

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

August 25, 2009

Attending:

Committee Members

Bill Archer, Chairman
David Allen
Gene Bishop
Joe Hatfield
Mabel Jenkins
Ray Lambert
Bob Rutland
Jim Walters
Tom Wheeler
Bill Carruth, Board Chairman, ex-officio

Board Members

Earl Barrs
Jenny Lynn Bradley
Walter Hudson
Phyllis Johnson
Loyce Turner
Jim Tysinger
Philip Watt

Visitors

Emory Brown, Georgia Falconry Association
Joseph Seabolt, Georgia Falconry Association
Karl Ledford, Georgia Transmission Corporation
Steve Hein, Georgia Southern University
Shana Udvardy, Georgia Conservancy
Gordon Rogers, Satills RiverKeeper
Katie Kirkpatrick, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
Debbie Phillips, Georgia Industry Environmental Coalition
Nate Hunt, Southern Environmental Law Center

Staff Members

Chris Clark
Carol Couch
Paul Burkhalter
Todd Holbrook
Susan Shipman
Dan Forster
Becky Kelley
Marlin Gottschalk
Ray Luce
Karl Burgess
Mark Whitney
Jim Ozier
Jon Ambrose
Steve Friedman
Jennifer Kaduck
Jac Capp
Mark Smith
Linda MacGregor
Doralyn Kirkland
Jim Ussery
Emily Hitchcock
Lauren Curry
Dave Crass
Pam Earl
William Cook
Dick Swanson
Mike Harris
Terry West
Jan Simmons
Brad Gane
Keith Weaver
Mary Ann Evans
Yolanda Fanning

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Clayton Doherty, Georgia Transmission Corporation

Thomas Farmer, The Nature Conservancy

Tara Vogel, Georgia Power

Steve Ewald, Georgia Power

Robert Gordon, Georgia Falconry Association

Joel Volpi, Georgia Falconry Association

Phil Zinsmeister, Sierra Club

Scott Tanner, Joe Tanner & Associates

Josh Stancil, Georgia Forestry Association

Doug Cloud, Alston & Bird

Shirl Parsons, Georgia Wildlife Federation

Mike Giles, Georgia Poultry Federation

Abit Massey, Georgia Poultry Federation

R. Riley Wilson, Georgia Game Hawkers

William Woodall, Georgia Hunting & Fishing Federation

Bettie Sleeth, Home Builders Association of Georgia

Patricia Barmeyer, King & Spalding

The August 25, 2009 meeting of the Wildlife Resources Committee was called to order by Board Chairman Bill Carruth.

Chairman Carruth called on Bill Archer, Chairman of the Wildlife Resources Committee, who stated that there would be three action items and a briefing. Mr. Archer called on Mark Whitney, Chief, Game Management for a presentation.

Mr. Whitney stated that the first item for consideration was proposed amendments to Rules 391-4-1-.13, Wildlife Management Area License; 391-4-2-.62, Alligators; 391-4-2-.70, Wildlife Management Areas and other State Lands; and 391-4-3-.09, Public Fishing Areas. He further stated that these changes include the need to adopt regulatory amendments consistent with statutory changes relating to the wildlife management area license and the use of lights to hunt alligators, and to mitigate a net loss of certain hunting opportunity on wildlife management areas resulting from budgetary reductions. He added that these proposals were discussed in detail at the June meeting and that he would like to request their approval.

Mr. Archer called on William Woodall, Georgia Hunting and Fishing Federation for comments. Mr. Woodall stated that he would like to commend the Wildlife Resources staff for their hard work on this issue.

A motion was made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Dr. Allen and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends that the Board approve the proposed amendments to Rules 391-4-2-.13, Wildlife Management Area License; 391-4-2-.62, Alligators; 391-4-2-.70, Wildlife Management Areas and other State Lands; and 391-4-3-.09, Public Fishing Areas. (Proposed Amendments attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Mr. Whitney stated that the next item for consideration was proposed amendments to Hunting Regulations, Chapters 391-4-2-.46 and 391-4-2-.52, and Chapters 391-4-2-.55 through 391-4-2-.58, Waterfowl and Late Season Migratory Bird Regulations. He further stated that the Committee and Board had been briefed in May on these proposals using the anticipated framework as proposed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Mr. Whitney stated that concerning the scaup and teal, the framework was more flexible than anticipated, and the proposal was modified to reflect a bag limit increase from one to two for scaup and the September teal season was expanded from nine to 16 days. He further stated that the proposed seasons and bag limits conform to federal regulations, while maximizing hunting opportunity. He added that he would like to request approval of the proposed amendments.

A motion was made by Mr. Wheeler, seconded by Mr. Walters and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends that the Board approve the proposed amendments to Hunting Regulations, Chapters 391-4-2-.46, 391-4-2-.52, and Chapters 391-4-2-.55 through 391-4-2-.58, Waterfowl and Late Season Migratory Bird Regulations. (Proposed Amendments attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Mr. Archer called on Jim Ozier, Program Manager, Nongame Conservation, for presentation of proposed amendments to Rule 391-4-10-.07, Exceptions, Protection of Endangered, Threatened, Rare, or Unusual Species, to Allow the Take of Peregrine Falcons for Falconry Purposes.

Mr. Ozier stated that he had briefed the Committee and Board on the proposed amendments in detail at the June meeting. He further stated that these proposed amendments reflect the need to adopt regulations to allow the Department to issue a limited number of permits allowing qualified falconers to take passage peregrine falcons for the purpose of falconry consistent with USFWS guidelines. He added that he would like to request approval of the proposed amendments.

Mr. Archer called on Joseph Seabolt, Georgia Falconry Association, for comments. Mr. Seabolt stated that he was in favor of the proposed amendments and would encourage the Committee to recommend the Board's approval.

Mr. Archer called on Steve Hein, Georgia Southern University, for comments. Mr. Hein stated that he was in favor of the proposed amendments and would encourage the Committee to recommend the Board's approval.

Mr. Archer called on Joel Volpi, Georgia Falconry Association, for comments. Mr. Volpi stated that he was in favor of the proposed amendments and would encourage the Committee to recommend the Board's approval.

Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Hatfield, seconded by Mr. Bishop and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends that the Board approve the proposed amendments to Rule 391-4-10-.07, Exceptions, Protection of Endangered, Threatened, Rare or Unusual Species, to Allow the Take of Peregrine Falcons for Falconry Purposes. (Proposed Amendments attached hereto and made a part hereof)

Mr. Archer called on Jon Ambrose, Assistant Chief, Nongame Conservation, to brief the Committee on the Georgia Invasive Species Strategy and Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Management Plan.

Mr. Ambrose stated that this document, which was finalized in August, is the product of a two-year planning effort by DNR and other organizations involved in invasive species management in Georgia. He further stated that development of the document was guided by a 30-member advisory committee and coordinated by WRD staff and the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. He added that one of the goals outlined in the Invasive Species Strategy, the formal establishment of a Georgia Invasive Species Task Force, has been realized through a Memorandum of Understanding between DNR, the Georgia Forestry Commission, the Georgia Department of Agriculture and the University of Georgia.

Mr. Ambrose stated that a related document, the Georgia ANS Management Plan, is also in final draft form and has been approved by the Georgia Invasive Species Advisory Committee. He further stated that the ANS management plan will be submitted to the federal Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force this fall for formal review. He added that once approved, this management plan will ensure DNR's eligibility to receive federal funding for control and management of aquatic nuisance species.

Mr. Archer called on Dan Forster, Director of WRD to update the committee on items of interest.

Mr. Forster recognized the Law Enforcement Section of WRD for recently receiving the Phyllis Godwin Agency of the Year Award from the Georgia Chapter of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy Associates.

Mr. Forster updated the Committee on construction of the Go Fish Education Center, stating that Phase I, which included construction of the building, was completed on August 11, under budget and ahead of schedule. He further stated that Phase II, which includes exhibit design and construction, was currently out for bid.

Mr. Forster updated the Committee on the new License System and indicated that year-to-date revenues were up from last year and that number of licenses sold was also up in June and July from comparable periods last year.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.