

Minutes
Board of Natural Resources
Ft. Yargo State Park
210 S. Broad St.
Winder, GA 30680

Tuesday, June 24, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Board Members

Lesley Reynolds, Chair
Patrick Denney, Vice Chair
Randy Dellinger, Secretary
Nancy Addison
Jeff Andrews
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy
Penn Hodge
Steve Hufstetler
Duncan Johnson
Ray Lambert
Mike Peavy
Bodine Sinyard
Harley Yancey

Staff Members

Walter Rabon, Commissioner
Thomas Barnard
Trevor Santos
Kyle Pearson
Taylor Fisher
Haley Chafin
Jeff Cown
Mike England
Ted Will
Angie Johnson
Andre McLendon
Jim Boylan
Katherine Darcey
Ellen Graham
Tina Johannsen
Derek Dillard

Guests

Terry England, Speaker's Office
Carol Dellinger
Damon Kirkpatrick, Friends of Georgia State Parks
Mike Worley, Georgia Wildlife Federation
Lyndy Rogers, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation
Charles Burton, North Georgia Mountain Authority
James Hamilton, North Georgia Mountain Authority
Anna Edmondson, Robbins Firm

The June 24, 2025, meeting of the Board of Natural Resources was called to order by Chairwoman Lesley Reynolds.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Terry England, Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the House, to deliver a moment of inspiration.

Chairwoman Reynolds adjourned the Board meeting to move into the Committee meetings.

Chairwoman Reynolds called the June 24, 2025, meeting of the Board of Natural Resources back to order.

Chairwoman Reynolds called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on May 20, 2025.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on May 20, 2025.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Jeff Cown, Director of the Environmental Protection Division, for his report.

Director Cown updated the Board on EPD employee spotlights; testimony at the U.S. House Energy & Commerce Committee's, Environment Subcommittee; communication efforts at EPD; and the U.S. EPA Proposed Budget.

Director Cown stated that this concluded his report.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Walter Rabon, Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, for his report.

Commissioner Rabon stated the Grants Unit recently hosted educational workshops both in-person at Indian Springs State Park and virtually. He further stated attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with staff and gain valuable insight into available funding opportunities.

Commissioner Rabon stated the DNR Leadership Academy would be traveling to Sapelo Island for the second session of the program.

Commissioner Rabon stated that DNR was partnering with the Atlanta Braves for Hunting and Fishing Night on Saturday, August 23rd. He further stated staff would be on hand at The Battery with interactive and educational experiences for those attending the game. He added that the

Georgia Natural Resources Foundation would receive a portion of the ticket sales purchased through a unique link.

Commissioner Rabon stated the 4th DNR Career Academy would take place at Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center and Jekyll Island from July 20-26, 2025.

Commissioner Rabon stated Commercial and Recreational Food Shrimp Season opened on June 10th, and an aerial survey counted 68 trawlers on the water during opening morning. He further stated 97 commercial trawl licenses had been sold since opening day.

Commissioner Rabon stated that with the new construction of a recirculating hatching system at the Walton Fish Hatchery, in addition to the GoFish Center, the Fisheries Section was able to produce 800,000 fingerling walleye, which were stocked into 12 waterbodies across the state.

Commissioner Rabon stated more than 260 participants attended summer camps through the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division this summer.

Commissioner Rabon stated the application period for youth, deer, alligator, waterfowl and dove quota hunts opened on June 1st.

Commissioner Rabon stated that, thanks to an appropriation from the legislature in the FY26 budget, the Wildlife Resources Division will introduce a pilot program aimed at helping remove invasive feral hogs from Georgia's landscape. Commissioner Rabon called on Ted Will, Director of the Wildlife Resources Division, who gave an overview of the "Hog Down Awards Program" and answered questions from the board concerning eligibility and disposal.

Commissioner Rabon called on Colonel Mike England, Director of the Law Enforcement Division, for his report.

Colonel England gave an update on the "Belts and Jackets" fly-around; Tri-State Boating Safety News Conference; 2025 boating statistics; illegal drug charges on Lake Lanier; a poaching case in Southeast Georgia; and a Boating Safety Event at Truist Park.

Commissioner Rabon called on Angie Johnson, Director of the Parks and Historic Sites Division, for her report.

Director Johnson gave an update on prescribed fire season; Ranger training; new accessible campsites at Magnolia Springs State Park; renovated campground at Indian Springs State Park; new cottages at Tugaloo State Park; GSGA Adaptive Golf Clinics; former Commissioner Lonice Barrett's oral history interview; and upcoming ribbon cuttings at Vogel State Park and the Little White House.

Commissioner Rabon stated that this concluded his report.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Ray Lambert, Chair of the Environmental Protection Committee, for his committee report.

A motion was made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Hatfield, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Air Quality Control, Chapter 391-3-1. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Harley Yancey, Chair of the Land Committee, for his committee report.

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval for the Acquisition (purchase) of 6,555.9± acres from Timberlands II LLC., 2nd Phase of the Upatoi Ravines Project, Talbot County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried, with one dissenting vote, that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval for the Acquisition (Purchase) of a Conservation Easement over 86.9± acres Rock and Shoals property, Athens-Clarke County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval for the Acquisition (donation) of a conservation easement over 93.7± acres Rock and Shoals property, Athens-Clarke County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Andrews, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval for the Acquisition (purchase) of 14.67± acres of the former Columbus Farmers Market, and then convey via ground lease from and to the Columbus Consolidated Government, Muscogee County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval via Executive Order to demolish the Flat Creek Public Fishing Area (PFA), Judge Richardson Home, J. Richardson Wellhouse, and Storage Building, Houston County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties

Commissioner approval of legislative action and to enter into a settlement agreement between the State and Glynn New Hope 1043, LLC (“Glynn New Hope”), for 4,086.07 acres of marshland in Glynn County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairwoman Reynolds announced the next meeting of the Board of Natural Resources would be on Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at the DNR Boardroom in Atlanta.

There being no further business, Chairwoman Reynolds adjourned the meeting.

Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman

ATTEST:

Randy Dellinger, Secretary

**Minutes
Environmental Protection Committee
Ft. Yargo State Park
210 S. Broad St.
Winder, GA 30680**

**Tuesday, June 24, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

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Bodine Sinyard, Vice Chair
Nancy Addison
Jeff Andrews
Patrick Denney
Penn Hodge
Steve Hufstetler
Duncan Johnson
Lesley Reynolds Board Chair, Ex-officio

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Mike Worley, Georgia Wildlife Federation
Lyndy Rogers, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation
Charles Burton, North Georgia Mountain Authority
James Hamilton, North Georgia Mountain Authority

The June 24, 2025, meeting of the Environmental Protection Committee was called to order by Chairwoman Lesley Reynolds.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Ray Lambert, Chairman of the Environmental Protection Committee. Chairman Lambert called on Jim Boylan, Chief of the Air Protection Branch, to present action on Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Air Quality Control, Chapter 391-3-1.

Mr. Boylan stated EPD regularly updates rules to incorporate changes to U.S. EPA rules, incorporate new U.S. EPA rules, remove obsolete requirements, align State rules with Federal rules, and update references to the most current document.

Mr. Boylan stated that key changes include updating to the definition of “Procedures for Testing and Monitoring Sources of Air Pollutants”, as well as revising the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of Air Quality rule to incorporate the most recent version of the federal modeling guidelines and to correct typographical errors. He further stated that there are updates to certain New Source Performance Standards (NSPS), which are technology-based standards that limit air pollutant emissions from new sources in specific source categories. He added that there are updates to certain Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, which are to control technology requirements for sources in specific source categories.

Mr. Boylan stated that key changes also include removal of Startup, Shutdown, and Malfunction (SSM) Emissions for SIP-Approved Rules (Rule 391-3-1-.02(2)(a)11) because it is no longer required by the U.S. EPA. He further stated that there are updates and an added exemption to NOx Emissions from Stationary Gas Turbines and Stationary Engines used to Generate Electricity rule (Rule 391-3-1-.02(2)(mmm)). He added that this rule is being revised to add an exemption to allowing the electric utilities to utilize emergency generators to provide power to the electric grid during periods of power interruption or severe weather events. He further added that this rule is also being revised to add clarity to the definition of emergency standby stationary gas turbines and stationary engines, add a new definition for emergency standby stationary engines at data centers, update a citation, correct grammar, and fix typographical errors. He finally stated that this rule update will align the State rule with the Federal rule.

Mr. Boylan stated that there was a comment from a private citizen about Rule 391-3-1-.02(2)(a)11. He further stated that this citizen expressed that this rule eliminates important revisions to Georgia’s Startup, Shutdown, and Malfunction (SSM) provisions, allowing loopholes to reopen for polluters. He added that this citizen stated that excess emissions during SSM events are a public threat, there are health impacts and financial burdens of excess emissions, and there is a disproportionate impact on environmental justice communities. He further added that Rule 391-3-1-.02(2)(a)11. never went into effect; therefore, the removal of this rule will have no impact on emissions in Georgia. He finally stated that the rule was not approved by the EPA and, thereby, was

never published in the Federal Register; this proposed rule amendment will remove superfluous language that never went into effect.

Mr. Boylan stated that a comment from Oglethorpe Power, stating that Oglethorpe Power strongly supports the proposed rule, noting that it will lead to increased grid reliability and provide an efficient and effective tool for utilities to avoid the involuntary interruption of service to customers, both large and small, across the state.

Mr. Boylan stated that after briefing the Environmental Committee of the DNR Board on March 25, 2025, there was a public hearing on May 1, 2025, and there were no comments. He further stated that the 30-day public comment period ended on May 8, 2025, and there were two written comments.

Mr. Boylan requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Hufstetler, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Air Quality Control, Chapter 391-3-1.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Minutes
Land Committee
Ft. Yargo State Park
210 S. Broad St.
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9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

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Duncan Johnson, Vice Chair
Nancy Addison
Jeff Andrews
Randy Dellinger
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy
Penn Hodge
Steve Hufstetler
Lesley Reynolds, Board Chair, Ex-officio

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Guests

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Damon Kirkpatrick, Friends of Georgia State Parks
Mike Worley, Georgia Wildlife Federation
Lyndy Rogers, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation
Charles Burton, North Georgia Mountain Authority
James Hamilton, North Georgia Mountain Authority

The June 24, 2025, meeting of the Land Committee was called to order by Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Harley Yancey, Chair of the Land Committee, who called on Trevor Santos, Deputy Commissioner, to present the six items for consideration.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated the first item would be the approval of the Upatoi Ravines Wildlife Management Area from Timberlands II LLC in Talbot County. He further stated that the 6,555-acre acquisition would be the second phase of this project, and that the Board had approved the 2,244-acre phase in December 2024. He added this phase is a part of a larger 9,014-acre project that the Department hopes to complete.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated the project is located within a large, forested area in the headwaters of the Upatoi Creek. He further stated that this acquisition will improve public access and provide new hunting and other outdoor recreational opportunities. He added that the funding sources for this acquisition are the U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy Grant, Georgia Department of Transportation Bat Funds, a Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Grant, and a Knobloch Family Foundation Grant.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated the cost for this phase of the acquisition is \$21,306,766.

Deputy Commissioner Santos requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Acquisition (Purchase) of 6,555.9± acres from Timberlands II LLC., 2nd Phase of the Upatoi Ravines Project, Talbot County.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated the next two items were for the same project, so he would be presenting them together while requesting two separate approvals. He further stated that, collectively, these tracts total ~180 acres and are adjacent to the state owned, 36-acre Rock and Shoals Outcrop Natural Area.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated this is a popular hiking destination in Athens-Clarke County, known for rock outcrop habitats as well as its proximity to Atlanta, making it a valued recreational area. He further stated the combined acquisition, and donation will improve public access and ensure the long-term oversight of the management of the property by DNR.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated that 'Item B' is the acquisition of a conservation easement over 86.9 acres for \$510,000, and 'Item C' is for the acceptance of the donation of a conservation easement on 93.7 acres. He further stated he would like to thank the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program and Athens-Clarke County for their support of these projects.

Deputy Commissioner Santos answered questions from the Board concerning public access and the conservation easement.

A motion was made by Mr. Dellinger, seconded by Mr. Andrews, and carried with one dissenting vote, that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the acquisition (purchase) of a conservation easement over 86.9± acres Rock and Shoals property, Athens-Clarke County.

A motion was made by Mr. Dellinger, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously, that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Acquisition (Donation) of a Conservation Easement over 93.7± acres Rock and Shoals property, Athens-Clarke County.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated the next item for the Board's consideration would be the acquisition of 14.67 acres of the former Columbus Farmers Market and subsequent conveyance via ground lease to the Columbus Consolidated Government in Muscogee County.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated that after the Columbus Farmers Market activity ceased, the property was conveyed to the Columbus Consolidated Government in 2019 for \$10, with the stipulation that the property remain available for public use in perpetuity. He further stated the Columbus Consolidated Government now wishes to use the site for soccer fields in partnership with a private group. He added that to facilitate this use, the Department will acquire the property for \$10 and then convey it back to the City of Columbus via a ground lease for an annual fee of \$1,740.

Deputy Commissioner Santos requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Hodge, seconded by Mr. Andrews, and carried out unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Acquisition (Purchase) of 14.67± acres of the former Columbus Farmers Market and then convey via ground lease from and to the Columbus Consolidated Government, Muscogee County.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated the next item for consideration was the approval, via Executive Order, to demolish the Flat Creek Public Fishing Area (PFA) Judge Richardson home, wellhouse, and storage building, in Houston County.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated that the Judge Richardson home and storage building are uninhabited, in total disrepair, and have not been occupied by the Wildlife Resources Division Fisheries staff since 2016. He further noted that the wellhouse and well are currently inoperable. Given the condition of all the structures, restoration would require a significant financial investment.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated that structures of historic significance and/or 2,000 sq. ft. or larger require an Executive Order authorizing removal. He further stated the State Archaeologist determined the structures are not historic, meaning demolition would have no negative impact on the Georgia/National Register of Historic Places. He added the combined square footage of the buildings, totals 4,117 sq. ft., so therefore, an Executive Order is required.

Deputy Commissioner Santos requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Hufstetler, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval, via Executive Order, to demolish the Flat Creek Public Fishing Area (PFA), Judge Richardson Home, J. Richardson Wellhouse, and Storage Building, Houston County.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated the final item for consideration would be the approval of legislative action authorizing acceptable terms of a settlement agreement between the State and Glynn New Hope 1043, LLC., for 4,086 acres of marshland in Glynn County.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated a property dispute between Glynn New Hope and the State exists over 4,068 acres of marshland in Glynn County. He further stated that Glynn New Hope wants to establish, construct, operate, maintain, and monitor a proposed mitigation bank on the site. Additionally, Glynn New Hope would like to sell mitigation credits from such a bank or banks in accordance with a mitigation banking instrument or instruments approved by the Army Corp. in compliance with relevant federal rules.

Deputy Commissioner Santos stated that, to resolve the ownership dispute, it was recommended a settlement agreement be executed with the terms included in the package. He further stated that the State Properties Commission approved the authorizing legislation and the terms of the settlement at its June 16, 2025, meeting.

Deputy Commissioner Santos answered questions from the Board members involving the ownership dispute and the mitigation credits.

Deputy Commissioner Santos requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval of legislative action and to enter into a settlement agreement between the State and Glynn New Hope 1043, LLC (“Glynn New Hope”), for 4,086.07 acres of marshland in Glynn County.

There being no further business, the Committee meeting was adjourn

**Minutes
Wildlife Resources Committee
Ft. Yargo State Park
210 S. Broad St.
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The June 24, 2025, meeting of the Wildlife Resources Committee was called to order by Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairwoman Reynolds called Steve Hufstetler, Vice Chairman of the Wildlife Resources Committee, who called on Tina Johannsen, Assistant Chief of Game Management, to present a briefing on the proposed amendments to the Rules for Wildlife Management Areas, 391-4-2.

Ms. Johannsen stated the hunting regulation amendments being presented authorize fluorescent pink hunting outer garments in accordance with legislation passed during the 2025 legislative session. She stated the public comment period would close on July 25, 2025, and she anticipated presenting the amendment, along with any public comments received, to the Board for consideration at the August 26, 2025, meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.