

**Georgia Occupational Regulation Review Council  
State Board of Registration for Foresters Meeting Minutes  
206 Washington St SW, Atlanta, GA 30334  
July 18, 2018 - 10:30 a.m.**

The Georgia Occupational Regulation Review Council Wednesday, July 18, 2018. The following members were present:

**Board Members Present**

Mr. Chris Wells, Chair, OPB  
Rep. Trey Rhodes, House of Representatives  
Ms. Pamela Woods, State Accounting Office  
Mr. Wes Robinson, Department of Natural Resources  
Mr. Ryan Germany, Secretary of State

**Administrative Staff Present**

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

**Board Members Absent**

Sen. Frank Ginn, Senate  
Mr. Perry Walden, Department of Agriculture  
Mr. Stephen DeBaun, Department of Revenue  
Ms. Kristin Miller, Department of Public Health

**GORRC Members' Staff**

Lisa Durden, Secretary of State

**Visitors Present**

James Johnson, Chairman, Georgia State Board of Registration for Foresters  
Gary White, Deputy Director, Georgia Forestry Commission  
Blake Sullivan, Sullivan Forestry Consultants

**Call to Order:** Mr. Wells established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

**OPEN SESSION**

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

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

**1. Introduction of Members, GORRC Process and Schedule**

**2. Overview of the State Board for the Certification of Foresters**

James Johnson, Chairman, Georgia State Board of Registration for Foresters. Mr. Johnson gave a presentation and overview on the Board of Foresters. The board was established in 1951 to protect the welfare of Georgians in a booming paper industry. Mr. Johnson said there are 15 total states that license foresters (7 in southeast), and Georgia is the number forestry state in the nation. The board is made of 6 members, 5 licensed foresters and one at-large member. The board oversees 946 active licenses. To obtain a license, you have to pass an exam and apply for the license. There are various education and supervision requirements a person has to meet in order to apply for a license. A college program has to be accredited by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) to meet the criteria for licensure. Continuing education requirements are in place for license renewal.

Mr. Johnson discussed the allowable activities under licensure. The Chair asked if there is a difference between an individual license and a company license to perform forester activities. Mr. Johnson replied that Georgia licenses individuals. If a company wanted to perform the activities reserved for foresters, they would need to have a licensed forester on staff. Ms. Woods asked for clarification on timber cruising. Mr. Johnson responded that it is a process used to estimate the volume and value of timber on a tract of land.

Mr. Johnson summarized the complaints the board receives and how they are handled. The Board works closely with the Secretary of State's Office to complete investigations. Once an investigation is finished, the Board will communicate their findings to the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) and other impacted boards such as the Real Estate Board. Mr. Germany asked what is handled by the Board and GFC. Gary White stated that GFC mainly handles timber theft allegations and do not have the staff to investigate administrative complaints. Mr. Germany asked about the breakdown of complaints the board receives. About half are unlicensed complaints, and the other half are conduct complaints. There are very few are criminal cases. Mr. White stated that very few of GFC's investigations involve foresters. Mr. Johnson concluded by saying that forest management is about sustainable management and licensed foresters help support this idea. There were no additional questions.

### **3. Open Public Comment**

Gary White, Deputy Director, Georgia Forestry Commission – provided the Council with additional handouts. He spoke on the economic impacts of forestry in the state. Georgia has more commercial timber land than any other state. A majority of these acres of timberland are owned by private land owners. In 2016, the total revenue generated by the industry was \$35.2B and supported 150K jobs. Mr. White stated that removing license requirements would be a move in the wrong direction. There were no additional questions.

Blake Sullivan, Sullivan Forestry Consultants, consulting forester and private land owner, gave some history to why foresters became licensed. Ultimately, the license was created to protect land owners. Mr. White stated that the need is no less today for licensure. Land is the biggest asset for land owners, and it takes institutional knowledge to efficiently manage and harvest timber. Mr. Sullivan spoke on the variety and difficulty of college courses taken by foresters. The loss of this institutional knowledge will have environmental, economic, and societal impacts. Mr. Sullivan gave an anecdote on how a landowner was approached to sell her timber for half of the estimated value. Mr. Sullivan was able to estimate the value, organize a sale, and sell her timber for over the estimated value. Mr. Germany asked if foresters are required to have insurance. Various attendees explained that liability coverage is standard practice, but not required. There were no additional questions.

Scott Griffin, Forest Management Chief, Georgia Forestry Commission spoke on the continuing education requirements and how they support protecting the land and wildlife. Georgia has a great system in place to approve continuing education to ensure foresters stay up to date. There were no additional questions.

### **Closing Discussion**

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

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, July 25, 2018, Capitol 450, at 10:30 a.m.

**Adjournment** No additional business was discussed and the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

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