

**Minutes
Land Committee
Brasstown Valley Resort
Creekside Pavilion
6321 Highway 76
Young Harris, GA 30582**

**Tuesday, December 5, 2023
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

Charles DePriest, Vice Chair
Nancy Addison
Randy Dellinger
Patrick Denney
Dan Garcia
Penn Hodge
Bill Jones
Lesley Reynolds
Bodine Sinyard
Gary Vowell
Dwight Davis, Board Chair, Ex-officio

Board Members

Joe Hatfield
Duncan Johnson
Ray Lambert
Paul Shailendra
Harley Yancey

Guests

J. D. McCrary, GA Forest Watch
Anna Edmondson, Robbins Government Relations
Alice Keyes, One Hundred Miles
Brian Foster, Georgia Conservancy
Bill Sapp, Southern Environmental Law Center

Staff Members

Walter Rabon, Commissioner
Thomas Barnard
Trevor Santos
Kyle Pearson
Cathy Barnette
Artica Gaston
Mike England
Steve Friedman
Doug Haymans
Angie Johnson
Ted Will
Heather Abercrombie

Jeff Cown, Director
James Boylan
Chuck Mueller
Katie Hegarty

The December 5, 2023 meeting of the Land Committee was called to order by Dwight Davis, Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairman Davis called on Charles DePriest, Vice Chairman of the Land Committee, in the absence of Tim Lowe, Chairman. Mr. DePriest called on Steve Friedman, Chief of Real Estate.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item A is requesting approval to purchase from the Mary Balent Long and Sergio A. Garza-Corona as Co-Executors of the Steven W. McCloud Estate, 144± acres as an addition to Crockford Pigeon Mountain WMA, Walker County. He further stated that Crockford Pigeon Mountain WMA has just over 20,000 acres and is one of the top conservation priorities for the Department. He added the WMA is managed for wildlife and recreation and protects rare species like the montane longleaf pine ecosystem. He added the McCloud tract has good road frontage, which will add better access to this side of the WMA, improve public recreation opportunities, and our ability to manage this portion of the WMA.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will acquire the property with a federal USFWS Pittman-Robertson Grant (PR) in the amount of \$470,000, a grant from the Open Space Institute Appalachian Landscapes Protection Fund (OSI) in the amount of \$50,000, and a donation from the Knobloch Family Foundation (KFF) in the amount of \$115,000. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the grants and funding, an affidavit will be recorded against the McCloud tract stating 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 USFWS, OSI, and KFF.

Mr. Friedman stated if there are no questions, he requests favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Denney, seconded by Mr. Vowell, 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 Mary Balent Long and Sergio A. Garza-Corona as Co-Executors of the Steven W. McCloud Estate, 144± acres as an addition to Crockford Pigeon Mountain WMA, Walker County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item B is requesting approval to purchase from The Nature Conservancy 2,345± acres as an addition to Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA, Marion County. He further stated that the Department is seeking approval from the Board to acquire the Brown Springs, Little Pine Knot, and Taylor Tracts from TNC, and is subject to a conservation easement to be held by TNC. He added that the Department has leased and managed these tracts for public recreation as part of the Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA. He further added that TNC is using funding from the Army and will place a conservation easement on each of the tracts which

reduces the purchase price. He stated the Army is providing funding due to the importance of these tracts to Fort Moore as a buffer. He further stated these are important tracts for recreation and conservation and will now be permanently protected additions to the Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will acquire the properties with funding from the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) in the amount of \$2,005,482, and private grants from Knobloch Family Foundation in the amount of \$750,000, and The Nature Conservancy via Stone Mountain Industrial Park in the amount of \$250,000. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the acquisition funds, an affidavit will be recorded against the properties stating they may not be disposed of in any manner or used for purposes inconsistent with the programs they were acquired for without the prior approval of the GOSP, Knobloch Family Foundation, and TNC via Stone Mountain Industrial Park.

Mr. Friedman stated if there are no questions, he requests favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Addison, seconded by Mr. Jones, 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 Nature Conservancy 2,345± acres as an addition to Chattahoochee Fall Line WMA, Marion County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item C is requesting approval to purchase from Charles R. Matzen, 93± acres as an addition to Big Hammock WMA, Tatnall County. He further stated that Big Hammock WMA, which is along the Altamaha River, is managed for wildlife and recreation and is heavily used by the public for hunting and fishing. He added the Matzen tract is an edge-holding with good road frontage, which provides a new entry point for the public and improves the ability to manage this side of the WMA.

Mr. Friedman stated the Department will acquire the property with a federal USFWS Pittman-Robertson Grant (USFWS) in the amount of \$140,000, and a grant from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) via Stone Mountain Industrial Park in the amount of \$60,000. He further stated that as a condition of receiving the grant and funding, an affidavit will be recorded against the Matzen tract stating 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 USFWS and the TNC.

Mr. Friedman stated if there are no questions, he requests favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Yancey, 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 Charles R. Matzen, 93± acres as an addition to Big Hammock WMA, Tatnall County.

Mr. Friedman stated that Item D is requesting approval to extend an existing lease agreement at St. Simons Airport with the Brunswick and Glynn County Development Authority, Glynn County. He further stated the Department has leased the 10,000 sq. ft. hanger at the St. Simons Airport since 1974 and the current lease is expiring in June 2024. He added the Law Enforcement Division (LED) would like to renew this lease for twenty-five years until June 2049, at an annual rate of \$4,600, adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index. He added that for the benefit of the Law Enforcement Division, the Department requests approval to extend the lease agreement with the Brunswick and Glynn County Development Authority and is subject to State Properties Commission (SPC) approval.

Mr. Friedman stated if there are no questions, he requests favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Dellinger, 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 to extend an existing lease agreement with the Brunswick and Glynn County Development Authority, Glynn County.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.