

Minutes
Board of Natural Resources
Brasstown Valley Resort
6321 Highway 76
Young Harris, GA 30582

Wednesday, December 7, 2022
9:00 a.m.

Board Members

Bill Jones, Chair
Dwight Davis, Vice Chair
Duncan Johnson, Secretary
Nancy Addison
Nick Ayers
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
Dee Yancey

Guests

Aaron Mitchell, Georgia Power
Rosa Chi, Georgia Power
J. D. McCrary, Georgia Forest Watch

Staff Members

Mark Williams, Commissioner
Walter Rabon
Kyle Pearson
Cathy Barnette
Donald Kirkland
Artica Gaston
Thomas Barnard
Jeff Cown
Steve Friedman
Doug Haymans
Ted Will
Antoinette Norfleet
Clint Peacock

Richard Dunn, Director
John Eunice
Karen Hays

The December 7, 2022 Board of Natural Resources meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Jones.

Chairman Jones thanked Charles Burton and his staff at Brasstown Valley Resort for hosting the December board meeting and for their hospitality.

Chairman Jones thanked Ray and Mary Lynn Lambert for hosting the Christmas party and for their hospitality. He stated it was a very special evening for everyone.

Chairman Jones introduced Anthony Rabern, Region II Supervisor, for a moment of inspiration.

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 October 25, 2022.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried unanimously that the Board approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on October 25, 2022.

Chairman Jones called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Rock Howard Conservation Achievement Award Nominating Committee conference call meeting on November 8, 2022.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Yancey, and carried unanimously that the Board approve the minutes of the Rock Howard Conservation Achievement Award Nominating Committee conference call meeting on November 8, 2022.

Chairman Jones called on Richard Dunn, Director of the Environmental Protection Division, for his report.

Director Dunn updated the Board on the general assembly biannual Environmental Policy academy, recycling, waste aversion, and waste reduction grants administered by EPD, and an update on Twin Pines applications and public notice and comment periods.

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

Commissioner Williams welcomed everyone to Brasstown Valley Resort and thanked Charles Burton and the staff at Brasstown Valley Resort. He recognized Mark Osterhaus, Coral Hospitality, and thanked him for attending.

Commissioner Williams stated the Weekend for Wildlife is right around the corner and announced that \$1.4 million has been raised and the event is at capacity. He thanked Lyndy Saparow and stated she continues to do a great job.

Commissioner Williams stated that once again this year the department partnered with the Governor's Office, DFCS, and the Clark Howard's Christmas Kids program to provide gifts for forty children in the DFCS system. He thanked the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation for purchasing the gifts to ensure the gifts were delivered by the deadline. He stated that donations are still being collected to fully cover the cost of the gifts.

Commissioner Williams provided a legislative update and stated that Georgia elected fifty-three new Representatives and Senators to the state legislature. He further stated that each chamber's majority caucus also elected new leadership, which will not take effect until approved by the entire chamber when the session officially begins in January.

Commissioner Williams stated the Career Academy Application portal has closed, and there were two-hundred applicants. He further stated the students will be graded, and the top candidates will move on to the interview phase.

Commissioner Williams stated that in November Donald Kirkland participated in multiple interviews discussing Native American Heritage Month and the Atlanta Braves. He further stated that last session, Donald worked with Senator Jeff Mullis and Representative Matt Hatchett to pass a resolution to allow them to hold a tree-planting event in recognition of Native American contributions to our state. He added that to his knowledge, it was the first addition to the capitol grounds since the Martin Luther King, Jr. statue was installed in 2017.

Commissioner Williams stated that on Friday, Governor Brian Kemp presented the Governor's Public Safety Award for Heroism to Corporal Tim Morris, for his actions following the April tornado in Bryan County. He further stated that Corporal Morris located and transported nine victims to safe areas where they could receive medical attention.

Commissioner Williams recognized Antoinette Norfleet, Grants Program Manager, for receiving a Service Award from the Association President at the most recent National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers Conference. He congratulated Antoinette and thanked her for her great work.

Commissioner Williams called on Antoinette Norfleet for an overview of the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant cycle.

Ms. Norfleet stated the briefing is on state-owned projects that will be advancing in the approval process, and no action is required at this time. She further stated that back in April she briefed the Board about criteria questions that are used to select the projects, including criteria questions for the city and county level and criteria questions for state-owned properties. She added that this briefing is to go over the state-owned properties that will be moving forward.

Ms. Norfleet stated there were six projects that were initially proposed, and four projects will be submitted to the National Parks Service: Evans County PFA, McDuffie PFA, Stephen C. Foster State Park, and Tupelo State Park. She further stated that a total of \$6.4 million will be requested and with the matching funds it will be \$12.8 million in total projects.

Ms. Norfleet stated that after today's briefing, the projects will be presented to the National Parks Service and after a 90-day review process, she anticipates the grant rewards will be received. He further stated that after the grants are received the Engineering and Construction team will take the next steps in coordinating with each site regarding the bidding and construction timelines.

Ms. Norfleet stated that regarding local governments, typically the DNR has the grant cycles in the Fall but this year it was decided to delay it due to the strong desire to provide sound guidance to the local governments and applicants. She further stated back in the Summer the National Parks Service said that they would be changing their submittal and approval process, so it was decided to delay the Fall grant cycle. She added the NPS will be testing their processes with these four projects, which will help the Department to provide guidance to the local governments.

Ms. Norfleet stated an educational webinar will be provided in mid-late January and the local governments will be given a couple of months to ponder their local projects and ask questions. She further stated the Department will open the grant cycle in April, close in May, and then score the applications received. She added that she will come back to the Board in

September for a briefing on city and county projects. She added the Department anticipates that \$10 million will be distributed in that process.

Ms. Norfleet stated this concludes her briefing.

Commissioner Williams thanked Antoinette for her update.

Commissioner Williams called on Colonel Thomas Barnard, Director of the Law Enforcement Division, for his report.

Colonel Barnard provided an update on the 37th Game Warden Academy, hunting incidents, deer poaching cases, SEAFWA Award, C.H.A.M.P.S. Program, and youth hunt.

Colonel Barnard stated this concluded his report.

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

Director Cown provided an update on Tropical Storm Nicole, 2022 Association of Southeastern State Park Directors Conference in Columbia, SC, All-Terrain Georgia Action Track Chairs, Fall Fun and Halloween Events, Panola Mountain Workday, Fort Yargo Bridges, and Hooded Pitcher Plants Partnership.

Director Cown stated this concluded his report.

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

Director Haymans provided an update on Hurricane Nicole, Coastal Longline Survey, Marine Sportfish population health survey, habitat enhancement, and an outstanding catch by Chad Hodges for landing a 14-pound 7.84-ounce Southern Flounder on November 17.

Director Haymans stated this concluded his report.

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

Director Will provided an update on the hunter feedback regarding deer season closing at the peak of the rut in SW Georgia, Fisheries Stocking and Sampling of fish populations in waterbodies across the state, the boat ramp dedication ceremony at River Cove Landing on

November 9, the 11th Annual Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop in November, and the collection of native groundcover seed on WMAs in Southwest Georgia.

Director Will stated this concluded his report.

Commissioner Williams stated this concluded his report.

Chairman Jones called on Mr. Patrick Denney, Chairman of the Wildlife Resources Committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Denney, seconded by Mr. Hatfield, and carried unanimously, that the Committee recommends the Board approve the on Proposed Amendments to Subject 391-4-3, relating to Fishing Regulations.

Mr. Denney stated this concluded his report.

Chairman Jones called on William Bagwell, Acting Chairman of the Land Committee, for his report.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Acquisition (purchase) from The Nature Conservancy of 1,342± acres as an addition to the Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA-Langdale Tract, Marion County.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded by Mr. Yancey, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Acquisition (purchase) of 2,424± acres from The Nature Conservancy, Dugdown Mountain Tracts, Paulding, Haralson, and Polk Counties.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, 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 392± acres from the USHA Reddy Trust, Flat Tub WMA, Jeff Davis County.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Acquisition (Purchase) of a Conservation Easement over the 1,520± acres Warbick Farms, LLC, Thomas County.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, 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 Lee County to lease the 2.3± acres Kinchafoonee Creek Boat Ramp.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded by Ms. Thomaston, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to renew a 25-Year License Agreement of 943.7+ acres at Lake Walter F. George with the U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers, Clay County.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded by Mr. Leebern, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Columbus, Standing Boy Creek SP, Muscogee County.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded Mr. Ayers, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval via Executive Order to demolish a residence on Standing Boy Creek State Park, Muscogee County.

Mr. Bagwell stated this concluded his report.

Chairman Jones called on Ray Lambert, Chairman of the Nominating Committee for the 2023 Officers, for his report.

Mr. Lambert stated the Nominating Committee met via conference call on November 29, 2022, to discuss the slate of officers for 2023. He further stated that the consensus of the committee was to offer the following nominations: Dwight Davis, Chairman; Joe Hatfield, Vice Chairman; and Gary Vowell, Secretary.

Chairman Jones thanked the Committee for their work and added that slate of officers will be voted on at the January meeting.

Chairman Jones called on Patrick Denney for a report from the Nominating Committee for the 2022 Board of Natural Resources Rock Howard Conservation Achievement Award.

Mr. Denney stated the Nominating Committee met via conference call on November 8, 2022, to discuss the nominee for the 2022 award. He further stated the committee received one nomination from Mr. Dwight Davis, and he nominated Dr. David Allen. He added that the consensus of the committee was to recommend Dr. David Allen.

A motion was made by Mr. Denney, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried unanimously that the Board approve Dr. David Allen to receive the 2022 Board of Natural Resources Rock Howard Conservation Achievement Award.

Chairman Jones thanked the Committee for their work and stated that the award will be presented to Dr. David Allen at the Board meeting on January 27, 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A. W. Jones, III, Chairman

ATTEST:

Duncan N. Johnson, Jr., Secretary