

December 8, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Board of Natural Resources

FROM: Todd Holbrook, Deputy Commissioner

SUBJECT: Acquisition (purchase) of 9,595± acres of real property, Oaky Woods Wildlife Management Area (W.M.A.), Oaky Woods Properties, L.L.C. Tract, Houston County

**Comments**

The State of Georgia has been granted an option to purchase up to 9,595± acres of the subject property subject to a survey:

<u>Owner</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Price/Acre</u>	<u>Total</u>
Oaky Woods Properties, L.L.C.	9,595±	\$3,000.00	\$28,785,000.00

For your review, we are enclosing:

- (1) Summary Statement
- (2) General Location Map
- (3) Draft Resolution

We have presented all available information pertaining to this acquisition to the Chairman, Land Acquisition Committee, and to the member of the Board within whose district this project is located.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The Department seeks approval from the Board to acquire up to 9,595 acres of the 15,991 acres we have leased since 1966 as part of the Oaky Woods WMA. This is one of the most popular WMA we manage and is very popular for hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing and wildlife viewing.

Oaky Woods is the largest, most ecologically important unprotected tract of land in the central part of Georgia. It is located along the Ocmulgee River and contains extensive upland pine, forested wetlands, a blackland prairie and is the core habitat for the Central Georgia black bear population, the third largest in the state. This section of the Ocmulgee is very important for the State endangered robust redhorse and numerous mussels.

**Recommendation**

We recommend adoption of the attached Resolution.

TH:sf

Enclosures (3)

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

PROJECT: Oaky Woods Wildlife Management (WMA)

TRACT: Oaky Woods Properties, L.L.C.

LOCATION: Houston County

THIS ACQUISITION: 9,595± Acres

DNR PURCHASE PRICE: \$28,785,000.00

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

G.O. Bond #110	\$ 24,777,817.00
G.O. Bond #21	\$ 2,071,124.00
G.O. Bond #92	\$ 1,928,737.00
G.O. Bond #93	<u>\$ 7,322.00</u>
<b>Total Purchase Price</b>	<b>\$ 28,785,000.00</b>

HISTORY OF NEGOTIATION: Due to the importance of Oaky Woods and long history the Department has had in leasing it as a WMA, acquiring all or part of it was a high priority. The Department has been in discussions with the owners for years, but it was after State funding became available that the discussions intensified. Although we did not have enough funding to acquire the entire parcel, once an agreement was reached on a purchase boundary that would make for a sustainable WMA, the appraisals were begun in early October. A final option was signed on November 19, 2010.

NOMINATION: Wildlife Resources Division

KNOWN RIGHTS OUTSTANDING: The sellers will retain the right to cross the property in two places for a possible sewer line easement and the right to use the Loop Road to service the sewer lines.

VENDOR RESERVES: None

BENEFITS OF ACQUISITION: Oaky Woods WMA is located along the Ocmulgee River and represents the largest single block of undisturbed land in Houston County. Acquisition of this tract will permanently conserve up to 9,595 acres, and connect to 1,008 acres of protected land on this side of the river and an additional 9,500 acres within the Ocmulgee WMA located across the river. Collectively these two WMAs provide the public a great outdoor recreation experience.

This part of the State still has a viable black bear population, which this acquisition will help sustain. Big Grocery Creek is a beautiful part of the tract with high quality bluff and hardwood floodplains. Because of the location of Oaky Woods there are plants common to both the Piedmont and Coastal Plain physiographic provinces. This site also contains unusual natural communities known as "black belt prairies."

These prairies support cone flower, eastern gammagrass and other species associated with prairies. Widespread exclusion of fire and conversion to other uses has made eastern prairies some of our rarest natural communities.

RELATIONSHIP TO  
DNR's STRATEGIC PLAN:

This tract is a priority with the State Wildlife Action Plan and one of the top six priorities for the Department State wide.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS  
REPORT:

A Phase I report is being completed at this time.

FIVE YEAR OPERATIONAL  
COST:

The following operating budget for Oaky Woods Wildlife Management Area, Oaky Woods Properties Tract Phase I tract represents estimated cost for the proposed acquisition only.

FY 2011 - \$ 57,815  
 FY 2012 - \$149,340  
 FY 2013 - \$154,340  
 FY 2014 - \$139,340  
 FY 2015 - \$139,340

**Total 5-Year Operating Budget Estimate = \$ 640,175.00**

APPRAISALS SUMMARIES:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>APPRAISALS</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>PER ACRE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
10/18/10	Pritchett, Ball & Wise, Inc. (timber included)	10,215±	\$ 3,010.00	\$30,740,000.00
01/11/10	Sizemore & Sizemore, Inc. (timber included)	10,215±	\$ 2,405.78	\$24,575,000.00
<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIMBER APPRAISALS</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>PER ACRE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
10/29/10	Forest Resources Consultants, Inc.	10,215±	\$ 981.56	\$10,026,654.00
10/29/10	Sizemore & Sizemore, Inc.	10,215±	\$1,056.35	\$10,790,652.00
OPTION: November 19, 2010	Oaky Woods Properties, L.L.C.	9,595±	\$ 3,000.00	\$28,785,000.00

TERMINATION DATE: December 28, 2010

LATEST CLOSING DATE: December 31, 2010

COORDINATION: Wildlife Resources Division

**RESOLUTION**

RECOMMENDING ACQUISITION BY NEGOTIATED PURCHASE OF THE FOLLOWING NAMED PROPERTY, MORE PARTICULARLY IDENTIFIED ON THE ATTACHED EXHIBIT "A", FOR RECREATION AND RELATED PURPOSES.

RECREATION AND RELATED PURPOSES DEFINED

Recreation and related purposes as herein used includes recreational, historical, archaeological, fish and wildlife, and other related uses of land and water resources.

Property To Be Acquired:

<b><u>Project</u></b>	<b><u>Property Owner</u></b>
<b>Oaky Woods Wildlife Management Area</b>	<b>Oaky Woods Properties, L.L.C (9,595± acres, Houston County)</b>

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is responsible for the conservation and wise utilization of the State's natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' staff has studied the subject property and found its recreation and related values are indeed of statewide significance and are endangered by conflicting land uses and that the acquisition and appropriate development of this property would contribute greatly to meeting the recreation needs of the people of Georgia and thus recommends the preservation of the subject property through acquisition or other appropriate action; and

WHEREAS, funds for the acquisition of this site have been programmed and are currently available.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Georgia Board of Natural Resources concurs in the findings of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources staff and recommends that the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources seek the approval of the State Properties Commission to acquire by negotiated purchase and develop the subject property for recreation and/or related purposes generally in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and procedures.

Adopted this 8<sup>th</sup> day of December 2010.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Jenny Lynn Bradley, Chairman  
Georgia Board of Natural Resources

ATTEST:

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Warren C. Budd, Jr., Secretary