

**Georgia Occupational Regulation Review Council  
State Board of Registration for Foresters Meeting Minutes  
206 Washington St SW, Atlanta, GA 30334  
July 25, 2018 - 10:30 a.m.**

The Georgia Occupational Regulation Review Council Wednesday, July 25, 2018. The following members were present:

**Board Members Present**

Mr. Chris Wells, Chair, OPB  
Sen. Frank Ginn, Senate  
Ms. Pamela Woods, State Accounting Office  
Mr. Wes Robinson, Department of Natural Resources  
Mr. Stephen DeBaun, Department of Revenue  
Ms. Kristin Miller, Department of Public Health

**Administrative Staff Present**

Anna Wrigley Miller, OPB  
Dale Brantley, OPB  
Meaghan Ryan, OPB

**Board Members Absent**

Rep. Trey Rhodes, House of Representatives  
Mr. Perry Walden, Department of Agriculture  
Mr. Ryan Germany, Secretary of State

**GORRC Members' Staff**

Lisa Durden, Secretary of State

**Visitors Present**

Dale Greene, University of Georgia  
Bob Izlar, University of Georgia  
Chuck Williams, Georgia Forestry Commission  
Andres Villegas, Georgia Forestry Association  
Brian Stone, Forest Resource Consultants

**Call to Order:** Mr. Wells established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

**OPEN SESSION**

**Agenda**           The Board accepted the agenda as presented.

**10:30 a.m. Meeting**

**1. Open Public Comment**

Dale Greene, Dean of the Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources, University of Georgia –provided a letter to the council with his statement. Mr. Greene gave a brief history of the school and his experience. He strongly encouraged the council to retain the board. Georgia has the most commercial forest land of any state. Two thirds of forest land is owned by private land owners in Georgia. Land owners are thinning or harvesting timber once a decade and rely on the services provided by foresters. He said he thinks the system we have works very well. The board responded to past budget constraints by moving to a national exam from a state licensing exam. Georgia was the first state in the south to register foresters. He recommended the council retain the board. Sen. Ginn asked Mr. Greene his forester number. He is registered forester #1975. There were no further questions.

Bob Izlar, Director of University of Georgia Center for Forest Business – gave a brief history on his education and his career. He stated that much of our timberland is divided in pieces. Many times, owners only have the opportunity to harvest once in their life and rely on registered foresters to make the most of their harvest. All of their Master's degree students are qualified to sit for the licensing exam. Mr. Wells asked if UGA tracks graduates and where they end up working once licensed. Mr. Izlar said that most undergraduates stay in state, but Master's students are spread all over the U.S. and the world. Sen. Ginn asked if graduates have to take the licensing exam before graduating. Mr. Izlar stated that graduates are qualified to sit for the exam. Graduates are required to gain experience and be recommended by established foresters in order to be licensed. There were no further questions.

Chuck Williams, Director, Georgia Forestry Commission – gave some background on the Georgia Forestry Commission. Their main mission is the protection and management of state forest resources. GFC also manages state forest assets. GFC mainly works with small land owners. About 75 employees at GFC are foresters. GFC's role is non fiduciary when it comes to interacting with land owners. GFC relies on registered foresters to fill the fiduciary role. In the past, the state dealt with timber theft. In response, a study committee was created to resolve the issue. Legislation was passed to add responsibilities to GFC to investigate timber theft. Mr. Williams demonstrated the distinction between criminal activity and legal activity. GFC employs six law enforcement

employees. The role of registered foresters are a key support system for private land owners. He recommended that the state keep the license for foresters. Sen. Ginn asked what the procedure is for foresters practicing without a license. Brian Stone responded that the established process is to encourage the land owner to submit a complaint online. Once the complaint has been submitted, the board will assign it to an investigator. The board then decides what action to take once the investigator has gathered all the data. Most times, the board will send a letter asking the individual to cease the practice. If the individual continues to practice without a license, further action may be taken as determined by the board. There were no further questions.

Andres Villegas, President & CEO, Georgia Forestry Association – stated the association has been around since 1907. Mr. Villegas explained how he considers Georgia to be the number one forestry state in the nation. It is determined by the amount owned by private hands. Forestry is the second largest industry in the state and a major component of Georgia's economy. Georgia can continue leading the industry in forestry with the right management. Mr. Villegas urged the council to continue the registration of foresters by its current standards. There were no further questions.

Brian Stone, Consulting Forester – gave a brief history on his career. He outlined the role of a consulting forester. Mr. Stone gave a few examples of the type of land owners they regularly help, the different services foresters provide, and the level of dependence landowners have on a forester. Mr. Stone said there are ways to improve the way forestry is regulated, but he doesn't see a reason why we should end the forestry license. Ms. Miller asked what it is about forestry that requires a license other than the education requirements. Mr. Stone responded that it boils down to the fiduciary responsibility. Mr. DeBaun asked about how long it might take a person to obtain a forestry license. Not including education or mandatory experience, a license may take six to nine months. The years of experience depend on the degree held. A Master's degree requires one year of experience, an undergraduate degree requires two years of experience, and an Associate degree requires three years of experience. There were no further questions.

Lisa Durden, Division Director of Professional Licensing Boards Division, Secretary of State's Office – gave a brief summary of the financial impact of the board. SOS oversees 40 licensing boards. The boards share resources to efficiently spread costs such as rent, call center, IT, utilities, etc. In 2018 the shared costs for the board was \$9,485.18, and the average costs per licensee was \$36.58. The board's revenue was not known at the time of the meeting. Ms. Durden said she would send the breakdown to the Council for their review. Mr. DeBaun asked for thoughts on a penalty structure for circumventing the licensing process. Ms. Durden said the structure has been discussed before with other groups. Forestry operates in a different title than most other boards. The boards are limited in what they can do in terms of penalties. The changing of penalty structure would require a change in law. Sen. Ginn asked how many cases were reported in the last five years. Ms. Durden said in the last two years, there were 15 allegations for unlicensed practice. Mr. Stone commented that the 15 investigators are shared among 40 licensing boards and their main constraint is the number of investigators. Increasing the number of investigators would help process complaints faster. Ms. Durden confirmed that their 15 investigators have multiple responsibilities and that there is a workload issue with the rising population. There were no further questions.

## **Closing Discussion**

### **1. Announcement of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 8, 2018, Capitol 450, at 10:30 a.m.

**Adjournment** No additional business was discussed and the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

**Minutes recorded by:** Meaghan Ryan, OPB