

Minutes
Board of Natural Resources
DNR Boardroom
2 MLK Jr. Drive, SE
Suite 1252, East Tower

Tuesday, May 20, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Board Members

Lesley Reynolds, Chair
Patrick Denney, Vice Chair
Randy Dellinger, Secretary
Nancy Addison
Jeff Andrews
Joe Hatfield
Penn Hodge
Steve Hufstetler (via conference call)
Duncan Johnson
Bill Jones
Ray Lambert
Brent Layton
Mike Peavy
Paul Shailendra (via conference call)
Harley Yancey (via conference call)

Guests

Lauren Curry, Governor's Office
JC Martin, Governor's Office
Bryan Tolar, Georgia Urban Ag Council
Charles McMillan, Georgia Conservancy
Lyndy Rogers, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation
Charles Burton, North Georgia Mountain Authority
Anna Edmondson, Robbins Firm

Staff Members

Walter Rabon, Commissioner
Thomas Barnard
Trevor Santos
Kyle Pearson
Kate Iannuzzi
Taylor Fisher
Haley Chafin
Jeff Cown
Anna Truscynski
Katie Bloomfield
Sam O'Neal
Beth Gilbert
James McLaughlin
Bob Holley
Josh Snead
Tina Johansen
Ted Will
Chuck Mueller
Jim Boylan
Brent Womack
Karl Burgess
Dan Roach
Oucia Jolly
Jennifer Welte
Anna Aponte
Andre McLendon
Sarah Visser

The May 20, 2025 meeting of the Board of Natural Resources was called to order by Chairwoman Lesley Reynolds.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Lauren Curry, Chief of Staff, Office of Governor Brian Kemp, to deliver a moment of inspiration.

Chairwoman Reynolds adjourned the Board meeting to move into the Committee meetings.

Chairwoman Reynolds reconvened the May 20, 2025 meeting of the Board of Natural Resources to order.

Chairwoman Reynolds called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on April 22, 2025.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Andrews, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on April 22, 2025.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Jeff Cown, Director of the Environmental Protection Division, for his report.

Director Cown updated the Board on EPD's signed legislation by the Governor, the re-organization of the EPD Director's Office, an ozone update, and a river cleanup event at Proctor Creek in Atlanta, GA.

Director Cown stated this concluded his report.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Walter Rabon, Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, for his report.

Commissioner Rabon gave an update on the 2025 legislative session. He stated Governor Kemp signed both DNR agency bills, HB 287 and HB 208, into law. He further stated HB 167 and HB 491 were also signed by the Governor.

Commissioner Rabon stated that Governor Kemp declared May 4-10 as State Employee Appreciation Week.

Commissioner Rabon stated DNR held a Senior Staff Retreat at Cloudland Canyon State Park at the end of April. He further stated this was an opportunity for senior leadership across all divisions, including the administrative units, to convene for a number of working sessions to embrace new perspectives, question conventional approaches, and champion new and creative ideas.

Commissioner Rabon stated that on April 25, 2025, 11 cadets of the 39th Game Warden Academy graduated and became Georgia’s newest game wardens. He further stated LED is now in the process of hiring for the 40th Game Warden Academy. He added that 112 applicants were interviewed, and 34 candidates are scheduled for a polygraph. He stated the goal is to hire 26 new game wardens to fill the vacancies statewide.

Commissioner Rabon stated Safe Boating Week would take place this week. He further stated DNR would take part in the “Belts and Jackets” media event at Lake Lanier, Lake Oliver, and Lake Blackshear.

Commissioner Rabon stated a soft opening was held for the new beach area at Ft. Yargo State Park. He further stated the area now offers an expanded beach, improved boat rental operations, individual picnic and grilling areas, pickleball courts, a splash pad, mini-golf, retail and improved parking.

Commissioner Rabon called on Karl Burgess, Assistant Director of the Coastal Resources Division, for his report.

Mr. Burgess gave an update on oyster shell deployment, dock rules, red drum, recent public outreach and events, and a new state record for Mahi Mahi.

Commissioner Rabon called on Ted Will, Director of the Wildlife Resources Division, for an update.

Director Will updated the Board on the division’s response and investigation to a recent bear encounter, the 2025 turkey season, adaptive fishing events, sea turtle nesting season, and a boat donated from the Yamaha U.S. Marine Business Unit.

Commissioner Rabon stated this concluded his report.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Ray Lambert, Chair of the Environmental Protection Committee, for his committee report.

A motion was made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Air Quality Control, Chapter 391-3-1. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Duncan Johnson, Vice Chair of the Land Committee, for his committee report.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Andrews, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval to purchase from the Conservation Fund, 177± acres as an addition to

the Panola Mountain State Park, DeKalb and Rockdale Counties. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval to purchase from Velda Elrick, 7.8± acres as an addition to the Canoochee Sandhills Wildlife Management Area, Bulloch County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Joe Hatfield, who was serving as Chair of the Wildlife Resources Committee, for his report.

A motion was made by Mr. Hatfield, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to Chapter 391-4-2, Hunting Regulations.

Chairwoman Reynolds announced the next meeting of the Board of Natural Resources would be on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at Ft. Yargo State Park.

There being no further business, Chairwoman Reynolds adjourned the meeting.

Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman

ATTEST:

Randy Dellinger, Secretary

Minutes
Environmental Protection Committee
DNR Boardroom
2 MLK Jr. Drive, SE
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Tuesday, May 20, 2025
9:00 a.m.

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Patrick Denney
Penn Hodge
Steve Hufstetler (via conference call)
Duncan Johnson
Bill Jones
Brent Layton
Paul Shailendra (via conference call)
Lesley Reynolds Board Chair, Ex-officio

Board Members

Randy Dellinger
Joe Hatfield
Mike Peavy
Haley Yancey (via conference call)

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The May 20, 2025 meeting of the Environmental Protection Committee was called to order by Chairwoman Lesley Reynolds.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Ray Lambert, Chairman of the Environmental Protection Committee. Chairman Lambert called on Jim Boylan, Chief of the Air Protection Branch, to present action on Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Air Quality Control, Chapter 391-3-1.

Mr. Boylan stated that he is here to discuss the proposed increase to Title V Air Permit Fees. He further stated that Title V Permit Fees include both annual permit fees and permit application fees. He additionally stated that approximately two-thirds of the Air Protection Branch staff salaries are paid with Title V permit fee funding, which is over 100 positions.

Mr. Boylan stated that the good news is that air emissions have decreased significantly, however, less emissions means less Title V revenue, and although the emissions have decreased, the work has not. He further stated that the work has increased, due to the significant economic growth since COVID.

Mr. Boylan stated a graphic that shows Title V revenue, expenses, and reserves over the last ten years, and then projects into the future, to 2031. He further stated that between 2016 and 2018, the revenue decreased \$2.5 million, due to the closure of coal-fired power plants. He added that from 2020 to 2022, expenses dropped because of COVID and vacant, non-competitive positions. He further added that during Fiscal Years 2023, 2024, and 2025 staff received much-needed salary increases, and filled vacant positions.

Mr. Boylan stated that we are at the end of Fiscal Year 2025, and at the end of Fiscal Year 2025 we project a slight revenue surplus, however, if we do not increase fees, we will not make it through Fiscal Year 2026, and we will fall \$1 million short. He further stated that the solution to fund the Air Protection Branch for the next 3-4 years will be to increase permit fees by \$2.8 million. He added that the Air Protection Branch's reserves will also increase over the next 3-4 years.

Mr. Boylan stated that the Air Protection Branch will continue to monitor revenue and expenses, to ensure that we have adequate funds to support the important work done in the Air Protection Branch.

Mr. Boylan stated that the proposed rule change is to amend subparagraph 391-3-1-.03(9)(b) to add a row for the new FY 2026 dollar-per-ton rates and reference the latest version of the Fee Manual (February 3, 2025). He further stated that the fee increases are referenced in the Fee Manual. He added that subparagraphs (9)(c) and (9)(g) are being revised to change "section" to "paragraph", and subparagraphs (9)(i) and (9)(i)1. are being revised to correct capitalization errors.

Mr. Boylan stated that the New Source Performance Standards Fee, the Synthetic Minor Sources Fee, and the Title V Sources – Minimum Fee will all be increased by 30%, respectively. He further stated that the Title V Sources – Maintenance Fee will be increased by 100%. He added that the Title V Sources – dollar per ton fees (coal-fired power plants and others) will be increased by 21.5%. He further added that the dollar per ton fee has not increased since 2012, and seven of the nine states in the southeast have higher dollar per ton fees than Georgia, making Georgia still competitive.

Mr. Boylan stated that the Permit Application Fees will increase mostly by 50%, except for Minor Source Permit or Amendment Fees and Permit-By-Rule Fees, which will have a 300% increase. He further stated that the amount of work for those two specific permits far exceeds what is currently being charged.

Mr. Boylan stated that following the briefing of the Environmental Committee of the DNR Board on February 25, 2025, EPD held a public hearing on April 1, 2025, and received no comments. He further stated that no comments were received during the public comment period. He added that following today's request of DNR Board adoption, the new annual fees and new permit application fees become effective on July 1, 2025.

Mr. Boylan requested a favorable consideration.

Chairman Lambert called on Mr. Johnson, who made a comment that the Air Protection Branch has been more work over the last few years with less people, and that we have been fighting an increase for a long time, but this is needed.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrews, seconded by Ms. Addison, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Air Quality Control, Chapter 391-3-1.

Chairman Lambert called on Ania Truszczynski, EPD Deputy Director, to present Item B, a second briefing on Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Water Quality Control, Chapter 391-3-6.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires States to review their water quality standards at least once every three years and revise them if appropriate; this is known as Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards. She further stated that there was an initial public hearing on March 22, 2022, to solicit items to be considered for this 2022 Triennial Review. She added that there were targeted stakeholder meetings: September 21, 2022, March 15, 2023, and February 7, 2024, on human health; August 16, 2022, March 21, 2023, March 28, 2023, and August 14, 2024, on selenium; 5 meetings held in August and September 2024 on new lake criteria. She further added that EPD gave two presentations at Georgia Association of Water Professional conferences in 2024. She finally stated that there was a comprehensive final public meeting held on October 7, 2024.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that the proposed changes from the first briefing include updating and correct formatting, adopting EPA's 2016 recommended aquatic life selenium criteria, adopting EPA's 2005 recommended aquatic life diazinon criteria, adopting EPA's 2005 recommended aquatic life nonylphenol criteria, updating human health criteria for 82 pollutants and add new human health criteria for 6 pollutants based on probabilistic risk assessment, adding language to allow for Site-Specific Bacteria Criteria, updating designated uses (11 recreation; 7 drinking water), and adopting site-specific criteria for Lakes Rabun, Burton, and Tugalo, including chlorophyll a.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that the proposed rules were presented at the December 3, 2024 DNR Board meeting and a public hearing was held on January 28, 2025. She further stated that the EPD then received comments from EPA. She added that the following changes were made in response to EPA's comments and are included in this second briefing: Made minor revisions to the human health criteria in paragraph (5)(e)(iv) based on recalculations; added language to the dissolved oxygen criteria for drinking water, recreation and fishing designated use waters in paragraph (6) to address natural conditions; and removed the total nitrogen and total phosphorus criteria for Lakes Burton and Rabun from paragraph (17) to provide more time to receive technical advisement from EPA on those criteria. She further added that the modified proposed rules were presented to the public at a public meeting held on April 21, 2025, and no additional comments were received.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that the kickoff public hearing for these rules was March 22, 2022, and between 2022-2024 there were 15 different public and stakeholder meetings. She further stated following the first briefing of the Environmental Committee of the DNR Board on December 3, 2024, EPD put out a public notice on December 4, 2024, and held a public hearing on January 28, 2025. She added that after receiving and implementing EPA's recommendations, today is the second briefing of the DNR Board Environmental Committee. She further added that EPD will hold a second public hearing in June 2025 and request DNR Board adoption in August 2025.

Chairman Lambert asked Ms. Truszczynski to continue with Item C, a briefing on Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Safe Drinking Water, Chapter 391-3-5.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that the purpose is to amend the Rules for Safe Drinking Water, Chapter 391-3-5, to provide a procedure for drinking water wells to be located within 100 feet of a surface water.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that the Rules and Georgia's Minimum Standards for Public Drinking Water Systems set requirements for the construction and siting of wells. She further stated that one requirement is that wells cannot be located within 100 feet of a surface water. She added that the Rules and the Minimum Standards were updated in 2021, and the variance for well setbacks from surface water was removed. She further added that since that time, EPD has received comments about the need for a variance process to allow for wells to be drilled within 100 feet of a surface water.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that in response to comments, EPD developed a process that would allow a water system that is proposing to locate a new groundwater well within 100 ft of a surface water to follow specific procedures, including monitoring, to identify whether the groundwater well is under the direct influence of surface water. She further stated that this process included additional water chemistry and bacteriological tests.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that EPD held a public meeting on December 18, 2024, and accepted comments through December 27, 2024. She further stated that EPD received 6 public comments: concerns with the cost and time of proposed Microscopic Particulate Analysis (MPA) testing, suggesting the use of bacteria testing as a surrogate to MPA testing, and suggesting that MPA testing only be used if bacteria testing is positive; provide a clear definition of surface water; correct the sample volume required to be consistent with EPA guidance, and adjust the turbidity requirement.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that EPD made substantial changes in response to the comments and held a second public meeting on April 21, 2025. She further stated that EPD received 1 public comment in support of the proposed rule amendments. She added that the commenter also suggested a clarification to the proposed rule language. She further added that EPD has made the suggested clarification.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that 391-3-5-.07, “Well Construction Standards” is being amended to provide a procedure in paragraph (3) for a drinking water well to be located within 100 feet of surface water. She further stated that public water systems requesting to locate a well within 100 feet of a surface water must submit a hydrologic assessment report and bacterial and chemical monitoring. She added that based on the report and the monitoring, the well may be permitted as a groundwater source or as groundwater under the influence of surface water.

Ms. Truszczynski stated that there was a public meeting for stakeholder feedback in December 2024. She further stated that there was a second public meeting for stakeholder feedback on April 21, 2025. She added that after briefing the Environmental Committee of the DNR Board today, there will be public notice in May 2025, and a public hearing in June 2025. She finally stated she plans to request adoption of the proposed amendments at the August 26, 2025 DNR Board meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Minutes
Land Committee
DNR Boardroom
2 MLK Jr. Drive, SE
Suite 1252, East Tower**

**Tuesday, May 20, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

Harley Yancey, Chair (via conference call)
Duncan Johnson, Vice Chair
Nancy Addison
Jeff Andrews
Randy Dellinger
Joe Hatfield
Penn Hodge
Steve Hufstetler (via conference call)
Paul Shailendra (via conference call)
Lesley Reynolds, Board Chair, Ex-officio

Board Members

Patrick Denney
Bill Jones
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Mike Peavy

Guests

Lauren Curry, Governor's Office
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Sarah Visser

The May 20, 2025 meeting of the Land Committee was called to order by Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairlady Reynolds stated that Harley Yancey could not attend the meeting in person today and therefore Duncan Johnson, Vice Chair of the Land Committee, would serve as chair. She called on Vice Chair Johnson who called on Brent Womack, Chief of Real Estate, to present the two action items.

Mr. Womack stated the first item for consideration was the purchase of the 177± acre Benton Trust Tract as an addition to Panola Mountain State Park in DeKalb and Rockdale Counties. He further stated that Panola Mountain State Park receives high visitation and protecting this property will prevent impacts to the granite outcrops found onsite as well as connect the park with other conservation lands in the area, increasing and protecting the conservation values of all the properties. He added the Department will acquire the property from The Conservation Fund using Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program grant funding and state park revenue funds as well as a donation from the Knobloch Family Foundation.

Mr. Womack stated the cost of the acquisition is \$1,894,000.

Mr. Womack requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrews, seconded by Ms. Addison and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to purchase from the Conservation Fund, 177± acres as an addition to the Panola Mountain State Park, DeKalb and Rockdale Counties.

Mr. Womack stated his final item for consideration was the purchase of the 8.7± Elrick Tract as an addition to Canoochee Sandhills Wildlife Management Area in Bulloch County. He further stated this Wildlife Management Area is managed for fire adapted ecosystems and is highly dependent on frequent prescribed burns to maintain high- quality habitat conditions. He added that this acquisition includes 7.8 acres and a residence, and the acquisition will eliminate an inholding and provide housing for a seasonal burn crew.

Mr. Womack stated the cost of the acquisition is \$550,000.

Mr. Womack requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Hodge, seconded by Mr. Hatfield, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to purchase from Velda Elrick, 7.8± acres as an addition to the Canoochee Sandhills Wildlife Management Area, Bulloch County.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes
Wildlife Resources Committee
DNR Boardroom
2 MLK Jr. Drive, SE
Suite 1252, East Tower

Tuesday, May 20, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Committee Members

Steve Hufstetler, Vice Chair (via conference call)
Jeff Andrews
Joe Hatfield
Penn Hodge
Duncan Johnson
Brent Layton
Mike Peavy
Lesley Reynolds Board Chair, Ex-officio

Board Members

Nancy Addison
Randy Dellinger
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Guests

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The May 20, 2025, meeting of the Wildlife Resources Committee was called to order by Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairwoman Reynolds stated that in the absence of Charles DePriest and Steve Hufstetler (who was joining the meeting via conference call), Joe Hatfield would serve as chair of the committee. She called on Mr. Hatfield who called on Tina Johannsen, Assistant Chief of Game Management, to present the proposed amendments to Chapter 391-4-2, Hunting Regulations.

Ms. Johannsen stated the proposed amendments were briefed to the Board at the March meeting. She further stated the Wildlife Resources Division held three in-person public hearings and one virtual meeting via Facebook. She added that a total of 49 people attended the public meetings, and 72 emails were received.

Ms. Johannsen stated the proposed regulations included standardizing the definition of “youth” to reflect statutory changes; establishing disposal requirements for deer carcasses; adding Calhoun County to the southwestern deer zone; allowing a replacement tag for deer that test positive for chronic wasting disease; allowing for an antlerless 2-day hunt in certain counties; reducing the teal season in accordance with federal regulations; regulating hunting and other activities on Wildlife Management Areas and other public lands; and housekeeping changes.

Ms. Johannsen requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Andrews, seconded by Mr. Johnson and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board approve the Proposed Amendments to Chapter 391-4-2, Hunting Regulations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

