

**Minutes
Land Committee
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S. E.
Suite 1252 East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334**

**Tuesday, May 23, 2023
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

Charles DePriest, Vice Chair
Nancy Addison
Patrick Denney
Dan Garcia
Kevin Jackson
Bill Jones
Gary Vowell
Dwight Davis, Board Chair, Ex-officio

Board Members

Joe Hatfield
Duncan Johnson
Ray Lambert
Paul Shailendra

Guests

Mark Woodall, Sierra Club
Bryan Tolar, GA Urban Ag Council
Debbie Phillips, GA Industry Environmental Coalition
Lindsay McVicar, GA Senate Budget and Evaluation Office
John Eberhart, GA Earth Alliance
Reaganne Hart, Office of the Governor

Staff Members

Mark Williams, Commissioner
Walter Rabon
Kyle Pearson
Kate Iannuzzi
Donald Kirkland
Cathy Barnette
Artica Gaston
Thomas Barnard
Jeff Cown
Steve Friedman
Ted Will
Mark Patterson
Mike England
Stephen Adams
Tina Johannsen

Richard Dunn, Director
James Boylan
Chuck Mueller
Anna Truszczynski
Laura Williams
DeAnna Oser
Sarah Visser

The May 23, 2023 meeting of the Land Committee was called to order by Dwight Davis, Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairman Davis called on Charles DePreist, Vice Chairman of the Land Committee, in the absence of Chairman Tim Lowe. Mr. DePriest called on Steve Friedman, Chief of Real Estate.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item A is seeking approval to purchase from ASF Georgia Holdings, LLC 1,488± acres as an addition to Providence Canyon State Park, Stewart County. He further stated the acquisition of this Providence Canyon State Park edge-holding would allow expansion of hiking trails, camping sites, nature study, and improve the public's recreational opportunities. He added that the property harbors wetlands and upland pine forests that will be converted over time to longleaf pine, and rich hardwood slopes. He further added the sellers will retain an access easement to the property they own next to this tract, along one of the existing roads.

Mr. Friedman stated the department will acquire the property with a grant from the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program and donation from the Knobloch Family Foundation. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the acquisition funds, an affidavit will be recorded against the property stating that it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the programs it was acquired for without the prior approval of the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program and the Knobloch Family Foundation.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. Vowell, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to purchase from ASF Georgia Holdings, LLC 1,488± acres as an addition to Providence Canyon State Park, Stewart County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item B is seeking approval to purchase from Double Rails Properties, LLC 215± acres as an addition to Providence Canyon State Park, Stewart County. He further stated that Double Rails consists of 215 acres and is an in-holding of the 1,488 acres Aurum tract we are currently working on as an addition to Providence Canyon State Park. He added that securing this tract will improve the management of Aurum and improve the public's recreational experience. He added that Double Rails has multiple wetlands and upland pine forests that will be converted over time to longleaf pine and rich hardwood slopes.

Mr. Friedman stated that the Department will acquire the property with funds from State Parks, donations from the Knobloch Family Foundation and The Nature Conservancy via Stone Mountain Industrial Park. He further stated as a condition of receiving donations, an affidavit will

be recorded against the property stating that it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the donations it was acquired for without the prior approval of the Knobloch Family Foundation and The Nature Conservancy.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to purchase from Double Rails Properties, LLC 215± acres as an addition to Providence Canyon State Park, Stewart County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item C is seeking approval to purchase from Hewlett H. Weaver Living Trust 104± acres as an addition to Sprewell Bluff State Park, Meriwether County. He further stated the Department will acquire this Sprewell Bluff WMA edge-holding from the Weaver Living Trust, which we currently lease as part of the WMA. He added that acquisition will improve the management, allow us to restore the montane longleaf pine community on it, protect the hardwood slope forests, and permanently keep this tract open for public recreation.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will acquire the property with a federal USFWS Pittman-Robertson Grant and donation from The Nature Conservancy via Stone Mountain Industrial Park. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the grant and funding, an affidavit will be recorded against the Weaver Living Trust tract stating it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the programs it was acquired for without the prior approval of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Services and The Nature Conservancy.

A motion was made by Mr. Vowell, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to purchase from Hewlett H. Weaver Living Trust 104± acres as an addition to Sprewell Bluff State Park, Meriwether County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item D is seeking approval to purchase from Open Space Institute Land Trust, Inc. (OSI) 2,409± acres as an addition to Sansavilla WMA, Wayne County. He further stated the Department will acquire this tract from OSI, who originally acquired it from Southern Power, because of its high conservation values, such as longleaf pine, native groundcover, gopher tortoises and a federally endangered plant. He added that it will be managed as part of the Sansavilla WMA and be available to the public for hunting, hiking, and nature study. He further added that the Department has been working with Open Space Institute Land Trust, Inc. to restore the longleaf pine on it and begin a burning program.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will acquire the property with two federal USFWS Grants: USFWS CWCG and USFWS NAWCA. He further stated the Knobloch Family Foundation donated funds to OSI to help them acquire it, which also reduces our price, and then donated \$300,000 to the Department to help us manage it. He added that in addition, Southern Power sold it to OSI at a reduced price, due to the high conservation values. He further added that as a condition of receiving the two grants and private funding, an affidavit will be recorded against the OSI-Southern Power Tract stating it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the programs it was acquired for without the prior approval of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Knobloch Family Foundation.

A motion was made by Mr. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Garcia, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to purchase from Open Space Institute Land Trust, Inc. 2,409± acres as an addition to Sansavilla WMA, Wayne County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item E is seeking approval to purchase from the Corley Family 42± acres as an addition to the Paulding Forest WMA, Paulding County. He further stated the Department will acquire this edge-holding from the Corley family along the Dugdown Mountain Corridor, which will become part of the Paulding Forest WMA. He added the Paulding Forest WMA is popular with the public due to its proximity to Atlanta for hunting, fishing, hiking, bike riding, and studying nature. He further added that in addition, this tract will permanently protect habitat for the rare montane longleaf pine and improve management of the WMA.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will acquire the property with a federal U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pittman-Robertson Grant and donation from the National Wild Turkey Foundation. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the grant and funding, an affidavit will be recorded against the tract stating it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the programs it was acquired for without the prior approval of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

A motion was made by Ms. Addison, seconded by Mr. Denney, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to purchase from the Corley Family 42± acres as an addition to the Paulding Forest WMA, Paulding County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item F is seeking approval to purchase 386± acres from Jupiter Timberlands, LLC as an addition to Dugdown Mountain Corridor, Tallapoosa River VPA, Haralson and Polk Counties. He further stated the Department will acquire this edge-holding from Juniper

Timberlands along the Dugdown Mountain Corridor, which will become part of the Tallapoosa River VPA. He further stated this WMA provides protection for the river basin and is popular for hunting, fishing, hiking, bike riding, and studying nature. He added that in addition, this tract will permanently protect habitat for the rare montane longleaf pine, improve management and access to the WMA.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will acquire the property with a federal U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pittman-Robinson Grant and donations from the Knobloch Family Foundation and The Nature Conservancy via Stone Mountain Industrial Park. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the grant and funding, an affidavit will be recorded against the tract stating it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the programs it was acquired for without the prior approval of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Services, the Knobloch Family Foundation, and The Nature Conservancy.

A motion was made by Mr. Denney, seconded by Mr. Jackson, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to purchase from Jupiter Timberlands, LLC 386± acres as an addition to Dugdown Mountain Corridor, Tallapoosa River VPA, Haralson and Polk Counties.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item G is seeking approval to accept the donation from The Nature Conservancy 375± acres as an addition to Morgan Lake WMA, Wayne and Long Counties. He further stated The Nature Conservancy will donate the Rayonier Connector tract to the Department to become part of the Morgan Lake WMA. He added the Department has been leasing this tract from The Nature Conservancy since they acquired it. He further added the Nature Conservancy is able to donate it because the U. S. Marine Corp purchased a conservation easement to buffer the Townsend Bombing Range which lowered their cost, and the Knobloch Family Foundation contributed the remaining funds. He stated this tract has high quality hardwood forests that provide an important buffer to the Altamaha River and is popular with the public for hunting and fishing.

Mr. Friedman stated as a condition of receiving the donation, an affidavit will be recorded against the tract stating it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the reason for the donation from The Nature Conservancy and funding from the Knobloch Family Foundation, without the prior approval of The Nature Conservancy and the Knobloch Family Foundation.

A motion was made by Mr. Jackson, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to accept the donation from The Nature Conservancy 375± acres as an addition to Morgan Lake WMA, Wayne and Long Counties.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item H is seeking approval to enter into a Ground Lease with Paulding County, Paulding Forest WMA. He further stated the Ground Lease will allow the County to install, operate, and maintain within the Paulding Forest WMA, a 911 emergency tower over a 6,400 sq. ft. footprint. He added that the tower may also improve radio reception within the WMA. He further added that because the tower is only for emergency services, and not commercial use, the recommendation to the State Properties Commission is it be issued at no cost. He stated that Paulding County will cover all costs to install and maintain the tower.

Mr. Friedman stated that upon approval by the Board of Natural Resources, the Department will seek State Properties Commission and General Assembly approval to enter into the Ground Lease for twenty-five years with Paulding County.

A motion was made by Ms. Addison, seconded by Mr. Garcia, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to enter into a Ground Lease with Paulding County, Paulding Forest WMA.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.