

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

March 27, 2018

Attending:

Committee Members

Dee Yancey, Chairman
Mike Phelps, Vice Chairman
Nancy Addison
William Bagwell
Dwight Davis
Dwight Evans
Bill Jones
Rob Leebern
Mark Mobley
Miki Thomaston
Philip Wilheit
Aaron McWhorter, Board Chairman, Ex-Officio

Board Members

Duncan Johnson
Bodine Sinyard
Brother Stewart

Guests

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Langley
Linda MacGregor, City of Gainesville
David Word, Joe Tanner & Associates
Hutton Brown, Southern Environmental Law Center
Neill Herring, Sierra Club
Joe Cook, Georgia River Network
Chris Manganiello, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
Mark Woodall, Sierra Club
Gordon Rogers, Flint Riverkeeper
Jen Hilburn, Altamaha Riverkeeper
Randy Quintrell, GMA & GA Paper & Forest Products Assn.
Clay Jones, GA Association of Manufacturing
Andrew Morris, Metro Water District
Tim Perkins, Forsyth County Water
Bryan Tolar, Georgia Agribusiness Council
Ronny Just, GA Power
Leon Watkins, Whitestone Landfill
Megan Huynh, Southern Environmental Law Center

Staff Members

Mark Williams, Commissioner
Terry West
Walter Rabon
Kyle Pearson
Wes Robinson
Melanie Johnson
Cathy Barnette
Amber Carter
Artica Gaston
Matt Smith
Dave Crass
Steve Friedman
Rusty Garrison
Doug Haymans
Eddie Henderson
Becky Kelley
Jeff Weaver
Will Smith
Ricky Boles
Jon Ambrose
John Bowers
Kathy Knowlton
Jodie Gardner

Richard Dunn, Director
Lauren Curry
Jac Capp
Jeff Cown
Karen Hays
Chuck Mueller
Laura Williams
Sydney Brogden
Erin Ruoff
Dika Kuoh
Jim Cooley
Sarah Vesser

Calista Moore, Wayne County High School Senior
Debbie Phillips, GIEC
Doug Mrell, Georgia Chamber
Bill Hodges, Hodges, Harbin, Newberry & Tribble
John Eberhart, GA Earth Alliance

The March 27, 2018 meeting of the Wildlife Resources Committee was called to order by Chairman Dee Yancey.

Chairman Yancey called on Jon Ambrose, Chief of Nongame Conservation, Wildlife Resources Division.

Mr. Ambrose presented a proposed amendment to fresh-water turtle regulations. He stated that the Board had been previously briefed on the proposed changes in January of 2018. Mr. Ambrose went on to state that the demand for U.S. fresh-water turtles has increased significantly in recent years, leading to a decline in overall fresh-water turtle population. He added that many other southeastern states have added protections to conserve the populations of fresh-water turtles.

Mr. Ambrose discussed the violations that law enforcement had found regarding fresh-water turtle regulations. He went on to discuss the proposed changes to fresh-water turtle regulations and stated the proposed changes were posted publicly and two public comment meetings were held to discuss the changes.

A motion was made by Mr. Leebern, seconded by Mr. Evans, and carried unanimously that the Board approve the proposed amendments to fresh-water turtle regulations, chapter 391-4-16.

Chairman Yancey thanked Mr. Ambrose.

Chairman Yancey called on John W. Bowers.

Mr. Bowers gave a briefing on proposed amendments to hunting regulations for WMAs and other state lands. He stated that the proposal was to delay the start of turkey season on Cedar Creek WMA for the 2019 turkey season to accommodate an ongoing research project occurring in the WMA. He went on to state that there is a concern in the lack of productivity among turkey populations in the area during the spring season. He added that spring season should go along with peak egg laying, and that the 2018 season appears to be ahead of that mark. He further stated that the research project can determine the cause of this anomaly and justifies the proposed delay to the start of the 2019 turkey season in Cedar Creek WMA.

Mr. Bowers gave a briefing on a proposed property amendment to Ochoopee Dunes WMA. Mr. Bowers stated that the size of the WMA is about to be tripled and the proposed regulation changes provided for increased archery hunting opportunities, additional firearm deer hunting opportunities, and substantial increases to small game hunting and turkey hunting opportunities in the area.

Mr. Bowers stated that these proposals would be publicly noticed with a comment closing date at the end of April. He further stated that the results of that comment period would be presented to the Board for their vote on the matter in May.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.