

**Minutes
Board of Natural Resources
Suwannee River Eco-Lodge
400 Eco Lodge Drive
Fargo, GA 31631**

**Tuesday, September 27, 2022
9:00 a.m.**

Board Members

Bill Jones, Chair
Duncan Johnson, Secretary
William Bagwell
Randy Dellinger
Patrick Denney
Dwight Evans
Joe Hatfield
Ray Lambert
Rob Leebern
Tim Lowe
Billy New
Paul Shailendra
Bodine Sinyard
Miki Thomaston
Gary Vowell

Guests

Bill Clark, Okefenokee Swamp Park
Bryan Tolar, GA Urban Agriculture Council
John S. Quarterman, Suwannee Riverkeeper
Lakesha Nixon, Sowing Seeds
Sylvia Everett, Sowing Seeds
H. Elaine Bailey, Sowing Seeds
Danielle Bailey, Sowing Seeds/Bailey Bro. Foundation
Ebony Garard, Sowing Seeds
Emily Floore, St. Marys Riverkeeper
Gordon Jackson, Brunswick News
Kim Bednarek, Okefenokee State Park
Rena Ann Peck, Georgia River Network
Ruth Ann Tesanovich, Madison Co. Clean Power Coalition
Drago Tesanovich, Madison Co. Clean Power Coalition
Rev. Antwon Nixon, Okefenokee Protection Alliance

Staff Members

Mark Williams, Commissioner
Walter Rabon
Kyle Pearson
Donald Kirkland
Cathy Barnette
Artica Gaston
Stephen Adams
Jeff Cown
Steve Friedman
Doug Haymans
Ted Will
Karl Burgess
Bert Deener
Brad Ballard
Tina Blackstock
Ellen Graham
Bryan Gray
Mitchell Hendrix
Angie Johnson
John Shellnut
Josh Snead
Desmond Timmons

John Eunice, EPD Dep. Director

The September 27, 2022 Board of Natural Resources meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Jones.

Chairman Jones thanked Director Jeff Cown, Ellen Graham and staff for hosting the September Board of Natural Resources meeting at the Suwannee River Eco Lodge and Stephen C. Foster State Park.

Chairman Jones introduced Mr. Roy Abbott, Mayor of the City of Fargo. Mayor Abbott welcomed the group to their isolated and beautiful community and encouraged everyone to visit again.

Chairman Jones introduced Bert Deener, Region IV Fisheries Supervisor, for a moment of inspiration.

Chairman Jones called on Cathy Barnette for a declaration of quorum.

Chairman Jones stated that the Executive Session of the Land Committee is cancelled and called for a motion to approve.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Thomaston, and carried unanimously that the Board approve the removal of the Executive Session of the Land Committee from the agenda.

Chairman Jones adjourned the Board meeting to move into the Committee meetings.

Chairman Jones called the meeting of the Board of Natural Resources to order.

Chairman Jones called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on August 23, 2022.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Evans, and carried unanimously that the Board approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on August 23, 2022.

Chairman Jones called on John Eunice, Deputy Director of the Environmental Protection Division, in the absence of Director Rick Dunn, for his report.

Deputy Director Eunice updated the Board on the Atlanta metro-area reaching attainment for the 2015 ozone standards, the Rivian environmental advisory committee meetings have concluded and are finalizing recommendations, and a brief update on the permitting process for Twin Pines.

Deputy Director Eunice stated this concluded his report.

Chairman Jones called on Mark Williams, Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, for his report.

Commissioner Williams welcomed everyone to the Eco-Lodge and Stephen C. Foster State Park and thanked Director Jeff Cown, Region Manger Brad Ballard, and Park Manager Bryan Gray for hosting the September board meeting.

Commissioner Williams stated the 2023 DNR Career Academy will take place from July 16-22.

Commissioner Williams stated the Georgia National Guard has announced the promotion of Lt. Col. Kyle Pearson to Colonel and investiture as the first Military Judge in the history of the Georgia Army National Guard. He stated the Department is very proud of Kyle and thanked him for his service.

Commissioner Williams stated the event at George T. Bagby State Park on Friday, September 30, is postponed due to Hurricane Ian.

Commissioner Williams stated that registration for the 2023 Weekend for Wildlife will open on November 1, 2022.

Commissioner Williams stated that he and staff are working closely with the Office of Planning and Budget and Governor Kemp's office as the department prepares next year's budget and agency legislation.

Commission Williams recognized the passing of Mrs. Penny Hendrix. He stated that Mrs. Hendrix and her husband Mitchell moved to Stephen C. Foster in 2006 for Mitchell to serve as a senior park ranger. He further stated that in 2020, while the department was short-staffed due to the pandemic, Mrs. Penny agreed to take a job on the housekeeping staff to help keep up the workload. He added that the staff was later nominated for the Region 6 Most Outstanding Housekeeping Award in 2021. He further added that Mrs. Penny also worked as a paralegal, loved the Georgia Bulldogs, and was an avid NASCAR fan. He thanked Mrs. Penny and Mitchell for their service and asked everyone to please keep the Hendrix family in their prayers. Commissioner Williams then recognized some of the staff at Stephen C. Foster State Park, including Bryan Gray,

Tina Blackstock, and John Shellnut. He stated that these staff members acted, called 911, and performed CPR while waiting for emergency services to arrive. He further stated the Department is very proud of them and their heroic efforts.

Commissioner Williams called on Major Stephen Adams for the Law Enforcement Division report.

Major Adams updated the Board on the bear cases in Region II, end of summer boating stats, Game Warden Awards Banquet, and the Peace Officers Association of Georgia Awards.

Major Adams stated this concluded his report.

Commissioner Williams called on Jeff Cown, Director of the State Parks and Historic Sites Division, for his report.

Director Cown updated the Board on the GPRA Class #03-Week 1, Junior Ranger Camps Summer 2022, Girl Scouts Love State Parks Day, James H. Floyd Flooding on September 4, Red Top Mountain Yurts, General Coffee State Park's new housekeeping van, and the 2022 National Association of State Park Directors Conference in central Oregon.

Director Cown stated this concluded his report.

Commissioner Williams called on Doug Haymans, Director of the Coastal Resources Division, for his report.

Director Haymans updated the Board on the CRD Dive Team's Dive Ops, Red Drum hearings and comments, Bull River Mariculture Zone Lighting, and announced that CoastFest is cancelled due to Hurricane Ian.

Director Haymans stated this concluded his report.

Commissioner Williams called on Ted Will, Director of the Wildlife Resources Division, for his report.

Director Will updated the Board on the 2022 Statewide Meeting, the flood event at Summerville Trout Hatchery's raceways and production ponds, Avian Influenza incident in Henry County, Dove Season, upcoming Quota Hunt deadlines, and the virtual public meeting regarding the proposed rules pertaining to wild animals.

Director Will stated this concluded his report.

Commissioner Williams stated this concluded his report.

Chairman Bill Jones called on Tim Lowe, Chairman of the Land Committee, for his report.

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Evans, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Acquisition (Purchase) of 876.9+ acres as an addition to FDR State Park, Meriwether and Harris Counties. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Ms. Thomaston, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Acquisition (Purchase) of 48+ acres as an addition to FDR State Park, Meriwether County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Evans, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to acquire by donation from the Georgia Department of Transportation 96± acres, as an addition to Watson Mill Bridge State Park in Madison County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Ms. Thomaston, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to acquire by donation from the Georgia Department of Transportation 1,364± acres, the Flint Ravines Tract, as an addition to Big Lazer Wildlife Management Area in Upson County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Evans, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to acquire by donation from the Georgia Department of Transportation 1,127± acres, the Stuckey Tract, as an addition to Ocmulgee Wildlife Management Area in Bleckley County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Ms. Thomaston, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to acquire by donation from the Georgia Department of Transportation 1,538± acres, the Little River Tract, as an addition to the Cedar Creek Wildlife Management Area in Putnam County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. New, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to acquire by donation from the Georgia Department of Transportation

333± acres, as an addition to the Dixon Bay Wildlife Management Area in Screven County.
(Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Denney, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to acquire by donation from the Georgia Department of Transportation 491± acres, as an addition to Bullard Creek Wildlife Management Area in Jeff Davis County.
(Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Ms. Thomaston, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to grant a Revocable License Agreement and Permanent Easement of up to 0.72± acres by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly to Georgia Power at Jack Hill SP, Tattnall County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. New, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to enter into an agreement with Camden County to lease the 2.0± acres Temple Landing Boat Ramp. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A. W. Jones, III, Chairman

ATTEST:

Duncan N. Johnson, Jr., Secretary