

DNR Commissioner off to new challenge

Williams to lead of Jekyll Island Authority

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After years of dedicated service and exemplary leadership, the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Mark Williams, has announced he is leaving the department to take on a new challenge, effective June 30. Williams leaves behind a remarkable legacy of conservation, environmental stewardship, and public service.

He will begin his new position as executive director of the Jekyll Island Authority on July 1.

During his tenure with DNR, which began in 2010, Williams has played a pivotal role in shaping the direction of the department, working tirelessly to protect and conserve the state's natural resources, promote outdoor recreational activities, and ensure the sustainability of Georgia's ecosystems.

Under Williams' leadership, DNR has made significant strides in the areas of land and water conservation, wildlife management, and environmental education. His balanced approach and commitment to collaboration have strengthened partnerships with various stakeholders, including other

government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local communities.

Throughout his career, Williams has championed numerous initiatives to protect and enhance Georgia's natural resources. He has actively promoted responsible hunting and fishing practices, implemented effective wildlife management strategies, and fostered the restoration and conservation of critical habitats. Williams' unwavering dedication has not only benefited the environment but has also contributed to the economic vitality and quality of life for the citizens of Georgia.

Beyond his accomplishments within DNR, Williams has also been a prominent voice in regional and national conservation efforts. He represented the 178th district in the Georgia House of Representatives for two terms from 2006 to 2010 and is a former high school teacher and football coach. He is a veteran of the Army National Guard. Born in Valdosta, Williams received a bachelor's degree in biology from Georgia College and State University. He is a member of Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Altamaha Wildlife Association, the Satilla Riverkeepers, the Flint Riverkeepers, the



File photo/CRD

DNR Commissioner Mark Williams holds a plaque presented to him by CRD during a going-away luncheon June 22 at Coastal Regional Headquarters.

Georgia Wildlife Federation and the Piedmont Park Conservancy.

Williams and his wife Pam have two daughters, Mary Katelyn and Miranda. He is a proud grandparent to Mary Katelyn and her husband Troy's two sets of twins.

DNR is grateful for Williams' outstanding service and profound impact on the state's environmental landscape. His tireless efforts have left an indelible mark on the conservation community and will serve as an inspiration for future leaders in the field.

Williams' successor will be named by the Governor's Office at a future date.

NEWS BRIEF

MARTA Board votes to donate retired railcars for reefs

The Board of Directors of MARTA, the Atlanta subway system, voted on June 8 to donate two retired subway cars to CRD to use at artificial reefs offshore.

The board approved a contract for a private company to clean the cars and remove grease, oil, and other chemicals to prepare them for

use as reef material. While MARTA has committed to two cars to begin with, it's possible that a total of eight could make their way to the coast.

Paul Medders, leader of the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Unit, said he's glad to accept the cars on behalf of CRD.

"These will make excellent additions to our offshore reefs, providing a substrate for natural reef growth," Medders said.

-STAFF REPORT



Provided photo/MARTA
MARTA cars, like the ones pictured here, are slated for donation to CRD to use at artificial reefs.