

**MINUTES
ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION
May 22, 2013**

PRESIDING – Tommy Thompson, Chairman

SECRETARY - Linda Casey, State Forester

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

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT - Salem Saloom.

ALABAMA FORESTRY COMMISSION PERSONNEL PRESENT - Linda Casey, Tom Conway, Heather Oates, Craig Hill, Bruce Springer, John Goff and Regina Miller.

GUESTS –Sam Duvall and Stephen May.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – Chairman Tommy Thompson called this regular meeting of the Alabama Forestry Commission to order at 10:00 a.m. on May 22, 2013 in the Alabama Forestry Commission's State Office Executive Conference Room located at 513 Madison Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.

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

Commissioner Don Heath made a motion to excuse Commissioner Saloom's absence. Commissioner Real seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Miller announced that the meeting had been properly advertised.

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY MEETING – Commissioner Don Heath made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2013 meeting as presented. Commissioner Johnny McReynolds seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT AND NEW TIME SYSTEM - Chief Financial Officer Heather Oates reviewed the monthly budget report and stated that the Commission has received approval to spend \$500,000 from the Emergency Forest Fire Fund which will be applied to the cost of bulldozers. Oates explained that the State of Alabama will be implementing a new time code program for all agencies with the intention to be more efficient and better track employee salaries. The Commission has volunteered to be one of the pilot agencies to implement the program.

State Forester Casey informed Commissioners that Oates is building a new accounting system to meet the agency's needs. Casey reviewed the agency's monthly expenditures/incomes.

STATE FORESTERS REPORT: JANUARY REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – State Forester Linda Casey reviewed workforce classifications and personnel changes comparing 2010 and 2013. The agency currently employs fifty-eight foresters, forty-six rangers, sixty-one ranger specialists, and thirteen other positions with foresters representing 33% of the workforce, rangers - 26%, forestry specialists - 34% and others – 7% of the agency's workforce.

Casey also presented information on the mileage of the agency's vehicles stating that thirty percent of agency vehicles have at least 150,000 miles and fifty-five percent have 100,000 miles or more.

State Forester Casey stated that the Commission's sixty-four dozers are older than the twenty-year life expectancy and beginning in 2014 the average age of the total fleet will be 19.9 years, while currently more than fifty percent of the total dozer fleet exceeds twenty years.

2014 Budget – With no increase in the agency's budget for FY2014, Casey informed Commissioners that the agency will work to reduce operating costs through a reduction in headcount and by increasing revenue through timber and land sales. Lengthy discussion followed regarding land sales. Chairman Thompson asked that field personnel present updated management plans on state forests (in their respective regions) at the next meeting.

Commissioner Don Heath made a motion for the agency to explore options in selling eighty acres of Miller Nursery property at the current fair market value and to also include Stauffer and Hauss Nursery properties, as well as the Central Shop property. Commissioner Ken Real seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

OIG Audit Update – State Forester Casey reported that according to the U.S. Forest Service, we are closer to a resolution on the audit.

Strategic Plan – State Forester Casey explained that the 3-year Strategic Plan has been revised and will be reviewed again after the Forest Action Plan is revised. This should occur by June 2014. She asked Commissioners to provide their input on the plan. Chairman Thompson recommended that a timeline be established for the updated plan.

Green Building Executive Order & Legislation – State Forester Casey informed Commissioners that she and Chris Isaacson with the Alabama Forestry Association had worked on support of the Green Building Initiative with the Legislature and Governor. The United States Green Building Council (USGBC) opposed the initiative at a public hearing and legislation was not approved; however, Governor Bentley issued an Executive Order in support of the initiative.

CONSOLIDATION TEAMS – Law Enforcement Chief – Law Enforcement Chief Craig Hill stated that legislation has been passed to consolidate most state agency law enforcement teams into two divisions with the Commissions' investigative unit to be placed under a new State Bureau of Investigation. During the next legislative session, current and new laws must be passed to consolidate agencies with an effective date of January 1, 2015.

Fleet Management – East Central Regional Forester Bruce Springer, representing the agency on the Statewide Fleet Consolidation Program, explained that the agency's vehicles must be placed under the Office of Fleet Management (ALDOT) who will be responsible for acquisition, operation and replacement of all state-owned and leased vehicles. The timeframe for completion is within the next two years.

First Responder Communications – Forest Operations Division Assistant Director for Fire, John Goff stated that Governor Bentley has issued an executive order establishing the Alabama First Responder Wireless Commission with the intent of bridging the communications infrastructure and frequencies for all federal, state, local and tribal entities needs. This order is in conjunction with FirstNet, National Public Safety Broadband Network legislation.

OTHER BUSINESS - Stephen May, meeting attendee, began to express his views when agency Legal Counsel Tom Conway suggested that pursuant to Commission bylaws, members of the Commission might vote to allow Mr. May to address the body. Commissioner Irvin Eatman made a motion to approve other items not on the agenda. Commissioner Johnny McReynolds seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. May expressed his beliefs regarding the management of the agency, recent personnel who have retired/left the agency as well as assistance in obtaining funds to support the agency.

DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING - Commissioners scheduled the next meeting of the Commission at 10:00 a.m. on July 30, 2013 at the Commission's state office in Montgomery.

ADJOURNMENT – Commissioner Don Heath made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 p.m. with Commissioner Ken Real seconding the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.