Minutes
Board of Natural Resources
Little Ocmulgee State Park and Lodge
80 Live Oak Trail, McRae, GA 31037

Tuesday, September 22, 2026
9:00 a.m.

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

Staff Members
Walter Rabon, Commissioner
Thomas Barnard
Trevor Santos
Taylor Fisher
Kyle Pearson
Haley Chafin
Jeff Cown
Anna Truszcynski
Katie Bloomfield
Doug Haymans
Julie Califf
Al Greer
Sarah Visser
Derek Jackson
Chris Harper
Blake Chafin
Bryan Gray
Jessica James Weems
Royce Johnson
Brent Womack

Guests
Charles Burton, North Georgia Mountains Authority
Lyndy Rogers, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation
Mark McDonald, speaker
Spud Woodward, Coastal Conservation Association
Rena Peck Stricker, Georgia Rivers

The September 22, 2026, meeting of the Board of Natural Resources was called to order by Patrick Denney, Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairman Denney called on Mark McDonald for a moment of inspiration.

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

Chairman Denney called the September 22, 2026, meeting of the Board of Natural Resources back to order.

Chairman Denney called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on August 25, 2026.

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 August 25, 2026.

Chairman Denney called on Jeff Cown, Director of the Environmental Protection Division, for his report.

Director Cown provided an update on statewide drought conditions, noting that Drought Response Level 1 remains in effect. He also discussed federal drought assistance available to eligible livestock producers.

Director Cown announced a memorial service for former Commissioner and EPD Director Leonard Ledbetter, scheduled for October 19 at Smoke Rise Country Club.

Director Cown concluded by sharing a new EPD video highlighting the division's work to protect Georgia's environment, which will be used for outreach and recruitment.

Director Cown concluded his report.

Chairman Denney called on Walter Rabon, Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, for his report.

Commissioner Rabon provided an update on the Department's second annual Hunting and Fishing Night in partnership with the Atlanta Braves and Realtree. More than 46,000 fans attended the game, marking the largest department-wide public information and education outreach event of its kind that he was aware of. The Braves reported that it was their best turnout ever for a

giveaway and weekend event. He commended Department staff for their efforts in coordinating the event and noted that planning is already underway for next year's event.

Commissioner Rabon announced that DNR was recognized as the Okefenokee Champion at the Georgia Rivers Gala. He thanked Board member Bill Jones for accepting the award on behalf of the Department. The recognition highlighted the Department's work to protect and manage lands in and around the Okefenokee Swamp, including the recent acquisition of the Trail Ridge Wildlife Management Area. The acquisition will allow the Wildlife Resources Division to manage nearly 8,000 acres in southeast Georgia for wildlife conservation and public recreation.

Commissioner Rabon highlighted the launch of a new artificial intelligence feature on the Department's website to improve search capabilities and help users locate information more efficiently. He noted that staff are continuing to work through some initial technical issues.

Commissioner Rabon reported that approximately 1,200 Georgia Black Bass license plates have been purchased since becoming available. He also noted that the Fisheries Management Section has begun developing a Black Bass Management Plan to guide the use of license plate proceeds in supporting black bass management efforts throughout the state.

Commissioner Rabon announced that Governor Brian Kemp proclaimed September 26 as National Hunting and Fishing Day in Georgia. The Wildlife Resources Division scheduled 12 events statewide, including youth fishing opportunities and outdoor adventure activities featuring archery and other outdoor recreation. The date also served as a free fishing day, allowing Georgia residents to fish in public waters without a fishing license.

Commissioner Rabon concluded by reporting that the Wildlife Resources Division's Hunter Development Program had certified 48 new coaches for the Scholastic Clay Target Program over the previous two months. The Department continues to partner with the Georgia Independent School Association and the Georgia Association of Private and Professional Schools to support youth shooting sports. Approximately 1,500 students participated in the two state shoots last fall, with 76 teams participating in the programs. Commissioner Rabon noted continued growth in student participation and competition.

Commissioner Rabon called on Doug Haymans, Director of the Coastal Resources Division, to give a brief update on the Red Snapper Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP).

Director Haymans provided an update on the Red Snapper EFP, which was approved on October 17 and signed and returned to NOAA Fisheries the following morning. The Department had requested authorization to harvest 10,759 fish over approximately 30 days but was granted a quota of 4,859 fish, which federal estimates indicate could be harvested over 14 days. The season is scheduled for October 9 through October 22, with the possibility of an extension into December if

the quota is not reached. Director Haymans noted that additional legal challenges are anticipated but expressed hope that the permit would remain in effect.

Director Haymans also discussed a recent presidential executive order addressing limitations in recreational fisheries data collection. He noted that existing data collection methods were not designed to effectively assess certain recreational fisheries, particularly those with infrequent or concentrated periods of activity. The executive order directs NOAA Fisheries to identify improved approaches to recreational fisheries data collection. Director Haymans stated that the Department hopes to see progress toward improvements over the next two years.

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

Director Johnson highlighted recent division accomplishments, including statewide programs celebrating America's 250th anniversary, expanded water safety and accessibility initiatives, and major infrastructure improvements at Okefenokee State Park. She reported that Georgia received a national innovation award for implementing its electronic park pass payment system, which has returned nearly 3,000 staff hours to park operations.

Commissioner Rabon called on Major Al Greer for a report from the Law Enforcement Division.

Major Greer reported decreases in boating incidents, injuries, and fatalities during the 2026 Memorial Day through Labor Day period compared with the previous year. He highlighted a successful canine-assisted search that located a murder weapon and announced the selection of 17 candidates for the 41st Game Warden Academy, scheduled to begin in January.

Major Greer recognized Game Warden Wes Freeman for receiving the Valor Award for rescuing three victims and congratulated Corporal Blake Chafin on being named 2026 Game Warden of the Year.

Commissioner Rabon called on Lyndy Rogers, Executive Director of the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation, who gave an update on the 2027 Weekend for Wildlife event.

Commissioner Rabon concluded his report.

Chairman Denney called on Ray Lambert for the report of the Environmental Protection Committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Solid Waste Management, Chapter 391-3-4. (Resolution attached hereto and a made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Lead-Based Paint Hazard Management, Chapter 391-3-24. (Resolution attached hereto and a made a part thereof)

Chairman Denney called on Mark Hennessy for a report of the Land Committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Hennessy, seconded by Mr. Garcia, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the acquisition (purchase) of 124.32± acres from the Howell Family Lands, LLC, Sheffield WMA – Howell 115 Project, Paulding County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Hennessy, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Proposed Amendment to Boring-Kirkman Conservation Easement. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Hennessy, seconded by Mr. Hatfield, and carried unanimously that 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 2.53± acres by the State Properties Commission and Friends of Northeast Georgia, Inc at Tallulah Gorge WMA, Habersham County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Hennessy, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to request approval via Executive Order to demolish the Fort Yargo State Park Red, Yellow, and Blue Cabin Clusters (along with their associated pavilion/tipi structures) and the Green Cabin Cluster in Barrow County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairman Denney stated an Executive Session of the Land Committee would be held immediately following adjournment.

Chairman Denney announced that the next Board meeting will be held Tuesday, October 27 in the DNR Boardroom in Atlanta, GA.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Patrick Denney, Chairman

ATTEST:

Dan Garcia, Secretary

Minutes
Coastal Committee
Little Ocmulgee State Park and Lodge
80 Live Oak Trail, McRae, GA 31037

Tuesday, September 22, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Committee Members
Nancy Addison, Chair
Harley Yancey, Vice Chair
Randy Dellinger
Charles DePriest (via conference call)
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy
Ray Lambert
Brent Layton (via conference call)
Mike Peavy
Patrick Denney, Board Chair, Ex-Officio

Board Members
Dan Garcia
Steve Hufstetler
Duncan Johnson
Bodine Sinyard
Lesley Reynolds

The September 22, 2026, meeting of the Coastal Committee was called to order by Patrick Denney, Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairman Denney called on Nancy Addison, Chairwoman of the Coastal Committee.

Chairwoman Addison called on Julie Califf, Fisheries Dependent Statistics, to present proposed amendments to the saltwater fishing regulations concerning recreational reporting requirements and endorsements for certain species.

Ms. Califf explained that the proposed amendments would establish reporting requirements for recreational anglers harvesting certain species, with implementation of reporting requirements for 2028 and beyond. She stated that the implementation date was selected to avoid confusion and duplication with reporting requirements associated with the red snapper endorsement.

Ms. Califf reviewed the nine species covered by the proposal: amberjack, black sea bass, cobia, dolphin, gag grouper, king mackerel, red porgy, red snapper, and Spanish mackerel. She

explained that these species are included in state regulations but are primarily harvested in federal waters.

Ms. Califf reviewed the proposed changes to Rule 391-2-4-.16, including requiring endorsement holders to report their harvest at the conclusion of each trip. She explained that recreational reef fish endorsement holders would submit reports electronically at the end of each trip, saltwater pier operators would submit monthly reports, and fishing guides would submit weekly reports. She stated that staff would work to coordinate overlapping reporting requirements to avoid unnecessary duplication.

Ms. Califf also reviewed proposed amendments to Rule 391-2-4-.17, which governs commercial fishing endorsements. She explained that the proposal would remove the word "commercial" and incorporate the endorsement requirements for recreational and commercial permit holders harvesting the nine identified species.

Ms. Califf stated that the public comment period was scheduled to open following the meeting and close October 30, 2026. She explained that the Committee would consider final action on the proposed amendments at its December 1, 2026, meeting.

In response to a question regarding fishing guides operating under a blanket license, Ms. Califf clarified that an angler being taken fishing by a guide would be covered by the guide's endorsement when the appropriate license and endorsement were held.

Chairwoman Addison called on Spud Woodward for public comment.

Mr. Woodward, representing the Georgia affiliate of the Coastal Conservation Association, expressed support for the proposed amendments, emphasizing the importance of improved fisheries data to inform management decisions and balance conservation with fishing opportunities.

Following public comment, Chairwoman Addison invited questions and comments from Committee and Board members.

There being no further questions or comments, the discussion concluded.

Minutes
Environmental Protection Committee
Little Ocmulgee State Park and Lodge
80 Live Oak Trail, McRae, GA 31037

Tuesday, September 22, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Committee Members
Ray Lambert, Chair
Duncan Johnson, Vice Chair
Nancy Addison
Dan Garcia
Steve Hufstetler
Brent Layton (via conference call)
Lesley Reynolds
Bodine Sinyard
Patrick Denney, Board Chair, Ex-Officio

Board Members
Charles DePriest (via conference call)
Randy Dellinger
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy
Mike Peavy
Harley Yancey

The September 22, 2026, meeting of the Environmental Protection Committee was called to order by Chairman Patrick Denney.

Chairman Denney called on Ray Lambert, Chairman of the Environmental Protection Committee, who called on Sarah Visser, Chief of the Land Protection Branch.

Ms. Visser presented proposed amendments to the Rules for Solid Waste Management, Chapter 391-3-4. She explained that the amendments align the Board's rules with statutory changes enacted during the previous legislative session.

Ms. Visser stated that the proposed amendments clarify local government verification requirements for zoning and solid waste management plan consistency, clarify that public participation requirements apply to major landfill modifications as well as new landfills, and revise provisions related to public meetings. She also explained that the amendments remove the restriction on regional landfills accepting waste generated outside their boundaries, consistent with a court decision regarding the Commerce Clause.

Ms. Visser stated that the public comment period began June 25 and that a public hearing was held July 23. Two written comments were received regarding zoning reaffirmation and verification of consistency with solid waste management plans. She explained that the comments were outside the scope of the current rulemaking but would be considered during a future rulemaking with stakeholder input. Staff recommended no changes to the proposed amendments.

Ms. Visser requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Ms. Addison, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the proposed amendments to the Rules for Solid Waste Management, Chapter 391-3-4.

Chairman Lambert called on Ms. Visser to present the proposed amendments to the Rules for Lead-Based Paint Hazard Management, Chapter 391-3-24.

Ms. Visser explained that the proposed amendments align Georgia's rules with updated federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements necessary to maintain the state's delegation. She stated that the amendments update definitions and terminology throughout the rules, lower dust lead action levels for floors, window sills, and window troughs to reflect current scientific understanding of lead exposure risks, and establish specific reporting requirements following lead abatement activities. The amendments also update administrative procedures by removing outdated paper-based requirements and correcting technical references.

Ms. Visser stated that the public comment period began June 25 and ended August 12. A public hearing was held July 29, and no written or oral comments were received. Staff recommended no changes to the proposed amendments.

Ms. Visser requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Ms. Reynolds, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the proposed amendments to the Rules for Lead-Based Paint Hazard Management, Chapter 391-3-24.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes
Land Committee
Little Ocmulgee State Park and Lodge
80 Live Oak Trail, McRae, GA 31037

Tuesday, September 22, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Committee Members
Mark Hennessy, Chair
Nancy Addison
Randy Dellinger
Dan Garcia
Joe Hatfield
Steve Hufstetler
Duncan Johnson
Lesley Reynolds
Harley Yancey
Patrick Denney, Board Chair, Ex-Officio

Board Members
Charles DePriest (via conference call)
Ray Lambert
Brent Layton (via conference call)
Mike Peavy
Bodine Sinyard

The September 22, 2026, meeting of the Land Committee was called to order by Patrick Denney, Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairman Denney called on Mark Hennessy, Chair of the Land Committee, who then called on Brent Womack, Chief of Real Estate, to present the items.

Mr. Womack presented a request for approval of the acquisition by purchase of the Howell 115 Project, consisting of approximately 124 acres in Paulding County adjacent to Sheffield Wildlife Management Area.

Mr. Womack stated that the acquisition will protect land along a creek, provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities, and offer opportunities for longleaf pine restoration and riparian buffer protection. Upon acquisition, the property will be incorporated into the wildlife management area and managed for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation opportunities. Funding

sources include the Knobloch Family Foundation, Stone Mountain Industrial, and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pittman-Robertson grant.

In response to a question from Mr. Hennessy regarding Stone Mountain Industrial, Mr. Womack explained that the company is a privately owned commercial development firm that has provided annual donations to support the Department's acquisition of conservation lands.

Mr. Womack requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Yancey, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution authorizing the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the acquisition (purchase) of 124.32± acres from the Howell Family Lands, LLC, Sheffield WMA – Howell 115 Project, Paulding County.

Mr. Womack presented a request for approval to amend the Boring Kirkman Conservation Easement in Baker County.

Mr. Womack stated that Department staff had worked with the landowners to develop the proposed amendments and that the landowners were supportive of the changes. The amendment would allow construction of a combination residential structure and maintenance shed at a designated maintenance shed site rather than the previously identified residential building site. He explained that the proposed structure would remain within the existing conservation easement guidelines for building size and height. The changes would reduce the number of building envelopes, minimize the total building footprint, improve management of the property, and provide greater protection of its conservation values. The proposed amendments would not negatively impact the property's conservation values.

Mr. Womack requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Yancey, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution authorizing the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the Proposed Amendment to Boring-Kirkman Conservation Easement.

Mr. Womack presented a request for approval of a revocable license agreement and permanent easement involving up to 2.53 acres of state property at Tallulah Gorge Wildlife Management Area in Rabun County for Friends of Northeast Georgia, Inc.

Mr. Womack stated that the proposed agreement would allow the construction and maintenance of a hiking trail along a portion of the abandoned Tallulah Falls Railroad. He explained

that the trail would provide additional public recreation opportunities, encourage visitation to the wildlife management area, and support the Department's mission of connecting people with the outdoors. Department staff had reviewed the proposal and had no objections. Mr. Womack noted that the property was not dedicated as a heritage preserve and that the proposed trail would require approval through the State Properties Commission and the General Assembly. Staff recommended that the revocable license be issued at no cost.

Mr. Womack requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution authorizing the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the granting of a Revocable License Agreement and Permanent Easement of up to 2.53± acres by the State Properties Commission and Friends of Northeast Georgia, Inc at Tallulah Gorge WMA, Habersham County.

Mr. Womack presented a request for approval, through executive order, to demolish the green, red, yellow, and blue cabin clusters and pavilion and tipi structures at Fort Yargo State Park in Barrow County.

Mr. Womack explained that demolition of the structures would address current Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements and camper safety concerns. He stated that, because the structures are considered historic, the Department would comply with O.C.G.A. § 12-3-10 by documenting their historic characteristics before demolition. Approval through an executive order signed by the Governor is required to proceed with the demolitions.

Mr. Womack requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution authorizing the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to request approval via Executive Order to demolish the Fort Yargo State Park Red, Yellow, and Blue Cabin Clusters (along with their associated pavilion/tipi structures) and the Green Cabin Cluster in Barrow County.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes
Executive Session of the Land Committee
Little Ocmulgee State Park and Lodge
80 Live Oak Trail, McRae, GA 31037

Tuesday, September 22, 2026
9:00 a.m.

Committee Members
Mark Hennessy, Chair
Nancy Addison
Randy Dellinger
Dan Garcia
Joe Hatfield
Steve Hufstetler
Duncan Johnson
Lesley Reynolds
Harley Yancey
Patrick Denney, Board Chair, Ex-Officio

Board Members
Ray Lambert
Mike Peavy
Bodine Sinyard

The Land Committee was called to order by Mark Hennessy, Chairman of the Land Committee.

Chairman Hennessy called for a motion.

A motion was made by Mr. Hatfield, seconded by Mr. Yancey, and carried unanimously by Ms. Addison, Mr. Dellinger, Mr. Garcia, Mr. Hufstetler, Mr. Johnson, and Ms. Reynolds that the Land Committee go into Executive Session in accordance with O. C. G. A. §50-14-3(b)(1)(B), in order to discuss the authorization of negotiations to purchase property and to dispose of property. (Affidavit attached hereto and made a part hereof)

There was no action taken during the September 22, 2026, Executive Session of the Land Committee.

There being no further business, the Land Committee was adjourned.