

Minutes
Board of Natural Resources
Board Committees and Meeting
Via Teleconference

Tuesday, January 26, 2021
9:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Board Members

Nancy Addison, Chair
Dee Yancey, Vice Chair
Bill Jones, Secretary
Nick Ayers
William Bagwell
Dwight Davis
Patrick Denney
Dwight Evans
Joe Hatfield
Duncan N. Johnson, Jr.
Ray Lambert
Rob Leebern
Tim Lowe
Mike Phelps
Billy New
Paul Shailendra
Jeff "Bodine" Sinyard
Miki Thomaston
Gary Vowell

Staff Members

Mark Williams, Commissioner
Walter Rabon
Kyle Pearson
Kate Iannuzzi
Josh Hildebrandt
Cathy Barnette
Amber Carter
Artica Gaston
Thomas Barnard
Jeff Cown
Steve Friedman
Rusty Garrison
Doug Haymans
Taylor Brown
Robert Stokes
Antoinette Norfleet
Soheila Naji
Richard Dunn, Director

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The January 26, 2021 Board of Natural Resources meeting was called to order by Chair Nancy Addison.

Chair Addison gave the invocation.

Chair Addison recognized Commissioner Mark Williams for his 10 years of faithful service and commended him for his commitment and dedication to the Department of Natural Resources and the State of Georgia.

Chair Addison called on Cathy Barnette for roll call and declaration of quorum.

Chair Addison adjourned the Board meeting to move into the Committee meetings.

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Chair Addison called the meeting of the Board of Natural Resources to order.

Chair Addison called for a motion to approve the December 1, 2020 minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Leeborn, seconded by Ms. Thomaston, and carried unanimously to approve the December 1, 2020 minutes.

Chair Addison called on Richard Dunn, Director of the Environmental Protection Division, for his report.

Director Dunn updated the Board on a contract between EPD and the Army Corp of Engineers for reservoir storage in Lake Lanier, the scheduling of oral arguments before the Supreme Court for the Florida v. Georgia water wars case, a draft permit issued to Sterigenics limiting ethylene oxide, and the FY 2021-2022 budget.

Mr. Ayers asked Director Dunn about the plans for the Twin Pines proposal at this stage. Director Dunn stated the division has received all the applications for qualified permits and the applications are currently under review for completeness. He further stated that at some point in the future and once those applications are complete, substantive review will proceed. He added that there will be ample opportunity, sometime in the future, for public comment and questions to be considered before the final permit or permits are ever issued. Mr. Ayers asked if the Director could give a rough timeline. Director Dunn stated he cannot and that it would not be in the next few months. He further stated it depends on the nature of the analysis to be done, as well as the extent of public comments on that analysis.

Director Dunn stated this concluded his report.

Chair Addison called on Mark Williams, Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, for his report.

Commissioner Williams called on Robert Stokes, Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Coordinator.

Mr. Stokes stated the 2020-21 pre-application cycle opened on August 1, 2020, after a series of web-based education workshops, and subsequently closed on October 16, 2020. He further stated that applicants competed in one of three application funding types, determined by their entity make-up. He added these are the funding types: local parks and trails, state stewardship, and state land acquisition. He added the highest scoring projects in each of the three funding types were incorporated into a slate proposal and then transmitted to the

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Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Board of Trustees for consideration. He further added on January 12, 2021, the Board of Trustees voted on and approved the 2020-21 slate proposal of approved conservation projects. He stated, upon approval by the Board, the slate will be transmitted to the Appropriations subcommittees of both the House of Representatives and Senate for consideration. He further stated that upon their approval, applicants will be invited to complete a second-level application, which opens in Spring 2021 and closes on May 30, 2021. He added the final approval of projects will be in the Summer of 2021, which will green light these entities to begin work on their projects.

Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Hatfield, seconded by Mr. Ayers, and carried unanimously to approve the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Fund 2020 - 2021 Approved Proposal of Projects.

Commissioner Williams called on Antoinette Norfleet, Grants Program Director of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), for an overview of the current grant cycle. He stated this is information for the Board and not an action item.

Ms. Norfleet stated the LWCF is a multi-government partnership and is federally funded through the Department of the Interior-National Park Service and administered at the state level by the Department of Natural Resources. She further stated this program provides grants to local governments to acquire land, develop outdoor recreation facilities, and renovate existing recreation facilities. She added this partnership was established in 1964 and the fund invests earnings from offshore oil and gas leasing.

Ms. Norfleet stated the current grant cycle started by conducting educational webinars in June and accepting applications in September and October. She further stated that the proposed projects were selected to move forward in the approval process. She added a total of seventy-six (76) applications were received, which is the highest number of applicants since 2005, when they received eighty (80) applications, and a clear indication of the appreciation and need for outdoor recreation. She further added that twenty-seven (27) projects were selected to move forward. She stated it is anticipated the National Parks Service will approve the projects in September of 2021.

Ms. Norfleet stated this concluded her report.

Commissioner Williams provided a legislative update and shared that the state's financials are in good shape, which means DNR will not have to undergo further budget cuts and will actually receive additional funds under the Governor's two budget recommendations.

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Commissioner Williams updated the board on the status of the Weekend for Wildlife virtual fundraising event. He stated that despite a very challenging environment, it is expected to be a successful event.

Commissioner Williams provided an update on the Coastal Resources Division, including the successful 2020-2021 Shrimp season; intertidal leases; two shellfish biologist positions have been filled; suspending the kick off of Georgia's new subtidal shellfish mariculture activities and reconvening the Shellfish and Mariculture Advisory Panel; and progress on the Golden Ray.

Commissioner Williams provided an update on the State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division, including vaccine distribution sites at Jack Hill State Park and Magnolia Springs State Park; First Day Hikes; the Great Conjunction or Christmas Star events; President Franklin D. Roosevelt portraits at the Little White House and the April 12 commemoration; managed deer hunts at Tugaloo and FDR; and three of DNR's golf courses listed in the 2021 Golf Advisor Golfers Choice Awards.

Commissioner Williams provided an update on the Wildlife Resources Division, including the announcement of Thom Litts as the new Assistant Director; closing of deer season; DNR's Deer Management Assistance Program; public meetings for Georgia's sportsmen and sportswomen and non-sporting individuals and the topics of turkey populations and seasons, antler restrictions, and evaluation of local WMAs; and the development of a Community Fishing Program by the Fisheries Management Section.

Commissioner Williams stated this concluded his report.

Chair Addison called on Dwight Davis, Chair of the Land Committee, for his report.

A motion was made by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Leebern, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval of the Conveyance (Donation) of 5+ acres of real property from Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT), and conveying a revocable license and permanent easement of 5+ acres by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly to DOT at Georgia Veterans State Park, Crisp County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to Approval to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Dougherty County, Flint River Educational Park, Dougherty County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

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Chair Addison called on Ray Lambert, Chair of the Nominating Committee, for his report.

Mr. Lambert stated the Nominating Committee met via conference call on November 19, 2020 and voted unanimously on a proposed slate of officers for 2021. He further stated he would like to present them to the Board for consideration: Dee Yancey, Chair; Bill Jones, Vice Chair; and Dwight Davis, Secretary.

A motion was made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Bagwell, and carried unanimously to approve the proposed slate of officers for 2021.

Chair Addison stated she would like to thank the Board, Commissioner Williams and staff and she truly appreciates the opportunity to serve in this capacity.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Nancy A. Addison, Chairman

ATTEST:

A. W. Jones III, Secretary