

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

Thursday, January 23, 2025
2:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Board Members

Joe Hatfield, Chairman
Lesley Reynolds, Secretary
Nancy Addison
Jeff Andrews
Patrick Denney
Mark Hennessy
Duncan Johnson
Brent Layton
Mike Peavy
Bodine Sinyard
Harley Yancey

Staff Members

Walter Rabon, Commissioner
Thomas Barnard
Trevor Santos
Taylor Fisher
Kyle Pearson
Kate Iannuzzi

Chairman Hatfield called the conference call meeting to order. He called on Commissioner Walter Rabon for a briefing on disease detection in Georgia's wildlife.

Commissioner Rabon stated that given the special circumstances surrounding the nature of the discussion for today's meeting, it was imperative that the Board call the meeting with less than 24 hours' notice, giving him the opportunity to brief the board on the action being taken by the department to address a newly detected disease in Georgia's deer herd.

Commissioner Rabon stated the agenda and meeting notice were posted to the DNR website and physically posted at the DNR board room at 12:15 p.m. on January 23, 2025, and submitted to the legal organ of Fulton County at 12:35 p.m. on January 23, 2025.

Commissioner Rabon stated DNR had just received confirmation from the USDA's National Veterinary Services Laboratories that a hunter-harvested deer had tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease, also known as CWD. Commissioner Rabon stated that the deer was harvested at the end of November in 2024 in Lanier County, and the sample was collected as a part of DNR's routine surveillance.

Commissioner Rabon detailed DNR's CWD Response Plan. He further stated the CWD Management Area includes Lanier and Berrien counties. Next steps include determining the geographic extent and prevalence rate in the Management Area, which DNR will achieve with landowner cooperation through cluster sampling in the immediate area.

Commissioner Rabon stated the Department would be issuing a press release on the afternoon of Thursday, January 23, 2025, and holding a press conference on the morning of Friday, January 24, 2025. He further stated WRD staff would host an informational session for all DNR employees about CWD and the department's management goals on Friday, January 24, 2025. He encouraged the Board members to attend if possible. Additionally, an email would be sent with talking points and frequently asked questions.

Chairman Hatfield opened the floor for questions. Commissioner Rabon answered questions on the topics of location, consumption, sampling and testing. Commissioner Rabon concluded his report.

There being no further business, Chairman Hatfield concluded the meeting.