

**Minutes**  
**Board of Natural Resources**  
**DNR Boardroom**  
**2 MLK Jr. Drive, SE**  
**Suite 1252, East Tower**

**Tuesday, February 24, 2026**  
**9:00 a.m.**

**Board Members**

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

**Guests**

Bryan Tolar, Georgia Urban Agriculture Council  
Lyndy Rogers, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation  
Charles Burton, North Georgia Mountain Authority  
Rena Peck, Georgia Rivers  
Chuck Munn, Hoyer Investment Company  
Mathieu Erramuzpe, Jones Fortuna LP  
Scott Hendricks, Georgia Power  
George Kelecheck, Rockdale Soil and Water Conservation  
David Lopeland

**Staff Members**

Walter Rabon, Commissioner  
Thomas Barnard  
Trevor Santos  
Kate Iannuzzi  
Taylor Fisher  
Haley Chafin  
Jeff Cown  
Anna Truscynski  
Veronica Craw  
Chuck Mueller  
Chris Harper  
Thom Litts  
Hunter Roop  
Angie Johnson  
Andre McLendon  
Ellen Graham  
Doug Haymans  
Brent Womack  
Richie Golden  
Dan Roach  
Mike England  
Bob Holley  
Quintin Reed  
Soheila Naji  
Ouicia Jolly

The February 24, 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 Lyndy Rogers, Executive Director of the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation (GNRF) for a Foundation update.

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

Chairman Denney called the February 24, 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 January 30, 2026.

**A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Hatfield and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on January 30, 2026.**

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

Director Cown recognized the passing of Harold Reheis, former Director of the Environmental Protection Division, and requested a moment of silence in his memory.

Director Cown provided a legislative update, reporting that House Bill 956 and House Resolution 1008 continue to advance through the General Assembly.

He also provided an update on statewide drought conditions, noting that much of Georgia remains in extreme to exceptional drought. After review of the Flint River Drought Declaration Matrix, he stated that he does not intend to call for a drought irrigation auction at this time but will continue monitoring conditions.

Director Cown concluded by recognizing Dr. Wei Zeng for 25 years of service and thanked him for his contributions to water resource management and interstate water litigation.

Chairman Denney thanked Director Cown for his report.

Chairman Denney then recognized Commissioner Walter Rabon for receiving the 2026 Conservation Trailblazer Award at the Dallas Safari Club Convention and congratulated him on the honor.

Chairman Denney called on Commissioner Rabon for his report.

Commissioner Rabon began by acknowledging the passing of Joe Yeager, retired Parks Region Two Manager, who served the Department for over 26 years. He requested that the Board keep Mr. Yeager's family in their thoughts and observed a moment of silence in his memory.

Commissioner Rabon then called on Ouicia Jolly, Recreational Trails Program Coordinator, to present an informational update on the 2025–2026 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) projects.

Ms. Jolly provided an overview of the RTP program, explaining that it supports development, maintenance, and rehabilitation of motorized and non-motorized trails statewide through federal funding derived from non-highway fuel excise taxes. She outlined the two-phase application process and reported that 23 non-motorized pre-applications were received for the 2025–2026 cycle, with no motorized applications submitted.

Ms. Jolly reported that \$3.1 million has been reserved, contingent upon successful completion of second-level application requirements and federal approval. The second-level application period will open April 1, 2026, and close June 1, 2026. No Board action was required.

Commissioner Rabon thanked Ms. Jolly for her presentation.

Commissioner Rabon then called on Colonel Mike England for an update from the Law Enforcement Division.

Colonel England reported that the 40th Game Warden Academy began January 11 and currently has 18 cadets enrolled, with graduation scheduled for April 17. He noted that applications remain open for the 41st Academy and provided an overview of current vacancies and ongoing training activities.

Colonel England summarized deer season enforcement activity from September through January, including citations, violations, and two hunting-related fatalities. He also highlighted enforcement activity related to waterfowl violations, including hunting over bait, and noted increased use of the Hunt Regs reporting app, which has resulted in a 185 percent increase in public tips.

Colonel England additionally reported on community outreach activities, wildlife rehabilitation assistance involving an injured eagle, and welcomed Lieutenant Colonel McLaughlin's newborn daughter.

Commissioner Rabon thanked Colonel England for his report.

Commissioner Rabon then called on Director Angie Johnson for the State Parks and Historic Sites Division update.

Director Johnson reported on the record-breaking First Day Hikes held January 1 as part of the “Monumental Moments” theme commemorating America’s 250th anniversary. She stated that 3,102 participants completed 93 hikes totaling 6,678 miles, the highest participation to date. She highlighted a coordinated coastal “Hike Through History” event across five historic sites.

Director Johnson also provided updates on operational improvements at Tallulah Gorge State Park, noting a reduction in search and rescue incidents and zero fatalities following implementation of new safety protocols. She reported completion of major renovations at George T. Bagby State Park, reopening of Seminole State Park campground following Hurricane Michael damage, and new cottage openings at Elijah Clark State Park.

She further highlighted recognition of several state park golf courses in national and statewide rankings and participation in Super Museum Sunday.

Commissioner Rabon thanked Director Johnson for her report.

Commissioner Rabon then called on Director Doug Haymans for a Coastal Resources Division update.

Director Haymans provided an update on upcoming red drum public meetings and the federal public comment period for the red snapper Exempted Fishing Permit. He also noted the upcoming CoastFest event in Brunswick.

Commissioner Rabon then presented the inaugural State of the Department report to the Board. He explained that the report provides a comprehensive overview of agency accomplishments from August 2023 through calendar year 2025 and will be presented annually moving forward.

Commissioner Rabon outlined the Department’s four strategic goals: workforce recruitment and retention; infrastructure modernization; marketing and messaging; and expanding access to outdoor recreation. He highlighted achievements including technology modernization initiatives, workforce development programs, communications enhancements, Outdoors Beyond Barriers expansion, capital project completions, land acquisitions totaling over 42,000 acres, and economic impacts of outdoor recreation and coastal industries.

Commissioner Rabon also summarized the Department’s response to Hurricane Helene, including deployment of over 450 personnel and restoration efforts following significant damage to state properties.

Commissioner Rabon concluded by thanking staff who contributed to the report and expressed appreciation to the Board for its support.

Chairman Denney thanked Commissioner Rabon for the presentation and expressed appreciation for the comprehensive update.

Chairman Denney called on Vice Chair Penn Hodge for the Land Committee report.

**A motion was made by Mr. Hodge, 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 granting of a drainage easement to HIC Altama, LLC by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly for a storm water drainage system to resolve a hydrological dispute in Altama Plantation WMA, Glynn County.** (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairman Denney announced that the next Board meeting will be held Tuesday, March 24, in the DNR Board Room.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Patrick Denney, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Dan Garcia, Secretary

**Minutes  
Land Committee  
DNR Boardroom  
2 MLK Jr. Drive, SE  
Suite 1252, East Tower**

**Tuesday, February 24, 2026**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Committee Members**

Mark Hennessy, Chair  
Penn Hodge, Vice Chair  
Nancy Addison (via conference call)  
Jeff Andrews  
Randy Dellinger  
Dan Garcia (via conference call)  
Joe Hatfield  
Steve Hufstetler  
Duncan Johnson  
Lesley Reynolds  
Harley Yancey (via conference call)  
Patrick Denney, Board Chair, Ex-Officio

**Board Members**

Bill Jones  
Ray Lambert  
Brent Layton  
Mike Peavy

The February 24, 2026, meeting of the Land Committee was called to order by Patrick Denney, Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairman Denney called on Penn Hodge, Vice Chair of the Land Committee, who stated that the Committee had one item on the agenda. Vice Chair Hodge then called on Brent Womack, Chief of Real Estate, to present the item.

Mr. Womack requested approval to grant an approximately 2.5-acre drainage easement to HIC Altama, LLC, subject to State Properties Commission and General Assembly approval. He stated that the easement is for a stormwater drainage system that will help resolve a hydrologic dispute involving Altama Plantation Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Glynn County.

Mr. Womack stated that HIC Altama contends that management activities in the area altered the historic hydrology by impeding the natural flow of water from its property. He further stated that the Department denies its actions altered the historic hydrology. He added that, in a good-faith effort to resolve the dispute, both parties have agreed to enter into a settlement agreement. As part of the agreement, HIC Altama requests a non-exclusive drainage easement

within the WMA to support the construction and long-term operation of necessary stormwater management facilities serving its property.

Mr. Womack stated that the Wildlife Resources Division has reviewed the proposed easement and supports its issuance due to the limited scope of the work, the minimal impact to the WMA, and the inclusion of measures to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife, including gopher tortoises. He further stated that, since the non-exclusive drainage easement is part of the overall settlement of this matter, the Department recommends it be granted at no cost.

Mr. Womack requested favorable consideration.

**A motion was made by Mr. Andrews, seconded by Mr. Hatfield, 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 drainage easement to HIC Altama, LLC for a stormwater drainage system to resolve a hydrologic dispute in Altama Plantation WMA, Glynn County.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.