

MINUTES
ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION
October 30, 2012

PRESIDING – Johnny McReynolds, Chairman

SECRETARY – Linda Casey, State Forester

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT – Johnny McReynolds, Ken Real, Don Heath, Irvin Eatman, Jerry Smith, Salem Saloom and Tommy Thompson.

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION PERSONNEL PRESENT – Linda Casey, Tom Conway, Tonia Stephens, Roy Griffith, and Regina Miller.

GUESTS – Rick Oats, Sam Duval, Roy McAuley and Steve May.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – Chairman Johnny McReynolds called the meeting of the Alabama Forestry Commission to order at 10:00 a.m. on October 30, 2012 in the Commission's state office executive conference room, 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.

ROLL CALL – Regina Miller called roll. All Commissioners were present. Miller announced that a quorum was present.

Miller stated that the meeting had been properly advertised.

MINUTES OF THE JULY 19, 2012 MEETING – Commissioner Don Heath made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2012 meeting as presented. Commissioner Thompson seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

STATE FORESTERS REPORT - State Forester Linda Casey reported that the operating budget is \$18.5 million; a shortfall of \$3 million. At this point, the amount of federal funding is still unsure and that there will be no funding for EQIP. She stated that the strategy for 2013 is to fill position on a critical needs basis. Commissioner Heath recommended that a staffing plan be presented at the next Commission meeting due to decreased funding.

Casey stated that federal grants training, time code training and standard operating procedures will be conducted prior to year end.

Casey reported that a forest economic development steering committee has been formed to develop strategies and goals to retain and grow the forest industry and markets.

COGONGRASS UPDATE – Stephen Peocot, Communications Director for the Cogongrass Control Project entered the meeting at 10:35 a.m. Pecot reported that the 3-year initiative created/saved 163 jobs which was the main focus of the ARRA stimulus

grant. One thousand, one hundred forty-five properties throughout 37 counties were selected for Cogongrass treatment.

LAND TRANSACTION UPDATE – General Counsel Tom Conway explained that a landowner bordering the old Crenshaw County office site and tower continues to request that the Commission give him the vacated land and tower. There is approximately 2 acres of land at the site. The Commission now needs to mount a repeater on the tower and therefore must maintain access. Conway is to report the actual land value at the next Commission meeting.

CALHOUN COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REQUEST - Conway informed Commissioners that the Commission has received a letter from the Calhoun County Soil and Water Conservation District Board expressing their inability to comply with plans to construct an office building and agricultural complex and nature trails at Choccolocco State Forest as previously requested. The District Board requests, instead, to purchase ninety acres of land at the location or swap land at another location. Commissioner Salem Saloom made a motion that the Commission not sell the ninety acres and Commissioner Heath seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. The Commission will discuss the matter with the Calhoun County District Board.

RENAMING A STATE FOREST – Commissioner Saloom presented a proposal to rename a state forest after two men who have led efforts in the retention, management and restoration of longleaf pine and associated ecosystems. Through an ARRA grant, The Longleaf Alliance restored Baldwin State Forest to a Longleaf working forest. Commissioner Saloom made a motion to rename the state forest the Gjerstad/Johnson Longleaf Alliance Forest. Commissioner Real seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. The Longleaf Alliance will handle publicity for the name change.

PERSONNEL UPDATE – Personnel Manager Tonia Stephens reported that training for the new Forest Ranger classification, succession planning, and a mentoring guide are in the developmental stages.

LOGGING ROADS – Commissioners discussed the logging road issue regarding notification of harvesting. Following discussion, Commissioner Tommy Thompson made a motion for Legal Counsel Tom Conway to draft a letter from the State Forester and Commission Chairman to the Alabama Association of County Commissions expressing the concerns of the Commission by November 2, 2012. Commissioner Salem Saloom seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

FORESTRY CAMPS – State Forester Casey stated that the Commission personnel are involved in two forestry camps each year. The Butler County Natural Resource Camp with minimal employee involvement while the Alabama Forestry Camp is primarily sponsored by the Commission with over six hundred hours of employee time contributed by nineteen employees. She expressed concern with employee time due to reduced manpower from budget cuts. Casey stated that our involvement is being evaluated and will report on the agency's involvement at the January meeting.

MEDIA PROJECTS – Media Team Leader Mike Kyser briefed Commissioners on statewide projects which included “Don’t Move Firewood” public service announcements, pamphlets and flyers, yard signs and banners; “Selling Your Timber” workshops/tours; Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) materials produced from a grant from FM Global; and a WUI campaign called “Ready, Set, Go” in partnership with the Association of Volunteer Fire Departments.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2013 OFFICERS – Chairman Johnny McReynolds appointed Don Heath and Ken Real to serve as the nominating committee for the election of 2013 officers. The committee will report at the January meeting.

NEXT MEETING – Commissioners scheduled the next meeting on January 10, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. at the state office in Montgomery.

ADJOURNMENT – Commissioner Don Heath made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:20 p.m. Commissioner Salem Saloon seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.