

Minutes
Board of Natural Resources
Young Harris College
Rollins Campus Center, Suber Banquet Hall
1 College Street
Young Harris, GA 30582

Tuesday, December 2, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Board Members

Lesley Reynolds, Chair
Patrick Denney, Vice Chair
Randy Dellinger, Secretary
Jeff Andrews
Charles DePriest
Dan Garcia
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy
Penn Hodge
Steve Hufstetler
Duncan Johnson
Bill Jones
Ray Lambert
Brent Layton
Mike Peavy
Bodine Sinyard
Harley Yancey

Staff Members

Walter Rabon, Commissioner
Thomas Barnard
Trevor Santos
Kyle Pearson
Taylor Fisher
Haley Chafin
Jeff Cown
Anna Truscynski
Angie Johnson
Ted Will
Chris Harper
Mike England
James McLaughlin
Katie Bloomfield
Sarah Visser
James Boylan
Levi Thompson
Andre McLendon
Katherine Darcey
Brent Womack

Guests

Dr. John Wells, Young Harris College
Lyndy Rogers, Georgia Natural Resources Foundation

The December 2, 2025, meeting of the Board of Natural Resources was called to order by Chairwoman Lesley Reynolds.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Dr. John Wells, President of Young Harris College, for a moment of inspiration.

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

Chairwoman Reynolds called the December 2, 2025, meeting of the Board of Natural Resources back to order.

Chairwoman Reynolds called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on October 28, 2025.

A motion was made by Mr. Sinyard, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the Board of Natural Resources meeting on October 28, 2025.

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

Director Cown updated the Board on EPD Agency Legislation for the 2026 Legislative Session, the upcoming State Water Council meeting, a drought update, and an update on EPD since the Federal Government reopened.

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

Commissioner Rabon began by recognizing Colonel Mike England for his 35 years of faithful service to the State of Georgia.

Commissioner Rabon called on Soheila Naji to present the proposed Vince Dooley Battlefield Trust Fund Program.

Ms. Naji stated that earlier this year, the General Assembly authorized the establishment of the Vince Dooley Battlefield Trust Fund to provide matching grants for the fee-simple acquisition or purchase of permanent historic preservation easement on qualified Georgia battlefields. She further stated the Department is responsible for developing and administering the program.

Ms. Naji stated that eligible applicants include non-governmental organizations involved in the acquisition and management of interests in land for historic purposes and state agencies. She further stated all project activities are limited to fee-simple acquisition or the acquisition of a permanent preservation easement. She added that qualified properties are historic battlefields within the State of Georgia as identified by the National Park Service.

Ms. Naji stated the Vince Dooley Battlefield Trust Fund consists of annual appropriations by the General Assembly; public or private grants, gifts, donations, or contributions; or money from other sources, including local, state or federal program funds dedicated to the fund for battlefield preservation.

Ms. Naji stated the funding cycle will be open year-round and applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. She further stated the grant limit would be up to fifty percent of the appraised value of the land or protective interest.

Ms. Naji explained the review and evaluation process for grant applications and the program requirements and oversight.

Commissioner Rabon requested favorable consideration.

Ms. Naji answered questions from the Board concerning grant administration and the percentage of privately owned battlefields in Georgia.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Hatfield, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the proposed Rule 391-5-13-.04, Vince Dooley Battlefield Trust Fund Program.

Commissioner Rabon stated the 2025 Leadership Academy recently concluded its final session at Unicoi State Park and Lodge, bringing together the participants from across the Department to celebrate their year-long development journey. He thanked Chairwoman Reynolds, Vice Chairman Denney, and Secretary Dellinger for joining the graduation ceremony.

Commissioner Rabon stated the 2026 Career Academy application period closed on November 17, 2025, with a total of 150 applications. He further stated the online interview process would begin over the next few weeks.

Commissioner Rabon requested the Board members attend Keeping Georgia Wild Day at the State Capitol on January 15, 2026. He stated that on the same day, the Parks and Historic Sites Division would host the 2nd Annual Art Contest, which showcases the talent and creativity of young artists from across the state.

Commissioner Rabon stated that the Outdoors Beyond Barriers Program added three new EcoRover all-terrain chairs to the fleet. He thanked NextEra and Mr. Jeff Andrews for donating the funds for these track chairs.

Commissioner Rabon stated the sponsorship total for the 2026 Weekend for Wildlife had already surpassed two million dollars. He thanked Lyndy Rogers, Executive Director of the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation, for her work.

Commissioner Rabon stated the State Wildlife Action Plan was approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on November 12, 2025. He further stated that the Wildlife Resources Division's Wildlife Conservation Section engaged with over 100 organizations and stakeholder groups to revise the plan, which sets ambitious goals for Georgia's wildlife and habitats over the next decade.

Commissioner Rabon stated the renovations are ongoing at the GoFish Center in Perry, Georgia. He further stated that all outdoor aquariums have been drained and the fish are temporarily being housed in the on-site hatchery while the aquariums are thoroughly cleaned, re-sealed, and have acrylic polished. He added that while the outdoor portion of the center will be closed through January 9, 2026, other activities remain open for visitors, including the movie theater, casting pond, and newly renovated indoor exhibits.

Commissioner Rabon stated the Wildlife Resources Division is working to set five-year goals and strategic planning around wildlife, fisheries and hunter education. He further stated the goals of the plan are to centralize data collection to allow for a holistic view of the division's impact, set education goals and standards for the entire division, and brainstorm new ideas on working across sections. He added that the Education Planning Committee, comprised of staff from each of the four sections, met last month to start drafting the Five-Year Education Plan.

Commissioner Rabon stated the Wildlife Resources Division is working on revising Georgia's Deer Management Plan. He further stated the process of updating this document blends public involvement with the latest scientific information. He added that this ensures that deer management decisions are both rooted in science and reflect the desires of all Georgians. He stated the planning process included three public meetings, a self-paced virtual public meeting, a comprehensive public opinion survey, five citizen stakeholder committee meetings, and a steering committee meeting to develop the final recommendations.

Commissioner Rabon noted the newest edition of Coastlines magazine was available at the desk of each member. He stated that on November 10, 2025, the Coastal Resources Division, along with our counterparts in Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina, submitted the Exempted Fishing Permit request for Red Snapper to the U.S. Commerce Secretary. He further stated that the Coastal Resources Division has asked for a two-month red snapper season in 2026 with a mandatory reporting requirement for all participating anglers. He added that the development of the reporting

application is being sponsored by Yamaha Marine Group through its environmental advocacy arm, Yamaha RightWaters.

Commissioner Rabon then called on Colonel Mike England, Director of the Law Enforcement Division, for an update.

Colonel England updated the Board of the 2025 boating season; the 40th Game Warden Academy; fleet vehicles; illegal wildlife and animal possession and sales; and a CIRT incident at Lake Tobesofkee.

Colonel England called on Game Warden Levi Thompson, who gave a presentation on the Hunter Safety Vest Loaner Box Initiative.

Commissioner Rabon called on Angie Johnson, Director of the Parks and Historic Sites Division, for an update.

Director Johnson updated the Board on the 2025 leaf watch season; Georgia Park Ranger Academy; Your State Park Day; the Perry Fair; and the DNR Leadership Academy session at Unicoi.

Commissioner Rabon stated that this concluded his report.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Randy Dellings, Vice Chairman of the Coastal Committee, for his committee report.

A motion was made by Mr. Dellinger, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Saltwater Fishing Regulations, Rule 391-2-4-.04. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Dellinger, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Board approve the Coastal Marshland Protection and Shore Protection Committee membership of Mr. Bart Gobeil.

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

A motion was made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Inspection and Maintenance, Chapter 391-3-20. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Lambert, seconded by Mr. Sinyard, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Radioactive Materials, Chapter 391-3-17. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Harley Yancey, Chair of the Land Committee, for his committee report.

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Hatfield, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval for the acquisition (purchase) of 3,856± acres from Union Carbide Corporation, the property known as the Mocama tract, Ceylon WMA, Camden County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Hennessy, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval for the acquisition (purchase) of 1± acre from David Bert White, Paulding Forest WMA, Paulding County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

A motion was made by Mr. Yancey, seconded by Mr. Hennessy, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commissioner approval for the granting of a Revocable License and Permanent Easement of up to 1.00± acre by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly to the Satilla Rural Electric Membership Corporation at Bullard Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Jeff Davis County. (Resolution attached hereto and made a part thereof)

Chairwoman Reynolds stated the next item of business would be to approve the Resolution honoring Ted Will, Director of the Wildlife Resources Division, who would be retiring at the end of December. She thanked Director Will for his years of service to the state and for his contributions to the field of conservation and wildlife management.

A motion was made by Chairwoman Reynolds, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Board adopt the Resolution honoring Ted Will, Director of the Wildlife Resources Division.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Ray Lambert, Chair of the Nominating Committee for the committee's report.

Chairman Lambert stated the nominating committee had met in late November to discuss the 2026 slate of officers. He further stated the committee would be taking the following recommendation to the Board at the January meeting: Patrick Denney, Chair; Randy Dellinger, Vice Chair; Dan Garcia, Secretary.

Chairwoman Reynolds announced the next meeting of the Board of Natural Resources would be on Friday, January 30, 2026, at the A.W. Jones Center on St. Simons Island.

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

Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman

ATTEST:

Randy Dellinger, Secretary

**Minutes
Coastal Committee
Young Harris College
Rollins Campus Center, Suber Banquet Hall
1 College Street
Young Harris, GA 30582**

**Tuesday, December 2, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

Randy Dellinger, Vice Chair
Charles DePriest
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy
Penn Hodge
Bill Jones
Ray Lambert
Brent Layton
Mike Peavy
Harley Yancey
Lesley Reynolds, Board Chair, Ex-Officio

Board Members

Patrick Denney
Jeff Andrews
Dan Garcia
Steve Hufstetler
Duncan Johnson
Bodine Sinyard

The December 2, 2025, meeting of the Coastal Committee was called to order by Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Randy Dellinger, Vice Chairman of the Coastal Committee, who called on Doug Haymans, Director of the Coastal Resources Division, to present the proposed amendments to the Saltwater Fishing Regulations, Rule 391-2-4-.04.

Director Haymans stated that a recent review of 391-2-4-.04 revealed four errors that could only be characterized as scrivener's errors. The errors include adding the accidentally deleted text "(Hexanchus nakamurai), and oceanic whitetip shark" back into the list of prohibited sharks and correcting the unit of minimum size limit to Fork Length (FL) for Bluefish, Sheepshead and Tarpon.

Director Haymans stated that public comment was open through Friday, November 28, 2025. He further stated that no comments were received from the public.

Director Haymans requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. DePriest, seconded by Mr. Hennessy, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend that the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Saltwater Fishing Regulations, Rule 391-2-4-.04.

Vice Chairman Dellinger asked Director Haymans to present the Coastal Marshland Protection (CMPC) and Shore Protection Committee (SPC) membership item.

Director Haymans stated that the Coastal Resources Division solicited nominations from the public to fill the upcoming vacancy on the CMPC/SPC. He further stated that one self-nomination was received from Mr. Bart Gobeil, President of Platform Strategies. He added that Mr. Gobeil had previously served as the President of the Georgia Conservancy and was Chief Operating Officer for the State of Georgia under Governor Deal.

Director Haymans requested the Board approve the membership of Mr. Bart Gobeil to the Coastal Marshland Protection and Shore Protection Committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Hatfield, seconded by Mr. Jones, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend that the Board approve the Coastal Marshland Protection and Shore Protection Committee membership of Mr. Bart Gobeil.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Minutes
Environmental Protection Committee
Young Harris College
Rollins Campus Center, Suber Banquet Hall
1 College Street
Young Harris, GA 30582**

**Tuesday, December 2, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

Ray Lambert, Chair
Bodine Sinyard, Vice Chair
Jeff Andrews
Patrick Denney
Dan Garcia
Penn Hodge
Steve Hufstetler
Bill Jones
Duncan Johnson
Brent Layton
Lesley Reynolds, Board Chair, Ex-Officio

Board Members

Randy Dellinger
Charles DePriest
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy
Mike Peavy
Harley Yancey

The December 2, 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 James Boylan, Chief of the Air Protection Branch, to present action on the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Inspection and Maintenance, Chapter 391-3-20.

Mr. Boylan stated that Georgia's Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) Program covers gasoline-powered passenger vehicles registered in the 13-county Atlanta Metropolitan Area. He further stated that the Program is required by the Clean Air Act Amendments for areas that were moderate or higher nonattainment areas for the 1979 1-hour ozone standard. He added that 3,252,387 emissions tests conducted in 2024, there are 711 vehicle emissions testing stations, and there are 2,125 active inspectors (as of 11/5/2025).

Mr. Boylan stated that amendments being added will remove definitions and references associated with 2-speed idle (TSI) testing, update to Phase VI emissions software, remove references to the RepairWatch Public Report, replace the word "Chapter" with "Subject" to reflect

the Secretary of State's naming convention, update terminology, and correct formatting and grammar.

Mr. Boylan stated that EPD briefed the DNR Board Environmental Committee on the proposed rule amendments at the August 26, 2025 DNR Board meeting. He further stated that on October 1, 2025, EPD issued a public hearing. He added that the 30-day public comment period ended on October 8, 2025, and there were no comments.

Mr. Boylan requested a favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Hodge, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Inspection and Maintenance, Chapter 391-3-20.

Chairman Lambert asked Mr. Boylan to continue with Item B, to present action on Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Radioactive Materials, Chapter 391-3-17.

Mr. Boylan stated that the Rules are periodically amended to address requirements of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for Agreement States. He further stated that the Agreement States (e.g., Georgia) are required to ensure that the Rules meet the compatibility and health and safety categories established by the NRC.

Mr. Boylan stated that the proposed amendments incorporate comments in the NRC letter dated September 26, 2024; incorporate comments from the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists regarding definitions, examinations, and training requirements; add a requirement to notify the NRC Headquarters Operations Center; further define and establish more detail in fee categories; replace the word "Chapter" with "Subject" to reflect the Secretary of State's naming convention; update a citation; and correct formatting and grammar.

Mr. Boylan stated that the American Registry of Radiologic Technologist (ARRT), American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT), Georgia Society of Radiologic Technologists (GSRT), and Emory University all provided support the proposed changes. He further stated that Georgia EPD appreciates the comments of support. He added that The ARRT, GSRT, and West Physics recommend that the "Grandfathering provision" date be updated to September 1, 2025. He further added that based on discussions throughout the rule update process, it was determined that the current rule adoption schedule (no change to the Grandfathering provision) was the preferred course of action.

Mr. Boylan stated that Emory University asked for minor clarifications on the proposed NRC notification requirement. He further stated that emergency postings will include a reference to a static, updated NRC contacts webpage, and the process for reporting to the Division, issuing violations and levying fines have not changed. He added that how each Agreement State chooses

to codify these requirements is up to the individual Agreement State and acceptance by the NRC as a program element.

Mr. Boylan stated that Emory University commented that the terms “Nuclear medicine technologist,” “Nuclear medicine technology,” “Radiation therapist,” and “Radiation therapy technology” are not included in the definitions in the Code of Federal Regulations. He further stated that the Division acknowledges that the justification could be better stated as “the definitions are consistent with NRC requirements”. He added that Emory University asked, “is the State of Georgia striving for consistency with other States that have a single program for regulating radiation-producing machines and radioactive materials?” He further added that this question is beyond the scope of this rulemaking action. He finally stated that Emory University commented that the updated rules now preclude nuclear medicine technologists and radiation therapists from having alternate pathways of education and experience. He concluded by stating that as regulators, EPD rarely, if ever, has seen technologists who are not board certified. EPD will look at specific situations on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Boylan stated that EPD briefed the DNR Board Environmental Committee on the proposed rule amendments at the August 26, 2025 DNR Board meeting. He further stated that on October 1, 2025, EPD issued a public hearing. He added that the 30-day public comment period ended on October 8, 2025, and there were no comments.

Mr. Boylan requested a favorable consideration.

Chairman Lambert called on Mr. Hennessy who asked, aren’t all nuclear medicine technologists and radiation therapists board certified? Mr. Boylan responded with he has never met one who wasn’t board certified.

A motion was made by Mr. Hufstetler, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution to approve the Proposed Amendments to the Rules for Radioactive Materials, Chapter 391-3-17.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Minutes
Land Committee
Young Harris College
Rollins Campus Center, Suber Banquet Hall
1 College Street
Young Harris, GA 30582**

**Tuesday, December 2, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members

Harley Yancey, Chair
Duncan Johnson, Vice Chair
Jeff Andrews
Randy Dellinger
Dan Garcia
Joe Hatfield
Mark Hennessy
Penn Hodge
Steve Hufstetler
Lesley Reynolds, Board Chair, Ex-Officio

Board Members

Patrick Denney
Charles DePriest
Bill Jones
Ray Lambert
Brent Layton
Mike Peavy
Bodine Sinyard

The December 2, 2025, meeting of the Land Committee was called to order by Lesley Reynolds, Chairwoman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairwoman Reynolds called on Harley Yancey, Chairman of the Land Committee, who called on Brent Womack, Chief of Real Estate, to present the action items.

Mr. Womack stated the first item was a request to approve the Mocama acquisition from Union Carbide Corporation in Camden County. He further stated the Mocama Tract adjoins Ceylon Wildlife Management Area and will connect to other conservation lands. He added the property contains good examples of maritime forest and coastal marsh and provides habitat for gopher tortoises and other rare species. He stated there are also notable historical features found on the property.

Mr. Womack stated the cost for the acquisition is \$4,800,000, and funding sources include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant, a Bobolink Foundation Grant, a Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Grant, and a Knobloch Family Foundation Grant.

Mr. Womack stated that due to the previous use of the property for industrial purposes, Union Carbide Corporation has been consulting with the Environmental Protection Division to conduct cleanup on portions of the acquisition area. He further stated that the condition of DNR closing on the property is the completion of all cleanup activities and downgrading the permit. He added that during due diligence, DNR discovered outstanding mineral reservations on the property and is working with the seller and the State Properties Commission to resolve the issue on this portion of the property.

Mr. Womack requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Hatfield and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the acquisition (purchase) of 3,856± acres from Union Carbide Corporation, the property known as Mocama tract, Ceylon WMA, Camden County.

Mr. Womack stated the next item for consideration would be the approval of approximately one acre from David Bert White in Paulding County. He further stated that once acquired, the property would be included in Paulding Forest Wildlife Management Area, located in the Dugdown Corridor.

Mr. Womack stated that this parcel was originally intended to close as part of the 82-acre acquisition that was approved by the Board in April of 2024, but after closing it was discovered that this one acre parcel was not included. He further stated this acquisition corrects the previous error and resolves boundary discrepancies ensuring the entire property is protected and managed as originally intended.

Mr. Womack stated the cost of this acquisition is \$3,900. He further stated that DNR intends to close on this project in December of 2025.

Mr. Womack requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Hatfield and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the acquisition (purchase) of 1± acre from David Bert White, Paulding Forest WMA, Paulding County.

Mr. Womack stated the final item for consideration would be the approval to grant the Satilla Rural Electric Membership Corporation a revocable license agreement and permanent easement of up to one acre by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly at Town Bluff Park, Bullard Creek Wildlife Management Area, in Jeff Davis County.

Mr. Womack stated this easement is needed to provide power service to a new building at Town Bluff Park which is located inside the Wildlife Management Area. He further stated the new building will offer additional space for history and natural history programs, which supports the education mission of the site. He added since the revocable license and permanent easement benefit the department, DNR recommends they be issued at no cost.

Mr. Womack requested favorable consideration.

A motion was made by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Mr. Andrews and carried unanimously that the Committee recommend the Board adopt the Resolution to authorize the Commissioner to seek State Properties Commission approval for the granting of a Revocable License and Permanent Easement of up to 1.00± acre by the State Properties Commission and General Assembly to the Satilla Rural Electric Membership Corporation at Bullard Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Jeff Davis County.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.