

**Minutes  
Land Committee  
Go Fish Education Center Theater  
1255 Perry Parkway  
Perry, Georgia 31069**

**Tuesday, May 24, 2022  
9:00 a.m.**

**Committee Members**

Tim Lowe, Chair  
William Bagwell, Vice Chair  
Nick Ayers  
Dwight Davis  
Randy Dellinger  
Patrick Denney  
Dwight Evans  
Rob Leebern  
Billy New  
Bodine Sinyard  
Gary Vowell  
Bill Jones, Board Chair, Ex-officio

**Board Members**

Joe Hatfield  
Duncan Johnson  
Ray Lambert  
Miki Thomaston  
Dee Yancey

**Guests**

Rena Ann Peck, Georgia River Network

**Staff Members**

Mark Williams, Commissioner  
Walter Rabon  
Kyle Pearson  
Donald Kirkland  
Cathy Barnette  
Artica Gaston  
Alexandrea Solomon  
Thomas Barnard  
Jeff Cown  
Steve Friedman  
Ted Will  
Doug Haymans  
Tina Johannsen  
Kara Nitschke  
Meghan Angelina  
Eric Bentley  
  
Richard Dunn, Director  
John Eunice  
Karen Hays

The May 24, 2022 meeting of the Land Committee was called to order by Bill Jones, Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairman Jones called on Mr. Tim Lowe, Chairman of the Land Committee.

Mr. Lowe called on Steve Friedman, Chief of Real Estate.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item A is seeking approval for Acquisition (Purchase) of a 3,900+ acres conservation easement, as an addition to the Canoochee Sandhills WMA-Georgia-Alabama Land Trust, Inc. Tract, Bulloch and Bryan Counties.

Mr. Friedman stated the GALT tract which connects to the Canoochee Sandhills WMA, will significantly benefit public recreation and make management of the WMA easier. He further stated Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) holds a conservation easement over the tract, which requires the owner to indemnify NRCS. He added that the state cannot indemnify anyone, so GALT agreed to sell the State a second conservation easement, that will give us every right remaining, such as all the timber rights, all recreation rights, and the right to manage it for conservation. He further added that after the closing, GALT will transfer the tract to Bulloch County, allowing us to form a partnership with the County. Mr. Friedman stated that due to the existence of the NRCS conservation easement, the Department's price is significantly lower than what the Department paid for other tracts that make up the existing WMA.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will acquire the property with federal and private funds. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the acquisition funds, an affidavit will be recorded against the property stating that it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the programs it was acquired for without the prior approval of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Knobloch Family Foundation.

A motion was made by Mr. Dellinger, seconded by Mr. Davis, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for Acquisition (Purchase) of a 3,900+ acres conservation easement, as an addition to the Canoochee Sandhills WMA-Georgia-Alabama Land Trust, Inc. Tract, Bulloch and Bryan Counties.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item B is seeking approval for Acquisition (Purchase) of approximately 368.9± acres as an addition to the Altama Plantation WMA-Hammersmith Tract, Glynn County.

Mr. Friedman stated the Hammersmith Tract is one of two tracts proposed for acquisition that will add to the recreational values, and significantly improve management of Altamaha Plantation Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). He further stated that these purchases will clean up two edge-holdings, and provide better access to the WMA, which will allow the Department to manage timber and continue to restore the WMA with controlled burns. He added that these management activities will greatly improve the habitat for recreation use as well as for the conservation values found on the WMA. He further added that the tracts each under an existing conservation easement held by the North American Landtrust, however, the easements allow for up to 12 homes in total and two visitors centers. Mr. Friedman stated the conservation easements do however significantly lower the Department's purchase price for each tract.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will acquire the properties with federal and private funds. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the funds, an affidavit will be recorded against each property stating that it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the programs it was acquired for without the prior approval of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Knobloch Family Foundation, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) via the Stone Mountain Industrial Park.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded by Mr. Davis, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for Acquisition (Purchase) of approximately 368.9± acres as an addition to the Altama Plantation WMA-Hammersmith Tract, Glynn County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item C is seeking approval for Acquisition (Purchase) of approximately 267.3± acres as an addition to the Altama Plantation WMA-Indigo Tract, Glynn County.

Mr. Friedman stated that the Indigo Tract is one of two tracts for acquisition that will add to the recreational values, and significantly improve management of Altamaha Plantation Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). He further stated that these purchases will clean up two edge-holdings, and provide better access to the WMA, which will allow the Department to manage the timber and continue to restore the WMA with controlled burns. He added that these management activities will greatly improve the habitat for recreation use as well as for the conservation values found on the WMA. He further added that the tracts are each under an existing conservation easement held by the North American Landtrust, however the easements allow for up to 12 homes in total and two visitor centers. Mr. Friedman stated the conservation easements do however significantly lower the purchase price for each tract.

Mr. Friedman stated that the Department will acquire the properties with federal and private funds. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the funds, an affidavit will be recorded against each property stating that it may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the programs it was acquired for without the prior approval of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Knobloch Family Foundation, and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) via the Stone Mountain Industrial Park.

A motion was made by Mr. Bagwell, seconded by Mr. Denney, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for Acquisition (Purchase) of approximately 267.3± acres as an addition to the Altama Plantation WMA-Indigo Tract, Glynn County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item D is seeking approval for Granting of a Revocable License Agreement and Permanent Easement of up to .25± acres by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly to Blue Ridge EMC at Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa, Towns County.

Mr. Friedman stated that the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC has requested a revocable license agreement and permanent easement of up to .25± acres to install an underground fiber optic line from the lodge/conference building at the Brasstown Valley Resort to the eight (8) cottages located on the property. He further stated that this area is not Heritage Preserve dedicated; therefore, a change of use is not necessary. He added that installing an underground fiber optic line requires a revocable license agreement be issued by the State Properties Commission (SPC) and a permanent easement be granted by the General Assembly (GA). He further added that since the power line has no benefit to the Department, SPC will determine a cost for this request.

A motion was made by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for Granting of a Revocable License Agreement and Permanent Easement of up to .25± acres by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly to Blue Ridge EMC at Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa, Towns County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item E is seeking approval to enter into a 25-year lease agreement with Wilcox County for the 1.56+ acres at Statham Shoals Landing Boat Ramp.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will enter into the lease on the Ocmulgee River at no cost for a twenty-five (25) year term, and Wilcox County will assist with general maintenance at no cost to the Department. He further stated that the Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) will

operate an upgraded boat ramp and improved parking area while performing structural maintenance and repairs as needed during the life of the lease.

Mr. Friedman state that for the benefit of the public and upon approval by the Board, the Department will enter into a twenty-five (25) year lease agreement with the County at no cost.

A motion was made by Mr. Denney, seconded by Mr. Davis, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommends the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval to enter into a 25-year lease agreement with Wilcox County for the 1.56+ acres at Statham Shoals Landing Boat Ramp.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.