a decision by the Administrative Law Judge goes directly to the Superior Court. The Board is not permitted to review or rehear the cases.

Finally, the Board does not have any power to affect or deal with matters concerning The Stone Mountain Memorial Association, the Jekyll Island State Park Authority, or the Lake Lanier Islands Development Authority. The Commissioner or his designee are by law members of the governing boards of those authorities, but the Board of Natural Resources does not act on any of the activities of those separate authorities. The Department is technically the “landlord” for

the Lake Lanier Islands Development Authority, but does not have a role in the day-to-day operation of the facility located at Lake Lanier.

III. When and where does the Board meet?

The Board meets 10 times a year, usually the fourth Tuesday (Committee Day) and Wednesday (Board Day) of each month at 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S. E., Suite 1252 East Tower, Atlanta, Georgia 30334. About three times a year the Board meets in a location other than Atlanta and there is usually no meeting in one of the summer months and in November. The Board's schedule of meetings and the places for those meetings are posted outside the Board Room in Atlanta or you may obtain a copy of the schedule on the Department's website at www.gadnr.org or by calling 404-656-3500.

IV. How may you get an opportunity to address the Board?

The Board's Chairman determines the agenda for each meeting. The printed agenda and supporting materials for the Board's consideration are mailed to the Board members one week in advance of the meeting date and is posted on the Department's website. If you wish to address the Board, please contact either Ms. Mary Ann Evans or Mrs. Hellen Harris by telephone at 404-656-3500 or by mail at 2 Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, S. E., Suite 1252 East Tower, Atlanta, Georgia 30334 at least two days prior to the date of the meeting. They will convey your request to the Chairman.

If you wish to address the Board on an item, which is already on the agenda, no further action will be needed after you contact Ms. Evans or Mrs. Harris. The Chairman will call on you at the appropriate time. If you wish to address the Board concerning a matter, which is not on the printed agenda, the Chairman will have to request that the Board consider amending its agenda at the meeting. Amendments to the agenda require a majority vote of the Board members present at the meeting.

Appearances before the Board are limited to three minutes per person. The Board asks that you present your position in writing as well, along with any supporting materials you wish to submit. Your written position and supporting material should be given to Ms. Evans or Mrs. Harris. Please limit the number of people in a group who wish to speak on the same subject.

There are usually meetings of committees of the Board members held on the afternoon prior to the full Board meeting. These committees deal with specific areas of concern to the Board, such as environmental rules, land purchases, and fishing and hunting regulations. The committees make recommendations to the full Board at its meeting. You may want to consider appearing at the appropriate committee meeting instead of the full Board meeting in order to have more time to present your issue. All board members are present at each committee meeting.

Please keep in mind that the Board does not make or review the management, regulatory and permitting decisions of the Commissioner and the Division Directors and cannot modify or change those decisions.

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