

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

August 15, 2013

Attending:

Board Members

Rob Leebern, Chairman
Philip Wilheit, Vice Chairman
Ray Lambert, Secretary
Nancy Addison
William Bagwell
Dwight Davis
Walter Hudson
Duncan Johnson
Phyllis Johnson
Bill Jones
Aaron McWhorter
Mark Mobley
Mike Phelps
Paul Shailendra
Bodine Sinyard
Mark Smith
Philip Watt
Dee Yancey

Staff Members

Mark Williams
Homer Bryson
Kyle Pearson
Lauren Curry
Zachary Harris
Cathy Barnette
Taylor Brown

Visitors

Gina Rogers, Georgia Wildlife Federation
Jason Rickett, Friends of Sweetwater Creek State Park
Julie Kennedy, Friends of Sweetwater Creek State Park

The August 15, 2013 conference call meeting of the Board of Natural Resources was called to order by Chairman Rob Leebern.

Chairman Leebern stated the purpose of the meeting was to hear the Petition to Repeal Rule 391-1-1-.01 and Reinstate Rule 391-1-1-.02(2)(3)(4)(5), filed by Friends of Sweetwater Creek State Park, Inc.

Chairman Leebern called on speaker Julie Kennedy to address the Board. Chairman Leebern stated that Ms. Kennedy should limit her comments to three minutes.

Ms. Kennedy stated she was a volunteer for Friends of Sweetwater Creek State Park.

Ms. Kennedy stated that the request for repeal was based on safety concerns in state parks following the removal of on-site law enforcement. She further stated park visitors would feel less safe and criminals would be more likely to commit crimes if on-site law enforcement was removed from state parks.

Ms. Kennedy stated she had discussed the issue with Douglas County Sheriff, Chief Copeland, who agreed that local law enforcement officers will not be as familiar with the land of state parks, which could cause public safety to suffer.

Chairman Leebern opened the floor to the Board members for comments or questions.

Mr. Davis questioned the Board's requirement to act on an individual's petition to the Board.

Kyle Pearson, Executive Counsel, stated that under Code Section 50-13-9, any interested person may request a rule to be repealed.

Mr. Davis asked if Ms. Kennedy had attended any of the three previous meetings where the matter was discussed.

Ms. Kennedy stated she was only made aware of the issue at the beginning of June. She further stated she had attended the June 4, 2013 public hearing but did not speak due to the lack of information she had received at that time.

Mr. Bagwell asked how many people were members of Friends of Sweetwater Creek State Park and if Ms. Kennedy was speaking on their behalf.

Ms. Kennedy stated there are 100 members of Friends of Sweetwater Creek State Park. She further stated that the Friends were aware of the petition, but she takes sole responsibility of the contents. She added she was attempting to express the opinions of the members of Friends of Sweetwater Creek State Park in the petition.

Chairman Leebern stated he appreciated the comments, candor, and concern expressed by Ms. Kennedy.

Ms. Kennedy stated she would like to reiterate that she authored and filed the petition, not Friends of Sweetwater Creek State Park.

Chairman Leebern called for a motion regarding the Petition.

A motion was made by Dr. Watt, seconded by Mr. Lambert and carried unanimously to deny the Petition by adopting the Resolution that Dr. Watt read out loud to the other Board members.
(Resolution attached hereto and made a part hereof)

There being no further business, Chairman Leebern called for a motion to adjourn the conference call meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Dr. Watt to adjourn the meeting.

Robert D. Leebern, Jr., Chairman

ATTEST:

Ray P. Lambert, Jr., Secretary