

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

May 20, 2013

Attending:

Committee Members

Philip Wilheit, Chairman
Mark Mobley, Vice Chairman
William Bagwell
Duncan Johnson
Phyllis Johnson
Aaron McWhorter
Rob Leebern, Board Chairman, ex-officio

Board Members

Nancy Addison
Dwight Davis
Walter Hudson
Bill Jones
Mike Phelps
Paul Shailendra
Mark Smith

Visitors

John Eberhart, Georgia Earth Alliance
Leon Watkins, K&M Landfill
Michael Pisciotta, Georgia Agribusiness Council
Debbie Phillips, Georgia Agribusiness Council
Harold Reheis, Joe Tanner & Associates
Chris Manganiello, Georgia River Network
Scott Tanner, Joe Tanner & Associates
Doug Fulle, Oglethorpe Power
Todd Holbrook, Georgia Wildlife Federation
Larry McSwain
David Waller

Staff Members

Mark Williams
Jud Turner
Homer Bryson
Dave Crass
Dan Forster
Becky Kelley
Eddie Henderson
Steve Friedman
Kyle Pearson
Lauren Curry
Zachary Harris
Cathy Barnette
Doralyn Kirkland
Doug Haymans
Jac Capp
John Bowers
Jeff Weaver
John Biagi
Mary Walker
Wally Woods
Michael Chadwell
Chris Faulkner
Hellen Harris
Kim Feagler

The May 20, 2013 meeting of the Wildlife Resources Committee was called to order by Chairman Rob Leebern.

Chairman Leebern called on Philip Wilheit, Chairman of the Wildlife Resources Committee, who called on John Bowers, Assistant Chief of Game Management.

Mr. Bowers stated the first item for consideration was an action on the proposed amendments to Hunting Regulations, Chapter 391-4-2, and Firing Ranges, Rule 391-4-9-.02.

Mr. Bowers stated the Board was briefed in detail on the proposed rulemaking in March, three public hearings were held in April, and 116 public comments were received during the public notice period. He further stated the majority of the comments were in support of the proposed rulemaking.

Mr. Bowers stated he would request the committee recommend that the Board approve the item as presented.

A motion was made by Mr. McWhorter, seconded by Ms. Johnson and carried unanimously that the committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the proposed amendments to Hunting Regulations, Chapter 391-4-2, and Firing Ranges, Rule 391-4-9-.02, as presented.

Mr. Bowers stated the next item for consideration was an action on the adoption of proposed Rule 391-4-9-.07, Falconry Permits.

Mr. Bowers stated these regulations reflect a need to ensure Georgia's compliance with federal parameters to safeguard the practice of falconry in Georgia.

Mr. Bowers stated the Board was briefed on the proposed rule at the April 2013 Board Meeting.

Mr. Bowers stated he would request the committee recommend that the Board approve the item as presented.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded by Mr. Mobley and carried unanimously that the committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the proposed amendments to Rule 391-4-9-.07, Falconry Permits, as presented.

Chairman Wilheit called on Lt. Col. Jeff Weaver, Assistant Chief of Law Enforcement, for a briefing on "Operation Dry Water."

Lt. Col. Weaver stated "Operation Dry Water" is a nation-wide campaign that focuses on Boating Under the Influence enforcement and education. He further stated "Operation Dry Water" takes place the weekend before July 4th.

Lt. Col. Weaver stated "Operation Dry Water" includes concentrated patrols in certain areas and checkpoints around lakes and river to catch drunken boaters.

Lt. Col. Weaver stated in 2012, 121 rangers were on the water spreading information about boater safety and looking for boaters under the influence. He further stated 1500 contacts were made and there were 19 BUI violation charges.

Chairman Wilheit called on Dan Forster, Director of WRD, for a division update.

Director Forster gave an update on the Fish and Wildlife Service and TVA's ongoing effort to stock trout on Blue Ridge Lake; WRD's volume of visitors on social media; wildlife license plates availability on June 15th; and the National Archery in the Schools Program.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.