

1 **STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF**
 2 **CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
 3 **ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**
 4 **State Capitol Auditorium**
 5 **Montgomery, Alabama**
 6 **March 9, 2019**

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12 **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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17 Proceedings taken before Tracye
 18 Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter, ACCR
 19 No. 294, and Commissioner for the State of Alabama
 20 at Large, at the State of Alabama Capitol
 21 Auditorium, Montgomery, Alabama, on Saturday,
 22 March 9, 2019, commencing at approximately
 23 9:01 a.m.

1 BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

- 2 Mr. Joseph Dobbs, Jr., Chairman,
- 3 Commissioner Christopher M. Blankenship
- 4 Commissioner Rick Pate
- 5 Dr. Gary Lemme
- 6 Mr. Patrick Cagle
- 7 Mr. Jeff Martin
- 8 Mr. Raymond Jones, Jr.
- 9 Mr. Grady Hartzog
- 10 Mr. Ben C. Stimpson, Jr.
- 11 Mr. Gary Wolfe
- 12 Mr. Tim Wood
- 13 Mr. Greg Barksdale
- 14 Mr. Brock Jones

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16 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Welcome to everyone. Call
17 the meeting to order, the first
18 Conservation Advisory Board Meeting,
19 March 9th, 2019. I'm glad you all are
20 here today. Hello to our usual
21 attendees and welcome to the first-time
22 participants. Let's have a productive
23 meeting today with good dialogue.

If everyone would please stand with
me, we will have the presentation of the
colors by the Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources Honor Guard.

1 (Presentation of the colors.)

2 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much. Thank
3 you, Chief, very much. Well done. Very
4 well done.

5 I'm going to ask Gary Wolfe to give
6 our invocation today, but before he asks
7 for God's blessings and guidance, our
8 condolences to our Board member Mr. Greg
9 Barksdale. His mom lost a long battle
10 on Monday.

11 Peace to you and your family.

12 Let's take a moment, too, while
13 we're standing with bowed heads to
14 remember our fellow Alabamians from Lee
15 County and Beauregard who lost loved
16 ones and whose lives have been forever
17 altered.

18 (Moment of silence.)

19 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Gary, would you lead us in
20 prayer, please.

21 MR. WOLFE: Let us pray.

22 Our most gracious Heavenly Father,
23 thank you for this beautiful day. Thank

1 you for watching over us as we all come
2 from different places in this state to
3 come to this meeting today. Lord, we
4 pray that you watch over the people that
5 lost loved ones during hunting season
6 that were tragic accidents. We also
7 pray that you watch over the families
8 that have lost loved ones with this
9 tornado that came through Alabama. We
10 pray that you watch over this meeting
11 with the grace of God. And we
12 appreciate you giving us the opportunity
13 to hunt God's animals during hunting
14 season, and we pray that you watch over
15 each and every one of us as we go after
16 this meeting back to our designated
17 homes. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

18 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Thank you all for
19 your prayers and respect.

20 I'm going to ask Grady Hartzog,
21 please, to lead us in the Pledge of
22 Allegiance.

23 MR. HARTZOG: Everybody please stand.

1 (Pledge of Allegiance recited.)

2 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Grady.

3 The next item on our agenda is the
4 Sportsmen's Pledge. It's something that
5 rings true to what we all believe is the
6 purpose of forward-minded resource
7 management. Those that would like,
8 please recite the pledge along with the
9 Board.

10 I'm going to ask Mr. Tim Wood to
11 lead us today. You have a copy of it.
12 It should have been in your seat.

13 So, Mr. Wood, if you will lead us.

14 MR. WOOD: The Conservation Statement: Since
15 the state in its sovereign capacity
16 occupies the attitude of guardian and
17 custodian of the people's welfare, it is
18 therefore the duty of the state by
19 enactment of appropriate legislation to
20 endeavor to extend adequate protection
21 to those resources in which the people
22 have collectively a natural right. Wise
23 and discreet individuals who feel no

1 inclination to make assaults on nature's
2 storehouse should have their rights
3 protected by the enactment of strong
4 laws to restrain the hands of the wanton
5 and the reckless whose vandalism would
6 annihilate every visible thing of fin,
7 fur, or feather to gratify their savage
8 instincts. John H. Wallace, Jr.

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, everybody. Y'all
10 have a seat, please.

11 Mr. Secretary, do we have a quorum
12 today?

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir, we have a
14 quorum.

15 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

16 The minutes of the May 19th, 2018,
17 Board Meeting -- I know our Board has
18 read them. Are there any changes to the
19 minutes from the May 19, 2018, Board
20 Meeting?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: While there's no indication
23 of any changes, the Board Meeting

1 Minutes are noted and approved.

2 Thank you, Ms. Tracye. The Board
3 minutes were perused and checked by
4 Ms. Betsy Jones.

5 At this time I'm going to start at
6 the far end with Mr. Barksdale and I'm
7 going to ask each Board member to
8 introduce themselves, note their
9 congressional districts, and provide us
10 with a brief report of the goings-on in
11 their district.

12 Mr. Barksdale.

13 MR. BARKSDALE: Good morning. My name is Greg
14 Barksdale. I represent District 4. I
15 haven't had a lot of contact this year
16 so far with anything other than the CWD
17 issues, dog deer hunting, and some duck
18 hunting issues going on. Primarily it's
19 been pretty quiet so far.

20 MR. MARTIN: Jeff Martin, District 3. All in
21 all it's been a good year. Some of the
22 changes we made last year have been
23 going really well from both sides.

1 Fishing was going really good. And
2 I was telling Raymond I was in the
3 grocery store the other day and the guy
4 asked me if I wanted to flip flower
5 beds. For y'all that don't know that,
6 Logan Martin was flooded and he was
7 talking about going fishing in people's
8 gardens. All in all it was good until
9 the flood came.

10 MR. WOLFE: Gary Wolfe, District 1.

11 Everything down south has centered
12 around red snapper and reef building.
13 It's been a great effort for the reef
14 building, everything going on that's
15 happening in south Alabama. There's a
16 lot of positive feedback as to how the
17 current state-managed system is being
18 conducted. Kudos to Director Bannon,
19 Chief Anson, and their staff. Everyone
20 is looking forward to banner fishing
21 this year. It looks like everything's
22 going to be really great.

23 Our thanks, also, to Senator Shelby

1 and Congressman Byrne for their efforts
2 in Washington. They really helped us to
3 get everything done this year and get
4 some stuff done that the money -- get
5 that in place.

6 Everyone is reporting a good deer
7 season in terms of harvest. Not as many
8 were seen, but the weather was a
9 contributing factor. I think everybody
10 realizes the rain and everything we had
11 this year kind of slowed a lot of stuff
12 down.

13 Everyone I spoke to was slowly
14 seeing benefits of our accounting of the
15 deer harvest, Game Check, and most are
16 participating. We hope more and more
17 people will do that and do the Game
18 Check. It's really helped. It has
19 given us some true numbers on what we
20 really know instead of just grabbing
21 numbers out of the air like we've been
22 doing in the past.

23 There are still a few dim spots

1 where there are negative interactions
2 between the private land and specific
3 dog deer hunting clubs, particularly in
4 the northern part of Baldwin County.
5 We've just got some little pocket areas
6 that's happening in, and hopefully we'll
7 address that with the officers being
8 able to work that out in a positive way.

9 I'm looking forward to turkey season
10 despite the fellow turkey hunters not
11 seeing as many as we have in the past.
12 I don't know what's going on in our
13 little area of Marengo County, but I
14 know we're not seeing as many turkeys as
15 we have in the past. But hopefully that
16 will change and just hope that everybody
17 else has a great turkey season. I just
18 can't wait to get in the woods and hunt.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. WOOD: I'm Tim Wood representing
21 District 7. I'm from Selma. We kind of
22 represent, along with Brock Jones, the
23 west part of Alabama, the Black Belt.

1 The deer season was pretty mixed. I
2 visited a lot with the processors and
3 some of the lodges. December was
4 extremely slow. It was devastating in a
5 lot of areas. But January was
6 phenomenal, and it put a lot of pressure
7 on the processors as well as the guides.

8 You know, the lodges I spoke with
9 did a really good job of harvesting 15-,
10 16-inch deer for them. They're calling
11 that a trophy. For a lot of individual
12 private landowners it may not quite be
13 what most of us are looking for. But
14 overall it was a pretty good to average
15 year in deer hunting.

16 Turkey season is coming around, and
17 there's an awful lot of people
18 optimistic because we have seen a lot of
19 turkeys in the fall and also in the
20 winter.

21 Mr. Chairman, I'm a little surprised
22 we've got opening day of youth here and
23 we're in the inside.

1 about -- and, in addition, Appalachian
2 Refuge where it's a no hunting zone now,
3 that's been very positive. And all you
4 have to do is drive across the Bayway
5 now and you actually see ducks
6 everywhere because they use it a lot.

7 But with Gary giving a good, full
8 report, I'll pass it on.

9 MR. RAYMOND JONES: Raymond Jones,
10 Congressional District Number 5, which
11 is located in north Alabama.

12 We had a good year all in all. The
13 deer season has been reported as slow,
14 but I think that it rained every weekend
15 and was 70 degrees, so it did not help
16 with that situation very often.

17 Same thing with the ducks. Without
18 the lack of cold weather -- we have a
19 lot of high duck populations normally in
20 north Alabama, but we did not see that.
21 Refuge counts were down significantly,
22 and we just did not see the numbers of
23 ducks that we have.

1 We have seen excellent turkey
2 reproduction. This is the fourth year
3 in a row that we have seen record -- or
4 what I would call record hatches. So we
5 have a lot of gobblers running around in
6 our area located in the north.

7 But other than that, things went
8 well, Mr. Chairman.

9 MR. BROCK JONES: Brock Jones. I represent
10 with Tim Wood District 7, which is
11 basically the Black Belt. It's great to
12 have Tim on the Board representing
13 District 7. He's certainly a great
14 asset and very in touch with everybody
15 out of Selma.

16 Like Tim said, for the most part it
17 was a good season deerwise. It seems
18 like Greene County and Sumter County
19 were more negatively affected by
20 flooding and rain than the other
21 counties based on what the people I know
22 in those two counties are saying. But
23 overall it was an average year.

1 CWD, of course, has got everybody
2 concerned, but for the most part
3 everybody that I talked to is very
4 confident that the response plan that
5 the state has is proper and will do what
6 it takes to minimize the spread should
7 it come to Alabama.

8 Hogs continue to be a problem. It
9 seems to be that people are kind of
10 accepting them as part of the process.
11 And like Tim said, the hope is that
12 eventually we'll have something that
13 will eradicate.

14 A lot of positive comments about the
15 public lakes in our district. The
16 Monroe County Lake, 100 acres, in
17 Beatrice. The one in Sardis -- near
18 Sardis in Dallas County is -- a lot of
19 favorable things about that. I continue
20 to hear a lot of great things about the
21 Barnett Lawley Forever Wild Trial Area
22 which is at the old State Cattle Ranch
23 west of Greensboro. And then, of

1 course, the SOAs at Cedar Creek and
2 Portland Landing, as Chuck, I'm sure,
3 will probably talk about, those are in
4 high demand and have been a tremendous
5 asset for the state of Alabama.

6 That's all I've got. Thank you.

7 MR. HARTZOG: Morning, everybody. Grady
8 Hartzog, District 2, Eufaula, Alabama,
9 southeast Alabama.

10 I also, like Tim, went to the
11 processors around the area. The
12 processors all felt like we had an
13 increased deer harvest in our area. As
14 y'all know, Barbour County is the only
15 county that has the three-point rule,
16 and most everybody still seems to love
17 that. The processors told me that they
18 were beginning to see more and more deer
19 in the 150, 160, 170 class range coming
20 in because of that and heavier deer
21 also. So it looks good.

22 Turkeys is kind of mixed. You talk
23 to one landowner and I got more turkeys

1 and you talk to another landowner and
2 you got less turkeys. So we'll just see
3 how that shakes out.

4 This morning the State Parks guys
5 ought to be feeling good because at the
6 state park boat landing you could not
7 put another boat in there this morning
8 at 5:00 for the bass tournament. So
9 those are going well. And I generally
10 when I go into restaurants and a bunch
11 of bass fishermen are in there -- I
12 always talk to them, and they've been a
13 little slow mainly because of high water
14 and the changing water depths and all.

15 The one bad -- one good thing for
16 the lake but bad thing for Eufaula is
17 about half of the airplanes in the
18 hangar from Eufaula is in the lake
19 adding additional fish structure to Lake
20 Eufaula from the tornado that we had.
21 We were south of the area where people
22 got killed, but it totally tore up our
23 airport and fire station and industrial

1 park across the street. So there's a
2 lot of metal structure and a lot of
3 airplane parts sitting in the lake now
4 adding additional fish structure. So
5 maybe we'll have some new fish
6 structures that everybody can go put
7 their GPS on.

8 But other than that, no real
9 complaints. I did have, it seemed like,
10 toward the end of the season a lot more
11 complaints from Coffee County with dog
12 deer hunting. And so that continues to
13 be an issue, and maybe we will be able
14 to address that issue this year.

15 Gary. Thank you.

16 DR. LEMME: Good morning. Gary Lemme, Alabama
17 Cooperative Extension System.

18 The Extension System put out a new
19 publication for the general public
20 explaining the science behind the CWD.
21 It's available on the "ACES.edu"
22 website. And in addition to that,
23 there's several spring hog management

1 workshops going on across the state.

2 COMMISSIONER PATE: Good morning. I'm Rick
3 Pate. I'm the new Commissioner of Ag
4 and Industries. I soon realized when I
5 got in this race that one of my
6 responsibilities as the new Ag
7 Commissioner was going to be to serve on
8 this Board, and I've been fortunate to
9 talk to many of y'all as I've traveled
10 the state over the last year.

11 I'm actually from Lowndes County,
12 which is in the 7th Congressional
13 District. I have to say anecdotally I
14 had a good hunting season. I didn't
15 know I was supposed to ask other people
16 that.

17 We have a tremendous problem with
18 beavers. I set, I think, 19 beaver
19 traps this week, and I'd be checking
20 them this morning if I wasn't here.

21 MR. CAGLE: Patrick Cagle. I serve
22 District 2, the same as Mr. Hartzog. I
23 live here in Montgomery which gives me

1 unique opportunity. I get to see a lot
2 of folks in the Department often and
3 interact with them, and I think they
4 deserve a lot of praise.

5 You know, during my time on this
6 Board we've had a great department, and
7 each year they get a little better.
8 They're really focused on the future.
9 The Department is working on things that
10 are going to really pay dividends. My
11 two-year-old son is going to benefit
12 from some of the mentored hunts and the
13 programs that this department is doing.
14 So I think they deserve a lot of praise.

15 As far as the district, you know, I
16 was getting little calls. I think we
17 all do. You all know those issues.
18 This year what stands out is CWD. It's
19 on everyone's mind. I tried to learn
20 what I can. Don't have the -- I'm not a
21 biologist, so will never know as much,
22 but work with stakeholders from my
23 district and around the state and just,

1 you know, hear concerns and try to
2 address those where we can and just
3 understand -- help folks understand why.

4 I think Director Sykes and Chairman
5 Dobbs deserve a lot of praise. At this
6 meeting last year they recommended that
7 we prevent the import of, you know, deer
8 parts unless it's deboned meat from all
9 states, including those where CWD had
10 not been found. Well, as we sit here
11 today -- at that meeting Tennessee --
12 CWD had never been found there. A
13 border state. A lot of deer probably
14 came across. You know, we sit here
15 today and there's over 170 cases of CWD
16 found in Tennessee. That was very
17 forward thinking, and I appreciate that.
18 I think you deserve a lot of credit for
19 that forward thinking that's proven
20 right.

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, all.

22 I'm Chris Blankenship, the Commissioner
23 of Department of Conservation. I just

1 have a few comments, and then Mr. Fred
2 Harders, our Assistant Director of
3 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries,
4 is going to give some information about
5 CWD. There's a lot of misinformation
6 around the state. So we figured while
7 we have everybody in one place here for
8 the meeting, we'll take a few minutes
9 and just let Fred share some of the
10 scientific research and information
11 concerning CWD.

12 I want to welcome Commissioner Pate
13 to the Conservation Advisory Board.
14 Commissioner McMillan sat there for
15 eight years and did a great job. He was
16 a great asset to the Board. And most of
17 the time you don't have to ask people
18 how their hunting season was. They'll
19 just tell you.

20 And so I appreciate your willingness
21 to serve as our Commissioner of
22 Agriculture and for your work you're
23 going to do here with us and the

1 Conservation Advisory Board. We work
2 very closely in the -- the Department of
3 Conservation and Department of Ag and
4 Industries work very closely together
5 and look forward to working with you for
6 the next several years.

7 You know, we really are blessed to
8 live in a wonderful state, but we live
9 in the -- this year we live in the
10 wettest state in the union, which
11 usually means really good things. It
12 means we have plenty of grass and trees
13 and acorns and all the stuff we need.
14 This year it just means we had a lot of
15 water. I think that affected a lot of
16 people's hunting season this year
17 because of some of the flooding.

18 But we really are blessed to live in
19 a great state that has deer and turkey
20 and freshwater fish, saltwater fish, and
21 we really have a sportsmen's paradise
22 here. And I'm honored to be the
23 Commissioner of the Department.

1 We've done a lot of work this year
2 dealing with CWD and having -- getting
3 all this -- trying to keep it out of our
4 state and then being able to mitigate it
5 or contain it if we do happen to have
6 the unfortunate circumstance where it
7 does show up here. It has been -- the
8 work that our staff has done has
9 magnified over the last two years with
10 it being found in Mississippi last year
11 and then in Tennessee this year. You
12 know, it's right here on the doorstep.
13 So it's extremely important for us to do
14 everything we can to keep that out of
15 our state. And you'll hear a little bit
16 about CWD, like I said, from
17 Mr. Harders.

18 I do want to praise our staff. You
19 know, we are blessed to have four of the
20 best division directors anywhere in the
21 country. We have Patti McCurdy who is
22 our State Lands Director; Greg Lein, our
23 State Parks Director; Scott Bannon, our

1 Marine Resources Director; and Chuck
2 Sykes, our Wildlife and Freshwater
3 Fisheries Director. And they do a very
4 good job in each of their divisions of
5 making sure that we stay on top of what
6 we need to do in the state and to try
7 and provide ample opportunities for
8 recreational activities throughout the
9 state. And I just want to thank them
10 for their -- publicly thank them for all
11 of their work that goes on throughout
12 the year. You only get to see them
13 sometimes twice a year at our Advisory
14 Board Meetings, but they are working
15 diligently 365 days a year to keep
16 recreational opportunities abounding for
17 us.

18 And so while I'm introducing staff,
19 I do want to introduce our new general
20 counsel for the Department of
21 Conservation, Charlanna Skaggs.

22 If you'll just wave, Charlanna. We
23 don't actually start paying her until

1 Monday, and so she's here for free
2 today. Appreciate you being here.

3 Some of you may be hearing from her
4 or seeing her, so I wanted you to know
5 she's our new general counsel that
6 starts to work on Monday.

7 We did have some problems this year
8 with our "Outdoor Alabama" app. I
9 apologize, while I've got the group
10 here, and tell you I'm sorry for any
11 people that tried to report and it kept
12 turning and wouldn't -- wouldn't load.
13 If you were in an area with poor cell
14 service and had some problems with it,
15 we have worked with our developer, the
16 company that handles that for us. We --
17 they assure us it is fixed now.

18 And I apologize for any problems you
19 had during the season. We worked on
20 that with them all through the season.
21 They found some small problem in the
22 coding that caused all the issues, and
23 it wouldn't show up until you were in an

1 area with poor cell service. And it
2 seemed to only show up on a Saturday or
3 a Sunday when people weren't in the --
4 we had to get the company out to try and
5 fix it.

6 So during turkey season this year
7 and for Snapper Check season it should
8 work flawlessly. If not, we'll be
9 finding a new company to handle our
10 "Outdoor Alabama" app from now on. I'll
11 just give you that as my word. We want
12 that to work. Appreciate y'all
13 participating in reporting the deer.
14 We'll appreciate you reporting your
15 turkey harvest this year as required by
16 the law, but it really gives us
17 incredible amounts of information
18 throughout the state to help us to make
19 management decisions.

20 And, you know, you mentioned about
21 the duck hunting. Our staff has done a
22 remarkable job over the last few years
23 really increasing the work that we're

1 doing towards duck habitat and duck
2 habitat management and creation of duck
3 habitat and partnering with Ducks
4 Unlimited, trying to partner with Delta
5 Waterfowl, a new partner in our state,
6 and then just working with a renewed
7 interest in providing duck hunting
8 opportunities throughout our state. And
9 so you'll see a little bit more of that
10 over the next few years.

11 And as I'm talking about partners,
12 we do have a great opportunity in the
13 Department of Conservation to work with
14 many organizations that care about the
15 outdoors. They care about habitat.
16 They care about the species. And when I
17 say partner with them, that means to me
18 not just that they bring money, but a
19 big part of it is they bring money.
20 They don't just talk about things that
21 they want to do or that we ought to be
22 doing as a department. But they work
23 with us with some ideas, with -- using

1 some of their staff, and then they also
2 provide funding for certain projects
3 that we can use and match that with
4 federal dollars and bring more money
5 into the state for us to be able to do
6 some good work. Those partners include
7 Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild
8 Turkey Federation, the Coastal
9 Conservation Association, Alabama
10 Wildlife Federation, the Alabama Coastal
11 Fishermen's Association. And then we
12 are now trying to create some new
13 partnerships with Delta Waterfowl and
14 the National Wildlife Federation to do
15 some good things in our state.

16 Among others. I hate when you name
17 names. You'll leave somebody out. If I
18 left your organization out, I apologize.
19 But those are just the ones that came to
20 mind as good organizations that partner
21 with us throughout the year.

22 If you are not getting
23 information -- if you're not signed up

1 to receive our "GovDelivery"
2 distribution, that is the newsletter
3 that comes out from the Department with
4 hunting news, fishing news, any press
5 releases we send out. If you want to
6 stay informed throughout the year, I
7 encourage you to go to the
8 "OutdoorAlabama.com" website and click
9 on "newsletters" to sign up for our
10 "GovDelivery" information.

11 There's a whole bunch of categories
12 on there. If you don't want to get
13 everything the Department sends out,
14 then you just click -- if you want to
15 get everything, you can just click one
16 box and you get everything we send. If
17 you only want hunting news or you only
18 want fishing news or you only want
19 something that deals with saltwater
20 fishing, you can just check those boxes
21 and anything we send out about that
22 they'll email to you or text it to you.
23 So I encourage you to do that just to

1 stay on top of what's happening in the
2 Department throughout the year. I think
3 that will help keep everybody informed.

4 And with that, Mr. Chairman, I'd
5 like to give Mr. Harders the
6 opportunity, if you don't mind, to give
7 a little information about CWD.

8 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I think that's perfect.

9 Mr. Fred, when you're ready.

10 (Brief interruption wherein Board
11 members move.)

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Harders is an expert on
13 many subjects, and this is one. This is
14 very important.

15 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: No, I'm not an
16 expert.

17 CWD, chronic wasting disease. If
18 you're a deer hunter, you may have heard
19 about it. Some of you may have even
20 attended some of the seminars that
21 Director Sykes did around the state.

22 The first thing I want to make --
23 point I want to make is Alabama does not

1 have CWD. Contrary to what you might
2 have read, heard from a buddy, pal,
3 whatever, we do not have chronic wasting
4 disease. The Division of Wildlife and
5 Freshwater Fisheries in conjunction with
6 the Department of Agriculture and
7 Industries started sampling deer in
8 2002. 8,000 deer have been sampled from
9 around the state. We have not found
10 CWD.

11 Now, since Mississippi and Tennessee
12 have detected chronic wasting disease,
13 the division is intensifying its
14 sampling effort. 1500 deer a year will
15 be sampled with an emphasis around those
16 areas of Mississippi and Tennessee.

17 Now, you may have heard, you may
18 have seen on YouTube, you may have read
19 on a deer forum, you may have heard from
20 a friend that a Pennsylvania sportsmen's
21 group made an announcement that the real
22 cause of CWD was discovered by a
23 researcher from LSU. They also

1 announced that in a year from now there
2 will be a test kit available to hunters
3 where you can instantly test your deer
4 to see if it has CWD. Also, two years
5 from now they say there's going to be a
6 vaccination -- a vaccine for captive
7 deer and in three years one for deer in
8 the wild. That sounds good, but the
9 vast majority of scientists and
10 researchers that have been working on
11 this disease and are still working on
12 the disease don't accept that theory.

13 The theory that's coming from the
14 researcher at LSU is that CWD is caused
15 by a bacterium, *Spiroplasma mirum*.
16 That's not accepted by the majority of
17 scientists. I'll talk about what they
18 believe in a minute.

19 What is CWD? It's a fatal
20 neurological disease that affects deer
21 and members of the deer family,
22 whitetail, mule deer, elk, reindeer,
23 moose. It was first discovered or found

1 in Colorado back in 1967. Nobody is
2 sure how or why. There's speculation as
3 to it, but nobody can say for sure how
4 it started there or why.

5 About 30 years later you can see how
6 it spread in that area. But, also, if
7 you notice, look up north in Canada and
8 Saskatchewan. There's one dot up there.
9 How in the world? How did it pop up
10 there?

11 That was an elk farm, and that elk
12 farm had purchased elk from a farm in
13 South Dakota. Watch the map.

14 2008, you can see how the area in
15 Colorado has spread, also Canada.
16 Popped up in Wisconsin, Illinois. It's
17 starting to spread. 2016, it's
18 continuing to spread.

19 Current distribution, 26 states,
20 three Canadian provinces. What's not
21 shown on here is South Korea and Norway.
22 They both have it. The third Canadian
23 province -- look over here. One area

1 popped up.

2 CWD is classified as a TSE disease.
3 That stands for transmissible spongiform
4 encephalopathy. What does that mean?

5 Transmissible means it's infectious.
6 It can be passed on to other
7 individuals. The spongiform --
8 spongiform encephalopathy means that the
9 infected individual's brain develops
10 lesions like holes similar to a sponge.

11 Which one of these deer do you see
12 here has chronic wasting disease and is
13 infectious?

14 The answer, both of them. Deer can
15 be infected and infectious and not show
16 any clinical signs for two years or
17 more.

18 Now, the disease is spread through
19 body fluids -- saliva, urine, feces --
20 and it can survive outside of the deer's
21 body. So these deer are spreading that
22 infectious agent. Soil absorbs it. It
23 can be in water. It can be on plants.

1 It can be in plants. Plants absorb it
2 through its root system and spread out
3 through the plant. So an uninfected
4 deer can eat a plant or drink the water
5 or eat the soil and they're infected and
6 the disease spreads. So what causes
7 this disease?

8 The current majority of scientists
9 and researchers say it's not a
10 bacterium. It's not a virus. It's not
11 alive. You can't kill it. You can't
12 cook the meat enough to destroy it.
13 What is it?

14 You may have heard the word "prion."
15 This is what causes chronic wasting
16 disease and other TSE diseases. So what
17 is it if it's not a bacterium, it's not
18 a virus? What is it?

19 An infectious prion is a misfolded
20 protein. What? A misfolded protein?
21 What's that?

22 Just to give you a little idea --
23 and stick with me, now -- what proteins

1 do, proteins are the molecular machines
2 of our body. They do most everything.
3 You see some different functions that
4 proteins serve. When you're out hunting
5 and you see that deer, that light --
6 that image is absorbed by protein
7 receptors in your eye transferred to
8 your brain. When you shoot that deer,
9 your finger is powered by muscle
10 proteins. When you cook that venison
11 with the onions and the spices, that
12 nice aroma that you smell is absorbed by
13 protein receptors in your nose
14 transferred to your brain. When you eat
15 that deer, that taste, yep, protein
16 receptors in your tongue transferred to
17 your brain. When you digest that
18 venison, yep, proteins, protein enzymes.
19 Proteins are us. They do everything in
20 your body basically.

21 Now, here's where we're going to get
22 a little deep, but stick with me. What
23 is a protein?

1 A protein -- they're made in your
2 cells. As we're standing here, sitting
3 here, proteins are being made constantly
4 in the cells of your body. If you think
5 of a protein as a string of beads, those
6 beads are the building blocks of those
7 proteins. The building blocks of
8 proteins are amino acids. There are 20
9 amino acids that our bodies use to make
10 proteins, various combinations and
11 various numbers.

12 To give you an idea of the diversity
13 of the proteins in our body, the
14 shortest one is 44 amino acids. That's
15 44 building blocks, 44 beads. The
16 longest one -- and this, again, is in
17 the cells of our body -- over 34,000
18 amino acids.

19 So once the amino acids, the
20 building blocks, are put together to
21 form this string of beads, there's
22 atomic forces in those amino acids that
23 want to attract and repel each other

1 that causes that string of beads to
2 fold. So the amino acid makeup, the
3 building block makeup, and the way that
4 protein folds dictates what the function
5 is going to be.

6 Now, when those proteins fold into a
7 three-dimensional complex structure,
8 they're held together by bonds. This is
9 the deepest I'm going to get. Stick
10 with me.

11 There are two types of bonds, alpha
12 bonds and beta bonds. The alpha bonds
13 are a helical bond, not hard to break.
14 Beta bonds are sheath-like. They're
15 hard to break. So, now, what about this
16 prion deal?

17 This represents a normal and an
18 infectious prion. A normal prion --
19 yes, we have prions in our body.
20 Scientists are still trying to determine
21 all the functions that they perform, but
22 they found out that it had to do with
23 the neurological system, the myelin

1 sheath, the cover of our nerves.

2 They're also involved in memory. Also
3 involved in a circadian clock, if you've
4 heard about that, that our body has.
5 They're still discovering what they do.

6 A normal prion, PrPC on the left,
7 has a majority of alpha bonds. They're
8 breakable. The infectious prion,
9 PrP Sc, has a majority of beta bonds.
10 Those beta bonds form an impermeable
11 sheath that resists destruction. That's
12 why this thing is so hard to get rid of,
13 hard to destroy.

14 Okay. So what happens? When a deer
15 picks up an infectious prion -- prions
16 end up going all through their body, but
17 the majority are found in the brain and
18 spinal cord. When that infectious prion
19 meets a normal prion, it causes the
20 normal prion to misfold and become
21 infectious. That just keeps going on,
22 keeps going on. It kills cells in the
23 brain, forms lesions, spongiform.

1 That's where that comes from.

2 So you may have heard that the
3 Center for Disease Control doesn't
4 recommend you eating venison or elk,
5 whatever, contaminated by CWD. But wait
6 a minute. If these prions are all over
7 the place shed from deer and the disease
8 has been there since the '60s, the '70s,
9 people have been eating that stuff,
10 venison, elk. You may know of somebody
11 that goes out west that says, yeah, I've
12 been doing that for -- I'm not sick.
13 That's kind of confusing. How come
14 that's -- how come it hasn't caused a
15 problem?

16 A study was done to look at people
17 that did eat and consume venison, elk
18 that were probably contaminated and
19 those that didn't and compared the
20 disease rate to see if those people came
21 down with a TSE, a fatal disease. There
22 was no difference. Kind of doesn't make
23 sense. So what's the big deal?

1 There's a transmission barrier, a
2 species barrier between the infectious
3 deer protein and our normal protein.
4 And what this paper is telling us is
5 that the difference in the
6 building-block makeup of the deer prion
7 and our prion is the blockage, the
8 building -- the barrier -- the
9 transmission barrier. So what's the
10 problem? We're home free; right?

11 Uh-oh. Sometimes barriers are
12 broken.

13 You may have remembered or you might
14 have heard of mad cow disease. Mad cow
15 disease is a TSE. That infectious cow
16 prion was consumed by humans which
17 became infected. They came down with
18 something called variant
19 Creutzfeldt-Jakob prion disease, and it
20 was fatal -- not everybody, but some
21 did. That's why the Center for Disease
22 Control is saying, you know, I don't
23 recommend you eat that and, by the way,

1 be careful when you're gutting that deer
2 or handling any parts.

3 So that's why we're very concerned
4 about chronic wasting disease. That's
5 why there are regulations that ban the
6 importation of live deer. That's why
7 there are regulations to prohibit
8 field-dressed deer from coming back in
9 the state. Even if you go across the
10 line in any -- in Mississippi,
11 Tennessee, Georgia, Florida -- I'm just
12 going a couple of miles. Nope. That's
13 why we've had officers monitoring
14 highways and giving tickets to people
15 that were bringing field-dressed deer
16 in. And when the officer said didn't
17 you know about this -- yeah, but I
18 didn't think it was such a big deal.

19 Now you know why it's a big deal.
20 There's no vaccine. There's no cure.
21 Once the state gets it, you don't get
22 rid of it. It seems like it expands.
23 That's why we're so concerned. So let

1 folks know this is a pretty important
2 issue. That's why -- don't bring it
3 home. We don't want it. We don't have
4 it.

5 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Fred. Any
6 questions for Mr. Fred?

7 (Brief interruption wherein Board
8 members move.)

9 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: One thing I'd
10 like to mention. If you do hunt out
11 west, if you do hunt in the states that
12 do have CWD -- and you may have heard of
13 this -- you get your deer tested. When
14 it's properly processed, brought home,
15 in two weeks or so you might get a
16 letter from the Wyoming Game and Fish
17 saying we're sorry to inform you, but
18 your deer has CWD. So what do you do
19 with that meat?

20 Don't dispose of it. Call us.
21 We'll dispose of it properly. Because
22 if you throw that out, you're spreading
23 prions.

1 But, yes, if you're hunting in any
2 areas -- Mississippi, Tennessee -- have
3 those deer checked. If you hunt in
4 those states, they'll tell you how to do
5 it.

6 MR. BROCK JONES: Fred, I've got a question.

7 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: Sure.

8 MR. BROCK JONES: Do you think there's a
9 connection with the CWD in South Korea
10 and the CWD in North America?

11 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: Yes. There were
12 animals that were sent from here over
13 there just like the first Canadian
14 outbreak that elk came from South
15 Dakota. The movement of animals is a
16 problem. That's why we have the ban on
17 importation of live deer. Sorry about
18 your reindeer for Christmas, but don't
19 bring them here.

20 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Do you have questions?

21 Mr. Hartzog.

22 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Fred, I remember in earlier
23 presentations it was more or less

1 implied that -- and I may not use the
2 correct terminology -- but the
3 incubation was like you didn't see it
4 until you saw like a two-year-old deer
5 or whatever. But it's my understanding
6 now in some of the Tennessee deer that's
7 being tested that age limitation -- what
8 was thought was an age limitation has
9 proven to be wrong.

10 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: Well, it can be
11 up to two years and not show any
12 clinical signs, but fawns -- you don't
13 want to test fawns. You need to get
14 older deer. So, yes, there is -- there
15 is a time at which you want to test the
16 deer to see if they have CWD.

17 MR. WOOD: Have there been any cases of any
18 spread of CWD through scent or either
19 through semen, or has there been any
20 documented cases of that?

21 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: Who knows.

22 MR. WOOD: Has the semen ever been tested to
23 see if it carries --

1 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: Well, the
2 semen -- the best way to answer that is,
3 is there's a similar disease called
4 scrapie from sheep, and the sheep
5 industry -- this happened way before
6 CWD. And the sheep industry went, whoa,
7 wait a minute, you know, we're doing all
8 of the AI and we've got to find out if
9 there's a problem. And so far it's not
10 as big a problem with semen.

11 DR. LEMME: Mr. Chairman?

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Dr. Lemme.

13 DR. LEMME: I'd ask Mr. Fred if he could rank
14 in the order of risk how CWD could come
15 into Alabama.

16 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: Live importation,
17 number one. Carcass, number two. What
18 other ways?

19 DR. LEMME: Body fluids and things like that?

20 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: Right. That
21 would be down there. I don't want to go
22 into like crows and birds and stuff like
23 that. There are studies that

1 have looked at when a deer dies, what
2 consumes that deer, what happens to
3 prions -- that's been studied. One of
4 the big concerns is Golden Eagles.
5 Golden Eagles eat deer, dead deer, so
6 that's a concern. There's a lot of
7 unknowns that's still being studied
8 about this.

9 DR. LEMME: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

11 MR. HARTZOG: I just want to make one comment.

12 Every time I've ever had any questions
13 Mr. Fred has been the guru on knowing
14 about it. And I want to commend
15 Mr. Fred and Chuck in allowing Mr. Fred
16 to learn as much as he can because that
17 resource will be definitely needed in
18 the case we ever get it into the state.
19 So thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I have one additional
21 question.

22 Would there be benefit to us and to
23 the Department -- there are studies

1 about the importation of fluids,
2 anything. There's a study in Texas.
3 The USDA has a study. Alfa has a study.
4 Do we have the results of those studies?
5 Are they preliminary? Are we going to
6 get those? Can we get those?

7 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: I'm sure we can
8 get them, but I don't know what stage
9 they're in to be honest with you.

10 DIRECTOR SYKES: There are quite a few studies
11 going on right now looking at the semen
12 industry, looking at the urine industry
13 as Dr. Lemme was alluding to. All of
14 the scientific information right now is
15 showing live deer and dead deer way
16 above everything else. If it comes to
17 Alabama, more than likely that's where
18 it would come from. Then followed
19 closely behind would be semen and urine.
20 Because you don't have to be a scientist
21 to understand if it's transmitted
22 through bodily fluid, that's a bodily
23 fluid.

1 So there are studies looking at that
2 right now, but as Fred said, it's a lot
3 more -- it's an older disease in the
4 cattle industry and in the sheep
5 industry, so they're leaps and bounds
6 ahead right now. There is a risk. It's
7 a smaller risk, but it is still a risk
8 to bring it in that way.

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Are other states mitigating
10 that risk in ways, states that have it
11 and states that don't?

12 DIRECTOR SYKES: There are. There's quite a
13 few states that have already outlawed
14 the importation or made illegal the
15 importation of those products. So,
16 yeah, it's -- in the AFWA BMPs -- the
17 Association of Fish and Wildlife
18 Agencies -- their management practices
19 to prevent introduction of CWD or
20 mitigate the risk, that's one of the
21 things that they note is to remove all
22 doubt you need to stop importing urine,
23 semen, live deer, or dead deer.

1 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: So we're doing a pretty good
2 job so far?

3 DIRECTOR SYKES: Yes, absolutely.

4 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Commissioner.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Well, I just wanted
6 to thank Fred for the presentation. If
7 you didn't know, Fred used to be a
8 schoolteacher before he came to work for
9 us quite a few years ago. So I think he
10 was back in his element being able to
11 talk about prions and proteins. But I
12 do appreciate that.

13 We're not trying to scare anybody or
14 to unduly concern people about consuming
15 deer or hunting deer. We just wanted to
16 provide the information as to why
17 this -- that we feel like that it's so
18 important to keep that out of our state
19 and why we feel like that if we can keep
20 it out of Alabama that's good for us,
21 that's good for the wildlife, and good
22 for you. And if it so happens to come
23 here, we need to be able to contain it

1 as best we can and to keep it from
2 spreading.

3 And so I think it was very good for
4 Fred to maybe go a little bit further
5 into some of the science than you might
6 have been expecting today, but I think
7 it just shows the depth of research
8 that's being done and why we take it so
9 important here in Alabama.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. I'm not sure, but
12 I'm going to ask this. And I want to
13 say thank you to the Board. Those are
14 the best district reports we've ever
15 had. That was very well done and well
16 thought out. Thank you.

17 These are the gentlemen that in your
18 districts if you have questions or
19 ideas, please call them. They're on top
20 of this. They're working at it all the
21 time. We're all talking and trying to
22 work through the problems and
23 communicating. So we will communicate

1 with you. Thank you.

2 So our Directors' reports, we're
3 really not going to have any.

4 Director McCurdy, do you have
5 anything, State Lands?

6 DIRECTOR McCURDY: I don't unless there's a
7 question or something from a Board
8 member.

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions from the Board
10 for Ms. McCurdy?

11 I'm sorry. Grady.

12 DIRECTOR McCURDY: I shouldn't have asked.

13 MR. HARTZOG: You shouldn't have asked.

14 What have we got in the works in
15 adding any additional WMAs? Have we got
16 any projects that we're in kind of the
17 final stages on?

18 DIRECTOR McCURDY: I think you mean in the
19 Forever Wild Land Trust area.

20 MR. HARTZOG: Correct.

21 DIRECTOR McCURDY: Yes. I mean, we're always
22 working toward that. We've had several
23 good nominations, a lot of short-listed

1 properties that are available to the
2 Board. And so I will let -- you know,
3 Chuck could speak more to how -- the
4 particular spots that they would intend
5 to manage. But we've had a lot of good
6 opportunities. We have a lot of
7 nominations. Only 15 percent of our
8 nominations actually make it through to
9 actual acquisition. So you can imagine
10 the ones that do are the top-level
11 opportunities.

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions for
13 Director McCurdy?

14 Director Lein, any thoughts or ideas
15 from you?

16 And let me say that the lodge in
17 Gulf Shores is over the top. It's
18 fabulous. Thank you. We're going to
19 grace you with our presence, if you'll
20 have us, at our next meeting. So we're
21 going to start making reservations.

22 DIRECTOR LEIN: Good morning. We very much
23 look forward to hosting the Board at the

1 new lodge and conference center at Gulf
2 State Park. I'm old enough to remember
3 the last time the Advisory Board had a
4 meeting there. It was in the old lodge,
5 and it was in its final stage of serving
6 the public and was taken out by one of
7 the tropical events. We don't use the
8 "H" word in the Parks system, but you
9 know what I'm talking about.

10 But we've gone 14 years without a
11 lodge at that park, and a lot of work
12 went into all the steps to create that
13 new facility. Patti was very much
14 involved with that. It's one of the
15 positive things that came out of the BP
16 oil spill that devastated our coastal
17 communities years ago. But we look
18 forward to hosting the Board there.

19 Right now our staff are working very
20 hard to be prepared to host the spring
21 breakers in all of our parks, and for us
22 that's almost a two-month occurrence.
23 They start arriving in March and that

1 goes on through April and then we have a
2 lull and then the summer breakers hit
3 us. So we're going to be hosting the
4 Board in May in between those windows of
5 peak activity, and we look forward to
6 doing that. I won't ask you if you have
7 any questions.

8 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much. Any
9 questions for Director Lein?

10 (No response.)

11 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. Director Sykes,
12 Mr. Fred Harders, Assistant Director,
13 took your time.

14 DIRECTOR SYKES: I'm good.

15 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Director Bannon?

16 DIRECTOR BANNON: I just have a quick couple
17 of notes on some updates. I'll move
18 over here to make sure everybody can
19 hear me.

20 Everybody can hear me without the
21 microphone? Are you good?

22 The 2018 red snapper season, just a
23 quick update on that from last year. It

1 was scheduled to potentially be 47 days.
2 We were fishing to 984,291 pounds. We
3 reached 986,000 pounds in 27 days -- or
4 28 days. So we had a shortened season.
5 Some people look at that as that is not
6 a success. We look at it, it is a
7 success because the state management was
8 trying to show that we can manage it to
9 a much better standard, that when we get
10 to the level that it needs to be closed,
11 we close it without overfishing so we're
12 not penalizing ourselves in the future.

13 So based on those numbers from last
14 year, with about a 40-percent reporting
15 rate on Snapper Check, we're going to
16 do -- the 2019 season is going to be 27
17 days, June 1st through July 28th,
18 including the 4th of July. So it's long
19 weekends again, Friday, Saturday,
20 Sunday, and we're going to include
21 Thursday, which is the 4th of July.

22 The first weekend is a short
23 weekend. June 1st is a Saturday. Our

1 federal for-hire charter boats will
2 start June 1st, and they have a 62-day
3 season this year. They're still under
4 federal management. It's a different
5 system. And they run straight through.
6 So if any of you are coming down to go
7 fishing, you can fish Monday through
8 Friday as well with the federal for-hire
9 charters. The state-licensed -- excuse
10 me. The state private angler is only
11 Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

12 But we did get a little bump in
13 quota. So we're at about a million
14 pounds. And in April at the Gulf
15 Council meeting we hope to vote for a
16 full-time state management system. So
17 for the 2020 season and beyond the State
18 of Alabama will control the season
19 dates. We still don't control the
20 amount of fish that we get to fish, but
21 we get to control the days. And as last
22 year, if we get bad weather or
23 something, we can actually add days to

1 the season this year. That's how tight
2 the control is for us.

3 Really quickly, we did dedicate some
4 artificial reef zones inside the 9-mile
5 state waters. We created seven new
6 ones, and then we named eight after
7 individuals and some organizations.
8 Three individuals: Dr. Steve
9 Szedlmayer, Dr. Sean Powers, and Dr. Bob
10 Shipp are the individuals. The Alabama
11 Wildlife Federation, National Fish and
12 Wildlife Federation, Coastal
13 Conservation Association of Alabama, the
14 Alabama Charter Fishing Association, and
15 the Alabama Reef Foundation. It's a lot
16 longer than that. I just don't remember
17 all the words for that one.

18 The eight zones that were named.
19 And they received a proclamation from
20 the Governor. They will be open to
21 fishing. They are new zones that are
22 just getting started. We've just put
23 material in them. So they won't be real

1 productive, but they're also there for
2 study -- for some artificial reef zone
3 studies.

4 The things that we presented to you
5 guys for approval this year mostly are
6 just cleanup items to some regulations.
7 We do have two things that are pending
8 that we're hosting public meetings
9 for -- and anybody here is welcome --
10 that we're looking to make some changes
11 to spotted seatrout and flounder. Those
12 are two very important fish to the state
13 of Alabama. Spotted seatrout are
14 gamefish.

15 We are looking at trout as a
16 concern -- not as a critical issue, but
17 we don't want to get to a critical
18 issue. So we've seen a few downward
19 trends, and so we would like to address
20 that. And flounder, we're past
21 concerned, and it's probably critical
22 that we do make some hard choices there.

23 So we're hosting some public

1 meetings, and it addresses different
2 user groups differently. We have a
3 commercial fishery for flounder as well
4 as a recreational fishery, and for
5 spotted seatrout it is just a
6 recreational fishery, but we also have
7 charter fishermen. So we kind of
8 address it from each of their
9 perspectives.

10 So we are hosting meetings. We have
11 hosted several meetings in conjunction
12 with CCA of Alabama. We've held two
13 already. The Alabama Coastal Fishing
14 Association, we had a meeting Thursday
15 night. We have a commercial fishing
16 meeting on March the 13th and a private
17 angler meeting on March the 13th and a
18 charter for-hire meeting on March the
19 27th.

20 So we're trying to get input for --
21 from those communities as to what they
22 consider to be appropriate changes. We
23 have a list of options that we can make.

1 And we can apply multiple options or we
2 can do just one option. And we're
3 showing them what the potential changes
4 would be, whether you're looking for a
5 quicker return, a long-term return. But
6 we have to have a positive return.
7 That's the purpose of the meeting and
8 the changes.

9 And so if you guys get any calls or
10 concerns from anybody in your district,
11 feel free to call me anytime. I know
12 we've already had some feedback.

13 And then just to update you on
14 oysters in Alabama, we did not have a
15 harvest season this year. We are
16 looking to do some restoration projects,
17 and part of that is to create a larger
18 hatchery at our Mariculture Center down
19 in Gulf Shores and do what we call a
20 spat on shell. We're kind of going to
21 jumpstart some reefs. We'll put the
22 spat on the shell. We'll grow them out
23 to a certain size. And then we'll go

1 put them out on the public oyster reefs,
2 one of which we're going to elevate.
3 We've had some low oxygen problems.
4 We'll elevate that oyster reef and
5 provide some, hopefully, better habitat
6 to kickstart our commercial oyster
7 harvest out in the Bay.

8 And at our Mariculture Center we're
9 working on a flounder project because,
10 again, flounder is a concern for us.
11 And we're just getting started. We're
12 having to buy some equipment, make some
13 changes. We have some broodstock that
14 recreational fishermen have provided to
15 us, and so we have about 40 fish,
16 somewhere around in there. And so we're
17 hoping to birth some babies here in the
18 near future. And we have a goal of
19 putting about 50- to 60,000 flounder
20 back into the system each year. That
21 should be up and running in 2020.

22 And I think that's -- oh, the other
23 one of question will be the reef fish

1 endorsement that is in your packet.
2 Nobody likes to have extra costs, and so
3 we -- we had to look at this real hard
4 about if this is something we wanted to
5 do.

6 There are a couple things with the
7 reef fish endorsement that we've
8 presented as a regulation. We have to
9 identify how many people are
10 participating in reef-fish fishing in
11 Alabama. Right now we sell saltwater
12 fishing licenses, but there are some
13 people that fish for saltwater species
14 that never leave the Mobile Bay area.
15 They're not participating in the
16 reef-fish fishery. With an endorsement
17 to that license, you only buy it if
18 you're going to participate in reef-fish
19 fishing, which is offshore in general.

20 And so we also have to continue
21 funding our research that goes on there.
22 We lose some of our funding at the end
23 of this year. So we're changing the way

1 that we're doing some of the research.
2 We are moving some of those projects to
3 other funding mechanisms. We're also --
4 some of those research items will have
5 been completed this year. It costs us
6 about a million-and-a-half dollars a
7 year to do some of these things, and
8 Snapper Check is included in that.

9 We've already moved some things to
10 get it down to around \$800,000. We
11 think we can get it down to around
12 \$500,000 a year to continue some of the
13 reef-fish research that we're doing and
14 run Snapper Check, which we would like
15 to expand and make it a little bit
16 tighter system and a better system.

17 With the reef fish endorsement,
18 that's sharing it amongst private
19 anglers, charter for hire, and
20 commercial fishermen who all utilize the
21 reef system off the state of Alabama --
22 so it is a tiered system -- and let
23 everybody share in that cost. We don't

1 want to put a big burden on any user
2 group.

3 We did not put a non-resident fee in
4 there from the commercial and charter
5 for hire. There's only a handful that
6 would be non-resident. And I do not
7 want to scare away anybody from another
8 state to come down here and participate
9 in fishing in Alabama. So I don't want
10 to make the burden any greater for them.

11 So it has potential to generate
12 between \$250,000 and \$400,000. So it'll
13 come close to supporting the annual
14 cost. The first year we may not need as
15 much money, and so if we can maintain
16 that funding, then we should be able to
17 manage those research projects through
18 the University of South Alabama and the
19 Dauphin Island Sea Lab with just that
20 amount of money. And it's also
21 available to be used as matching funds
22 because it is state money. So we can
23 turn that into matching funds with the

1 federal government.

2 So with that, that's my update. If
3 I can answer any questions. I know that
4 was a lot.

5 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions for Director
6 Bannon?

7 (No response.)

8 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Thank you,
9 Director Bannon.

10 I'd like to say just briefly thank
11 you to Ms. W. McCullers and Ms. B.F.
12 Jones for being here and helping put
13 this meeting on. It's very important.
14 They're always here with everything for
15 us and the placards and things for our
16 participants. So thank you to them and
17 their staffs very much. Thank you.

18 Our next item on our agenda -- I'm
19 sorry. Yes, Grady.

20 MR. HARTZOG: I just have one question of
21 Chuck.

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, sir.

23 MR. HARTZOG: We were talking about different

1 fundings, and I know that PR is --
2 Pittman-Robertson is a big dollar source
3 for us and it has been a big dollar
4 source for us. And I've been reading
5 that that dollar source is going to
6 start -- do we have any kind of
7 projection what our next five-year -- it
8 had gotten up to about what? About
9 \$20 million?

10 DIRECTOR SYKES: Yeah. My first year our
11 apportionment in December of 2012 when I
12 started was roughly \$8 million. It was
13 almost \$19 million last year. I mean,
14 the Obama administration was excellent
15 for gun salesmen and ammunition
16 salesmen.

17 I just, as you know, was in Denver
18 this week in meetings. We met with a
19 lot of the industry reps while we were
20 there. Their sales are down. People --
21 however, people's stockpile of
22 ammunition is beginning to go down. And
23 so we are anticipating a drop over the

1 next couple of years. It's not going to
2 be drastic. I don't think we'll ever go
3 back to the \$8 million. There's going
4 to be a new normal. We're guessing, you
5 know, 10, 12, somewhere in that mid
6 range. It's never going to get back to
7 that high point or I hope we don't get
8 in a national crisis where it gets back
9 to that high point. It's going to drop,
10 but we're going to set a new normal. So
11 I think we'll be okay.

12 MR. HARTZOG: Well, I just know that Patti's
13 office depends heavily on that because
14 when we got that big increase we had to
15 have the matching quarter, and the oil
16 revenues gave us that matching quarter
17 and it just -- I just wondered what
18 we're going to be able to look at --

19 DIRECTOR SYKES: We're going to set a new
20 normal. It's not going to be back to
21 historic lows. It will just be a new
22 normal in the next couple of years.

23 MR. HARTZOG: Okay. Thanks, Chuck.

1 DIRECTOR McCURDY: I will say, Mr. Chairman,
2 just to clarify, too, that Forever Wild
3 Land Trust money can be used as a state
4 match that Chuck needs to further those
5 purchases. So that's still -- that
6 aspect is secure. That has been working
7 well. The federal agencies are fine
8 with that. And so I think we do have an
9 ongoing source of the match necessary to
10 even utilize the funds, which is always
11 the first -- the first challenge that
12 Chuck has.

13 DIRECTOR SYKES: And, Mr. Chairman, could I
14 make one more comment?

15 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, you may.

16 DIRECTOR SYKES: Mr. Jones brought up the
17 SOAs. Our Special Opportunity Areas
18 have been a tremendous hit, and that is
19 working with Patti and the Forever Wild
20 Board on that match where we can further
21 the Board's mission as well as further
22 our mission. It's been an absolutely
23 incredible program and been a huge

1 success.

2 And to answer Mr. Hartzog's question
3 about adding more, we definitely intend
4 to do that and maximize our PR dollars
5 and help the Board maximize their
6 authority on accomplishing their goal of
7 providing the stuff. So, yeah, things
8 are good.

9 MR. RAYMOND JONES: Yes. While we're thanking
10 people, I also wanted to extend thank
11 you very much to Chief Weathers and all
12 the officers. Y'all do a great job. I
13 was -- I've known a lot of officers
14 through the years and had great
15 relationships with them.

16 I was driving down Red Road in Macon
17 County, Alabama, with my son. Bam. A
18 tire blew out. And within five
19 minutes -- I didn't call anybody -- but
20 an officer stopped to help me change a
21 tire. So Blair Sistrunk was his name.

22 But, again, thank you all for all
23 y'all do.

1 CHIEF WEATHERS: Absolutely. We've got some
2 good guys out there.

3 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Very good guys.

4 And one quick reminder about the
5 Pittman-Robertson Act, that this
6 department gets no general fund funding.
7 The monies that they get to operate come
8 from license sales and the match. So if
9 you don't buy licenses -- am I right --
10 we can't grab that big bucket of money
11 that comes from sale taxes and use taxes
12 on guns and ammunition, et cetera,
13 that's in Washington, D.C.

14 So encourage your friends to always
15 buy a license. It's very important that
16 we keep on keeping on.

17 Our next part of today's proceedings
18 are the public commentary. That's where
19 I am in this. If there are no more
20 questions from the Board or no more
21 announcements, we'll move on to public
22 commentary.

23 We don't have many speakers today.

1 So we are not going to use the ready
2 chairs like we have in the past. I'm
3 just going to call the speaker's name to
4 please come to the podium. And I'm
5 going to ask again, as I always do, for
6 everyone in the auditorium, let's be
7 respectful. Reserve your comments to
8 outside the hall. No applause or
9 outbursts during the question period.

10 And I'm going to ask each Board
11 member to refer to the chair for
12 questions of the speakers, please.
13 Again, let's be courteous and give each
14 speaker the respect that you would
15 expect.

16 Speaking today first on freshwater
17 fishing is Brandon Jackson from Cullman.

18 MR. JACKSON: Good morning, I'm Brandon
19 Jackson, Walker County. One, we wanted
20 to express our appreciation -- I wanted
21 to express my appreciation for the
22 Department and for all the work that's
23 been done at Walker County Public Lake.

1 Between the new archery range --

2 My girls love it by the way.

3 They've been there several times.

4 -- the walking trail, and stocking
5 of rainbow trout, what was probably once
6 a forgotten resource in our area has
7 been revitalized. A lot of people seem
8 to be really enjoying it. We've heard a
9 lot of great comments about it and
10 especially about the trout fishing there
11 as a great benefit.

12 They stocked about 1,000 to 1,200
13 rainbow trout on November the 19th and
14 fishing began on November the 22nd.
15 They required a \$5 daily trout permit as
16 well as a valid Alabama fishing license.
17 The creel limit was reduced to four fish
18 as opposed to the statewide five fish
19 creel limit, and it seems to be -- have
20 been a great success.

21 Between November the 22nd and March
22 the 7th the lake was open -- I'm not a
23 math guy, but I think with taking out

1 the Christmas vacation that goes on at
2 the Christmas break and Wednesdays --
3 because the lake is closed on
4 Wednesdays -- they had about 47 days of
5 fishing. And in that 47 days, as many
6 of you know, we had a good deal of rain,
7 bad weather, wind and stuff like that.

8 But even with all of that, the
9 four-fish limit, they were able to
10 harvest 832 of those trout. So they --
11 in that short period of time 832 trout
12 were harvested, and they sold 350
13 individual trout licenses. So that's
14 not the general lake. That's just for
15 the trout fishing in that short period
16 of time.

17 I appreciate the effort of the state
18 in making that available for the people
19 in Cullman and Walker Counties but also
20 throughout the region. People seem to
21 be enjoying it, traveling in order to
22 participate in it.

23 It is a closed system. We

1 appreciate the work that was done there
2 and the way it was managed in order to
3 promote those fishing opportunities in
4 the winter. Sometimes below Smith Lake
5 Dam they may be limited a little bit
6 because of generation. It seems like we
7 get some -- some of those rains in the
8 winter and this provides people an
9 additional opportunity.

10 As those temperatures rise, those
11 fish will die. Once that lake -- it's
12 only a 2-acre lake. Once it gets above
13 70 degrees, every one of those fish will
14 perish. And so we appreciate that
15 opportunity when it's available and as
16 it's available.

17 MS. JONES: Time.

18 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Is that it, Brandon? Is
19 there any specific point you want to
20 make?

21 MR. JACKSON: That's it.

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. Thank you very much.

23 Any questions from the Board?

1 Grady, Mr. Hartzog.

2 MR. HARTZOG: Actually not of Brandon. But
3 the funding for the stocking of those
4 fish, were those some of the power
5 company fish or were those some that we
6 bought ourselves?

7 I'm sorry to make you get up.

8 CHIEF NICHOLS: Nick Nichols. I am Chief of
9 Fisheries.

10 That project is -- parallels a
11 project we've been doing up on Madison
12 County Lake for years, but the purchase
13 of those trout is handled through our
14 public fishing lakes program. So we
15 actually purchased those fish with
16 dollars from our public fishing lake
17 program.

18 MR. HARTZOG: Continue?

19 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Please.

20 MR. HARTZOG: So we had 350 permits at \$5
21 apiece. What was our cost of the
22 stocking?

23 CHIEF NICHOLS: I'm going to defer to my

1 Assistant Chief.

2 ASSISTANT CHIEF GREENE: We don't have that in
3 front of us, but we can get that
4 information.

5 MR. HARTZOG: Well, I mean, if it's
6 profitable, let's double the amount of
7 fish and advertise that we double our
8 revenue.

9 CHIEF NICHOLS: Well, you know, it's --

10 MR. HARTZOG: I'm being --

11 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

12 CHIEF NICHOLS: I'm not sure if we're really
13 making much money. One thing that has
14 proven to be very successful up at
15 Madison County Lake, especially if you
16 look at the demographics in the
17 Huntsville area -- there are a lot of
18 people that do -- that are from other
19 parts of the country where they do like
20 to fish for trout. And that's been very
21 successful up there. It actually
22 supports -- it provides interest for
23 that lake year around by having that

1 trout fishery during the wintertime.

2 So it might be hard for us to
3 actually put a pencil to it and work out
4 whether we're making a profit or not,
5 but it does seem to enhance the interest
6 in the lake from the public there.

7 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chair, could I ask, just out
8 of curiosity, to send an email to us and
9 let us know kind of what the cost was
10 and what --

11 CHIEF NICHOLS: We can get that information to
12 you.

13 MR. HARTZOG: Yeah. Just out of curiosity.

14 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Cagle.

15 MR. CAGLE: Yeah. The work that y'all are
16 doing there and at the other county
17 lakes are great. I see news about it
18 all the time, and I think there is a
19 renewed interest.

20 As most people probably know,
21 there's a stocking effort that goes on
22 at Sipsey Fork below Smith Dam for
23 years. The Department has been doing

1 some research on it both on the
2 biological aspects of it as well as user
3 group research. Appreciate y'all's
4 effort there.

5 We've had a conversation on it, and
6 I want to keep looking at it just to
7 see -- you know, sometimes there's
8 some -- it's not easy to find solutions.
9 There's not always solutions. But
10 within the context of the -- you know,
11 first based on the biological science
12 and then the user groups, I think having
13 that conversation, being thoughtful, you
14 know, may yield the possibility to find
15 a way that we make it work for the most
16 users without -- you know, with minimal
17 conflicts.

18 So I look forward to working with
19 the Department to see if we can, you
20 know, maybe find a few things to extend
21 the -- give everyone a little of what
22 they want. Like a lot of things -- or
23 most things, no one gets everything they

1 want. But I look forward to continuing
2 that and maybe have something we can
3 discuss at the next Board meeting.

4 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Just from a housekeeping
5 standpoint, there's a report, Chief
6 Nichols, that you are going to get. I
7 understand that's been delayed and we'll
8 enjoy that report later.

9 CHIEF NICHOLS: Correct. There's a study that
10 we've been funding with Dr. Steve
11 Sammons at Auburn University and one of
12 his students. I believe we started that
13 study in 2017.

14 ASSISTANT CHIEF GREENE: Yeah. This is the
15 third year.

16 CHIEF NICHOLS: We extended it a year. There
17 were some -- you know, just due to some
18 of the high water flows that Brandon
19 mentioned, that kind of complicated some
20 of the study. So we extended that study
21 through this fiscal year. So we should
22 be seeing a final report on that study
23 sometime probably early 2021 -- excuse

1 me -- 2020. Excuse me.

2 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Thank you, Chief.

3 Any more questions from the Board?

4 (No response.)

5 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Brandon, thank you very much.

6 MR. HARTZOG: Thank you, Brandon.

7 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Our next speaker today is

8 Mr. Bradley Durham from Limestone

9 County.

10 MR. DURHAM: First of all, thank you guys for
11 all you do for -- all you do for Alabama
12 and all the outdoor enthusiasts.

13 My name is Bradley Durham. I'm from
14 Madison in Limestone County. I'm here
15 to share my concerns about the change to
16 the permits for the Alabama organized
17 field trials. Of course, they --
18 there's a variety of field trials
19 throughout this state. Some of them are
20 shooting. Some of them are nonshooting.

21 What I mainly want to speak about is
22 coon hunting because that's what I'm
23 passionate about. And I've had a lot of

1 questions about what exactly we do on a
2 competition coon hunt. We do not take
3 any coons. We do not try to harm them.
4 All we're trying to do is showcase the
5 dog's talents.

6 So the clubs that -- they're having
7 a hard time making ends meet as it is,
8 and when we put the \$50 permit fee and
9 only limit them to three, it really
10 burdens them.

11 I have -- I gave you guys a copy of
12 some of the numbers from some of the
13 hunts and some of the clubs and some of
14 the other -- what other states do, and
15 we're what seems to be way out of align
16 with what other states do. I think
17 we're double -- more than double the
18 permit fees, and I don't think there's
19 any of them that have a minimum -- or
20 maximum amount that they can have.

21 And we -- I'm in charge of one of
22 the biggest coon hunting clubs in the
23 state of Alabama. We've had hunts for

1 ten years and had up to 400 dogs in one
2 weekend a year. And we're really,
3 really hurting now because we're having
4 to send all our hunters across the state
5 line to Tennessee for our small hunts.
6 And it's really hurting us really,
7 really bad.

8 There's other papers I put on there
9 that are entry numbers just to let you
10 guys know what exactly -- how big these
11 coon hunts actually are and what all
12 they're bringing to the state
13 economically. I know you guys get more
14 of the money off the Pittman-Robertson
15 Act where license sales -- so I think
16 there is a civilized way that we can go
17 about changing this. And I'm not
18 opposed and most of the people I've
19 talked to are not opposed to a fee, But
20 whenever we're having up to 31 hunts a
21 year and having to pay -- change, you
22 know, people's names around and all
23 this -- you can see -- I think there is

1 one sheet on there that has if we're
2 charged \$50 for every fee -- every
3 hunt --

4 MS. JONES: Time.

5 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any more specific points? Do
6 you have another point that you want to
7 make, Bradley?

8 MR. DURHAM: I'm fine with that.

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. Are there any
10 questions from the Board?

11 Mr. Hartzog.

12 MR. HARTZOG: I reckon I'm the question-asker
13 today.

14 You said that you have -- your club
15 ends up with 31 hunts a year?

16 MR. DURHAM: Yes, sir. Up to 31 hunts a year.
17 We can have two hunts a month through
18 the Professional Kennel Club, and we
19 hunt seven a year through the United
20 Kennel Club. And there's other
21 organizations out there, also, that we
22 don't hold any more field trials for.

23 MR. HARTZOG: Okay. And you said that some of

1 your coon hunts you have 40 dogs.

2 What's your entry fee?

3 MR. DURHAM: Some of our hunts in the past
4 have had up to 150.

5 MR. HARTZOG: Okay. But what's your entry
6 fee?

7 MR. DURHAM: My entry -- they're different
8 compared --

9 MR. HARTZOG: I mean just on an average.

10 MR. DURHAM: We have three hunts a year that's
11 a \$50 entry fee, and the rest of them
12 are \$30 to \$10.

13 MR. HARTZOG: Okay. Well, I professionally
14 trial Retrievers, and I know the Barnett
15 Lawley Center is one of the premier
16 places they use for the Retrievers and
17 all. But I can't see where a \$50 fee --
18 when you're making a \$45 entry fee for
19 400 dogs and a \$50 fee is detrimental to
20 your club revenue.

21 Now, a change that might work would
22 be if you're limited to three for \$50 is
23 just set a dollar amount per field trial

1 ago and acted like I didn't know what I
2 was talking about. Our definition in
3 the handbook is chase, also, or pursue.

4 MR. RAYMOND JONES: Okay. I think that's most
5 everyone's definition is pursuing.

6 MR. DURHAM: Yes, that's correct.

7 MR. RAYMOND JONES: It seems like a license
8 would be something that -- if you got
9 the hunting license, then that would
10 take care of -- the same situation.
11 When I go to pursue turkeys in Texas, I
12 have to buy a license.

13 MR. DURHAM: We don't --

14 MR. RAYMOND JONES: Now, hopefully I kill
15 turkeys in Texas, but that's not a
16 guarantee.

17 MR. DURHAM: Our intent is not to kill though.

18 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Martin.

19 MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 Did you say your intent was not to
21 kill?

22 MR. DURHAM: That's correct.

23 MR. MARTIN: What if you did?

1 MR. DURHAM: I've been doing it 20 years,
2 competition hunting. There's probably
3 seven or eight times in the last 20
4 years and I go to about 150 a year. I
5 go all over the -- I go all over where
6 there's coon hunts. I've been in upper
7 New York and --

8 MR. MARTIN: Well, I think in relation to what
9 Mr. Jones was talking about, you're
10 pursuing.

11 MR. DURHAM: That's correct.

12 MR. MARTIN: There's a chance you could kill
13 one.

14 MR. DURHAM: That's correct.

15 MR. MARTIN: I'm not saying you're trying to,
16 but --

17 MR. DURHAM: My point is the state lines --
18 the clubs that are on state lines are
19 not getting a fair opportunity because
20 the people in the center of the state do
21 not have to buy a hunting -- they
22 already have a hunting license, so they
23 don't have to buy a permit to hold a

1 field trial. We're losing \$3400 already
2 on top of 150 more. I just -- I don't
3 see where it's fair to people that's
4 close to state lines.

5 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Durham, just bear me out.
6 I'm listening.

7 MR. DURHAM: Yes, sir.

8 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And I'm in agreement. We all
9 agree that chasing or pursuing is
10 hunting by definition. That's easy
11 enough. So you do understand that when
12 you buy that \$50 permit for the three
13 events -- and possibly more, but
14 certainly three events -- that the
15 members or the participants in those
16 events don't have to buy a hunting
17 license even if they come from out of
18 state. Is that correct?

19 So, frankly -- I said it earlier --
20 we derive our resources from hunting
21 licenses. The \$50 is a help because we
22 get generally a three-to-one match. But
23 we're not getting that hunting license.

1 So that's -- I'm losing sight of where
2 you're losing.

3 MR. DURHAM: All right. I agree that you are
4 losing that money because -- all right.
5 But why do I have to live in this state
6 and pay my fees and hold hunts in my
7 state and send everybody across the
8 state line to Tennessee to have a hunt?

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I don't know why you do.

10 MR. DURHAM: Because I can't get another
11 permit for it.

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Hartzog.

13 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, I would like the
14 staff to possibly come up with a change
15 in that regulation. Instead of limiting
16 it to three for \$50, put \$20 a hunt on
17 there, and so they don't have to
18 change -- the Grady Hartzog Club is
19 having three hunts and the Gary Lemme is
20 having three hunts and allow each club
21 to buy as many permits as they want and
22 instead of three for 50, do \$20 apiece.
23 And if they can't -- I know what entry

1 fees are, and \$20 is a steal. So, I
2 mean, that's the only recommendation --

3 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Time out. Mr. Commissioner.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,

5 Mr. Hartzog. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 This is -- it's \$50 per hunt, and
7 then they were allowing three for each
8 particular club. So what you're really
9 asking is for them not to have a limit
10 on those --

11 MR. HARTZOG: No. No. What I'm saying is, is
12 not have a three-hunt limit but just if
13 they want ten hunts, they pay \$20 a
14 hunt -- instead of three for 50, they
15 get --

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: It's not three for
17 50. It's \$50 per hunt.

18 MR. DURHAM: Per hunt.

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Per hunt.

20 MR. DURHAM: So 150 and we're only allowed
21 three.

22 MR. HARTZOG: Oh, okay. Well, leave it at \$50
23 and --

1 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: But this does allow
2 them to have the field trails without
3 all of their participants from out of
4 state having to buy a hunting license.

5 MR. DURHAM: Exactly.

6 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So we feel like as
7 a department that this does provide the
8 opportunity for them to have these hunts
9 at an extremely reasonable cost to bring
10 the participants in.

11 So I really -- I don't want to
12 disagree with you vehemently in front of
13 everybody, but I feel like that the \$50
14 and the permit that we charge for this
15 is actually a benefit to the people that
16 are closer to the state line because
17 those people in the state -- close to
18 the center of the state, they're having
19 these trials with people that are
20 already spending more money on a hunting
21 license than these people that are
22 coming from out of state on the edges
23 that are covered by the \$50 permit.

1 But we can discuss with the staff
2 and bring back something to you before
3 the next meeting on whether the
4 three-hunt limit for each club is
5 reasonable or not, provide some
6 information on that.

7 MR. HARTZOG: Well, that's -- I misunderstood
8 that. I apologize. I thought it was
9 \$50 --

10 MR. DURHAM: If you look on the very front of
11 it, on the very front page, you can see
12 that we're way out of align with what
13 every other state does. We're more
14 than -- we're more than double than what
15 any other state charges for a permit,
16 and no other state has a limit -- a
17 maximum number of permits that they're
18 allowed.

19 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman. Yeah. It's
20 difficult here to compare to other
21 states. I mean, all states are funded
22 differently. I'm not sure that any
23 others get zero general fund dollars.

1 I mean, so it's not really apples and
2 oranges.

3 You know, we're a very lean state.
4 Our state legislature has voted not to
5 fund the Department. So it's hard to
6 compare it to somewhere like Tennessee
7 where they do get substantial money.
8 And I understand that, you know, from a
9 practical application it does, but it's
10 just hard to compare when you're
11 comparing funding sources because we
12 literally are using that matching PR
13 money to operate.

14 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Just an observation, just an
15 ask: These states that you have where
16 there is no fee or the fee is minimal,
17 do you have to have a hunting license?

18 MR. DURHAM: No, not if you're out of state.
19 Nowhere that has a permit system
20 requires out-of-state hunters to have a
21 hunting license.

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: That's fine. Go ahead,
23 Mr. Pate.

1 COMMISSIONER PATE: Is the limitation -- are
2 you upset about the limit of three or
3 the \$50? I can't really --

4 MR. DURHAM: Both of them, mainly because our
5 smaller hunts -- we have more smaller
6 hunts. And Alabama ranks third in the
7 most organized field trials for
8 coonhounds out of the whole world.
9 We're only behind Tennessee and Indiana.

10 COMMISSIONER PATE: Well, let's separate those
11 two issues. Is there any reason we want
12 to limit coon hunting?

13 I mean, we're not really short of
14 coons that I know of.

15 MR. DURHAM: No, not at all.

16 COMMISSIONER PATE: I mean, so I think we can
17 solve that issue if that's the issue
18 that he's limited in the amount of coon
19 hunting. And it's a whole separate
20 issue --

21 (Brief interruption by the court
22 reporter.)

23 COMMISSIONER: I'm sorry. I guess my point

1 would be -- there seems to be two
2 separate issues here, and I think we've
3 got to talk about them separately if
4 we're going to solve them. But it
5 doesn't seem to be any reason we'd
6 limit, I mean, the amount of coon
7 hunting that went on in the state of
8 Alabama.

9 MR. DURHAM: Correct. And my other point is
10 if we're only allowed three at \$50 a
11 hunt and we have 31 hunts a year and
12 then you pay \$20, that's a lot more
13 money for a smaller fee with no maximum.

14 MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

15 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Wolfe.

16 MR. WOLFE: But to that point -- and I guess I
17 might be missing something. But, again,
18 we're going back. You're not killing
19 the coons.

20 MR. DURHAM: That's correct.

21 MR. WOLFE: Just you're hunting them. So with
22 what he's saying, that's not going to
23 help kill all the coons in Alabama. So

1 we're not talking about the same thing.
2 You're talking about just the chase.
3 And the way it's defined in our
4 regulation the chase is hunting; right?

5 MR. DURHAM: Yes.

6 MR. WOLFE: So I don't think we're talking
7 about the same thing. We're not helping
8 killing all the coons. It's just y'all
9 are wanting to hunt -- I think -- to me
10 the staff -- I think we need to go back
11 to the staff and let the staff work with
12 y'all and try to figure out a solution
13 because we're not talking about a fair
14 chase and kill and all. So I think we
15 need to let the staff come back and make
16 us some recommendations.

17 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Agree.

18 Mr. Commissioner.

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: That's all I was
20 going to say is that -- I mean, I don't
21 want to debate this up here with the
22 Board. I'd rather not until we've had a
23 chance with the staff to really talk

1 about it and bring back a recommendation
2 to the Board before the next meeting, if
3 that would suit you, Mr. Chairman.

4 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I think that's ideal, and we
5 can expect something before the May 9
6 meeting.

7 And you're welcome to return,
8 Bradley. Thank you very much.

9 Our next speaker -- small game
10 again -- is Mr. Jimmy Mitchell from
11 Quail Forever.

12 MR. MITCHELL: Like the chairman said, my name
13 is Jimmy Mitchell. I reside in Hanover,
14 Alabama, and that is in Coosa County for
15 people who don't know. It's about
16 10 miles north of Rockford. I'm here
17 today to represent Quail Forever and
18 more importantly landscape-scale
19 conservation.

20 We met with Keith Gauldin, the
21 Wildlife Chief, about three months ago,
22 and he's shown us some things that the
23 Department has done to do small game

1 upland management, you know, that
2 benefits quail, rabbits, brood-rearing
3 turkeys and everything. And he was
4 gracious enough to meet with us and a
5 Quail representative -- an employee who
6 represents four states.

7 And we're really -- Quail Forever is
8 really growing through the state. I
9 know they partnered with the Alabama
10 Wildlife Federation last year to do a
11 tour to try to -- with the Alabama Black
12 Belt Adventures to kind of bring
13 attention to, you know, the quail
14 culture in Alabama, and there's a rich
15 history with field trials.

16 Some of the things that Keith talked
17 about -- you know, the burning. I know
18 there's extensive effort -- pretty good
19 efforts at Freedom Hills WMA in
20 northwest Alabama and also Barbour
21 County WMA. Probably our highest quail
22 numbers in the state. And those efforts
23 are not unappreciated. I'm here today

1 to hopefully entice you guys to
2 springboard those efforts and ramp up
3 those efforts.

4 In 2006 I think there was two Quail
5 Forever chapters in the state, one at
6 the Conecuh Forest down in Conecuh
7 County around Andalusia and one Covey
8 Rise chapter around Alexander City.
9 Since then, in the last two years, there
10 have been four chapters added. So
11 that's a total of six chapters and
12 interest in the last two weeks in
13 starting a chapter in Enterprise,
14 Alabama.

15 And so, you know, we're also having
16 a meeting with the Alabama Wildlife
17 Federation. There's a lot of great
18 resources in the state. Alabama
19 Wildlife Federation has three biologists
20 that work across the state. No fee
21 charged to help landowners whether
22 they're managing for deer, turkeys,
23 quail. And we're hoping to -- you know,

1 they have Claude Jenkins on staff. He
2 studied under Wes Burger at Mississippi
3 State, one of the leading researchers
4 for quail.

5 So I think there's a lot of
6 knowledge for quail in the state of
7 people who know how to manage for wild
8 quail. You know, I know there's a lot
9 of pen-raised hunts, and, you know,
10 certainly that's kept the sport alive
11 through the years, but ...

12 Let's see. You know, just where
13 feasible -- I know everywhere is not
14 feasible. I know there's, you know,
15 some efforts -- you know, we can -- you
16 can do. I know the Conecuh Forest
17 chapter, they've put -- and since
18 they've been alive they've put \$100,000
19 into public land, into the Conecuh
20 National Forest, part of what's Geneva
21 State Forest and what's now the Boggy
22 Hollow WMA, which was created in the
23 last couple of years.

1 Another thing is, you know, a youth
2 mentor program. I know the State Lands
3 Division -- there's the Wehle Tract and
4 the -- what's the area -- State Cattle
5 Ranch. If we could work and, you know,
6 enhance the habitat on those places to
7 do a youth mentor program. I know
8 Barbour County had a youth hunt this
9 year.

10 MS. JONES: Time.

11 MR. HARTZOG: Go ahead and end it.

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Please finish.

13 Thank you, Grady.

14 MR. MITCHELL: I know Barbour County did a
15 youth hunt this year. I wasn't aware of
16 that. I wish -- you know, we can help
17 promote that program. It was -- you
18 know, they did a rabbit hunt, I think,
19 and a squirrel hunt, but it was to
20 introduce youth to the sporting
21 programs. They did that last weekend on
22 Barbour County WMA. Had pretty good
23 facilities. They had bathrooms there.

1 I know the Wehle Tract is adjacent to
2 it. I'm not aware of the quail numbers.

3 But if we could enhance management
4 and, you know, increase that -- if we
5 could have a youth hunt on that same day
6 maybe for quail. You know, anything we
7 can do. I'm open for ideas. Quail
8 Forever is open to helping you guys and,
9 you know, also, in kind dollars of
10 volunteer work to match PR -- you know,
11 to get some PR dollars to put into these
12 public lands.

13 You know, I know that the Dutch Bend
14 Tract over in Dallas County, the Old
15 Cahawba site -- you know, I don't know
16 if some of that land could be reclaimed
17 into some quail management. I'm not
18 sure, you know, all the things that can
19 be done, and I'm not the technical
20 expert on habitat. But, you know, I
21 know there's people out there. We've
22 got some great people in the state. I
23 know Keith Gauldin said that, you know,

1 he's going to have someone to -- a quail
2 biologist maybe by April. I'm not sure
3 if that's still on plan.

4 But, you know, I think there's some
5 positive things going, and, you know, if
6 there's increased interest -- and I
7 think that, you know, it will bring the
8 people in if we can implement the
9 habitat and, you know, keep increasing
10 our numbers.

11 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Mitchell. Are
12 there any questions from the Board?

13 Mr. Hartzog.

14 MR. HARTZOG: Not really a question but just a
15 a couple of comments.

16 He was talking about the State
17 Cattle Ranch. And with Patti at the
18 State Cattle Ranch -- they've already
19 done a bunch of extensive work with warm
20 season grasses for quail habitat.

21 You were talking about Barbour
22 County, and, of course, that's my
23 county. And I know about the hunt last

1 weekend. There were several hundred
2 kids there. There's been extensive
3 quail work being done there.

4 You talked about AWF and Claude
5 Jenkins and the guys they have on staff
6 there.

7 For those that are interested, AWF
8 just got through doing a tremendously
9 nice book on warm season grasses and
10 identifying those warm season grasses
11 and plants in the prairie Black Belt.
12 So all you've got to do is contact the
13 AWF, and they'll send you a free copy of
14 that.

15 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. I would recommend the
16 AWF. They're a great program. And, you
17 know, you could support them
18 financially, but they -- you know, they
19 do work -- you know, if you need
20 landowner assistance, you know, you
21 don't know how to manage for deer,
22 turkey, whatever you want to, you know,
23 they'll come out and help you -- you

1 know, they don't have any financial
2 assistance, but they can tell you where
3 to go to possibly get some cost share if
4 it's applicable.

5 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

6 MR. HARTZOG: And thanks to the foundation for
7 giving to the Barbour County Youth Hunt.

8 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Noted. Thank you very much.

9 MR. MITCHELL: Thank y'all.

10 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I failed to mention it
11 earlier, but I will again. We're -- a
12 lot of latitude today because there are
13 so few speakers. But Ms. Jones is
14 keeping time. Speakers have three
15 minutes.

16 Ms. Blackwell down here, thank you
17 so much for being here with us today
18 too. And she's recording it.

19 So our next speaker is Mr. Jimmy
20 Jimmerson from Cleburne County.

21 MR. JIMMERSON: I want to thank you for
22 allowing me to be here again this year.
23 Last year I met with this same group and

1 I had some handouts. I'm not going to
2 give out any handouts this year.

3 But what I'm asking for -- and
4 Cleburne County is at the northern part
5 of the state north of I-20 which goes
6 from Birmingham to Atlanta. Our deer
7 are rutting early. We've been -- for
8 the last three years we've allowed the
9 Game and Fish folks -- the biologists to
10 come in and shoot does early in the --
11 or shoot the does late, and it's
12 showing -- their results is showing that
13 our deer are being bred before our gun
14 season opens.

15 And what I'm asking for is the ten
16 days that y'all give the whole state --
17 take those ten days off at the end.
18 That's not doing us any good. Add it to
19 the front side of hunting season and
20 allow us to hunt ten days -- that way we
21 get to hunt the rut. We're not -- our
22 bucks are rutting early. The does are
23 being bred early. So that's mainly what

1 I'm asking for.

2 I'd like to add that in the 2019
3 manual -- Alabama Farmers Federation
4 2019 policy from Alfa and the Farmers
5 Federation -- but it says that the
6 Alabama Department of Conservation and
7 Natural Resources continues to study the
8 breeding patterns of whitetail deer to
9 determine an accurate conception range.
10 We encourage the Alabama Department of
11 Conservation and Natural Resources to
12 use this information to set hunting
13 season dates accordingly.

14 Does anybody have any questions?

15 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Martin.

16 MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Jimmy, when is y'all's rut?

18 MR. JIMMERSON: They're rutting before gun
19 season opens. We're on the -- Cleburne
20 County is right on the Georgia line.
21 Georgia is -- they're hunting a month
22 earlier than we are. Those deer that
23 were stocked in the Choccolocco Wildlife

1 Management Area back in the '40s and
2 '50s -- those deer came, I think, from
3 North Carolina. That's the reason --
4 that gene that's in those deer that were
5 put there, that's the reason that
6 they're rutting early.

7 And, like I said, it's just -- it's
8 not fair that we don't get to hunt the
9 rut because -- and I know, you know,
10 y'all gave us ten days at the end of the
11 season. Barbour County and a lot of
12 those counties in south Alabama the deer
13 aren't rutting till after the end of
14 hunting season. So give them ten days
15 and then everybody else ten days. We
16 just need our ten days added on the
17 front side.

18 We've -- we've been working with the
19 Department of Conservation. For three
20 years we've allowed them to come in and
21 shoot does later in the season. The
22 biologists was testing them, and it is
23 showing that they're being bred.

1 They're already -- conception rate is
2 early, so ...

3 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Cagle.

4 MR. CAGLE: Very briefly. I don't want to get
5 too caught up. But you mentioned
6 something from the Alabama Farmers
7 Federation.

8 MR. JIMMERSON: Yes.

9 MR. CAGLE: Wasn't that a proposal that didn't
10 pass?

11 MR. JIMMERSON: That's in their 2019 policy
12 manual.

13 MR. CAGLE: Yeah. I think it was something
14 they voted on that didn't pass.

15 MR. JIMMERSON: This is in the manual. It's
16 passed.

17 MR. CAGLE: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

19 Mr. Martin.

20 MR. MARTIN: I'd like to ask Chuck a question.

21 Chuck, is there any other places like
22 this around, or can you elaborate on --

23 DIRECTOR SYKES: Yeah. I mean, Mr. Jimmy is

1 100 percent correct. I mean, no ifs,
2 ands, or buts. That's one of the few
3 things that we have got concrete data
4 on. We've got the maps. We know within
5 two weeks of when deer are being bred
6 all over the state. There are several
7 places just like what he's talking
8 about. There's one in Grady's county.
9 I mean, there's a couple of counties
10 down along the Georgia line that just
11 depending where you stand in the county
12 you can hunt peak rut November,
13 December, January, and February.

14 So he's correct. And I've talked
15 with several of the Board members. I
16 mean, we've got three zones now where we
17 used to just have one. We're headed in
18 that direction. It's just going to take
19 a little bit of time to get where we're
20 helping Mr. Jimmy in Cleburne and then
21 we're going to have folks in Barbour
22 saying, well, you did it there, carve me
23 out here, or folks up around Bankhead,

1 carve me out here.

2 So we know it for a fact. He is
3 100-percent correct. We've been working
4 with him. Our biologists are working
5 with him. It's just the -- it's going
6 to take time to get -- if the Board
7 decides to do that, we may end up with
8 15 zones versus three zones. So we just
9 aren't -- as a Department we're not
10 ready to make that recommendation yet
11 despite the fact that he is 100-percent
12 correct.

13 MR. MARTIN: Well, just keep in mind he ain't
14 no spring chicken.

15 MR. JIMMERSON: That's right.

16 MR. MARTIN: We had that conversation earlier.

17 MR. JIMMERSON: That's my next point. If we
18 wait for all these -- it takes three
19 years for the biologists to do their
20 studies. If we do that for all the
21 other areas -- you know, I'm 72 years
22 old. I'm not going to live forever like
23 Grady. We're getting a little age on

1 us, but --

2 MR. HARTZOG: We're getting a little
3 gray-headed.

4 MR. JIMMERSON: That's right. And bald-headed
5 too.

6 But, you know, it's penalizing us to
7 not go ahead and approve it. It's not a
8 big deal. The boundary lines are drawn.
9 But if we have to wait for all these
10 other counties, like I said, that --
11 arguing that point, it's never going to
12 happen, not in my lifetime.

13 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Dr. Lemme.

14 DR. LEMME: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask
15 Chief Weathers a question concerning the
16 implications of -- if we follow the
17 trend out and we cut out the small areas
18 that are biologically rutting earlier,
19 what would be the implications both on
20 the Enforcement Division but also on the
21 hunters?

22 I know I've been in some states
23 where the -- there were so many little

1 zones that I couldn't tell where I was
2 and where I wasn't.

3 CHIEF WEATHERS: Dr. Lemme, you know, as
4 regulations become more complex, the
5 maps get harder to read.

6 Is it tougher on the hunters?
7 Absolutely. Everything we add to the
8 book is more for them to keep up with.

9 For our officers, because they're
10 stationed in a particular county, it's
11 not that hard for them. Seasons are
12 constantly changing. We deal with one
13 thing to another from turkey season into
14 the height of fishing season, those
15 sorts of things.

16 On our officers it's not a
17 particular hardship. Is it on the
18 hunters trying to keep up with that
19 considering that a hunter may have land
20 leased, you know, on the other end of
21 the state? It's hard for them to keep
22 up with. Is it something they're
23 willing to do? Most likely. Is there a

1 learning curve? Absolutely. You know,
2 we've got management areas where we have
3 zones on a management area, Choccolocco
4 being one of those.

5 Mr. Jimmerson is exactly right. I'm
6 from Jacksonville, Alabama. And the
7 best deer that I've ever killed in my
8 life was in full rut a few days out of
9 bow season. He's dead-on-the-money
10 right. Folks get used to it. They
11 figure it out. There's a learning
12 curve, but the hunters will pick it up.
13 So I think all could agree on it.

14 To echo what Director Sykes is
15 saying, if you're going to move these
16 zones, you want to do it -- you don't
17 want 15 zones. If there are a bunch of
18 places like that where we can pull it
19 together and make that a Zone D in
20 different pockets around the state,
21 that's better than Zone D, E, F.
22 Similar regulations are better for
23 everybody.

1 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Jimmy.

2 MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

3 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Wolfe.

4 MR. WOLFE: A question. I guess go to Chuck.

5 Other states that are in like zones like
6 Georgia and Mississippi that adjoin us,
7 they have the same problem that we would
8 have in the north of the state and south
9 of the state.

10 Georgia has a split state. Is that
11 right?

12 MR. JIMMERSON: That's right.

13 DIRECTOR SYKES: Well, most states don't have
14 to deal with what we have to deal with.
15 Again, we've got peak rut November,
16 December, January, and February. Most
17 states -- you go to Illinois. First
18 week to ten days of November every deer
19 in the state is rutting wide open. So I
20 don't know of another state that has the
21 management issues that we have.

22 Now, that can be portrayed as a good
23 thing because we're the only ones -- us

1 and Mississippi are the only states with
2 a February rut that has a season.
3 That's a good thing as far as hunters
4 coming in, but it's a management
5 nightmare when you've got four areas in
6 the same county that's got different
7 deer. And they are genetically
8 different deer. We can go look back at
9 the historical stocking data.

10 It's a management nightmare in
11 trying to carve out all of those little
12 zones. It's up to y'all. If y'all want
13 to do it, we will do it to the best of
14 our ability, but just understand you're
15 never going to be able to get everything
16 where Grady's folks are not going to be
17 mad if we give it to Mr. Jimmerson. If
18 we're going to do it, we need to do
19 wholesale. And if y'all tell us to do
20 that or look into it, that's something
21 that we can look into before next year.
22 But I don't think we need to do one
23 zone. It needs to be -- if we're going

1 to do it, we've got to do it for
2 everybody.

3 MR. JIMMERSON: And the zone that I'm talking
4 about is easily outlined. You've got
5 the state of Georgia on one side.
6 You've got I-20 on the bottom side.
7 You've got Calhoun County on the west
8 side and Cherokee County on the north
9 side. The county boundary lines are
10 pretty much where this is happening at.
11 So it would be easy to do.

12 And it probably would be an economic
13 boom for the community because people --
14 the rest of the folks in Alabama,
15 they're going to come and hunt around
16 Choccolocco. And people out of state
17 probably would pay an extra out-of-state
18 license to come and hunt that early
19 season in Cleburne County.

20 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Martin.

21 MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Chuck, I was just wanting to
23 clarify. You said you do have all that

1 information statewide for these
2 different pockets?

3 DIRECTOR SYKES: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.
4 And, again, Mr. Jimmerson is right. His
5 zone is easy to define. The other ones
6 are not that easy. So everything he's
7 told y'all is spot on.

8 MR. MARTIN: I think as a board we should take
9 a look at it.

10 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. B. Jones.

11 MR. BROCK JONES: Chuck, as far as the -- how
12 long do you think it would take to get
13 this together as far as defining the 15
14 or so zones?

15 And I personally don't see a problem
16 with not feeling like you have to do
17 them all at the same time.

18 DIRECTOR SYKES: Let me respectfully disagree
19 with doing it all at the same time. We
20 tried that with the February extension,
21 and I don't want to go down that road
22 again. So I think if we do it, we need
23 to do it. We can -- we're working on a

1 CWD response plan right now. As soon as
2 we get done with that, then we can start
3 laying out the state for this.

4 I don't think it's going to happen
5 for this season. But if y'all want to
6 do that, if Mr. Jimmy can make it till
7 74, which we all hope he does, that's a
8 realistic possibility.

9 MR. JIMMERSON: We've had this argument going
10 on for the last three years anyway,
11 so ...

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Hartzog.

13 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman -- and, there
14 again, Mr. Jimmy, I understand. I get
15 complaints all the time. People don't
16 realize that there's actually been
17 studies and papers written on Barbour
18 County where -- because the deer herd
19 that was introduced in Fort Benning came
20 down the river and then we had a herd --
21 deer herd that was in the Bledsoe Hills
22 that go back to the Indian time and then
23 the Barbour County Management Area was

1 stocked with different deer. We've got
2 three separate DNAs, and for some reason
3 those DNAs don't mix. And the rut does
4 just like you're saying. The rut on the
5 river where I am is actually over about
6 the time of gun season.

7 Just as curiosity, Chuck, we got a
8 three-buck limit and we extended the ten
9 days to satisfy the people from west
10 Alabama all the way over to Barbour
11 County because Barbour County Management
12 Area had a deer herd that had the --
13 but, there again, you start trying to
14 divide Barbour County into three
15 areas -- you know, I've seen graphs that
16 Bill Gray has done, who is our district
17 deer biologist, and it would be a
18 nightmare trying to define zones
19 where -- you know, where the Bledsoe
20 Hill starts and all this kind of stuff.

21 Since we've got the three-buck
22 limit, would the Department consider the
23 possibility of leaving the ten days on

1 the end and putting ten days on the
2 front, since we've only got a three-buck
3 limit, and that satisfies Mr. Jimmerson
4 as well as satisfies those that, oh, we
5 can't kill a deer till February the --
6 I mean, would that be easier to pass a
7 regulation and make Mr. Jimmerson happy
8 as well as those that we can't kill a
9 deer till February the 30th?

10 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Excuse me just one moment.

11 Let's do this, Grady. Let's defer this
12 to --

13 MR. HARTZOG: Well, that's basically what I'm
14 saying is would the Department consider
15 that and bring that back to us as --

16 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. If you have some
17 recommendations individually, Grady,
18 write those -- get those to me. I'll
19 get them to him, or you send them
20 straight to him.

21 MR. HARTZOG: Okay.

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Jimmerson, is that okay
23 with you?

1 MR. JIMMERSON: That's fine. Try it for one
2 year in the area that I'm talking about
3 and see how it works, and then you can
4 work forward adding those other areas in
5 the state. There's no reason why we
6 shouldn't just go ahead and approve -- I
7 mean, the lines are drawn in the
8 Cleburne County area. Go ahead and
9 approve it for that and then see how it
10 works and then work it out as you go
11 down through other parts of the state.

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We're going to look at it.

13 MR. JIMMERSON: Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We're going to get back with
15 you.

16 MR. MARTIN: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Jimmerson, for
18 always coming.

19 The next speaker is Mr. Guy Moore,
20 the Sipsey Wilderness Hunt Club.

21 MR. MOORE: Mr. Chairman, honorable members of
22 the Board, thank you for the opportunity
23 to be able to address you today.

1 you because -- and I don't have a
2 problem with somebody that's shooting
3 deer, but I just have a problem with --
4 when somebody just -- you know, just
5 shoots everything that walks. And we
6 got that going on, and my neighbor is
7 shooting deer over corn. And I know
8 that's happening and we know that's
9 happening and I don't know how to fix
10 the problem.

11 But I am considered, you know, as
12 somebody that knows what I'm doing
13 trying to hunt and -- but commonly my
14 neighbors -- my neighbors are harvesting
15 the deer that I've got all the pictures
16 of that are the two- and -- well, the
17 three- and four-year-olds. Like this
18 year on one place I had six
19 four-year-olds -- six three- and
20 four-year-olds. They all died during
21 the deer season, and I wasn't even
22 hunting them.

23 But what was common -- what was

1 happening was, is I got my cameras out
2 year around and I'm feeding year around.
3 Well, I've got plenty of gobblers in
4 there and turkeys that I know are there.
5 But right when the deer season shows
6 up -- when the gun season shows up, my
7 turkeys are gone and my long-beards are
8 gone and they don't -- and they're gone.
9 I say, well, they must have shot my
10 turkeys. Well, every year about a week
11 after the deer season is over my turkeys
12 are back on my camera again right there
13 where they always are.

14 So my point is, is I don't know how
15 we can fix it. I appreciate the
16 difficulty of enforcing our game laws,
17 but I'm frustrated and tired of trying
18 to compete with everyone who feeds only
19 during the deer season. And that's just
20 frustrating, you know. And I know I'm
21 not speaking alone. I've talked to a
22 lot of other hunters that are in the
23 same area. But really -- and I've

1 talked to game officers who are
2 frustrated, too, because it is
3 difficult, you know, to -- a hundred
4 yards away behind some kind of natural
5 barrier. And so anything you can do to
6 fix that, I would appreciate it.

7 I also addressed this Board about --
8 well, I don't have time.

9 But, anyway, I addressed this Board
10 several years ago about the extended ten
11 days and the doe issue. We just -- the
12 coyotes are doing a real good job of --

13 MS. JONES: Time.

14 MR. MOORE: But, anyway, I need something done
15 because -- like in northern Jefferson
16 County they don't ever need a doe to be
17 shot, not right now, not in northern
18 Jefferson County, and a few other places
19 I hunt. So, anyway, I'd appreciate the
20 Board thinking about that.

21 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions for Mr. Moore?

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Moore. Thank

1 you for being here, for coming.

2 Our next speaker on dog deer hunting
3 in support of same is Mr. Chad Dugger
4 from Baldwin County.

5 MR. DUGGER: My name is Chad Dugger, and this
6 is my son, Easton, and we're from
7 Robertsdale, Alabama, in Baldwin County.
8 And, first off, I'd like to thank you
9 for letting us -- allowing us to talk to
10 you.

11 We represent Halls Fork Hunting
12 Club. We'd like to thank the Advisory
13 Board for giving us the opportunity to
14 continue to hunt and make memories with
15 our families. We had several young kids
16 harvest their first buck --

17 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Dugger, would you speak
18 closer to the microphone. You're
19 talking softly. Thank you.

20 MR. DUGGER: Okay. Yes, sir. Sorry.

21 We've had several young kids harvest
22 their first buck in front of hounds with
23 their dads and grandfathers by their

1 side. With this being said, we have had
2 two guys report that we have been having
3 dogs on their property, and most of
4 these complaints that have been called
5 in were dogs that were on a public road
6 where we have property on both sides of
7 the road. And there also has been times
8 they have just rode up and down the road
9 trying to catch our dogs while we are
10 trying to keep them -- trying to keep
11 them off of unpermitted property.

12 This has been an ongoing problem for
13 years, and no one else in the community
14 has ever had a complaint on us or our
15 dogs. We have had community cleanups
16 and, also, an annual fish fry for the
17 people of the community.

18 We just want to keep the way we love
19 to hunt alive and to keep making
20 memories with our families and don't
21 want to get it taken away by a couple of
22 people that just have a personal grudge
23 against a club and some of its past

1 members. Thank you for your time, and
2 we ask you to let us keep our rights.

3 And, also, I just wanted to let you
4 know that when y'all think about this
5 stuff -- he just got two dogs this
6 particular year, just puppies, that
7 we're going to go in the woods hopefully
8 this year and hunt with those. And we
9 have GPS. We spent a bunch of money.
10 And there's quite a few people in our
11 club that has GPS. We diligently try to
12 keep dogs off of other people's land.
13 And, you know, we try to do a good job
14 of that and cut the dogs off when we
15 hunt.

16 Everybody that hunts -- our
17 standers, we'll tell them, you know, if
18 a dog comes by you, try to catch the
19 dog, please don't let it get on somebody
20 else's property. If a property owner
21 comes up, be respectful. You know, just
22 be nice to our community.

23 But he's nine years old. And I can

1 remember going with my dad at seven or
2 eight, and he's been going since he
3 could walk. And, you know, I remember
4 all them times that I've hunted with
5 dogs and, you know, with deer. Some
6 people like to still hunt, and that's
7 fine. But we like to dog hunt.

8 But we do our best and spend
9 hundreds of dollars on GPS tracking
10 systems just to keep them off of other
11 people's property and diligently try --
12 and I teach him -- you know, diligently
13 try to respect other people because they
14 don't want them on there. And that's
15 understandable.

16 So we're just up here to ask for
17 y'all to think about it, and we just --
18 you know, we love to dog hunt.

19 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Dugger.

20 Any questions for Mr. Dugger?

21 MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Wolfe.

23 MR. WOLFE: Do y'all participate in any kind

1 of -- I understand -- I've gotten a
2 lesson the last two or three meetings
3 learning more about how to control dogs.
4 Are y'all participating in any like
5 whistle training or shock collars or
6 anything like that?

7 MR. DUGGER: Yes, sir. Well, that GPS has
8 shock collars on them. And, you know,
9 not everybody has got them in the club,
10 but -- I don't really know a percentage.
11 I haven't talked to how many people has
12 got them. But I would say half of our
13 club has them. But they're very
14 expensive. I mean, they just cost a lot
15 of money, and some people just frankly
16 can't afford it.

17 But a lot of them older guys that's
18 got them dogs -- them dogs are smart.
19 They've been hunting with them for
20 years. They'll run for a little bit.
21 They'll start hollering or whooping and
22 they'll get off that deer trail and
23 they'll come back. You can see them

1 walking down the road. They'll have six
2 dogs and they don't have a collar, but
3 they've been hunting with them for
4 years.

5 And, you know, we know we've had a
6 problem in the past. So we
7 diligently -- we tell our new hunters,
8 our guests, you know, when you come up
9 here, if you see a dog, grab that dog,
10 you know. And our dogs don't bite.
11 They're good dogs. But grab that dog.
12 Please don't let it go on somebody
13 else's property and just respect them.
14 And if the property owner comes up from
15 somewhere, be nice. And that kills them
16 a lot of times with kindness, you know.
17 And there's a few times we've had
18 problems, but we have property owners
19 that'll tell us if your dog goes on a
20 property -- don't take no gun -- call
21 us. We'll come open the gate up and let
22 you go in there and get your dogs. Just
23 don't go on it without asking us. And,

1 of course, we do that.

2 So we have some people that works
3 great, and we just have a few that don't
4 necessarily want us to do it and they
5 just want to still hunt and they don't
6 want the dogs on there. But, like I
7 said, we diligently buy GPS and do
8 everything we can. And there are some
9 places we've kind of got a couple of
10 trouble areas, so to speak --

11 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Dugger, thank you. The
12 Commissioner has a question for you.

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So your place is on
14 Phillipsville Road --

15 MR. DUGGER: Yes, sir.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And where is that
17 in relation to the Assembly of God
18 Church right there? Is it close to that
19 on Phillipsville?

20 MR. DUGGER: Yes, sir. It's right over from
21 it.

22 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And so your
23 property is on both sides of

1 Phillipsville Road? Those are the roads
2 you're talking about?

3 MR. DUGGER: Yes, sir, that is correct.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right. Just
5 making sure I had the right area. Thank
6 you.

7 MR. DUGGER: Yes, sir.

8 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions for
9 Mr. Dugger?

10 (No response.)

11 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

12 MR. DUGGER: Thank you, sir.

13 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Our next speaker today is
14 Mr. Don Knight from Calhoun County.

15 MR. KNIGHT: I think most of you know who I
16 am. I'm Don Knight. I live in
17 Anniston, and I hunt in Barbour.

18 And I want to first thank the
19 Conservation Advisory Board and the
20 Conservation Department itself for the
21 work on CWD. I think that's a very
22 important function of this state. If we
23 don't get it stopped, it's going to

1 change our total way of hunting, and we
2 need to work on that even more.

3 Now, most of you got my letter, so
4 I'm not going to go into that. You know
5 what I'm talking about there.

6 What I would like to bring up today
7 is what we need to do about saving
8 all -- all aspects of hunting period.
9 You read in the papers and everything
10 every day where the states around this
11 United States is trying to shut down all
12 hunting -- not just dog hunting. All
13 hunting. And even in a couple of them
14 it's fishing. We've got people out
15 there today that are working extremely
16 hard to shut us all down, and if we
17 don't all stick together and we don't
18 all work toward knocking these people
19 out, they'll get us.

20 Look around, people. Look around to
21 what's happening in this world today and
22 see what's going on. You can kill
23 babies, but they're not going to let us

1 go out there and kill Bambi. Think
2 about it. It's coming. Get serious.
3 There are a lot of things that's going
4 on down here, but we need to get serious
5 about that.

6 All right. Another thing I want to
7 bring up is the gentleman that brought
8 up the coon hunting deal a while ago.
9 We also have rabbit dog trials, which I
10 have rabbit dogs, and I love to rabbit
11 hunt. But the thing that you got to
12 understand is you're talking about your
13 money, but when you do away with these
14 things or cause them to be done away
15 with, you're taking away from the
16 community. When these people come into
17 town to go to these trials, they spend
18 money and that community is helped a
19 lot. So I know you've got to have your
20 money, but stop and think about the
21 communities around it before you make a
22 decision on it. And it's a lot of
23 money. I promise you it is.

1 And I just want to thank you people.
2 Glad to see Mr. Pate here and all the
3 rest of you. I know sometimes I cause
4 you problems, but you cause me problems.
5 That's just as simple as it can be.
6 I've worked with these boards for 25
7 years now, I guess.

8 Grady -- I see him down there eating
9 steaks at a restaurant and I know he's
10 got plenty of money. I have to go in
11 there and scrimp to buy me a steak in
12 that airport restaurant.

13 It didn't get blowed away, did it?

14 MR. HARTZOG: No.

15 MR. KNIGHT: Good. That's our eating place.

16 MS. JONES: Time.

17 MR. KNIGHT: And I just want to let you know
18 that -- please help us as dog hunters.
19 If you could, go to these land
20 companies. You're talking about
21 something that would help the dog
22 hunting problems. Go to these land
23 companies and ask them to lease these

1 large tracts of land to dog hunters. We
2 would keep our dogs off of everybody
3 else's property. It would be a big
4 help.

5 But you need to protect all forms of
6 hunting no matter whether it's quail
7 hunting, snipe hunting or whatever.

8 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Don. We
9 appreciate it.

10 MR. KNIGHT: Thank you.

11 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, one comment.

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes. Go ahead.

13 MR. KNIGHT: He's like the rest of us. He's
14 getting this color.

15 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes. Yes, he is.

16 The next speaker is Ms. Susan
17 Morrow.

18 MS. MORROW: Good morning, I'm Susan Morrow.
19 Most of you know me. I want to thank
20 the Board for what y'all have done and
21 hope that y'all will make sure that
22 chronic wasting disease does not come to
23 our state because hunting is a big part

1 of what a lot of us family people like
2 to do.

3 And I'd also like to ask the Board
4 to -- if you remember -- when these
5 people call you with complaints about
6 dog hunters, a lot of times it's not
7 hunting dogs. It's just a dog.

8 And also this past year I have
9 visited with some dog hunting clubs.
10 Just about all our dog hunters now -- a
11 lot of the clubs won't let you even turn
12 loose if you don't have a GPS collar on
13 your dog, and that is a lot of money.
14 And we are doing a whole lot better. I
15 would say 85 percent of the clubs you
16 don't turn loose unless you got GPS
17 collars on.

18 And everybody says that they've had
19 a good season. And I would like to
20 remind the Board that in the past, many
21 years ago before some of y'all was on
22 the Board, the common thing was if you
23 wanted to get rid of dog hunting, you

1 called the representative in your area
2 and told him. Because unlike
3 trespassing, a sheriff will come out
4 there or a game warden and they will
5 arrest a trespasser, but the dogs -- the
6 dogs show up or they don't show up.

7 We are trying our best to keep our
8 dogs on our property. And before
9 whenever -- it was common knowledge all
10 you had to do was call, get it brought
11 up at a meeting, and then the next
12 meeting they would vote. And that's how
13 dog hunting got done away with in a lot
14 of counties in Alabama until the dog
15 hunters started showing back up to these
16 meetings to defend ourself. And we come
17 up here and it's like we got our hat in
18 our hand. We beg y'all to keep the kind
19 of hunting that we like to do. We're
20 not trying to change y'all's. And we
21 don't mind restrictions because we want
22 to continue to hunt the way we do.

23 So I would like for y'all before you

1 make any decisions on taking any more
2 dog hunting away to think about these
3 other counties, how they got dog hunting
4 done.

5 And, also, hunting license have been
6 on a down-cline, especially since dog
7 hunting -- every time it comes up. And
8 a lot of our hunters, they don't do
9 nothing but dog hunt. And if the
10 restriction on dog hunting would be
11 better and no more taken away, your
12 hunting license might come back up.

13 And I would also ask that y'all make
14 sure that the chronic wasting disease
15 stays out of our state. Thank y'all.

16 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Susan. Thank you
17 very much for being here.

18 Our next speaker is going to be
19 Mr. John Williamson.

20 MR. WILLIAMSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My
21 name is John Williamson from Bessemer,
22 Alabama, in regards to hunting in Walker
23 County.

1 Unlike the previous two speakers,
2 I'm speaking against dog hunting. I'm
3 not asking that dog hunting get taken
4 away. Okay. I done that 25, 30 years
5 ago myself. I've also given you just a
6 few of our documentation of dogs. And
7 these dogs are dog -- deer dogs.
8 They're not house dogs. You can see in
9 these pictures. And you can see
10 correspondence from the first day of gun
11 season all the way through till about
12 the end of January even though season
13 was closed on the 15th.

14 Hearing the lady speak previously
15 about GPS collars, I wish that they were
16 hunting next to me. Okay. And a
17 gentleman earlier saying the same thing.
18 I feel it should be mandatory for them
19 to have those GPS. I know they're
20 expensive, but, hey, I spent 12 grand on
21 700 acres last year to hunt for family.
22 It's just a few of us and it's family.

23 So for me to sit here and come out

1 and hunt 40 days, 45 days during the
2 year and I only get five days that I'm
3 not hearing the dogs run or dogs coming
4 across the field or running deer off my
5 field that I'm sitting at or my wife is
6 sitting at or my young nephews and
7 nieces, my liberties get taken away.
8 It's not fair.

9 I'd love to have these people that
10 are speaking respectfully of having GPS
11 collars and keeping them on their own
12 property. But when they're turning them
13 loose right next to the property line --
14 you're sitting in a stand 300 yards from
15 the property line and you hear them
16 turn them loose, drop the tailgates.
17 That's not right. There's got to be
18 some kind of limit somewhere. I ain't
19 asking for it to be taken away, but
20 there's got to be penalties somehow or
21 another associated.

22 You know, these dogs ain't going to
23 go hungry. You look in there. You can

1 find a couple of dogs in there that are
2 skin and bones. They've been out there
3 running around. And it's not just the
4 fact of hunting on Friday and Saturday.
5 You go out there on Tuesday and
6 Wednesday and Thursday thinking you
7 might get away with it. No. The
8 stragglers are still out there running
9 around, running in circles, following
10 you. They get so poor. Now, when they
11 come to the camp, trust me, my wife,
12 that gentleman's daughter, them dogs --
13 they're going to get fed and they're
14 going to get taken care of. We're not
15 going to hurt somebody's dogs. But it
16 sure did hurt our season. Hurt that kid
17 from having a good chance at a buck.

18 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other specific point that
19 you would like to make?

20 MR. WILLIAMSON: Just other than the fact
21 that, you know, there's got to be some
22 mandatory punishments or requirements
23 more dedicated toward this dog hunting.

1 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: So if there were some rule in
2 place that allowed a dog to be penalized
3 or a dog's owner to be penalized for
4 being on your property illegally or
5 uninvited, as it were, would that be
6 something that you think would help you?

7 MR. WILLIAMSON: Oh, it would definitely help
8 my area in my situation. The club south
9 of me was scared to come up here.
10 They're scared of retribution. Well,
11 I'm past that. I don't care.

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Retribution from the ...

13 MR. WILLIAMSON: Dog owners.

14 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: From the dog owners and the
15 dog deer hunting clubs.

16 Well, there's -- we have a rule that
17 has been brought up on several
18 occasions. We've talked about it, and
19 it sort of -- it's something that I
20 would like for Chief Weathers, if he
21 could, to give us a rundown of that
22 particular rule that might help you.

23 CHIEF WEATHERS: Chairman Dobbs, you know,

1 it's been brought up a couple of times
2 over the last few years. The dog deer
3 hunting regulation, 220-2-.112, it
4 establishes some of the few laws that we
5 have on dog deer hunting.

6 We talked about several years ago --
7 introduced the idea of a dog
8 encroachment subsection being added to
9 the dog deer hunting regulation, and
10 basically what it said was this: It
11 shall be unlawful for any person after
12 having received a written warning from a
13 Conservation Enforcement Officer to
14 allow a dog for the purpose of deer
15 hunting to enter onto, cross, or remain
16 upon the property of another without
17 written permission.

18 So it could not really be enforced
19 ever by a sheriff's deputy or a state
20 trooper or anybody other than someone
21 who had some understanding of hunting
22 and fishing issues and conservation
23 issues. It's a game warden regulation.

1 No one would be cited for this,
2 arrested for this without having been
3 warned the first time. It's very
4 similar to criminal trespass. There is
5 a warning. When the same behavior
6 occurs again, the dogs show up for a
7 second time, the dog's owner can be
8 cited for a violation of the exact same
9 regulation that's in place right now.
10 So that's basically what it was.

11 We looked at it as a way to be as
12 minimally restrictive on dog deer
13 hunting statewide as we could. Instead
14 of putting more counties on the permit
15 system, which has the possibility of
16 taking away public lands, things that we
17 don't permit, putting one regulation out
18 there that held an individual
19 accountable and not the entirety of the
20 club. The way we looked at it was that
21 it would give the dog deer hunting clubs
22 a tool, something in their bylaws of the
23 individual club that if that member was

1 given a warning for allowing their dog
2 to go onto a neighboring property owner
3 or being arrested for it, so to speak,
4 given a ticket for this, that that club
5 could have that in their bylaws and use
6 that as a tool to eject that member of
7 the club and not punish that club. It's
8 a fairly minimally restrictive way of
9 looking at it to accomplish a goal.

10 Walker County --

11 MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, that would help because
12 presently when I call Phil -- and Lord
13 knows that if he was here, I mean, he
14 could tell you. I mean, I wore him out
15 hard for several weeks with -- and
16 there's some of that correspondence in
17 there.

18 CHIEF WEATHERS: Sure.

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: But if they don't have GPS
20 collars on to stop them --

21 CHIEF WEATHERS: Sure.

22 MR. WILLIAMSON: -- even what you're saying is
23 not going to do any good. And as far as

1 that goes, I had two dogs that had
2 tracking collars on --

3 CHIEF WEATHERS: Sure. It occurs.

4 Absolutely.

5 MR. WILLIAMSON: -- that stays over there --

6 CHIEF WEATHERS: This would be a tool for your
7 county that does not currently exist.
8 And Walker County is not on the permit
9 system as it stands right now. So this
10 would be some tool if a dog was to be
11 able to be caught on your property, a
12 collared dog, a hunting dog -- there is
13 a possibility of doing something with
14 that dog's owner aside from what's going
15 on right now, meeting him back out at
16 the road, delivering the dog to him, and
17 it can occur again two hours later.

18 MR. WILLIAMSON: Now, would that pertain just
19 in particular to that one dog or any dog
20 under that man's name?

21 CHIEF WEATHERS: Under his name. It's not a
22 specific dog.

23 MR. WILLIAMSON: Under his name, so it's not a

1 specific dog.

2 CHIEF WEATHERS: Right.

3 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Williamson.

4 Chief Weathers, a quick question.

5 If a hunting club is on or an area is on
6 the permit system, this is not something
7 that's going to affect them directly.

8 It's more to the individual. Is that
9 right?

10 CHIEF WEATHERS: The way that we've looked at
11 it is it should be an aid for them, a
12 tool. If a club gets multiple
13 complaints in a year, typically what we
14 do, we send them a warning letter and
15 we'll put them on probation for the next
16 year.

17 Now, they may have gotten those
18 multiple complaints for one or two
19 members. The vast majority of the club
20 is doing exactly what they should be
21 doing. They bought tracking collars.
22 They've whistle-broken their dogs,
23 whatever it is. They're controlling

1 their dogs. But they may have a couple
2 of club members who are habitually
3 turning dogs loose with no respect to
4 whether it appears on somebody else's
5 property or not.

6 It gives us a tool -- right now all
7 we have is after a year's worth of
8 warnings to carve out a piece of
9 property of that dog hunting club and
10 say, okay, between this road and this
11 road you can no longer dog hunt or take
12 the dog deer permit from the entirety of
13 the club. We don't in our current
14 regulation have a way to punish the
15 individual that may be -- you know,
16 honestly, he may be -- that one person
17 may be the only problem in that club,
18 and that's -- I think that's a reality
19 in a lot of places.

20 So, no, it's not any kind of
21 situation where we would go and arrest
22 this one person, the club ejects them,
23 and then next year pull the club's

1 permit. That's absolutely not the
2 intent of it.

3 MR. WILLIAMSON: No. I think it would be fine
4 if you just did it to the one owner
5 itself and not even be an issue with the
6 club.

7 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

8 MR. WILLIAMSON: So it's up to the club and
9 the club president to ensure that
10 everybody is doing --

11 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Williamson.
12 Thank you. We appreciate the dialogue,
13 and we'll take this under advisement for
14 sure.

15 Questions?

16 MR. BARKSDALE: Yes. I have one question.

17 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Barksdale.

18 MR. BARKSDALE: How would you do that with
19 dogs that do not have a collar on?
20 Because they simply can just open the
21 box --

22 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

23 CHIEF WEATHERS: Will it fix every problem?

1 Avery today.

2 MR. BATES: My name is Avery Bates. I'm vice
3 president of Organized Seafood. Been
4 doing this a long time.

5 But first I want to invite y'all to
6 the "Seafood Bash" on the 20th. Love to
7 see our new Agriculture fellow that just
8 went to the restroom come with y'all.

9 DR. LEMME: March 20th; right?

10 MR. BATES: March 20th. We should have a lot
11 of good seafood.

12 A number of concerns. We're losing
13 our barrier islands. We want the
14 Conservation to support some bills that
15 David Sessions -- we're trying to get
16 the beach quality sand to build back the
17 island. If we lose that one barrier
18 island we got, we're in trouble inside
19 toward your estuaries and stuff. It's
20 critical that we keep our barrier
21 islands like Dauphin Island alive and
22 well and sand put back on the beach. So
23 far the Corps has really done us in.

1 Also, we've got a problem -- our
2 Board of Health now tells me we've got a
3 lot of people on the east side of the
4 Bay that's putting cages for their
5 personal use -- oyster cages. This in
6 turn -- if they harvest oysters when
7 they want to, if they hit the market --
8 they won't hit the market. They can't
9 hit the market. But what the problem
10 is, *Vibrio vulnificus* gets very
11 prevalent when the water gets up.

12 And we can't oyster when it gets
13 over 80 degrees without having the
14 oysters brought. But if the people on
15 the piers get sick, what happens? It
16 gets in the press. It destroys -- we
17 mentioned it before -- the market for
18 all of Alabama oysters.

19 When it says oyster with *Vibrio* in
20 it, we're going to have a problem with
21 enforcement, getting with the Board of
22 Health. Byron Webb says I don't know
23 what the Conservation is going to do

1 about it. But I hope we're working on
2 that to make sure that these people that
3 has their own private piers -- when they
4 harvest the oysters, they better be
5 careful that the oyster industry is not
6 hampered, hindered, or shut down.
7 People will not eat oysters if they know
8 that they're going to get sick, and I
9 don't blame them.

10 So we would love for something to
11 come up with the Department with
12 enforcement to try to head off a problem
13 before it truly gets here because it's
14 getting ready to boom with some of these
15 private piers. And that's a concern for
16 the Board of Health, too, and I hope
17 it's a concern for the Conservation.

18 We -- we want to continue to supply
19 a lot of food for our people. We're
20 worried about what the Corps is doing up
21 the Bay. The flooding that we're having
22 now -- we had two tremendous floods
23 putting extra sedimentation in the Bay.

1 The Corps in turn digs the bottom of the
2 channel --

3 MS. JONES: Time.

4 MR. BATES: -- puts the spoil out on the
5 flats, and adds maybe 200 years of
6 siltation across some of our reefs.

7 So think what we have to deal with
8 with our commercial fishermen and don't
9 make a regulation on fishing that will
10 hamper or interfere with our
11 restaurants. Our restaurants are
12 begging for seafood. So don't put a
13 regulation that'll put some of these
14 fish that's coming up on a part where
15 the public can't consume them in our
16 restaurants. Thank you very much.

17 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Bates.

18 Any questions for Avery?

19 Mr. Wolfe.

20 MR. WOLFE: Mr. Avery, I've had a lot of
21 people come to me in the last year
22 that -- it is. It's spreading on the
23 Point Clear/Weeks Bay area, right

1 through there. And that's kind of where
2 it's spreading, and I'm just absolutely
3 telling them not to do it. And I think
4 you're right. And I think it's
5 something that we as a board are going
6 to have to address because somebody is
7 going to get sick and somebody is going
8 to really get sick bad.

9 So it is a big thing growing, and we
10 know it's growing. And we know there's
11 a lot of people starting to do it in
12 that little area through there. But I'm
13 doing everything I can to notify them
14 when they ask me and tell them not to do
15 it.

16 MR. BATES: You know, our oyster industry --
17 we produce some of the best oysters in
18 the world. If you come to this meeting
19 that we're going to have on the 20th,
20 you'll get to eat some half-shell
21 oysters if the waters are open. And I
22 want to tell you, I open a lot of them
23 for the people there. They say they're

1 I did want you to know and let the Board
2 know that there was a bill that was
3 introduced in the regular session -- I
4 think it's House Bill 107 -- that would
5 address recreational oyster harvest
6 under those piers and would be a no-cost
7 permit. It's not a departmental bill.
8 I'm just letting you know that there is
9 a bill out there. I would encourage you
10 to look at that. And it would create
11 that no-cost permit where they would
12 track the people that are doing this
13 recreational oyster work under the piers
14 where they can provide them information
15 about *Vibrio vulnificus* and track what
16 they're growing there. So just take a
17 look at that, please, sir.

18 MR. BATES: Yes, sir. But we did have grave
19 concern both to the Board of Health and
20 our oysters. And I want to say if
21 you've got a pier and you want
22 oysters -- it scares me that they're
23 going to get them in July when the

1 Vibrio is the highest and go consume
2 them and kill the market that's really
3 trying to refrigerate their oysters
4 within one hour, which --

5 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Avery. Thank you
6 very much.

7 MR. BATES: Thank y'all.

8 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We're always glad to have you
9 here.

10 Our next speaker is Mr. Blakeley
11 Ellis from Orange Beach, Alabama.

12 MR. ELLIS: Thank you, Chairman. I just
13 wanted to take the opportunity to speak
14 to y'all about some of the stuff we've
15 been working on with the Department and
16 Marine Resources.

17 I will just tell you, I really
18 appreciate the relationship that my
19 organization, the Coastal Conservation
20 Association, has with the Department,
21 with Chris and with Scott and with
22 Kevin. I see a lot of other states. I
23 talk to a lot of other executive

1 directors around the country, and
2 they're all pretty jealous of the type
3 of relationship we have and the amount
4 of information we can share with each
5 other and the amount of projects that we
6 do work on together. And it's just
7 something that I'm really proud of.

8 While I'm talking about stuff that
9 I'm really proud of, it makes me really
10 proud to see us continue to grow the
11 artificial reefs off our state. It's no
12 secret that we've got the best
13 artificial reef system in the world, the
14 biggest. And it makes me even more
15 excited that we're not slowing down and
16 that we're continuing to add more
17 artificial reefs even though some folks
18 at NOAA, the Marine Fisheries --
19 National Marine Fisheries don't
20 necessarily like the artificial reefs.
21 But I appreciate y'all continuing to
22 work towards that.

23 I wanted to thank y'all again for

1 the opportunity to have the reef zones
2 named after my organization. Appreciate
3 Governor Ivey and Chris and Scott for
4 all the work they did on that. My
5 organization will continue to support
6 all of y'all's efforts to have more and
7 more of a state-controlled reef fish off
8 our coast.

9 Definitely encourage the Snapper
10 Check program, the compliance. We do
11 understand that that's the weak link and
12 a lot of the arguments is the compliance
13 and the participation, or lack thereof,
14 with our anglers. And so we're
15 definitely open to helping spread that
16 word or encourage participation with
17 that process.

18 With the trout and flounder
19 regulation changes that are being
20 discussed, those are easily the two fish
21 that I get the most phone calls at my
22 office about is people concerned with
23 those species, speckled trout and

1 flounder, but specifically flounder. I
2 do feel good knowing that we do have
3 guys working hard at the hatchery down
4 at Gulf Shores to produce flounder to
5 restock some, but there's definitely
6 something that's got to be taken with
7 that.

8 Look forward to seeing y'all down in
9 my neck of the woods in May down at
10 Orange Beach.

11 And I'll take this -- if any of
12 y'all have -- any of y'all or anybody in
13 the room, if there's a youth group --

14 MS. JONES: Time.

15 MR. ELLIS: -- a camp or any type of an
16 organization that has access to a pond
17 or a lake and needs fishing equipment,
18 rods and reels or some tackle -- it
19 doesn't have to be saltwater. That's
20 what we work with primarily. But if you
21 know of one that needs rods and reels
22 for the kids, get in touch with me.
23 We'd like to help with that.

1 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Blakeley.

2 Any questions for Mr. Ellis?

3 (No response.)

4 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

5 Our last speaker is Mr. Lonnie
6 Miller. My note says you wanted to be
7 last.

8 MR. MILLER: Oh, I'm sorry. I won't tie you
9 up very long.

10 I'm Lonnie Miller, the president of
11 the Alabama Dog Hunters Association.

12 I'm going to just kind of feed on what
13 some of these other folks talked about.

14 The communication -- what I've
15 talked about for -- this is my fourth
16 year. Communication is what's going to
17 help the dog problem. This year for
18 some reason we don't have the
19 communication that we've had in the
20 past.

21 What I mean by that is that the -- I
22 had to do a Freedom of Information Act
23 this year to get the deer dog report

1 complaint -- the complaint report. In
2 the past it was something I would just
3 email the DCNR, which the Chief at the
4 time -- two weeks later -- you know,
5 every two weeks or so I would do that.
6 This year I emailed two weeks into the
7 season, and I was told, you know, by
8 Chief Weathers basically it was a legal
9 issue now and that -- basically because
10 of a comment that was made publicly here
11 and they can't do that, so I have to do
12 a Freedom of Information Act to get any
13 information.

14 So I did -- look, I did the
15 Freedom -- the FOI. I did it. So I
16 asked for the report. Then I was told
17 we had to wait till the season was over,
18 which I get that. But the only way that
19 I know there's 16 complaints in
20 Washington County or 17 in Mobile County
21 is if I can get the complaint. If we
22 could get it at three or four complaints
23 on my side I could head it off. I know

1 where the problem's at. And so I got
2 the report two weeks after the season
3 was over.

4 So like today I talked to
5 Mr. Hartzog. He says there's complaints
6 in Coffee County. On that report
7 there's zero complaints in Coffee
8 County. In Baldwin County there's nine
9 complaints. One of those was hunting
10 out of season. In Walker County --
11 there was three complaints in Walker
12 County on the report.

13 And I don't doubt there's dog
14 complaints. There's always going to be
15 somebody breaking the law. We could buy
16 the most expensive GPS equipment in the
17 world. Sometimes it does not work.
18 Collars fail. The satellite don't get a
19 signal. That's not going to stop the
20 problem. And if you want a zero
21 tolerance, you're not getting it.

22 In the last year we had 25
23 complaints. This year there's -- I say

1 complaints. Either warnings or tickets,
2 arrests they call it. This year there's
3 somewhere around 118 based on the report
4 that I got.

5 So all I'm saying is -- and I've
6 talked with three or four of you guys,
7 and I appreciate the ones that do talk
8 to me and call me if there's an issue.
9 Communication is going to stop the
10 problem.

11 Two weeks ago I was at Teel Creek
12 Hunting Club in Coffee County. That is
13 a duck hunting issue, not a dog hunting
14 issue. There's one pack of 14-inch
15 Beagles that the guys were hunting --
16 one pack of Beagles in that small a club
17 I don't think is an issue. I've been
18 all over the state. And in the past
19 what I do know is communication is going
20 to fix the problem, not restrictions.

21 MS. JONES: Time.

22 MR. MILLER: So as far as any restrictions go,
23 what I ask is let the dog hunters be a

1 part of the chain so we can fix it on
2 our end as well and be a part.

3 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Lonnie. Thank you
4 very much.

5 Any questions for Mr. Miller?

6 Jeff Martin.

7 MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Is there any way that we could
9 get -- I've worked with Lonnie a bunch,
10 and the communication we've had and the
11 communication he has where I'm having
12 issues has been outstanding. And I was
13 hoping that fellow would be here because
14 I was going to tell him to talk to you.

15 Is there any way we can get him that
16 information any quicker?

17 CHIEF WEATHERS: It would be a question for
18 our legal section.

19 Here what's important to bring up is
20 that the dog deer hunting report, as
21 Lonnie calls it, we didn't do that.
22 Chief Dodd started that four years ago
23 for Lonnie. And we don't keep track of

1 complaints in general. We get
2 complaints through the officers, through
3 emails -- it might be at the post
4 office -- on everything, fishing
5 complaints. You name it. We don't take
6 time -- we have very few officers. We
7 try and tie up their time on paperwork
8 as little as possible.

9 But we don't track complaints. We
10 began this four years ago for Lonnie to
11 provide that information, not to try and
12 target dog hunting or anything like
13 that. To provide this information.

14 As far as the Freedom of Information
15 Act request, the open records request,
16 that's the advice of our legal counsel,
17 and that's really not a question that I
18 can answer. But, understand, we do take
19 very good records on what comes into us,
20 and we give it as fast as we can so he
21 doesn't have to do a FOI request every
22 two weeks.

23 MR. MILLER: What I'm saying about the --

1 excuse me. I'm sorry.

2 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The Commissioner has a
3 question.

4 MR. MILLER: I'm sorry.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I was just going to
6 say, again, Mr. Lonnie did file two open
7 records requests. I think the second
8 one that he filed -- I think we were
9 able to turn that around in about two
10 days and get that back to him. On the
11 last one we replied. So it's not like
12 this is dragging out for months and
13 months. I think in two or three days we
14 got him the information that he asked
15 for.

16 Some of the stuff that he asked for,
17 like the complaints, is not something
18 that we have on a -- that we compile on
19 a weekly basis or when the officers
20 send -- some of it takes a little bit
21 more time to get that information for
22 you.

23 MR. MILLER: Yes, sir. But that's just --

1 that's the exact point. But the same
2 information that you're saying you don't
3 have is what we're regulating -- you
4 guys are being told we got all these
5 complaints, but they're not keeping up
6 with them. And what I'm saying, as I
7 said for four years, if you don't have a
8 substantiated complaint -- did you catch
9 the dog, who does it belong to -- it
10 doesn't matter. Anybody could call or
11 stop me at the store and complain, but
12 is it a complaint --

13 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Lonnie. And a lot
14 of these complaints, as you know, come
15 to these Board members.

16 MR. MILLER: Sure.

17 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: So they vet those complaints
18 before they bring them here as a fact.

19 MR. MILLER: Sure.

20 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: So just to understand it.
21 Thank you very much.

22 MR. MILLER: Sure. I understand fully.

23 MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman?

1 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Jeff.

2 MR. MARTIN: I would just suggest to any of
3 the Board members, especially the new
4 guys -- I would get Lonnie's number
5 because he has helped me a bunch. And
6 if I have a complaint, I can call him,
7 and 99 percent of the time he'll take
8 care of it in a very professional
9 manner.

10 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And I'm happy to share that
11 with anyone. I have it. I'm happy to
12 share it. Thank you.

13 MR. MILLER: Look, guys, about the dog
14 encroachment, I strongly suggest we get
15 a committee of dog owners if that's what
16 you guys are going to do, but I can tell
17 you that a person breaking the law --
18 you can make all the rules you want.
19 It's not going to stop -- this gentleman
20 on the end, he's right. If they want to
21 take the collar off the dog, nobody
22 knows who owns the dog. So you can wipe
23 dog hunting out. We can shut it down.

1 And then you're going to have a big
2 deal, and so --

3 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Lonnie. We'll
4 reserve it for another time.

5 MR. MILLER: I'm sorry. See you.

6 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We're past our three minutes.
7 I've been very lenient today with
8 everybody --

9 MR. MILLER: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: -- because we had so few
11 speakers, and it's taken a long time and
12 I apologize.

13 (Brief interruption by the court
14 reporter followed by a brief
15 recess.)

16 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We're back to order.

17 For edification moving forward,
18 please refer all questions or comments
19 to the Chair so that I can say the name
20 of the commenter, et cetera, so
21 Ms. Blackwell can get all of that for
22 us. She has missed some names. So duly
23 chastised and I apologize.

1 eliminate dog deer hunting on the Piney
2 Woods/Ivory Mountain area. I'll define
3 those borders in a minute.

4 No dog deer hunting on Monday,
5 Tuesday, or Wednesday of each week
6 unless a holiday falls on those days.

7 Dogs must be boxed at or before
8 2 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays.

9 Dog deer hunting allowed on weekends
10 during legal shooting hours during the
11 2018-2019 deer season.

12 This motion has a sunshine review
13 provision. A review and recommendation
14 regarding the continuation of this
15 change will be made by Law Enforcement
16 at the first Conservation Advisory Board
17 meeting of 2019.

18 And then it goes into defining the
19 area. Would you like for me to do that?

20 MR. HARTZOG: No. That's fine. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. So in accordance with
22 that, if we could ask Law Enforcement,
23 Chief Weathers, if you would give us a

1 review of what has happened in that area
2 and your experiences.

3 CHIEF WEATHERS: I've spoken with the officers
4 that work those two separate areas.
5 There have been some public complaints
6 from dog hunting in those areas, some
7 things sent through Facebook that
8 originated there that they were able to
9 go back -- some pictures that were sent
10 to us that they were able to go back to
11 spots in the forest and identify that,
12 yes, this was a hunt that was held
13 there. Quieted it down quite a bit
14 absolutely, undoubtedly. And in one
15 respect, from what I understand from the
16 local officers there, the folks that
17 were hunting those areas moved to
18 another area, and we got a fair number
19 of complaints from that particular next
20 area down the line.

21 So it really is a people problem.
22 They just moved -- moved locations. Not
23 as many complaints as in the past, but

1 there are still some complaints on those
2 two areas. But the people that were
3 generating the complaints have sort of
4 moved down the line a little bit.
5 That's the overall feeling in the
6 county.

7 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: What about -- it's my
8 understanding that there were some dogs
9 shot or injured.

10 CHIEF WEATHERS: Yes. It was not on either of
11 the closed areas. But, yes, there was a
12 dog that was killed around the High
13 Falls area in Clay County opening day of
14 the season. A really bad incident.

15 A landowner there who we have had a
16 pretty good bit of history with -- we've
17 had lots of complaints from him. He's a
18 landowner who owns property bordering
19 the National Forest and borders -- the
20 Forestry Service borders his property.

21 Constant problems with dogs running
22 on his property. He's called us 30 or
23 40 times over the years. Our officers

1 respond. We've caught dogs, taken them
2 off his property, the same thing he's
3 done. A few years ago we actually
4 arrested him. He put out relaxing
5 snares to try and keep dogs off of his
6 property, and we charged him, I think,
7 with nine counts of having snares out.

8 Opening day of the season he was on
9 a food plot and a dog showed up on his
10 property, and long story short, he
11 killed it. Drug it off the property
12 onto the National Forest. Our officers
13 and the sheriff's department got
14 involved. The district attorney's
15 office spoke with our officers. And I
16 know that felony charges were looked
17 into. I do not know that he has been
18 charged at this point. Cruelty to
19 animals -- they were pushing for felony
20 cruelty to animals. He stated that he
21 was in fear for his life, that sort of
22 thing.

23 A bad situation all the way around.

1 Shouldn't have killed the dog, shouldn't
2 have been placed in the situation where
3 he had to, that sort of thing. But that
4 has nothing to do with those two areas
5 to clarify that.

6 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. What percentages
7 of your complaints have come from those
8 areas? Is it up or down?

9 CHIEF WEATHERS: From the two closed areas?

10 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes.

11 CHIEF WEATHERS: Down. It is down. The
12 neighboring areas have gone up.

13 MR. MARTIN: Mr. Chairman?

14 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Martin.

15 MR. MARTIN: I've spoken with Gene Miller. He
16 is the fellow who is the private
17 landowner that had the petition out that
18 was all around those areas. He actually
19 called Lonnie Miller.

20 Lonnie, I think you can help me
21 verify this when Gene called you.
22 Everybody around that surrounding area
23 that Gene had sign is extremely happy.

1 I talked to Mr. Stevens who kind of
2 heads up that dog hunting on the
3 mountain. He's --

4 MR. MILLER: Mr. Sprayberry. Mr. Sprayberry.

5 MR. MARTIN: Yeah, Mr. Sprayberry, too. I
6 don't know about on down the line. I'm
7 sure that was -- I had actually said
8 something to Mr. Stevens that those guys
9 that are there would probably be spread
10 out or moved somewhere --

11 CHIEF WEATHERS: That's pretty much what's
12 happened. They're happy. The closure
13 worked right there. We probably will
14 hear from the folks, you know, where
15 these guys -- it's a people problem is
16 what it is.

17 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: So I'm understanding these --
18 the previous folks that caused the
19 issues have moved into Clay County?

20 CHIEF WEATHERS: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Into Clay County. Out of
22 Talladega into Clay County?

23 CHIEF WEATHERS: I don't -- you know, we don't

1 know for sure. There's not documents to
2 prove that. But, you know, that's kind
3 of what we think went on.

4 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Commissioner.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Just asking. If
6 you don't feel like you can answer off
7 the cuff, that's fine. But if you were
8 to have a regulation like the dog
9 encroachment rule where it could
10 handle -- you say it's a people problem.
11 If there was a regulation that could
12 address particular individuals that are
13 causing the problem, would that take
14 care of a lot of the other issues in the
15 area or most of the issues?

16 CHIEF WEATHERS: It would take care of a
17 majority, I think. And, you know, one
18 of the -- one of the bad things that
19 came out about the shooting of the man's
20 dog down there -- one of the questions
21 that the district attorney asked was
22 what could he have done, was there
23 something that -- a tool out there, a

1 law that he could have, you know, used
2 as a victim, so to speak, and not shot
3 the man's dog. And I think that was
4 sort of a problem there. He himself had
5 been arrested trying to keep dogs off
6 his property, and it was a ten-year-long
7 problem or so.

8 And the petition -- this man's name
9 was on the petition. I think he was one
10 of the people that was really kind of
11 instrumental in spreading that petition
12 around. So he really had tried to fix
13 this problem in just about every way
14 that he could and then did something
15 really stupid, and on both counts it's a
16 really bad thing.

17 Had an encroachment regulation been
18 in place -- he was one of the guys who
19 was catching dogs routinely. He was
20 catching collared dogs and meeting
21 people on the road every weekend. You
22 know, it was one of those things. Could
23 he -- could that have helped him in his

1 The proposed reef fish endorsement,
2 Regulation 220-3-.87.

3 And this is just like we would
4 normally do in approving seasons and bag
5 limits. They have some federal
6 regulations that they have to deal with.
7 So we're doing this a meeting early;
8 right?

9 Okay. Is there a second?

10 MR. RAYMOND JONES: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The motion is made. There is
12 a second.

13 Is there any discussion?

14 (No response.)

15 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: No discussion. We'll call
16 for a vote. Let's do this just by
17 "ayes" and "nays."

18 All those in favor let me know by
19 saying "aye."

20 (All Board members present respond
21 "aye.")

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any opposed?

23 (No response.)

1 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The motion is carried.

2 Are there any additional motions or
3 new business?

4 Yes, Mr. Cagle.

5 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman, I move that we
6 approve the CPI increase as it's
7 presented by the Department as we do
8 annually.

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: A motion has been made to
10 approve the CPI.

11 Are you ready for that, Assistant
12 Director?

13 A motion has been made to approve
14 the Consumer Price Index increase in
15 license fees for this coming season.

16 The motion is made. Is there a
17 second?

18 MR. MARTIN: Second.

19 MR. HARTZOG: Second.

20 (Brief interruption by the court
21 reporter.)

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Is there any discussion?

23 (No response.)

1 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: There is no discussion.

2 Again, we'll vote on this.

3 All those in favor let it be known
4 by saying "aye."

5 (All Board members present respond
6 "aye.")

7 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any opposed?

8 (No response.)

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The motion is carried.

10 Any other new business at this time?

11 MR. RAYMOND JONES: Mr. Chairman?

12 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Jones.

13 MR. RAYMOND JONES: I would like to ask the
14 Department to do some more research on
15 the importation of semen -- Cervidae
16 semen and, you know, what potential
17 effects it might have on the wildlife of
18 this state.

19 DIRECTOR SYKES: You got it.

20 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. So noted. And we
21 will -- it would be reasonable to expect
22 something back before our meeting in
23 May?

1 DIRECTOR SYKES: Yes.

2 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Some indication?

3 DIRECTOR SYKES: I will put Professor Prion on
4 it.

5 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HARDERS: There's an
6 International Prion Conference in
7 Calgary coming up. Maybe I can --
8 (Simultaneous crosstalk.)

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: To the Calgary Stampede.

10 As an aside, would you like for
11 the -- we'll wait until next meeting to
12 review the proposals for Wildlife and
13 Freshwater Fisheries in their packet.

14 I have no announcements. Are there
15 any announcements? Anything?

16 Mr. Hartzog.

17 MR. HARTZOG: There again, Mr. Chris, would
18 you get -- you know, the legislature is
19 fixing to go in session. I understand
20 there's been four or five bills that
21 have been prefiled. Would you just kind
22 of make the Board as well as the public
23 aware of what bills that affect

1 conservation have been prefiled and are
2 before the legislature.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: You mean get those
4 to you now or send you something or -- I
5 mean, are you asking me to talk about it
6 now or just to send some information out
7 to the Board?

8 MR. HARTZOG: Just send some information out
9 to the Board.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I can get you about
11 half of them off the top of my head, but
12 without that, I'm -- to give you just
13 a -- there were 170-something bills, I
14 think, that --

15 MR. HARTZOG: No. Just the ones that affect
16 conservation.

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right. I'll
18 get those to you.

19 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other announcements or
20 requests?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The date and location of the
23 next meeting will be May the 4th -- I'm

1 pretty sure that's right -- at the Gulf
2 Shores -- in Gulf Shores at the new
3 lodge. Make your reservations early.

4 MS. JONES: I'll send out room block
5 information.

6 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And Ms. Jones will send
7 out -- Ms. B.F. Jones will send out room
8 block information.

9 All right. Safe travels to
10 everybody going home. Thanks for your
11 participation. It was a good meeting.
12 Meeting adjourned.

13
14 (Meeting adjourned at
15 approximately 12:09 p.m.)
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* * * * *

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

* * * * *

STATE OF ALABAMA:

MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

I, Tracye Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large, do hereby certify that I reported the foregoing proceedings of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Board Meeting on March 9, 2019.

The foregoing 192 computer-printed pages contain a true and correct transcript of the proceedings held.

I further certify that I am neither of kin nor of counsel to the parties to said cause nor in any manner interested in the results thereof.

This 25th day of April 2019.

/s/ TRACYE SADLER BLACKWELL

Tracye Sadler Blackwell
ACCR No. 294
Expiration date: 9-30-2019
Certified Court Reporter
and Commissioner for the State
of Alabama at Large