

**Board of Natural Resources
Minutes**

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

January 28, 2009

Attending:

Board Members

Phyllis Johnson, Chairman
Bill Archer
Earl Barrs
Jenny Lynn Bradley
Warren Budd
Bill Carruth
Joe Hatfield
Walter Hudson
Mabel Jenkins
Ray Lambert
Bob Rutland
Loyce Turner
Jim Tysinger
Jim Walters
Philip Watt
Tom Wheeler

Visitors

Gary Dennis, Georgia Car Wash Association
Bryan Tolar, Georgia Agribusiness Council
Phil Zinsmeister, Sierra Club
Eric M. Robbins, Camp Twin Lakes, Inc.
Shana Udvardy, Georgia Conservancy
Mike Giles, Georgia Poultry
Mark McDonald, Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation
Shirl Parsons, Georgia Wildlife Federation
Dan Mathews, Camp Twin Lakes, Inc.

Staff Members

Noel Holcomb
Chris Clark
Paul Burkhalter
Carol Couch
Susan Shipman
Steve Friedman
Dan Forster
Marlin Gottschalk
Becky Kelley
Ray Luce
Jim Ussery
Doralyn Kirkland
Linda MacGregor
David Crass
Todd Holbrook
Jac Capp
Terry West
Paul Nelson
Wally Woods
Mark Whitney
Connie Buck
Jeff Swift
Mike Binion
Homer Bryson
Sarah Dearman
Emily Hitchcock
Kyle Pearson
Mary Ann Evans
Hellen Harris

Board of Natural Resources – Minutes

January 28, 2009

Page 2

Josh Sweat , Camp Twin Lakes, Inc.

Bettie Sleeth, Home Builders Association of Atlanta

Robert Farris, Georgia Forestry Commission

Steve Johnson

Anna Johnson

Maggie Buckley

Laura Carruth

Brad Carroll

Tracy Bonds

Beverly Devaney

The January 28, 2009 meeting of the Board of Natural Resources was called to order by Chairman Phyllis Johnson.

Chairman Johnson called for a motion for the approval of the minutes of the December 3, 2008 meeting of the Board of Natural Resources.

A motion was made by Mrs. Bradley, seconded by Mr. Barrs and carried unanimously that the minutes of the December 3, 2008 meeting of the Board of Natural Resources be approved.

Chairman Johnson welcomed Commissioner-Select Chris Clark and expressed appreciation to those attending the meeting. She called on Noel Holcomb, Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the Commissioner's Report.

Commissioner Holcomb recognized friends and family members of Chairman Johnson and Vice Chairman Bill Carruth and welcomed them to the meeting.

Commissioner Holcomb congratulated Kyle Pearson, Deputy Executive Counsel, DNR, for his promotion to the level of Major in the National Guard Reserves and expressed appreciation to him for his service to the country and to the citizens of Georgia. He stated that Major Pearson would be deploying to Afghanistan shortly for a fourteen-month mission, and that the Department would be looking forward to his return. He commended Major Pearson for his dedication and work since his employment with DNR.

Chairman Johnson expressed appreciation from herself and from the Board to Major Pearson for his work with the Department and his service to the country.

Commissioner Holcomb called on Colonel Terry West, Chief of Law Enforcement, to present an award to Corporal Mike Binion, Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) Law Enforcement Officer.

Colonel West presented Corporal Binion with the 2008 State Ranger of the Year Award, and commended him for his exemplary performance and demonstration of being a true public servant. Colonel West introduced several other WRD Law Enforcement officers attending the Board meeting.

Chairman Johnson expressed appreciation to WRD's Law Enforcement officers for their dedication and service to the Department and the public.

Commissioner Holcomb called on Robert Farris, Director, Georgia Forestry Commission, to give a briefing on Georgia's Sustainable Forestry Report.

Mr. Farris gave an overview of Georgia's Forestry and Forestry Industry over the past seventy years. He explained that most of the timberland in the state is owned by families, corporations, the forest industry, national forests, and the public. He stated that though the number of mills has declined over the past 20 years, production of timber products has remained at historically high levels, and that Georgia's forest volume growth is well exceeding removals. He further stated that ownership patterns are changing with the number of owners increasing while acreage per owner is decreasing. He added that forestry ownership objectives are also changing to include aesthetics, recreation, privacy, and legacy; and that challenges to forestry in Georgia include urban sprawl, the ability to properly manage forests, life and property concerns, and invading species that threaten the health of forests. He further added that with wise use of Georgia's forestry resource, Georgians can keep our forests sustainable for present and future generations. (PowerPoint attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Commissioner Holcomb called on Colonel Terry West to present a briefing on WRD Law Enforcement Section Responsibilities.

Colonel West gave an overview of the history and responsibilities of WRD Law Enforcement Section, and stated that their mission was "to conserve our natural resources and to protect the people we serve." He outlined several areas of responsibility which involve State and Federal fisheries and wildlife enforcement, boating, hunting and fishing, protection of habitats, and threatened and endangered species. He described how Law Enforcement works with other DNR divisions and State agencies involving issues and violations affecting the State's cultural and natural resources, property, environment, waterways, and health and safety. He detailed Law Enforcement's work regarding the coast and rivers, special canine and investigation units, emergency response and body recovery teams, participation on the Counter Terrorism Task Force, and other special units. He added that he was proud of his officers, their intense training, and their demonstration of trust, fairness, and professionalism. (PowerPoint attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Commissioner Holcomb called on Wally Woods, Chief of Operations, Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites Division (PRHSD), who introduced Eric Robbins, Executive Director of Camp Twin Lakes, Inc., to give a briefing on an Agreement with Camp Twin Lakes, Inc., for operation of Camp Will-A-Way at Fort Yargo State Park.

Mr. Robbins stated that the agreement was a collaboration between Camp Twin Lakes, Inc. and the Department of Natural Resources to operate Camp Will-A-Way at Fort Yargo State Park, Winder, Georgia, which would be modeled after Camp Twin Lakes, located at Rutledge, Georgia. He presented a DVD, which showed the operation of Twin Lakes and its work with children and young people with serious illnesses and life challenges. He stated that the camp is uniquely designed to give children and young people, who have a wide range of special needs and disabilities, a robust camping experience, and that the camp is equipped with medical staff, a kidney dialysis and chemo center, trails to accommodate wheelchairs, and special equipment which

allow children to enjoy the same camping experiences as healthy children. He further stated that the camp would serve over 6,000 campers and volunteers in 2009. He added that the camp is operated by professionals and volunteers and depends on donations from private and corporate sponsors.

Mr. Robbins introduced Dan Matthews, Camp Director for Camp Twin Lakes, Inc., who presented the plans and vision for Camp Will-A-Way and its schedule of weekly camps from May through August 2009 involving children and young people with special needs. Mr. Matthews stated that the 2009 camp would serve 780 campers with a group of 395 volunteers. He further stated that by 2011, over 3750 campers and volunteers would attend programs at Camp Will-A-Way.

Mr. Robbins introduced Josh Sweat, Camp Manager for Camp Will-A-Way, who presented plans for facility changes and construction improvements at Camp Will-A-Way, Fort Yargo. He stated that Camp Twin Lakes, Inc. would invest over \$4 million at Camp Will-A-Way to bring the camp up to current camp industry standards that would meet the special needs of children and add programs for camp operations. He further stated that construction improvements included a medical building, multipurpose building, arts and crafts building, camper cabins, and staff cabins. (PowerPoint attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Discussion ensued.

Chairman Johnson requested contact information regarding both camps.

Commissioner Holcomb called on Dan Forster, Director, WRD, who gave an update on the right whale, the current calving season, and the successful disentanglement of a right whale by WRD staff in December. He presented information regarding the status of the transition to the new hunting, fishing, boat registration license system, and called on Mark Whitney, Chief of Game Management, to address recent concerns regarding Canadian geese.

Mr. Whitney gave a brief summary of measures that WRD took in the 1970's to increase the population of Canadian geese in Georgia for hunting purposes. He gave an update on the current geese population in Georgia, the length of the hunting season, and the protocol for handling nuisance geese in Georgia. He related the incident of the recent bird strike and crash landing of a commercial airplane in New York and stated that of the 1241 air strikes in Georgia between 1990 and 2008, only eight had been by Canadian geese. He added that the increase in air strikes by various fowl has led to permits to control fowl populations around airports.

Commissioner Holcomb called on Dr. Ray Luce, Director, Historic Preservation Division (HPD), who stated that HPD grant programs would receive budget cuts. He further stated that money from the sale of HPD license tags had helped with restoration of the Tybee Theater on Tybee Island. He added that the current U.S. Senate version

of the Federal stimulus package included \$50 million for historic preservation grants for states. Dr. Luce introduced Mark McDonald, CEO for the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, and expressed appreciation to Mr. McDonald for the partnership between HPD and the organization for the preservation of Georgia's cultural resources.

Commissioner Holcomb called on Becky Kelley, Director, PRHSD, who called attention to the new 2009 Park Brochure and a 2009 *Georgia Travel Guide*, which contained several articles and items relating to parks and historic sites in Georgia. She also called attention to a recent publication from the National Park Service which included recognition of Georgia's three national heritage areas: Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area, the Augusta Canal, and the Gullah-Geechee National Heritage Corridor, which encompasses Georgia's coast.

Mrs. Kelley called on Wally Woods, PRHSD, to give a brief overview of the hunt at FDR State Park, Pine Mountain, Georgia.

Mr. Woods stated that the FDR hunt was a successful event, with a 99% hunter success rate, and that 104 of the 105 hunters who participated were able to harvest a deer. He further stated that the deer harvested were in good physical condition, and that another hunt is scheduled for next season in an effort to reach a sustainable deer population at the park.

Mr. Budd stated that he had observed the FDR hunt and commended Becky Kelley, her staff and WRD for the success of the hunt.

Commissioner Holcomb called attention to updated DNR and EPD budgets and a recent DNR audit, distributed to Board members, and encouraged Board members to let him, Chris Clark, or Michele Bonner, Chief Financial Officer, know of any questions that they may have.

Commissioner Holcomb called on Chris Clark, Commissioner-Select, to give an update on the status of the DNR budget. He stated that Dr. Carol Couch would follow Mr. Clark and give an update on the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) budget and items of interest from EPD.

Before addressing the DNR budget, Commissioner-Select Clark called on Scott Tanner, from Joe Tanner and Associates, to make a presentation.

Mr. Tanner expressed appreciation to DNR for helping to make Sportsmen's Day at the State Capitol a great event during the Legislative session each year. He presented an award to Commissioner Holcomb, which read "in appreciation for the sportsmen of Georgia," as recognition of Commissioner Holcomb's service to the State of Georgia and to the sportsmen of the state.

Commissioner-Select Clark gave a brief overview of the DNR budget as it moves through transition, and stated that total DNR budget cuts amounted to 18%, or a \$22 million cut, which includes common cuts such as deferral of employee raises, changes in health benefits, operational cuts, suspension of motor vehicle purchases, the removal of some contract funds, and others. He detailed budget cuts in each DNR division for 2009 and 2010 and possible adjustments to compensate for the cuts and avoid laying off employees. He reminded the Board that the budget is fluid and subject to change (Budget attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Barrs stated that it would be helpful to Board members to be kept up to date on changes in the budget that affect activities and state properties in the various districts, and that this would enable Board members to answer questions from constituents in a knowledgeable and professional manner.

Commissioner-Select Clark stated that the Department would make that request a priority.

Mr. Wheeler suggested that the current condition of the economy presents opportunities to allow for renegotiation of project contracts on construction costs due to lower market prices.

Commissioner-Select Clark stated that because of the continued downward turn in State revenues, it is likely that there would be continued cuts in the budget, and that he would be open to ideas on ways to lower costs.

Commissioner-Select Clark called on Dr. Carol Couch to present an update on the 2009 and 2010 EPD budget.

Dr. Couch stated that cuts in the EPD budget related to areas of protecting and restoring Georgia's environment, ensuring clean air, land and water. She further stated that the Governor's recommendations for EPD's 2009 amended budget would result in a 27% reduction, which involves approximately \$12 million from general funds, including \$9 million from trust funds. She added that reductions involve employee salary increase deferral, health benefit reductions, and freezing, cutting or eliminating 24 vacant positions. She further added that other cuts involved reduced funds for advertising for the Governor's Clean Air Campaign, restructuring the Emergency Response Network, and cuts in the Hazardous Waste Trust Fund and Solid Waste Trust Fund. She explained how these cuts would affect each area of the Department. (Budget attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Dr. Couch stated that she would give an update on EPD activities.

She stated that the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker have been working on appointments for the Georgia Regional Water Council and announcements of these appointments would be made soon. She further stated that the Governor has assured that funding for the Statewide Water Plan would be included in the 2009 and 2010 State budgets from State and Federal sources. She gave an update on the status of court cases regarding Lake Lanier, the Army Corps of Engineers' opinion regarding its authority at Lake Lanier, and stated that EPD has not yet had a briefing as to when the judge intends to hear the court cases.

Discussion ensued.

In response to a question regarding the current rate of water release from Lake Lanier, Dr. Couch stated that after April, temperatures rise; and that releases would need to return to a level of 750 CFS flow. She further stated that requesting additional permanent reduction in levels would require the Corps to make changes in its draft operations manual which would call for additional national environmental assessments.

Chairman Johnson called on Mrs. Bradley, Chairman of the Coastal Committee.

Mrs. Bradley stated that she would present one action item from the Committee.

A motion was made by Mrs. Bradley, seconded by Mr. Walters, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution regarding Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Saltwater Finfishing, Chapter 391-2-4-.04. (Resolution attached and made a part hereof).

Chairman Johnson called on Walter Hudson, Chairman of the Environmental Protection Committee.

Mr. Hudson stated that the Environmental Protection Committee had two action items to present.

A motion was made by Mr. Hudson, seconded by Mr. Barrs, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution regarding the Proposed Rules for Water Conservation Best Management Practices and Certification, Chapter 391-3-31. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Hudson, seconded by Mr. Carruth, and carried with one abstention by Mr. Archer, that the Board adopt the Resolution regarding the Proposed Amendments to Rules for Air Quality Control, Chapter 391-3-1, pertaining to Miscellaneous Provisions. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Chairman Johnson called on Mr. Barrs, Chairman of the Land Acquisition Committee.

Mr. Barrs stated that the Land Acquisition Committee had five items to present to the Board for consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Barrs, seconded by Mr. Carruth, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to dispose of 603± acres of real property, owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), Lake Walter F. George Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Clay and Quitman Counties. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Barrs, seconded by Mr. Carruth and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to enter into a twenty-five (25) year Lease Agreement with Gordon County for 2.8± acres of real property at Highway 156, Oostanaula River, Gordon County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Barrs, seconded by Mr. Carruth and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to enter into a twenty-five (25) year Sublease Agreement with Seminole County for 7.0± acres of real property at Reynolds Landing Boating and Fishing Facility, Lake Seminole, Go Fish Georgia Program, Seminole County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Barrs, seconded by Mr. Carruth and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the acquisition (transfer) of 1.5± acres from the Sapelo Island Heritage Authority with custody and control in the Department of Natural Resources, Gardner Tract, Sapelo Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Raccoon Bluff, McIntosh County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Barrs, seconded by Mrs. Jenkins, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the acquisition (transfer) of 2.23± acres from the Sapelo Island Heritage Authority with custody and control in the Department of Natural Resources, Bill Brasher Tract, Sapelo Island Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Raccoon Bluff, McIntosh County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Chairman Johnson called on Dr. Loyce Turner, Chairman of the Nominating Committee for the 2009 Board of Natural Resources Officers.

Dr. Turner stated that he would present the nominations chosen in the December 2008 meeting by the Nominating Committee for the 2009 Board of Natural Resources Officers.

A motion was made by Dr. Turner, seconded by Mr. Tysinger, and carried unanimously that the Board elect Bill Carruth as Chairman, Jenny Lynn Bradley as Vice-Chairman, and Earl Barrs as Secretary for the 2009 Board of Natural Resources Officers.

Dr. Turner expressed appreciation to Chairman Johnson for outstanding service as Chairman of the Board for 2008.

Chairman Johnson turned the Office of Chairman over to Mr. Carruth, Chairman for 2009.

Chairman Carruth expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve as Chairman for 2009, and congratulated Mrs. Bradley as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Barrs as Secretary for 2009.

Mr. Carruth commended and expressed appreciation to Mrs. Johnson for the excellent job she did serving as Chairman during 2008.

Mrs. Johnson expressed appreciation for the opportunity to have served as Chairman and to Board members, Commissioner Holcomb and staff for their service to the Department and to the Board during her tenure.

Chairman Carruth introduced several of his friends and family members attending the meeting. He reminded Board members regarding Weekend for Wildlife and called attention to handouts regarding Board information for 2009.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Phyllis T. Johnson, Chairman

ATTEST:

Jenny Lynn Bradley, Secretary