

Minutes
Board of Natural Resources
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S.E.
Suite 1252 East Tower
Atlanta, GA 30334

March 30, 2016

Attending:

Board Members

William Bagwell, Chairman
Aaron McWhorter, Vice Chairman
Bodine Sinyard, Secretary
Dwight Davis
Dwight Evans
Duncan Johnson, Jr.
Ray Lambert, Jr.
Rob Leebern
Mark Mobley
Mike Phelps
Matt Sawhill
Paul Shailendra
Philip Wilheit
Dee Yancey

Guests

Bryan Tolar, Georgia Agribusiness Council
Jonathan Harding, Georgia Agribusiness Council
Ross M. Smith, PotashCorp – PCS Nitrogen
Ronny Just, Georgia Power Company
Chris Manganiello, Georgia River Network

Staff Members

Mark Williams
Walter Rabon
Kyle Pearson
Melanie Johnson
Mary Kathryn Yeara
Cathy Barnette
Amber Carter
Dave Crass
Mark Whitney
Becky Kelley
Steve Friedman
Eddie Henderson
Terry West
Mary Walker
Jeff Cown
Chuck Mueller
Doralyn Kirkland
Karen Hays
Erin Ruoff
Bill Murphey
Taylor Brown
John Martin
Mark Walker
Thomas Barnard
Artica Gaston
Antoinette Norfleet

The March 30, 2016 meeting of the Board of Natural Resources was called to order by Board Chairman William Bagwell.

Chairman Bagwell called on Karen Hayes to introduce the Employee Focus speaker. Karen Hayes thanked the Chairman and introduced Dr. Bill Murphey, State Climatologist.

Chairman Bagwell thanked Dr. Murphey.

Chairman Bagwell called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February Board meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Sinyard, seconded by Mr. Mobley to approve the minutes of the February Board meeting. (Minutes attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairman Bagwell called on Mary Walker, Assistant Director of the Environmental Protection Division, for her report.

Assistant Director Walker updated the Board on the legislative session and upcoming rule changes to expect in the next year.

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

Commissioner Williams stated that the display behind the podium is a new addition to the agency's recruitment and marketing tools. He further stated that Mark McKinnon, Public Affairs Officer for the Law Enforcement Division, worked hard to collaborate with the divisions, design and print the displays.

Commissioner Williams stated that the agency's new Deputy Executive Counsel, Melanie Johnson, was present. He further stated that the new Natural Resources Foundation Executive Director, Mark Walker, was also in attendance.

Commissioner Williams stated that a departmental change occurred effective February 1st with the Grants Unit, previously under the Parks Division, moving under the Commissioner's Office Administrative Services Unit. He further stated that the physical move would come July 1st and that the Director of the Grants Unit, Antoinette Norfleet, and her staff would be moving to the Atlanta office. He added that the Grants unit administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund grants and the Recreational Trails Program grants.

Commissioner Williams called on Terry West to update the Board on the recipients of this cycle's grants.

Terry West stated that maps were provided to the Board members to show areas where applications came from and which areas were awarded grants. He further stated that the Grants Unit staff worked very hard throughout the process and thanked them for their efforts. He added that it was a

challenge and team effort to run both grant cycles concurrently, but the success is due to the hard work of the staff.

Mr. West stated that the Recreational Trails Grant is administered through the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and that funds come from a portion of the federal motor excise tax on gasoline for off-road recreational vehicles. He further stated that the program is in its twenty-third year and its purpose is to develop and maintain rec trails. He added that the grants are awarded on an 80-20 match system and that they are reimbursement grants limited to \$100,000.

Mr. West stated that this year we had 57 applicants who requested a total of \$5.3 million dollars. He further stated that the advisory board who sets the criteria for how the grants are scored has given their approval to the grant recipients. He added that we awarded twelve successful grants this year that totaled \$1,143,490, which will need final approval from the Federal Highway Administration.

Mr. West stated that a separate map was provided for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant including the areas who submitted applications and those who received grants. He further stated that the 51-year-old LWCF program is administered through the National Parks Service. He added that the LWCF provides funding for outdoor recreational facilities.

Mr. West stated that the LWCF program is funded through off-shore gas, oil, and mineral royalties that come in to the Federal government. He further stated that the LWCF grants are 50-50 grants; meaning that the local municipality contributes 50% and the grant covers the remaining 50% up to \$100,000. He added that these are also reimbursement grants.

Mr. West stated that there were 20 applicants this cycle; one was not eligible, but the other 19 will be recommended for approval to the National Parks Service. He further stated the total amount to be awarded is \$1,491,900. He added that final approval from the National Parks Service should come sometime in October of this year.

Chairman Bagwell asked if the communities who were denied grants could re-apply in coming cycles for future grants.

Terry West stated that we reach out to those communities, offer advice on the application process, and encourage them to apply again.

Commissioner Williams thanked Mr. West.

Commissioner Williams stated that the legislative session finished on Thursday, March 24. He further stated that he was very pleased with the agency's budget for Fiscal Year 2017. He added that, along with most other agencies, our budget remained flat this year with standard adjustments made to reflect healthcare and retirement costs.

Commissioner Williams stated that under the Fiscal Year 2017 budget a new architectural reviewer position was added in the Historic Preservation Division resulting from House Bill 308 which passed in the 2015 legislative session and increased the rehabilitation tax credit for historic structures. He

further stated that all state employees will be receiving a three percent pay raise and that all POST certified state employees will be receiving a six percent raise.

Commissioner Williams stated that the license increase initiative did not move forward. He further stated that throughout the legislative process, it became apparent that there are still many unanswered questions and that we will continue to work toward a solution. He added that the other piece of agency legislation, House Bill 840, which authorizes wildlife exhibition permits for use by the film industry, is waiting on signature from the Governor.

Commissioner Williams stated that now that session is over, he is looking forward to visiting DNR facilities. He further stated that Board members should also make trips to their local sites. He added that turkey season is also off to a great start.

Commissioner Williams stated that public thanks is due to Ronny Just, Georgia Power's representative present today. He further stated Georgia Power is closing Plant Mitchell, south of Albany, and during the closure they realized that they had a functioning locomotive. He added that Georgia Power would be donating that locomotive to DNR's SAM Shortline.

Commissioner Williams called on Mark Whitney, Assistant Director of the Wildlife Resources Division, for his report.

Assistant Director Whitney gave an update on the NonGame Species Dashboard and the Blue Ribbon Panel Recommendation; the Game Management Telecheck System and Turkey Harvest Report; and trout stocking efforts.

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

Colonel Henderson updated the Board on the 2016 drownings; youth turkey season; new turkey harvest process and Outdoors Georgia App used by hunters; unusual activity reports; and opening weekend of turkey season.

Commissioner Williams called on Dave Crass, Director of the Historic Preservation Division, for his report.

Director Crass updated the board on his recent psychometric tool facilitator training and travel to Washington D.C.

Commissioner Williams called on Becky Kelley, Director of the Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Division, for her update.

Director Kelley updated the Board on the 85th Anniversary of Georgia's State Parks.

Chairman Bagwell called on Mr. Shailendra for the Land Committee report.

A motion was made by Mr. Shailendra, seconded by Mr. Davis and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to amend the 50 year intergovernmental agreement for the former Unicoi State Park: Camp Appalachian Wilderness, White county. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Shailendra, seconded by Mr. McWhorter and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to enter into a 25 year lease agreement for 65± acres of real property with the Georgia Power Company, Paulding Forest Wildlife Management Area, Paulding County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Shailendra, 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 a 25 year lease agreement for 8.5± acres from the Georgia Power Company, Sheffield Wildlife Management Area, Paulding County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Shailendra, seconded by Mr. Evans and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to subgrant a Civil War Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant from the National Park Service to the Civil War Trust to allow the Civil War Trust to purchase and donate a conservation easement over the 30.9± acres, Nance Tract, Catoosa County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Shailendra, seconded by Mr. Sawhill and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to subgrant a Civil War Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant from the National Park Service to the Civil War Trust to allow the Civil War Trust to purchase and donate a conservation easement over the 308.46± acres, Rocky Face Ridge Tract, Whitefield County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairman Bagwell stated that the next Board meeting is Wednesday, April 27, with Committee meetings starting at 9:00AM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

William A. Bagwell, Jr., Chairman

ATTEST:

Bodine Sinyard, Secretary