

Minutes
Board of Natural Resources
Courtyard Jekyll Island
178 S. Beachview Dr.
Jekyll Island, GA 31527

Tuesday, September 23, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Board Members

Lesley Reynolds, Chair
Patrick Denney, Vice Chair
Randy Dellinger, Secretary
Nancy Addison
Charles DePriest
Dan Garcia
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy (via conference call)
Steve Hufstetler
Duncan Johnson
Bill Jones
Ray Lambert (via conference call)
Brent Layton (via conference call)
Mike Peavy
Harley Yancey

Guests

Damon Kirkpatrick, Friends of Georgia State Parks
Lyndy Rogers, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation
Davis Poole, McIntosh County
Anna Edmondson, Robbins Firm
Bryan Tolar, Georgia Urban Agriculture Council
Rena Stricker, Georgia River Network
Mayor Cosby Johnson, City of Brunswick
Anita Collins, Urban Perry Park Neighborhood
Katrina Cochran, Georgia Municipal Association
Josiah Watts, Sapelo Island Cultural Revitalization Society
Vance Hughes, Jekyll Island Georgia
Warren Wagner, Georgia Power Company

Staff Members

Walter Rabon, Commissioner
Thomas Barnard
Trevor Santos
Kyle Pearson
Taylor Fisher
Haley Chafin
Jeff Cown
Anna Truscynski
Katie Bloomfield
Doug Haymans
Angie Johnson
James McLaughlin
Thom Litts
Brent Womack
Andre McLendon
Bart Hendrix
Jeri Nokes
Ryan Harrell
Jill Andrews
Bryan Gray
Karl Burgess
Tyler Jones

The September 23, 2025, meeting of the Board of Natural Resources was called to order by Chairwoman Lesley Reynolds.

Chairwoman Reynolds notified the Board members the meeting was being streamed live via Zoom.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Cosby H. Johnson, Mayor of the City of Brunswick, for a moment of inspiration.

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

Chairwoman Reynolds called the September 23, 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 August 26, 2025.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Garcia, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on August 26, 2025.

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

Director Cown updated the Board on attending last month's DNR Leadership Academy, updates on the State Water Council, and the status of the International Paper Plant closure. Director Cown stated this concluded his report.

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

Commissioner Rabon stated that DNR recently met with ESP to discuss opportunities for partnership through the Department's Outdoors Beyond Barriers initiative and added that staff are excited about the possibilities for collaboration.

Commissioner Rabon stated the Outdoors Beyond Barriers mission statement had been updated to recognize that there are barriers to the outdoors for many people. The new statement reads:

“The Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ Outdoors Beyond Barriers (OBB) adaptive program seeks to encourage, educate, and empower people of all abilities to connect with nature by providing gateways to enjoy hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational opportunities. The OBB program will teach skills and provide the necessary tools to become independent users of Georgia's natural resources.”

Commissioner Rabon stated this change reflects the growth of the initiative in its first year, as divisions have embraced OBB and expanded beyond mobility-focused programs to provide a broader range of adaptive opportunities for people of all abilities.

Commissioner Rabon stated the Outdoors Beyond Barriers hunting season began with two successful dove hunts—one in partnership with Lives Without Limits at Flint River WMA and another at Clybel WMA’s R3 Field—with a total of 14 hunters participating. He further stated that applications for the OBB deer hunts are now closed, with 94 hunters applying for eight public land hunts. He added that the Department is encouraged by the continued growth and early success of the initiative.

Commissioner Rabon stated that State Representative Butch Parrish recently toured George L. Smith State Park, where he received an overview of operations and information on upcoming projects. He thanked Representative Parrish for his continued support of DNR’s mission.

Commissioner Rabon stated the DNR Leadership Academy held its fourth session from September 9–11 at F.D. Roosevelt State Park, bringing together representatives from each of DNR’s five divisions. He stated the session highlighted the Environmental Protection Division’s operations and provided an overview of the Department’s administrative functions.

Commissioner Rabon stated the Leadership Academy will hold its final session at Unicoi State Park and Lodge, with graduation scheduled for November 12, 2025.

Commissioner Rabon stated that the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSA) pre-application period remains open through October 17, and that the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) pre-application period opened September 1 and will remain open through November 1.

Commissioner Rabon stated that Governor Brian Kemp proclaimed Saturday, September 27, as *National Hunting and Fishing Day* in Georgia. He noted that the Wildlife Resources Division has 11 events scheduled statewide, including kids fishing events and Outdoor Adventure Days featuring activities such as archery, fishing, and shooting. He added that September 27 will also be a Free Fishing Day, allowing Georgia residents to fish on public waters without a license.

Commissioner Rabon stated that on October 4 and 5, hunters in most Georgia counties will have an early-season firearms opportunity to harvest antlerless deer on private lands. He stated that

this effort supports venison donation and helps reduce deer-related crop damage. Hunters are encouraged to donate harvested deer to the *Georgia Hunters for the Hungry* program.

Commissioner Rabon stated that with the official recognition of the Altamaha and Bartram's bass as separate species, Georgia can now claim 14 black bass species—more than any other state or country. He stated that Bartram's bass inhabit the upper Savannah River Basin while the Altamaha bass is endemic to Georgia and found only in the Altamaha River Basin.

Commissioner Rabon then called on Lieutenant Colonel James McLaughlin to provide an update from the Law Enforcement Division.

Lieutenant Colonel McLaughlin updated the Board on 2025 boating statistics; dove season; a Gaboon Viper in Troup County; the 40th Game Warden Academy; drone usage; new field uniforms; and the 12th Annual Game Warden Banquet.

Commissioner Rabon then called on Director Angie Johnson to provide an update from the Parks and Historic Sites Division.

Director Johnson updated the Board on recent ribbon cutting events; the 2025 Park Ranger Academy; interpretive programming; Governor Kemp's visit to the Reynolds Mansion; the 2025 Park Managers Conference; the National Association of State Park Director's meeting; the 2026 Annual program theme; and Your State Parks Day.

Commissioner Rabon stated this concluded his report.

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

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Hatfield, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval for the Granting of a Revocable License Agreement and Permanent Easement of up to 0.45± acres by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly to Excelsior EMC Electrical Service at George L. Smith State Park, Emanuel County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairwoman Reynolds announced the next meeting of the Board of Natural Resources would be on October 28, 2025, in Atlanta.

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

Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman

ATTEST:

Randy Dellinger, Secretary

**Minutes
Coastal Committee
Courtyard Jekyll Island
178 S. Beachview Dr.
Jekyll Island, GA 31527**

**Tuesday, September 23, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

Nancy Addison, Chair
Randy Dellinger, Vice Chair
Charles DePriest
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy (via conference call)
Bill Jones
Ray Lambert (via conference call)
Brent Layton (via conference call)
Mike Peavy
Harley Yancey
Lesley Reynolds, Board Chair, Ex-Officio

Board Members

Patrick Denney
Dan Garcia
Steve Hufstetler
Duncan Johnson

Guests

Damon Kirkpatrick, Friends of Georgia State Parks
Lyndy Rogers, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation
Davis Poole, McIntosh County
Anna Edmondson, Robbins Firm
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Jeri Nokes
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The September 23, 2025, meeting of the Coastal Committee was called to order by Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Nancy Addison, Chairwoman of the Coastal Committee, who called on Doug Haymans, Director of the Coastal Resources Division, to speak about the Coastal Marshlands Protection Committee (CMPC) and Shore Protection Committee (SPC) Vacancy.

Director Haymans stated the CMPC was created in 1970 with the passage of state law that protects the public trust tidal wetlands and the SPC was created in 1979 with the passage of the Shore Protection Act, which protects the sand sharing system comprised of beaches, dunes, sand bars and shoals. He further stated these committees' issue permits for activities that occur within the jurisdiction of these state laws, including waterfront development, such as marinas and community docks, residential and commercial shorefront development, beach crossovers, beach nourishment, and bank stabilization. He added that the committee is made up of five members and the Commissioner of DNR serves as the Chair.

Director Haymans stated that effective December 31, 2025, Mr. Chad Barrow's (Chatham County) final term of membership expires. He further stated that CRD will announce the committee vacancy via print media, social media, and GovDelivery, with a nomination period closing on November 14, 2025.

Chairwoman Addison stated she would request the Board members submit any recommendations. She further stated she believed the vacancy would best be filled by someone from Chatham County.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Minutes
Land Committee
Courtyard Jekyll Island
178 S. Beachview Dr.
Jekyll Island, GA 31527**

**Tuesday, September 23, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

Harley Yancey, Chair
Duncan Johnson, Vice Chair
Nancy Addison
Randy Dellinger
Dan Garcia
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy (via conference call)
Steve Hufstetler
Lesley Reynolds, Board Chair, Ex-officio

Board Members

Patrick Denney
Charles DePriest
Bill Jones
Ray Lambert (via conference call)
Brent Layton
Mike Peavy (via conference call)

Guests

Damon Kirkpatrick, Friends of Georgia State Parks
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Jill Andrews
Bryan Gray
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Tyler Jones

Warren Wagner, Georgia Power Company

The September 23, 2025, meeting of the Land Committee was called to order by Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairlady Reynolds called on Harley Yancey, Chairman of the Land Committee, who called on Brent Womack, Chief of Real Estate, to present the action item.

Mr. Womack stated this item seeks approval to grant Excelsior EMC Electrical Service a revocable license agreement and permanent easement over up to 0.45 acres at George L. Smith State Park in Emanuel County. He further stated that Excelsior EMC Service needs this easement to provide power service to a new campground at the park. He noted that the park is under heritage preserve designation, but this request supports the reasons for the designation, so a change of use is not necessary. He added that DNR recommends this be issued at no cost.

Mr. Womack requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Granting of a Revocable License Agreement and Permanent Easement of up to 0.45± acres by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly to Excelsior EMC Electrical Service at George L. Smith State Park, Emanuel County.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.