

**MINUTES
ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION
JULY 23, 2009**

PRESIDING – Melisa Love, Chairman

SECRETARY - Linda Casey, State Forester

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT – Melisa Love-Chairman, Don Heath, Jerry Smith, Jett Freeman, Randy Gilmore and Johnny McReynolds.

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION PERSONNEL PRESENT - Linda Casey, Bill Baisden, Tom Conway Tonia Stephens, Walter Cartwright, Bruce Springer, Balsie Butler, Craig Hill, Mike Kyser, Elishia Ballentine, Kelvin Daniels and Regina Miller.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER –Chairman Melisa ~~Smith~~ Love *called this regular meeting of the Alabama Forestry Commission to order at 10:00 a.m. on July 23, 2009 in the Forestry Commission’s Executive Conference Room located at 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.

ROLL CALL - Commissioners Melisa Love, Don Heath, Jerry Smith, Jett Freeman, Randy Gilmore and Johnny McReynolds were present. Ken Real and Randy Gilmore were absent. Don Heath made a motion to excuse Ken Real and Randy Gilmore (if he does not attend the meeting) due to their father’s illness. Jett Freeman seconded the motion and the motion carried. A quorum was present.

Randy Gilmore joined the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 23, 2009 MEETING – Melisa Love made a motion to accept the minutes of the April 23, 2009 meeting with a correction of her last name. Don Heath seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

ASSISTANT STATE FORESTER – Linda Casey informed Commissioners that she received resumes from 27 applicants for the position of Assistant State Forester. An interview panel met and narrowed the selection to the top 5 applicants. These applicants will be interviewed the week of August 3, 2009 by the panel. At the Commission’s next meeting, Linda will present the panel’s recommendation for Assistant State Forester.

Commissioners commended Bill Baisden for his excellent service to the Commission for almost 2 years.

GRANT FOR LITTLE RIVER STATE FOREST - Linda reported that SW Regional Forester, Gary Cole had applied for a grant through the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to develop restroom and shower facilities at Little River State Forest. ADECA has informed the Commission that we will be awarded this grant and that a resolution must be approved by Commissioners for the agency to receive the funds.

Tom Conway, Legal Counsel, presented a resolution for the Commissioner’s approval (Attachment #1.) Don Heath made a motion to accept the \$50,000 grant from ADECA. The motion was seconded by Randy Gilmore and passed by unanimous vote.

GRANT REVIEW/2009 BUDGET STATUS – Administrative Division Director, Jerry Dwyer reviewed a summary of grants to AFC partners (Attachment #2). Jerry Dwyer also reviewed the AFC budget to date explaining that we are on track for this time of year.

ARRA COGONGRASS & LONGLEAF GRANT UPDATE – Assistant State Forester, Bill Baisden, updated Commissioners on the ARRA (stimulus) grants by saying that Requests for Proposals are being circulated by

the AFC and other Cogongrass Task Force members in search of a firm to serve as coordinator of this grant. The ARRA stimulus grant for the Longleaf Grant involves 5-6* states. The coordinator for this grant will be the Longleaf Alliance. He also reported that an accountant has been hired to work with these two grants for a three-year time period.

NEW LAW ENFORCEMENT REGULATIONS – Law Enforcement Chief, Craig Hill, presented law enforcement regulations for the Commission’s consideration (Attachment #3). Following discussion of each regulation, Randy Gilmore made a motion to accept the regulations as presented. Don Heath seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Linda Casey acknowledged Chief Hill for bringing consistency and cohesiveness to the Commission.

12:15 p.m. - Chair, Melissa Love convened the meeting for a break.

12:21 p.m. - Love reconvened the meeting.

DISPATCH CENTER UPDATE – Dispatch Center Supervisor, Balsie Butler, reported that progress is being made to achieve full staffing of the Dispatch Center with employees in the Police Officer Communications classification. Ultimately, dispatchers per shift will include 6 on the 1st shift, 4 on the 2nd shift, and 2 statewide on the 3rd shift.

NRCS COST-SHARE PROGRAM & MOU – Forest Management Director, Walter Cartwright explained that a cost-share program called CCPI targeting eligible landowners in Alabama’s black belt counties is being provided through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS.) At the end of June, seventy-two minority, female, low-income or new to cost-share landowners had signed up for the matching 90/10 funds.

Cartwright said that partnering agencies specific to CCPI had signed an MOU for this cost-share program. He further explained that these agencies had previously signed an MOU covering assistance on a regular basis.

EAST CENTRAL REGION OVERVIEW /OLD TALLAPOOSA COUNTY OFFICE SITE – Regional Forester, Bruce Springer, presented an overview of the East Central Region including work force and work within the counties. Springer presented a proposal to sell the old Tallapoosa County Office site. The building, still in good condition, is not needed. Due to the Department of Transportation’s need for highway construction, a new building had to be constructed about 10 years ago, approximately 300 ft. from this building. Don Heath made a motion to sell the property at or above the appraised value. Jett Freeman seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Linda Casey informed Commissioners commended Bruce in his leadership role and stated that he had done an outstanding job.

RECOGNITION OF MEDIA TEAM & OVERVIEW OF THE TREASURED FOREST MAGAZINE – The media team consists of Mike Kyser, Elishia Ballentine and Kelvin Daniels. Mike explained that the team publishes the agency’s magazine 3 times per year, produce brochures, flyers, news releases, whatever the agency needs. Mike stated that he is the agency’s webmaster and is responsible for maintaining the AFC web site.

Linda praised the output of the team saying their work is amazing, great, and fantastic! She also commended them for working with other groups/organizations.

DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING – The next meeting date was scheduled on August 20, 2009 with an alternate date – August 17, 2009. At this meeting, Linda will present information on the top 3 Assistant State Forester candidates, resumes, and their ranking.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

