

1                   **STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF**  
 2                   **CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES**  
 3                   **ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
 4                   **State Capitol Auditorium**  
 5                   **Montgomery, Alabama**  
 6                   **February 11, 2017**

7  
8  
9                   \* \* \* \* \*

10  
11                   **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

12  
13                   \* \* \* \* \*

14  
15  
16                   Proceedings taken before Tracye  
 17 Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter, ACCR  
 18 No. 294, and Commissioner for the State of Alabama  
 19 at Large, at the State Capitol Auditorium,  
 20 Montgomery, Alabama, on Saturday, February 11,  
 21 2017, commencing at approximately 9:02 a.m.

22  
23                   \* \* \* \* \*

1 BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

2

- Mr. Warren Strickland, Chairman
- 3 Mr. N. Gunter Guy, Jr., Commissioner
- Dr. Gary Lemme
- 4 Mr. Jeff Martin
- Mr. Raymond Jones, Jr.
- 5 Mr. Grady Hartzog
- Mr. Joseph Dobbs, Jr.
- 6 Mr. T.J. Bunn, Jr.
- Mr. Patrick Cagle
- 7 Mr. Ben C. Stimpson, Jr.
- Mr. Gary Wolfe

8

9

10

11

\* \* \* \* \*

12

13

14

15

CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The February 11, 2017,  
 16 Conservation Advisory Board Meeting is  
 17 now called to order.

18

19

20

21

22

23

I hope every one of you had an  
 enjoyable outdoor experience this past  
 hunting season. The entire board would  
 like to welcome all of you to our State  
 Capitol in Montgomery, Alabama. At this  
 point would everyone, please,

1           discontinue cell phone usage.

2           The first order of business is the  
3           delivery of the invocation.

4           Mr. Jones.

5           MR. JONES: Please bow your heads with me.

6           Our Heavenly Father, thank you so  
7           much for this beautiful day, this time  
8           that we have to come together as members  
9           and citizens of our great state of  
10          Alabama. Help us in the decisions we  
11          make. Help us as a board to listen to  
12          the individuals in the audience and for  
13          us to make wise decisions. Be with all  
14          of those that have gathered here today  
15          and be with them on their way home. In  
16          Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

17          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Jones.

18          The next order of business is the  
19          introduction of the ex-officio members  
20          of the Conservation Advisory Board:

21                 Commissioner Gunter Guy,  
22                 Commissioner of the Department of  
23                 Conservation and Natural Resources.

1                   John McMillan, Commissioner of  
2                   Department of Agriculture and  
3                   Industries.

4                   Dr. Gary Lemme, Director of Alabama  
5                   Cooperative Extension System. Thank  
6                   you.

7                   Curtis Jones, Deputy Commissioner.

8                   Gentlemen, we appreciate all of your  
9                   hard work. And, once again, the board  
10                  wants to recognize the service that you  
11                  have brought forth over the years.

12                  Next we will have the introduction  
13                  of the board members. If you would  
14                  state your congressional district and  
15                  names. And we'll start from the far  
16                  right.

17                  T.J.

18                  MR. BUNN: Okay. I'm T.J. Bunn. I represent  
19                  Congressional District 7.

20                  MR. WOLFE: Gary Wolfe, District 1.

21                  MR. STIMPSON: Ben Stimpson, District 1.

22                  MR. CAGLE: Patrick Cagle, District 2.

23                  MR. JONES: Raymond Jones, District 5.

1 MR. MARTIN: Jeff Martin, District 3.

2 MR. HARTZOG: Grady Hartzog, District 2.

3 MR. DOBBS: Joey Dobbs, District 6.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, gentlemen.

5 We certainly appreciate all of your hard  
6 work and your contribution to preserving  
7 the natural resources in the state of  
8 Alabama.

9 May the minutes note that Mr. Austin  
10 Ainsworth is absent today.

11 The next order of business is the  
12 approval of the minutes, actually, from  
13 the previous two meetings. That's March  
14 20th, 2016 -- excuse me -- February  
15 20th, 2016, and March 26th, 2016.

16 Are there any corrections or  
17 addendums to those last two sets of  
18 minutes? If not, may I have a motion  
19 for approval.

20 MR. HARTZOG: So move.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Grady.

22 MR. JONES: Second.

23 Any discussion?

1 (No response.)

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?

3 (All board members present respond  
4 "aye.")

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

6 (No response.)

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: "Ayes" have it. Motion  
8 carries.

9 The next agenda item is Commissioner  
10 Gunter Guy's comments.

11 Commissioner.

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 And welcome, everyone. We have a really  
14 packed house tonight -- today, I should  
15 say, and I'm going to try to keep my  
16 comments short. But I do have just  
17 about three things I would like to say  
18 briefly, and then we're going to have a  
19 couple of PowerPoints by Director Sykes  
20 and Director Blankenship that I think  
21 will be informative as we move forward  
22 through the agenda.

23 The three things I would like to

1 do -- I hope I can keep it at three --  
2 is you'll see some awards down here in  
3 front. And Alabama Interactive is our  
4 web license and Game Check service  
5 provider. I know there was -- I think  
6 there was going to be somebody here from  
7 Alabama Interactive.

8 There he is. Robert, good to see  
9 you.

10 I just put a couple of these down  
11 front to note what a great job they do.  
12 And there's going to be some more talk  
13 about the Game Check, which we also do  
14 for Snapper Check. And they help --  
15 they help, you know, put those things  
16 together for us and keep them running.

17 And I think if anybody really paid  
18 attention and did their Game Check from  
19 this year, you will see that that is one  
20 of the easiest ones that there is in the  
21 country. And, you know, we heard loud  
22 and clear from everybody that, oh, you  
23 know, this is -- there's a lot to do.

1           It takes about 20 seconds to do the Game  
2           Check -- for all of those who did it and  
3           I hope there was a lot that did it --  
4           once you get your information  
5           downloaded. I don't think you'll find  
6           one better anywhere.

7           And I want to just -- I want to  
8           thank Alabama Interactive. They work  
9           very hard to get what you want and what  
10          we want. So just think about the hard  
11          work that goes into that, and I think  
12          the results speak for themselves.

13          Next, it is just about impossible  
14          for me to not mention this every time  
15          because I think there are a lot of  
16          people that just don't understand about  
17          our department. And so we have four  
18          divisions:

19                 Parks Division. Mr. Greg Lein  
20                 oversees the Parks Division.

21                 I want to thank everybody that  
22                 hopefully voted for Constitutional  
23                 Amendment Number 2. It passed by 80



1           percent. So I would think that a lot of  
2           people in here were a part of making  
3           that possible. And I want to thank you  
4           on behalf of Greg and myself. He runs  
5           an excellent Parks Division with what he  
6           has. And, hopefully, in the future  
7           we -- he has plans to make it even  
8           better than before now that we have  
9           secured that funding from now on. And I  
10          want to thank Greg and his staff for  
11          what he does for our department.

12                 Also, Patti Powell is our Lands  
13          Division director. She runs -- in  
14          addition to running, I should say -- the  
15          first-class Forever Wild program. Her  
16          and her staff also oversee the \$1.3  
17          billion that we have gotten in oil spill  
18          money, which is a whole job into itself,  
19          and manages all the state lands, oil and  
20          gas and different kinds of things like  
21          that. Overwhelming job. They do an  
22          excellent job in doing that,  
23          Mr. Chairman.

1 Chris Blankenship, Marine Resources  
2 director, who will speak in a minute,  
3 oversees all of our coastal fisheries.  
4 He has worked -- if anybody cares  
5 about -- and I think a lot do -- our  
6 snapper fisheries -- has just been at  
7 the leading edge of trying to get that  
8 broken federal system fixed. And you  
9 would just not -- you would not believe  
10 what Chris has done as far as -- in that  
11 way. He is a leader for the state of  
12 Alabama, and the state of Alabama is a  
13 leader in making that a better fishery  
14 for the residents of the state of  
15 Alabama.

16 And then, lastly, Chuck Sykes, who  
17 also oversees all the Wildlife and  
18 Freshwater Fisheries. His section  
19 chiefs do -- and he do a wonderful job.

20 And I want to particularly commend  
21 Chuck for -- many of y'all saw him this  
22 year. I've never seen a director go out  
23 and attend as many meetings as he did,

1 go on the road and talk individually to  
2 the hunters in this state about what we  
3 need from you and how this Game Check  
4 was going to work. And I think y'all  
5 have found out that he is a man who  
6 speaks honestly, like the rest of our  
7 division directors do, and tells you  
8 like it is. And that's the way you  
9 should want it.

10 We're as transparent an agency as I  
11 think we've ever been. So when we tell  
12 you we want to do something, we usually  
13 have a reason that we back it up. And  
14 if you don't believe it, just look at  
15 the statistics.

16 So the thing that I want to add to  
17 that is -- think of this: What I just  
18 said about all of these division  
19 directors and their staff, they create  
20 an economy in Alabama -- I just got some  
21 recent information.

22 So tourists and residents spend  
23 approximately \$7.5 billion annually,

1 Mr. Chairman, related to outdoor  
2 recreation in Alabama. That creates  
3 \$494 million in tax revenues and  
4 supports approximately \$86,000 -- excuse  
5 me -- 86,000 jobs -- supports 86,000  
6 jobs, provides \$2 billion in wages, and  
7 has over \$3 billion in economic impact,  
8 and no tax dollars do we use to do that.  
9 It's based on what you do to support our  
10 agency and this state. None of your tax  
11 dollars go to what we do.

12 Now, that is something to be proud  
13 of by the hunters, fishermen, and  
14 outdoor recreation people in this state.  
15 And for our agency who -- you know, in  
16 tough times where people want government  
17 to be efficient, we are not using any  
18 tax dollars to do that.

19 So, Mr. Chairman, I just want to  
20 thank those people I mentioned. I think  
21 it's worthwhile noting that our division  
22 directors do a phenomenal job and make  
23 it certainly very easy for me and for

1           this board, I think, to do their  
2           business. So I appreciate that.

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Commissioner --

4           COMMISSIONER GUY: And could I say -- and  
5           then, lastly, I do want to say this: I  
6           want to thank our board up here. They  
7           have shown great leadership and, you  
8           know, have been willing to do some  
9           things. Change is always difficult.  
10          And I want to thank our board for the  
11          leadership they showed last year in the  
12          Game Check. And I think the proof is in  
13          the results that we have gotten, and  
14          Chuck is going to talk more about that.  
15          And I just want to thank our board for  
16          that.

17                   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Commissioner.

19           Those words are well received. You  
20           know, we are so fortunate to have such  
21           an active, productive wildlife and  
22           biology staff and our board members. I  
23           think this is my tenth year serving, and

1           without a doubt, I feel that we have the  
2           most engaged, the most experienced board  
3           members that I have seen since I've been  
4           here during this tenure.

5           Chuck, you and the division chiefs  
6           have done a wonderful job. The state of  
7           Alabama is very fortunate to have you  
8           guys in that position. Thank you.

9           COMMISSIONER GUY: So, Mr. Chairman, at this  
10          time if we could recess -- well, we did  
11          have some seats here, but they're gone.

12          So we just need the board members,  
13          if we can --

14                               (Multiple speakers.)

15          COMMISSIONER GUY: We've got so many people  
16          today, and we're sorry for everybody  
17          who's standing outside. We're going to  
18          try to make these -- we're going to try  
19          to make these PowerPoint presentations  
20          as quick as possible, but I think we  
21          found they're very informative. So  
22          we're going to start off with  
23          Mr. Blankenship and then be followed by

1           Mr. Sykes, and then we'll get to your  
2           comments. Thank you.

3           MR. BLANKENSHIP: Again, I'm Chris  
4           Blankenship. I'm the director of the  
5           Marine Resources Division for the  
6           Department of Conservation. I'm going  
7           to give a summary of our Alabama Snapper  
8           Check program -- this is the third year  
9           of the program -- and then, also, a  
10          quick overview of the recommended  
11          regulation changes that we have.

12                 This slide here is a little bit  
13          busy. It has a lot of information that  
14          we try and condense from our Snapper  
15          Check program, but I highlighted in red  
16          the areas that I really wanted you to  
17          see. And these are the total landings  
18          where we take the reported landings and  
19          the discards. And this is the  
20          correction factor that we have for the  
21          amount of nonreporting that we had and  
22          come up with the estimated pounds.

23                 So one thing I do also want to point

1 out, this is the average weight for the  
2 total season, 8.71 pounds. A little  
3 over nine pounds was the average-size  
4 red snapper that was caught during the  
5 federal season. Back in the late 2000s,  
6 when the fishery was in trouble, the  
7 average-size red snapper was around  
8 three pounds. So we've more than  
9 tripled the average size of the fish as  
10 the fishery has rebuilt, which is part  
11 of the problem with the way it's managed  
12 federally now, is the fish are larger  
13 and so the quota is met sooner because  
14 the fishery has recovered and the  
15 management on the federal side has not  
16 caught up with the increase in the  
17 fishery that we have, especially off the  
18 coast of Alabama.

19 I want you to see this number,  
20 206,000. We did have a longer season in  
21 state waters this year than we've had in  
22 the past, and the state waters were  
23 extended out to nine miles thanks to



1           some work from Senator Shelby and  
2           something he put in the federal omnibus  
3           spending bill. Having those extra state  
4           waters -- those extra six miles of state  
5           waters increased the catch from Alabama  
6           state waters about -- about ten times.  
7           That's -- that was about 20 or 25,000 in  
8           previous years during the state season.

9           So our total for Alabama is a little  
10          over 1.5 million pounds from the federal  
11          and state seasons in 2016.

12          There are multiple methods where  
13          people can report the red snapper catch.  
14          They have an app. We have paper reports  
15          at six of our select -- or seven of our  
16          select boat ramps now on the coast.  
17          They can do it online through the  
18          Outdoor Alabama -- or through the  
19          phone -- touch-tone phone.

20          As you can see, only eight percent  
21          of the people used the phone. And we  
22          had a very high rate of incorrect  
23          reporting using the touch-tone phone,

1 but it -- so we have been successful at  
2 getting the ones that do report to  
3 either use the app or online. That's --  
4 about 80 percent of the reports are  
5 coming in electronically.

6 This is just a slide I put up a  
7 couple of years ago, and we keep looking  
8 at this. It just shows the number of  
9 reports by county between the charter  
10 boats and the private fishermen.

11 As you can see, Baldwin County and  
12 Orange Beach have a -- it is the largest  
13 port -- the highest number of charter  
14 vessels in any one port in the Gulf is  
15 in Orange Beach, Alabama. So that's a  
16 big part of the fishery is in Baldwin  
17 County. So we're using this information  
18 to transition some of our staff from  
19 Baldwin County to Mobile County over  
20 time through attrition because we see  
21 that we're needing more officers, more  
22 personnel in Baldwin County as the  
23 fishery continues to grow.

1           So this is a quick slide for the  
2           comparison for the last three years. So  
3           you can see we estimated one-and-a-half  
4           million pounds of red snapper landed.  
5           The federal government estimates that  
6           almost 2.8 million pounds of red snapper  
7           were landed in Alabama in 2016. And  
8           that does not include the months of  
9           November and December, which there will  
10          be very, very few landings during that  
11          month. But you can see it. It is a big  
12          difference. And it follows the pattern.  
13          Since we started Snapper Check in 2014,  
14          there's the difference and the  
15          difference last year and 2015.

16          So the federal system overestimated  
17          81 percent in 2014, 68 percent in 2015,  
18          and then 79 percent in 2016. It's very  
19          consistent how much they have  
20          overestimated the catch for Alabama,  
21          which when you're managing fisheries  
22          against a quota means that the fishery  
23          closes sooner because -- than it would

1           have if the landings information was  
2           correct.

3           I didn't put up all the boring  
4           confidence intervals and statistical  
5           information, but this -- we are much  
6           more confident in our 1.5 million pounds  
7           when you look at it statistically than  
8           their 2.7 million pounds. You know, we  
9           feel like ours is accurate, is more  
10          correct.

11          Just moving forward, we plan to  
12          continue the same program in 2017,  
13          continue the Snapper Check. One thing  
14          that we have added in 2016 and it has  
15          expanded for 2017 is there was a pilot  
16          program that National Fish and Wildlife  
17          Foundation, CLS America, and a couple of  
18          other groups were looking to implement  
19          where they would do electronic reporting  
20          for charter boats. They would have like  
21          an electronic logbook. So Alabama  
22          partnered with those groups since we had  
23          the largest charter fleet in any one

1 place, like I said, in Orange Beach.  
2 And so we have almost a hundred percent  
3 of our vessels that have been outfitted  
4 with these -- for free with these VMS  
5 systems and electronic reporting system.  
6 They're about \$3100 apiece. And so  
7 through this pilot program they install  
8 these on the charter vessels.

9 And so now -- when I showed you that  
10 number of the ones that were reporting  
11 by app, some -- a lot of those came from  
12 this charter program that feeds directly  
13 into our system. So as a help to the  
14 fishermen, we're getting accurate  
15 information, and we've shown that that  
16 type of system will work. So, again,  
17 we're, you know, kind of cutting edge  
18 here in Alabama to show the rest of the  
19 Gulf what will work and give us better  
20 reporting numbers.

21 Our compliance was not nearly as  
22 high as I would like for it to be. In  
23 2016, from the private vessels we

1 estimate about 25 percent of the people  
2 reported accurately and on time, within  
3 the time frame when they were supposed  
4 to, but about 70 percent of the charter  
5 vessels. So that is a big part of our  
6 push for 2017 will be to increase that  
7 compliance and make this program even  
8 better.

9 The whole purpose for doing this  
10 Alabama Snapper Check program was to  
11 show that the federal government is  
12 overestimating the landings for Alabama.  
13 We needed three years' worth of data to  
14 really have that program certified as  
15 the appropriate method for landings  
16 calculations for our state. We finished  
17 our third year in 2016. We've been  
18 diligently working with National Marine  
19 Fisheries Service for 2017 to have them  
20 use our program as what they will use to  
21 count the landings for Alabama and what  
22 they will use preseason to estimate what  
23 the landings will be for Alabama to set

1 the season length.

2 So this should be granted  
3 imminently. We're very -- I had hoped  
4 we would have it before we came to this  
5 meeting today and I could tell you it  
6 was a success. But with the transition  
7 in the new administration, things have  
8 slowed down, but I think within the next  
9 week or two we will have that word and  
10 they'll -- so when they estimate the  
11 season length for 2017, they'll use our  
12 numbers. I won't say that the season  
13 will be longer than nine days in 2017,  
14 but it will be longer than it would have  
15 been if they didn't use our numbers.

16 We expect the nine-mile jurisdiction  
17 to remain for 2017. That is in --  
18 currently we're in a continuing  
19 resolution for the 2016 budget where  
20 that -- that granted us the nine miles  
21 was included. If they pass a 2017  
22 budget -- that is in the draft 2017  
23 budget. So we expect to keep our nine

1 miles.

2 Just real quickly -- I won't go into  
3 all the details. But Senator Shelby  
4 also included \$10 million in the budget  
5 last year to change the way the federal  
6 government does the stock assessment for  
7 red snapper to put together a new  
8 program to estimate the population of  
9 red snapper in the Gulf different from  
10 what they've been doing in the past.  
11 They put out an RFP, and they had these  
12 universities and consortia to provide a  
13 method of how to do this -- do this work  
14 Gulfwide.

15 I am happy to report that of the  
16 five valid proposals that were put  
17 forth, three of them mirrored exactly  
18 what we're doing in Alabama to estimate  
19 the red snapper population. So I think  
20 that was -- that says a lot about the  
21 work that we're doing cooperatively in  
22 the division and with the University of  
23 South Alabama and Auburn University to



1 estimate the populations of the red  
2 snapper in the reef zones off of  
3 Alabama.

4 So they're trying to take the  
5 methods and the way that we're doing  
6 things here and extrapolate that out  
7 Gulfwide to get a Gulfwide estimate. So  
8 I was very -- very happy to see that  
9 when you get all the smartest minds in  
10 the United States together to try and  
11 figure out how to count red snapper,  
12 they want to do it the way we do it here  
13 in Alabama. We must not be that  
14 backwards here.

15 Last year the red snapper season was  
16 open from Memorial Day weekend through  
17 the month of July. That seemed to be  
18 very successful. People were happy with  
19 that. They could fish the Memorial Day  
20 weekend, all through the summer in June  
21 and July when the kids are out of  
22 school. We're still discussing what the  
23 season should be for 2017, but I did

1 receive a lot of positive feedback from  
2 fishermen last year.

3 And one thing that we're proposing  
4 this year is to eliminate the phone  
5 method for reporting in 2017. You saw  
6 that only eight percent of the people  
7 used the phone app to report -- or used  
8 the touch-tone telephone method to  
9 report, and our error -- our error rate  
10 with those was extremely high. And so  
11 we think that we can move forward with  
12 just the app and having the paper forms  
13 available at those seven select boat  
14 ramps and still be able to get all the  
15 information we need.

16 That's all about the Snapper Check  
17 program. We just have a few slides with  
18 a few regulations that we are proposing.

19 One would be to establish a bait  
20 area near Fort Morgan. The legislature  
21 changed the way we manage shrimp in  
22 2016. We closed all of Mobile Bay for  
23 the month of May, and then we reopened

1           Mobile Bay on June 1st. So for the  
2           month of May there is no place for  
3           people -- for smaller boats or for the  
4           live-bait catchers to catch shrimp for  
5           people that fish. So we propose to just  
6           create this one bait area at Fort  
7           Morgan.

8           We have other bait areas around  
9           Mobile Bay, but there was nothing in the  
10          Fort Morgan peninsula for people to be  
11          able to catch bait. So this would only  
12          be open during that one month when those  
13          waters open for commercial shrimping.  
14          And recreational shrimping, this would  
15          just be open like it -- like everything  
16          else, just -- this is something we're  
17          trying to do to help the fishermen and  
18          help the community.

19          Commercial crab regulations: It's  
20          time to -- our crab landings were  
21          down -- have been down substantially.  
22          The average crab landings in the late  
23          2000s was about 2.3 million pounds a

1           year. The average for the last five  
2           years has been about 1.4 million pounds.  
3           This year was a better year than we've  
4           had in the past, but our crab fishery is  
5           not where it needs to be.

6           So we are proposing making a few  
7           changes to the crab reg as a  
8           precautionary measure to increase the  
9           production of blue crabs. One would be  
10          to return egg-bearing crabs to the  
11          water, you know, where they have -- what  
12          they call sponge crabs. If you've ever  
13          caught a crab and it's got what looks  
14          like a sponge on its belly, those are --  
15          those are eggs. And so we would require  
16          the commercial crabbers to throw those  
17          back.

18          And then most of the -- all of the  
19          other states require escape rings, which  
20          are small rings that are put in the trap  
21          so that undersized crabs can get back  
22          out of the crab traps and not -- not be  
23          captured. So we feel like by throwing

1           back the egg-bearing crabs and releasing  
2           the juvenile crabs, that this will  
3           increase crab production in the future.  
4           So we're interested in trying that.

5           Louisiana is having the same  
6           problems there, but they -- one thing  
7           that they did in Louisiana was implement  
8           a 30-day closure where nobody can crab  
9           in the state of Louisiana from February  
10          20th through March 20th. So we want to  
11          try and do some of these things  
12          preemptively before we get to that  
13          situation in Alabama where we have to  
14          have time where people just can't -- the  
15          commercial fishermen just can't work.

16          And then there are some crab traps  
17          that get lost. We have a derelict crab  
18          trap program where we pick up traps that  
19          are -- that people -- the floats get cut  
20          off or they get lost. So in order for  
21          those ghost-fishing crab traps to no  
22          longer kill crabs if they're lost, we  
23          are going to require a biodegradable

1 panel that would be on the side of the  
2 trap that if the trap gets lost, after  
3 30 days or 45 days that panel falls off  
4 and any crabs that are in -- that get in  
5 the trap can get back out.

6 And then we're proposing opening an  
7 area in northern Mobile Bay that had  
8 been closed to crabbing. It was a  
9 channel. The channel is being taken out  
10 by the Lake Forest Yacht Club. And so  
11 we wouldn't allow them to crab in the  
12 channel because it was a marked channel,  
13 but now that that channel is being taken  
14 out, this would open up about another  
15 half a square mile of waters for  
16 crabbing.

17 One of the fastest-growing segments  
18 of the seafood industry is off-bottom  
19 oyster aquaculture. I don't know if any  
20 of you have had those at restaurants or  
21 seen those or seen some articles about  
22 that, but it's an extremely productive  
23 industry that's taken off in south

1           Mobile County.

2           One of the ways that they -- we have  
3           always required oysters to be harvested  
4           and placed in sacks -- burlap sacks.  
5           That is not very efficient for the  
6           oyster aquaculture industry. They would  
7           like to have other types of containers,  
8           plastic containers, things that they can  
9           put the oysters in and stack differently  
10          and use for shipment.

11          So in trying to work with that  
12          industry as it grows, we're trying to  
13          modify our regulations to make it --  
14          make those guys where they can be  
15          efficient and still meet our  
16          requirements for having certain size  
17          containers or sacks of oysters and to be  
18          able to tag those so we know where they  
19          came from in case people -- so in case  
20          people get sick eating an oyster or  
21          something, we'll be able to track those  
22          back.

23          So this is -- to make this one

1 change to add containers, we have to  
2 change about five or six regulations.  
3 But that's all the change is, is just to  
4 make -- to work -- we're working with  
5 the industry to help this industry grow,  
6 to make them more efficient and put  
7 people to work in Alabama. We don't  
8 want to be an impediment to people  
9 working if it's -- if we could do  
10 something that would help them.

11 Just a couple of other quick things.  
12 The king mackerel recreational limit is  
13 increasing to three per person from two.  
14 That's a success story. Our king  
15 mackerel fishery is rebuilt, and it's  
16 just increasing the recreational limit.

17 And then there was a loophole in the  
18 regulations. If people went out in  
19 federal waters and caught certain  
20 species that didn't have a federal size  
21 limit or federal creel limit, they could  
22 bring those back into Alabama in any  
23 size or any number that they wanted if



1           they came from federal waters. So we  
2           would like to close that loophole and  
3           just say if they're fishing in federal  
4           waters and they left from Alabama that  
5           they can only bring back fish to Alabama  
6           that meets our size and creel limits. A  
7           very -- a minor change and it really  
8           just affects those three species right  
9           now: tripletail, sheepshead, and  
10          pompano.

11           And then we did want to clarify who  
12          can sell live bait. That's just a --  
13          just another clarification in the  
14          regulation.

15           Any questions?

16          UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is that the egg sac?

17          COMMISSIONER GUY: Can we just save those,  
18          Chris, until after we get --

19          MR. BLANKENSHIP: Okay.

20           No. That's actually a male crab. I  
21          didn't have a good female crab picture  
22          with an egg -- an egg sac. That would  
23          have been -- that would have been much

1           nicer.

2                   And I would be remiss if I didn't  
3 stand up here and tell you that I think  
4 it would be a good idea if you eat  
5 seafood. Get this many group of people  
6 in a room and I ought to be able to tell  
7 you that seafood is good for you and  
8 healthy. And our commercial fishermen  
9 work really hard to provide this, and  
10 they would appreciate it if you'd eat a  
11 little bit more of it. You can go to  
12 "EatAlabamaSeafood.com" and find recipes  
13 or where you can find it. Thank you.

14       MR. SYKES: If y'all don't mind, I'm going to  
15 do it from up here. Everybody doesn't  
16 love me like they do Chris. I want a  
17 podium in between me and the crowd  
18 before the bullets start flying.

19                   Last year when I came to the board,  
20 I showed you this map where we were one  
21 of three states that did not have some  
22 type of mandatory reporting system. And  
23 we went over the voluntary harvest

1 reporting. We had less than 20,000 deer  
2 reported during the first year, 16,000  
3 the second year, 15,000 the third year.

4 Doesn't that map look better?

5 We are one of two now. And just a  
6 little FYI. Mississippi is right behind  
7 us. Florida is going to be the last man  
8 standing when it comes to a mandatory  
9 reporting system.

10 As of February the 7th, we have had  
11 78,157 deer reported in Game Check.  
12 That's a little bit more than the 15,000  
13 that we had last year. Voluntary didn't  
14 work. I think we all knew that.

15 It's a little over 81,000 right now.  
16 There will probably be more people  
17 hunting today and tomorrow that hunted  
18 the past two days. So we may be up to  
19 about 85,000 by that time. So I'm --  
20 look, I was cautiously optimistic that  
21 people were going to buy into it. It's  
22 still not a hundred percent, but it's a  
23 lot better than where we were.

1           Out of that 78,000 deer -- I'm going  
2           to pose it to the board. I've got one  
3           question for y'all: What's the  
4           buck-to-doe ratio on that? Is it one to  
5           one bucks to does? Two to one? Three  
6           to one?

7           Four to one I heard.

8           Guess what, more bucks are reported  
9           than does so far. Is that the way it  
10          is, or are we killing more bucks than  
11          does? Are people not reporting does and  
12          reporting bucks?

13          I don't know. Time will tell. But  
14          that was something that nobody that I've  
15          asked that question has been able to get  
16          it. Everybody assumes it's two to one  
17          or three to one bucks to does.  
18          And we had nine turkeys reported. I  
19          don't know why.

20          Just a little tidbit of info for  
21          you. Our staff has conducted some  
22          informal surveys. We were betting  
23          before all of this started that we would

1           have 20 to 25 percent compliance. It's  
2           looking like it's better than that.  
3           It's about 35. After the end of turkey  
4           season, we're going to do some  
5           scientific studies on it, but right now  
6           the staff members that have been  
7           conducting this, I'll bet that their  
8           data is going to show the same thing  
9           that a scientific data report is going  
10          to show.

11                 So we're betting on 35 percent right  
12          now. I think Georgia had about 50  
13          percent this year on theirs. 35 percent  
14          for Alabama for the first year, I think,  
15          is a monumental success. So that would  
16          be -- estimated bucks would be a little  
17          over 22,000 (sic), estimated does a  
18          little over a hundred. So we're rocking  
19          on about two-and-a-quarter. That's not  
20          too bad for our first year.

21                 Unlike Chris, who had 80 percent  
22          reporting over online and app, we only  
23          had 46 percent. And I thought we beat

1           that horse pretty good in all the  
2           seminars that we did and magazine  
3           articles and newspaper articles. But  
4           we've still got 30 percent reporting  
5           their harvest through telephone.

6           Chris, please keep me updated on  
7           knocking that out in 2017. I would love  
8           to be right there behind you.

9           24 percent chose to report their  
10          harvest through the website. So we've  
11          basically got 70 percent that's doing it  
12          online. And, again, just like with  
13          Chris, the data that's coming in on the  
14          phone is substandard from what we get  
15          online and through the app.

16          And I do want to thank Robert and  
17          everybody with AI for doing the app.  
18          That was -- that was a huge success.

19          The mail survey that we've been  
20          using for the past 50 years has  
21          estimated approximately 295,000 deer  
22          were killed last year. As you know,  
23          voluntary Game Check said we killed

1           about 15,000. So we're going to fall  
2           somewhere in between the way it's  
3           looking right now.

4           Here are some really interesting  
5           facts as we've started to tease out some  
6           of this data.

7           Dallas County passed Jackson County  
8           last week for the first time in the four  
9           years that we did three-year voluntary  
10          and one-year mandatory. Jackson County  
11          was always number one. And as you see,  
12          Jackson County is sort of -- Dallas  
13          County is one now, but if you look on  
14          the mail survey results, it's number  
15          two. It's still good. But if you look  
16          at the difference in the blue line and  
17          the red line on bucks to does, the mail  
18          survey is estimating about three to one  
19          bucks to does. Same thing with Macon  
20          County.

21          Macon County is number one on the  
22          mail survey. You look at it over here  
23          on Game Check numbers. It's middle of

1           the road. Jackson County, which has  
2           been number one up until last week for  
3           reporting, if you look at the mail  
4           survey, it is way toward the middle of  
5           the pack.

6           So although overall numbers may be  
7           close right now, it's the little things,  
8           the buck-to-doe ratios, which counties  
9           are doing what, which is what we've been  
10          talking about the whole time. We need  
11          much more specific information where our  
12          guys in the field can make  
13          recommendations and we can do the best  
14          job that we possibly can.

15          All of this is preliminary. We're  
16          not going to do anything one year with a  
17          knee-jerk reaction, but this is the kind  
18          of data that we're going to be looking  
19          at. And, y'all, this is stuff that you  
20          can go online. Y'all can look at it  
21          just like we can. Go to the  
22          "OutdoorAlabama" website. You can see  
23          all of this data right there.



1           Some changes -- and the title is  
2           major changes, but really, compared to  
3           the past couple of years, these are  
4           minor changes for 2017-18.

5           Turkey season boundaries for a part  
6           of Geneva County that was previously  
7           closed are going to be opened up for a  
8           limited season.

9           The feral swine season that we did  
10          last year -- Joey and Jessica and  
11          members of the hog dog hunters  
12          association have been asking for years  
13          to be able to hunt at night with their  
14          dogs without having a permit during  
15          those summer months when it's hot. We  
16          allowed that last year, but there was a  
17          lot of confusion over whether you could  
18          use guns or not.

19          There is no confusion now. If you  
20          want to use a gun, get a permit, just  
21          like always, and you can use a gun. I  
22          don't think that's going to be a problem  
23          with anybody, but we wanted to spell it

1 out where there weren't any confusion  
2 this year.

3 U.S. Forest Service may have some  
4 restrictions a little bit further than  
5 what we have as far as small game. Some  
6 of the areas are looking at closing fox  
7 squirrel season or limiting the fox  
8 squirrel harvest. But it's their  
9 property. They can make restrictions  
10 more than we do. So we're just giving  
11 a heads-up that that may happen.

12 Pintail limit was reduced from two  
13 to one. That's not going to affect us  
14 in Choctaw County too much.

15 A segment was added to the regular  
16 goose season from October 7th to the  
17 23rd in order to fully utilize the new  
18 federal framework.

19 And despite what's going around, the  
20 rumors on social media and everywhere  
21 else, no changes have been made for Swan  
22 Creek WMA at the present time. A survey  
23 by our biologists on the area asked

1 hunters some options of what they would  
2 like. As with most things, a little  
3 information can get twisted and turned.  
4 The governor has been getting calls.  
5 We've been getting calls that five  
6 people were going to vote to close Swan  
7 Creek. It's not going to happen. Y'all  
8 can settle down. Nothing is changing on  
9 Swan Creek right now.

10 The deer zone map, it worked last  
11 year. No changes other than calendar  
12 days.

13 At the request of the board, they  
14 have asked us to revise our depredation  
15 permits for deer, and we've done that.  
16 The permits will no longer be handled by  
17 our law enforcement section. They will  
18 be handled by our wildlife section,  
19 namely our technical assistance  
20 biologists. They will be issued  
21 separately from hog and coyote  
22 depredation permits.

23 There will be property inspections

1 to verify that there is damage. Maps of  
2 these areas will be given to the local  
3 CEOs where everybody knows you have a  
4 permit. The number of deer taken, the  
5 day and disposition of the carcass will  
6 be recorded on a data sheet. And in  
7 order to renew your permit, you're going  
8 to have to fill out these data sheets.

9 If hunters need to report their deer  
10 harvest, deer depredation permits are  
11 going to need to report their deer  
12 harvest. A dead deer is a dead deer  
13 whether it's killed in the summer on a  
14 soybean field or on a food plot in  
15 January. We need to know those numbers  
16 where we can do our job. No permits  
17 will be issued during the regularly  
18 scheduled deer season.

19 Some revised regulations: In order  
20 to close a loophole in 220-2-.142, the  
21 turtle dealer or turtle farmer  
22 regulation, verbiage was added to  
23 prohibit propagation of nonindigenous

1 turtles.

2 Standards of care for wildlife held  
3 for public exhibit needs to be amended  
4 to require them to also obtain a USDA  
5 permit in order to have a permit from  
6 us.

7 Organized field trial regulation  
8 limited to three free field trials per  
9 year per organization with an  
10 administrative fee of \$50 per permit.

11 Nongame species reg was amended to  
12 require a permit before you can sell or  
13 offer to sell anything with a  
14 diamondback rattlesnack. In y'all's  
15 packet there's a little list of why, and  
16 basically U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
17 is looking at the diamondback  
18 rattlesnake. It is a species of concern  
19 here. We want to get ahead of it.

20 For areas like the Opp Rattlesnake  
21 Rodeo, they can still get a permit from  
22 the Commissioner to obtain snakes for  
23 that. We're not eliminating it. All

1 we're doing is trying to get ahead of  
2 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listing  
3 it where it's going to be a problem for  
4 us as well as landowners.

5 And then the dog deer hunting reg,  
6 y'all tried it last year. I'm sure  
7 y'all are going to hear a lot of comment  
8 on this coming up in the public section.

9 Look, we worked extremely well with  
10 the Alabama Dog Hunters Association this  
11 year, made monumental strides in  
12 reducing landowner conflicts with dog  
13 hunters. I know Lonnie does not  
14 represent everybody. That's a shame  
15 because we're working well.

16 Talladega went down to very, very,  
17 very few complaints this year. Jeff had  
18 to check and make sure his phone was  
19 still working.

20 We worked with Lonnie and that group  
21 to do the first ever dog hunt on the new  
22 Geneva WMA. It went off without a  
23 hitch. There was 250, 275 people there.

1           Used whistle-broke dogs. They stayed on  
2           the property. Everybody had a good  
3           time.

4           Y'all, it can be done. But I think  
5           that reg with our staff, that is the  
6           answer to the dog-hunting issue. Keep  
7           your dog on your property and have fun.  
8           When it crosses the line and impacts my  
9           ability to enjoy my property, that's  
10          where it's a problem.

11          The permit system. Look at Chilton  
12          County. A couple of people lost the  
13          right for that whole county. With this  
14          regulation, it places the burden on the  
15          individual, not the club and not the  
16          county. It promotes those of you that  
17          are doing it right and protects it. I  
18          don't know any other way to explain it  
19          better than that. The regulation puts  
20          the burden on the individual with the  
21          dog, not the club and not the county.

22          Last year the board changed some  
23          wording in the chronic wasting -- in the

1 Regulation 220-2a-.25 to prohibit  
2 bringing in certain parts of deer  
3 carcasses that came in from out of state  
4 that had CWD. 36 other states have this  
5 similar reg. It basically says you  
6 can't bring any spinal column, brain  
7 tissue -- anything that can carry that  
8 disease. Deboned meat, hides, and  
9 cleaned skull plate can come back.

10 Y'all, we're trying to do everything  
11 we can to keep this disease out of  
12 Alabama. This was just another step.

13 Our department is testing  
14 approximately 500 hunter-harvested,  
15 roadkill, herd health collection, deer  
16 depredation permit deer every year. The  
17 game breeders are testing approximately  
18 500 deer every year. We're all working  
19 together to try to make sure this  
20 disease does not come to Alabama. So it  
21 is -- it's imperative that the hunters  
22 do their part as well and not go out of  
23 state, shoot a deer, and bring the whole



1 thing back.

2 Those are the states that are  
3 impacted with CWD. That map is on the  
4 "OutdoorAlabama" website. You can look  
5 at it. If you hunt in one of those  
6 states in that light color, please bone  
7 your deer out, cape it out, go hunt and  
8 have a good time, but then when you come  
9 back home, bring that deboned meat.

10 I was asked by several of our board  
11 members to give them what had been done  
12 with our law enforcement section this  
13 year. And I just picked a handful.

14 Y'all can remember last year I had a  
15 slide that showed that 3.7 percent of  
16 Alabama residents bought a hunting  
17 license last year. I'm happy to report  
18 we're up, 3.8. It's up from 178,000 to  
19 182,000. So we're making progress.  
20 But, y'all, that's still not enough.

21 I had Acting Chief Lewis pull some  
22 numbers for me. Last year during the  
23 whole season we had written 375

1           citations for hunting without a license.  
2           If people don't buy a license, we don't  
3           have money to hire law enforcement  
4           officers. If we don't have law  
5           enforcement officers, people don't buy a  
6           license for fear of not getting checked.  
7           It's a vicious cycle.

8           We had saved money. We put ten more  
9           officers in the field this year. As of  
10          last week, we have contacted 475 people  
11          that were hunting without a license. So  
12          just by the addition of ten officers, in  
13          half the time more than a hundred people  
14          were ticketed for not hunting with a  
15          license.

16          Y'all, they're stealing from you,  
17          not from me. That's the biggest issue  
18          we have in this state is people hunting  
19          without buying a license, and the only  
20          way we can stop that is sell more  
21          licenses where we can hire more  
22          officers. It's a vicious cycle.

23          Y'all, please, tell your friends,

1 tell your family, purchase a hunting  
2 license. As the Commissioner said  
3 earlier, we receive no general fund  
4 money. The only way we can provide  
5 services to you is by people buying  
6 hunting licenses.

7 All right. I'll get off my soapbox  
8 on that.

9 We had two arrests and multiple  
10 warnings for bringing dead deer into the  
11 state from CWD-positive states. The  
12 regulation worked. We had people that  
13 brought deer in from Illinois and are  
14 still working on several others right  
15 now.

16 We had 16 arrests for illegal sale,  
17 transportation, release, or possession  
18 of live feral swine. That was an  
19 18-month case that covered eight or nine  
20 counties in three states. Y'all, we've  
21 got enough hogs. We don't need to catch  
22 them and take them somewhere else and  
23 turn them loose.

1           Two arrests were made for illegal  
2           sale of wildlife. I'm sure most of  
3           y'all in this room have seen pictures of  
4           that piebald deer that was taken in  
5           Washington County. Tremendous trophy.  
6           It's now in our possession because it  
7           was illegally sold.

8           32 arrests, more than 40 warnings  
9           for failure to maintain accurate  
10          inventory, report transportation of  
11          white-tailed deer, and operating without  
12          the proper game breeder license. One  
13          arrest for illegal transportation of  
14          live white-tailed deer into the state of  
15          Alabama.

16          Y'all, we -- we don't want CWD here.  
17          As hunters and everybody else, we have  
18          got to come together and stop bringing  
19          things into the state that could cause  
20          us a problem. That carcass importation  
21          reg is important. If y'all see anything  
22          that looks suspicious, a dead deer or  
23          live deer, please let your local officer

1 know so we can check.

2 And that's it. And I'll entertain  
3 questions from the board.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Are there any questions  
5 from the board members that you would  
6 like to direct to Chris or Chuck in  
7 regards to --

8 (Brief interruption by the court  
9 reporter.)

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Attention. We're back  
11 in session here.

12 Dr. Lemme, if you'd like to address  
13 Chris or Chuck in regards to questions.

14 DR. LEMME: Chris, I had a quick question on  
15 the biodegradable panels on the crab  
16 traps. How often do they have to be  
17 replaced on an active trap if it's not  
18 lost?

19 MR. BLANKENSHIP: I think they -- it depends  
20 on the trap and how -- where they use  
21 them and how they powerwash their traps.  
22 But I think that most of them would have  
23 to be replaced probably annually to put

1           those -- to restring those or do some  
2           maintenance on those traps, which they  
3           do that anyway. They usually have to do  
4           a lot of maintenance on their traps  
5           throughout the year. And it is one more  
6           thing that they'll have to do.

7           MR. HARTZOG: Chris, on the nine-mile limit --  
8           of course, it's -- Shelby attached it to  
9           the budget bill. Hasn't some states  
10          already gotten permanent nine-mile, and  
11          what's our chances of getting a  
12          permanent nine-mile?

13          MR. BLANKENSHIP: The states of Florida and  
14          Texas have nine miles, and that was  
15          done, really, when they came back into  
16          the Union after the Civil War. Alabama,  
17          Mississippi, and Louisiana have three  
18          miles. And so we're working with  
19          Senator Shelby to have something that's  
20          put in there more permanently than just  
21          year to year in the budget. And so if  
22          the '17 budget passes, we think that  
23          we'll be in good shape to have that nine

1 miles from then on.

2 And then we're also -- you know, a  
3 new congress started in January. So any  
4 bill -- we had several bills that were  
5 making their way through congress that  
6 expired in December. So now we're  
7 having those reintroduced. Senator  
8 Shelby and then Congressman Byrne from  
9 Alabama have bills that would make that  
10 nine miles permanent, and we're trying  
11 to work those through the -- through  
12 congress.

13 MR. DOBBS: Mr. Chairman?

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes.

15 MR. DOBBS: Question for -- for the crab  
16 traps, you spoke about everything being  
17 commercial. Will those rules and regs  
18 apply to recreational crab traps and  
19 crab trappers?

20 MR. BLANKENSHIP: Yes. Yes. I have Major  
21 Scott Bannon and our Chief Biologist  
22 Kevin Anson here as well.

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Are there any further

1                   questions from the board?

2                                   (No response.)

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  At this time we would  
4                   like to acknowledge the presence of the  
5                   press.  We certainly appreciate you-all  
6                   being here today.

7                                The next order of business is the  
8                   public hearing.

9           COMMISSIONER GUY:  I'm sorry.  I don't know if  
10                   they knew that Chuck -- y'all can ask  
11                   questions of Chuck, too.

12           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  I'm sorry.

13           COMMISSIONER GUY:  That's all right.

14           MR. JONES:  Patrick had a question.

15           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  You have the floor.

16           MR. CAGLE:  Sorry.  This question is for  
17                   Chris.

18                                I know that your department has been  
19                   making major investments and putting a  
20                   lot of effort into rebuilding reefs and  
21                   creating new ones.  Can you give us a  
22                   quick overview of some of y'all's more  
23                   recent efforts and what's -- what you



1           have planned in the future?

2           MR. BLANKENSHIP: Sure. We received about  
3           12-and-a-half-million dollars from the  
4           National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
5           for artificial reef creation on a  
6           three-year program. We just refurbished  
7           about \$2.1 million worth of our inshore  
8           reefs that have been built over the last  
9           20, 25 years. We put new material on  
10          those reefs. We just built a new  
11          nine-acre reef inshore off of Point  
12          Clear just out from the Grand Hotel.

13                 Just this week we partnered with CCA  
14          on a memorial reef for Bernie Heggeman.  
15          He was a fishermen that died a couple of  
16          years ago, drowned. And we had a -- CCA  
17          and the Mobile Big Game Fishing Club and  
18          others wanted to do a reef in his  
19          memorial. So they raised \$137,000 and  
20          provided that to us, and we used some  
21          matching funds. And we just built a  
22          reef this week just south of Bayou La  
23          Batre on a site where they used to have

1 a gas rig that was one of his favorite  
2 places to fish. And then we'll be  
3 starting next week on a new reef in  
4 Pelican Bay just south of Dauphin  
5 Island.

6 So those are our inshore sites. We  
7 plan to do about another couple of  
8 million dollars' worth of refurbishment  
9 on those -- on new inshore reefs next  
10 year.

11 We're building reefs offshore.  
12 We're building some 25-foot-tall pyramid  
13 reefs. We just sank -- we did a great  
14 partnership with Alabama Power Company  
15 and Cooper Marine and sank a 180-foot  
16 barge with two huge boilers from Alabama  
17 Power Company earlier this fall. That  
18 was a great partnership that didn't cost  
19 the state any money. It was all donated  
20 material from those two companies. We  
21 were excited to work with them on that.

22 We're opening bids in the next  
23 couple of weeks to sink two ships.

1 We're working to sink two large --  
2 really large vessels offshore. And  
3 those are out for bid now. We'll see  
4 what kind of proposals we get from  
5 different companies.

6 So we -- we have a lot of artificial  
7 reef work going on offshore and inshore.  
8 And we're trying to get a new -- new  
9 reef zones permitted between six and  
10 nine miles offshore. And as soon as we  
11 get those permitted, we have the money  
12 set aside to build 600 artificial reefs  
13 within that six- to nine-mile range.

14 We're working with the Corps of  
15 Engineers. They're holding us up on  
16 getting our permits. As soon as we get  
17 that permit, we're ready to go. We have  
18 the money set aside. We have the bid  
19 documents ready to put out. All we need  
20 is just a permit from the Corps, and  
21 we'll be ready to build 600 more reefs  
22 in that six- to nine-mile reef zone.

23 MR. CAGLE: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: You have the floor,  
2 Mr. Jones.

3 MR. JONES: I'm going to ask Chuck so he  
4 doesn't feel -- I mean, we've got to  
5 have equal time here.

6 Chuck, seriously, how many meetings  
7 did you attend this year on behalf of  
8 the Game Check system and in how many  
9 counties? Do you know that information?

10 MR. SYKES: Our staff conducted approximately  
11 50 in 37 or 38 counties, and I did 44 of  
12 them.

13 MR. JONES: Thank you very much. We really  
14 appreciate that.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And, Chuck, one other  
16 question.

17 There was about 33-percent  
18 participation in Game Check?

19 MR. SYKES: Let's go 35. We'll be optimistic.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: So what can we do to  
21 increase participation in Game Check?  
22 That's such valuable information that  
23 we're getting from our hunters out

1           there.

2           MR. SYKES: It's just going to take time.

3           Honestly, that's all I think. We -- we  
4           beat the bushes pretty hard last year.  
5           We're not going to quit. We're going to  
6           still continue to keep that on,  
7           educating people. And I think more  
8           people tried it, saw that it worked. We  
9           didn't send a drone in to give them a  
10          ticket when they got on their phone and  
11          reported it. So a lot of the conspiracy  
12          theories are fading away right now.

13          I just think it's going to take  
14          time. Honestly, 35 percent I thought  
15          was pretty good for our first year, and  
16          I think next year we'll bump on up.

17          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Excellent job.

18                   Commissioner.

19          COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman, let me just  
20          add to that because Chuck may not want  
21          to say it. But just like the three-buck  
22          limit, Game Check -- we've been kind of  
23          discretionary. Officers have used a lot

1 of discretion about that and been pretty  
2 lenient, and they're going to start  
3 enforcing it. And so just be prepared.

4 We see that it's not that hard to  
5 do. Now you don't even have to carry  
6 that paper around. All of that is  
7 contained on the app. And our officers  
8 will start enforcing it if you're not  
9 Game-Checking the deer just like they do  
10 when you don't have a hunting license.  
11 That's the way they do it in every other  
12 state in the country, and ours is going  
13 to be the same. People want three-buck  
14 limits. We've got to enforce it. So I  
15 hate to add that bad news, but that's  
16 the way it's going to be.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Well, it's just such  
18 important data that we have to have to  
19 manage our resources. We start to, you  
20 know, see the results of the regulations  
21 that we put in place, buck restriction,  
22 Game Check, harvest limits. All those  
23 really impact the quality of deer

1            hunting that we have here in the state  
2            of Alabama.

3            Grady.

4            MR. HARTZOG: I've said it to Chuck. I had a  
5            question thrown at me concerning one of  
6            the proposed changes that he posted up  
7            there on the Geneva County change. And  
8            I reminded him of the situation where  
9            several years back when we had just a  
10           weekend-long alligator hunt out in -- on  
11           Lake Eufaula and one of the weekends a  
12           hurricane came through and nobody really  
13           killed anything.

14           But April the 21st through the 25th  
15           in Geneva, I asked Chuck if he would get  
16           with his biologists and see, you know,  
17           if that's a bad weekend when the  
18           tornadoes are coming through and the  
19           hunters don't really get it, then  
20           possibly look at the possibility of two  
21           weekends instead of one weekend. So  
22           that's the only question I have for  
23           Chuck, if he would talk to his staff and

1 bring it before the next meeting.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Grady.

3 Any other questions from the board?

4 MR. DOBBS: Director Sykes, what will be --  
5 what can we as a board do and what are  
6 you doing and staff doing to alert or  
7 bring about more awareness for chronic  
8 wasting?

9 I've read some articles, and I know  
10 that our members and a lot of people are  
11 very concerned about it. The new cases  
12 in Wisconsin and Michigan, if you could  
13 speak about those, if you're aware, and  
14 Arkansas, an almost neighboring state.  
15 What are we going to do?

16 MR. SYKES: Y'all took a big step last year  
17 with improving the language in the  
18 carcass import reg. And, again, it's  
19 about like Game Check. It's going to  
20 take a little while for everybody to  
21 understand. We did actually have  
22 taxidermists calling us. We had  
23 processors calling us. We did make



1 cases. We gave a lot of warnings this  
2 year. That's going to be more strictly  
3 enforced next year.

4 We're working closely with the deer  
5 breeders association to make  
6 traceability better where deer are going  
7 from one place to the other. When Texas  
8 found CWD, they were able to find out  
9 where it went -- where everything went,  
10 the spider web of affected areas  
11 quickly. And we've got an open line of  
12 communication with their association  
13 working on that.

14 Again, we are -- it's not always the  
15 good people that are -- it's the ones  
16 that don't abide by the deer association  
17 rules. It's the people that don't abide  
18 by ours. Just like the individual that  
19 brought deer in from another state. I  
20 mean, that's -- that's self-serving  
21 interest that's putting the whole state  
22 at jeopardy. The same thing with the  
23 people going -- and one -- I'll give you

1 a prime example.

2 We had someone hunting in Illinois.  
3 Shot a deer. Shot a buck, a nice  
4 eight-point. Threw the whole deer on  
5 his four-wheeler where everybody could  
6 see it coming back from Illinois and  
7 Kentucky and Tennessee and into Alabama  
8 where everybody would know what a good  
9 hunter he was. And it just happened  
10 that someone recognized the county tag  
11 on his truck, saw our press releases,  
12 and said that's an issue and called the  
13 local officer. And we were waiting on  
14 him when he came across the state line.

15 Illinois was happy because not only  
16 had he violated our rules; he had taken  
17 a buck on a doe tag. So everybody knows  
18 what a good hunter he is now, but it's  
19 going to cost him.

20 So I'm saying that because it's  
21 just -- it's going to take time. I  
22 mean, I think we're doing what we can.  
23 Y'all are doing what you can. But

1           it's -- it's up to these people.  
2           They're -- if it hadn't have been for  
3           tips from the public that knew what was  
4           going on, that saw our literature,  
5           understood what we were doing, there's  
6           no way we could get to all that.

7                     So it's just going to -- we're going  
8           to continue to educate people. We're  
9           going to continue doing public meetings,  
10          having magazine articles, newspaper  
11          articles, radio spots.

12                     Look, it's up to the hunters. It's  
13          their deer. It's their resource. We're  
14          just the ones that's in charge of  
15          managing it. So it's going to be up to  
16          them to help us and sell more hunting  
17          licenses where we can get more officers  
18          out there.

19          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chuck?

20          MR. SYKES: Yes, sir.

21          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Do you feel -- we had a  
22                     pretty severe drought this hunting  
23                     season. Do you feel that that drought

1           will increase the susceptibility of our  
2           herd for CWD?

3       MR. SYKES: No, sir, I don't think so. I  
4           really don't. Just my personal -- not  
5           Director Sykes, "Biologist Chuck"  
6           talking to you, people had a bad year  
7           because we're stuck in a rut. We're  
8           used to going and sitting on that same  
9           food plot at three o'clock in the  
10          afternoon. There was no grass for the  
11          first two months. Then there was warm  
12          weather. Things in the woods started  
13          popping back out. Deer weren't coming  
14          to the plots because there was pressure  
15          there.

16                I think in another couple of weeks  
17                when the pressure is gone and people  
18                start running trail cameras inventorying  
19                what is there, they're going to be  
20                surprised that all those deer that left  
21                are miraculously back again. I think if  
22                we have a good spring that deer are  
23                going to get back healthy and they're

1           going to be in good shape and we'll have  
2           a good season next year.

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Chuck.

4           MR. SYKES: Yes, sir.

5           MR. DOBBS: One additional comment.

6                     Director Sykes, what do you perceive  
7           as the biggest threat from CWD? Is it  
8           people bringing carcasses back? Is it  
9           people bringing live deer?

10          MR. SYKES: It's both. I mean, a dead deer  
11          can transmit the disease just like a  
12          live one can. So that -- it's about  
13          like hogs moving around. Natural  
14          migration is pretty slow, but when it's  
15          going 75 miles an hour down the  
16          interstate, it can cover a lot of ground  
17          quickly.

18                     So that to me is the biggest threat  
19          we have is self-serving individuals only  
20          worrying about themselves and not  
21          worrying about the resource of the state  
22          and be that bringing a live deer in or  
23          be that going to Texas and killing a

1 deer and saying, well, you know, one  
2 deer is not going to hurt anything; I'm  
3 just going to carry it back and -- it's  
4 an inconvenience to me to debone that  
5 meat. It is. But I can assure you it's  
6 going to be a greater inconvenience if  
7 we ever get it here.

8 MR. BUNN: Chuck, these breeders that are  
9 buying AI straws and breeding deer  
10 here -- I know you can't check for CWD  
11 until the deer is dead. How do you know  
12 that some of these straws that they're  
13 buying and artificially inseminating  
14 deer here don't -- are not carrying CWD?

15 MR. SYKES: We don't.

16 MR. BUNN: I mean, is it something we need to  
17 look at and maybe we can't buy AI straws  
18 from the states that are --

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chuck, isn't CWD a virus  
20 pretty much that's in the central  
21 nervous system?

22 MR. SYKES: It's a mutated protein prion that  
23 can be transmitted from nose to nose,

1 deer to deer. The proof has not come  
2 whether urine, feces, and all that does  
3 it. It's just speculation right now.

4 So I don't know if AI straws is the  
5 answer. I -- I think bringing the whole  
6 deer is much more concerning to me than  
7 that. I -- just a little sidebar, I've  
8 been working with the Archery Trade  
9 Association, which I know you're very  
10 familiar with. They have a program  
11 where they're working with the deer  
12 scent industry. There's a lot of states  
13 that have panicked and have banned the  
14 use of deer urine even though there's  
15 not a whole lot of scientific data out  
16 there right now saying it can be  
17 transmitted that way.

18 So the industry is working together  
19 to put self-imposed restrictions on  
20 themselves to ensure that their business  
21 is protected as well as the resource is  
22 protected, same thing that we're doing  
23 working with Alabama Deer Breeders

1           Association, trying to make sure that  
2           their business interests are okay as  
3           well as the native resource, which is  
4           what we're all here for.

5           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And since it is a virus,  
6           it really only takes one deer -- one  
7           infected deer to really create a  
8           problem. So all of us --

9           MR. SYKES: Yes, sir.

10          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: -- have to really  
11          understand that. You know, we have to  
12          be very diligent and make sure that we  
13          follow the regulations that our  
14          biologists have put in place to protect  
15          our herds here in the state of Alabama  
16          because it doesn't take much --

17          MR. SYKES: Yes, sir.

18          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: -- to become an  
19          epidemic.

20          MR. SYKES: It only takes one self-serving  
21          individual to mess it up for everybody.

22          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes.

23          MR. WOLFE: How -- what's the process that



1           we're checking the breeders? I mean, is  
2           it your officers go in so often and  
3           check them? Is it computerized? How do  
4           we do that?

5       MR. SYKES: Have yearly inspections where the  
6           inventory is examined and paperwork is  
7           looked at, but it's in a three-ring  
8           binder about that big.

9       MR. WOLFE: Is that -- does that need to be  
10           updated? Are we looking -- are y'all  
11           looking at doing --

12       MR. SYKES: We are talking with the deer  
13           breeders association. We met with them  
14           about a month ago on some options, yes.

15       MR. BUNN: Chuck, one question. Are they  
16           mandated where if they have a deer  
17           die -- are they mandated to inform us?  
18           Are they mandated to check it for CWD?

19       MR. SYKES: If it is over one year of age, to  
20           comply with the CWD-monitoring  
21           regulations, it has to go be tested.  
22           That's where that 500 deer that I put on  
23           my slide -- we're checking 500 wild deer

1           a year. They're averaging anywhere from  
2           four to 600 a year that goes to be  
3           tested.

4                   And, look, it's not just a CWD test.  
5           We're looking for all kind of -- it's  
6           just a disease-monitoring program.

7   MR. WOLFE:   So right now there is a window  
8           from day one to a year old --

9   MR. SYKES:   To a year old.

10   MR. WOLFE:  -- that they're not checked at  
11           all?

12   MR. SYKES:   That's right.

13   MR. DOBBS:   One additional question.

14   CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  Joey.

15   MR. DOBBS:   Are the deer that people are  
16           breeding -- are they Alabama deer or do  
17           they come from other parts of the  
18           country?

19   MR. SYKES:   Well, they're -- what T.J. said,  
20           straws can come in. So a Michigan deer  
21           may be bred to a Texas deer. That  
22           offspring may be bred to -- you know,  
23           whatever. I -- but the deer on these

1 facilities -- I think 1997 is when the  
2 ban started on moving deer across state  
3 lines. I may be incorrect on that, but  
4 it was somewhere around that time.

5 So there's not supposed to be any  
6 live deer coming in the state, but we  
7 know it's happening. I mean, we caught  
8 one. So there's still some individuals  
9 that are trying to do that.

10 There is enough genetics, enough  
11 breeders in Alabama. There's no reason  
12 to do it. Because there's 206 or 208  
13 licensed game breeders in the state of  
14 Alabama. So bringing deer from out of  
15 state is completely unnecessary.

16 MR. DOBBS: One follow-up question, please.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Sure, Joey.

18 MR. DOBBS: Where do most of those deer go  
19 that are being bred? Do people turn  
20 them loose? Are we shooting them?

21 MR. SYKES: From my understanding -- I'm not  
22 completely familiar with the market --  
23 but they're going between each other

1           improving each other's genetics and they  
2           are going to enclosures to hunt. So as  
3           far as I know, there's two markets.  
4           There's a breeder market and then  
5           there's a shooter market.

6           MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

7           COMMISSIONER GUY: Let me just add to that.

8           And, Chuck, you just answered a question  
9           to Joey. And remember that we passed a  
10          reg that said you cannot intentionally  
11          release a deer into the wild.

12          MR. SYKES: Yeah. They have to go inside an  
13          enclosure. They can't just be released  
14          into the wild.

15          COMMISSIONER GUY: Which is the reason for the  
16          need for the traceability.

17          MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

18          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Gary.

19          MR. WOLFE: So, Chuck, are we looking at  
20          really running fast-track on this thing  
21          and try to get a hold of it, or where  
22          are we at right now with it? I mean,  
23          are we just looking at other states?

1           Are we looking at -- I know y'all caught  
2           somebody bringing deer in. But is there  
3           something we need to do and look at as a  
4           study to kind of fast-track this thing  
5           and make some decisions?

6           MR. SYKES: We have an online database that  
7           several of the breeders have tested.  
8           Tweaks have been made. And, again,  
9           we're in meetings with -- we met with  
10          them about a month ago discussing some  
11          options on that.

12                 So we are proceeding -- look, it's  
13          just the traceability thing. If Deer  
14          "A" goes here, here, here, here, and  
15          here and we've got a three-ring binder,  
16          it's kind of hard to -- it's takes a  
17          while. Like I said, Texas did theirs in  
18          hours what would take us months.

19          MR. WOLFE: And that's what I'm getting at.  
20                 I'm familiar with that. In Texas, the  
21          reason they stopped it is because they  
22          had the system in place and they jumped  
23          right on it and stopped it.

1 MR. SYKES: Well, not necessarily stopped it,  
2 but they at least knew where that  
3 deer -- all of the facilities that it  
4 had been in where they could quarantine  
5 and do the proper testing to make sure  
6 everything was safe there before  
7 anything else moved around.

8 Look, once it gets here, there is no  
9 stopping it. That's -- that's the major  
10 issue. It's not like EHD that we get  
11 every year. We lose a few deer. The  
12 ones that make it have an immunity to  
13 it. They're fine. Once we get it, it's  
14 here forever and ever, amen.

15 MR. BUNN: Chuck, going back, is this  
16 something we need to look at with these  
17 breeders bringing in AI straws from the  
18 states that are affected by CWD? Is  
19 this something we need to look into and  
20 maybe --

21 MR. SYKES: I will get my staff to look at the  
22 latest research as far as -- because  
23 I'm -- I would be talking out of turn.

1 I don't know what the latest research is  
2 showing on that. My gut feeling is  
3 there is not anything real specific  
4 right now, but we can -- we can look  
5 into it before the next board meeting.

6 MR. BUNN: Because, like you said, we've got  
7 enough breeders in the state now. It's  
8 really -- I don't see any reason for  
9 somebody needing to, you know, buy  
10 straws from Texas or Wisconsin or  
11 Michigan when we've got plenty of  
12 breeders here in the state they can  
13 trade between.

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any further questions  
15 from the board?

16 (No response.)

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chuck, thank you.

18 MR. SYKES: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chris and Chuck,  
20 excellent presentation.

21 Okay. The next order of business is  
22 public hearings. For those who  
23 participate in the public hearing, there

1           are a couple of rules you need to  
2           follow.

3           When your name is called, please  
4           come to the microphone. You are limited  
5           to only three minutes, and it will be  
6           strict adherence to three minutes, three  
7           minutes from the time you are called.  
8           State your name and the subject you wish  
9           to talk on. No interference from the  
10          audience will be tolerated. In  
11          addition, all board members are asked to  
12          please address the chair before taking  
13          the floor.

14          Okay. The first public hearing will  
15          be Mr. Avery Bates. Mr. Bates.

16          Mr. Bates is quite a familiar face  
17          here at the Conservation Advisory Board  
18          Meetings. Thanks for coming, Mr. Bates.

19          MR. BATES: You think I'm familiar here. You  
20          ought to be in Bayou La Batre.

21          My name is Avery Bates, vice  
22          president of Organized Seafood  
23          Organization.



1           I want to thank the board for all  
2           y'all's work for us over the years. For  
3           the last number of years you've put in  
4           for pompano, Spanish mackerel, and  
5           sheepshead to stay a commercial fish so  
6           everybody can enjoy it through our  
7           markets. You know, the property we  
8           enjoy, what we call the common property,  
9           is precious to us.

10           And while I'm here, real quick, I  
11           want to invite y'all November -- I mean,  
12           March the 7th we're going to have a  
13           Seafood Bash as normal. And the  
14           Commissioner comes. I hope he enjoys  
15           the seafood. We always enjoy seeing  
16           Chris and everybody else.

17           And we want to tell you right now on  
18           the three things that we have -- I think  
19           it's three for the commercial fishermen.  
20           We do not have any major problems. We  
21           have some commercial things -- I'd say  
22           cosmetic things that was done on the  
23           crab the one year -- and I thank

1 Mr. Hartzog for asking me, why cosmetic.  
2 And that being the true problem exists  
3 all up and down the Gulf Coast,  
4 especially in areas that has no -- the  
5 crab trap ban in Louisiana -- they have  
6 not allowed sponge crabs for many years,  
7 and they're the one that's running the  
8 crabber back out of here.

9 Now, we had a sponge crab law in the  
10 '40s here, a regulation. They took that  
11 away a number of years later. But our  
12 problem with the crabs, Louisiana's  
13 problem with the crabs, Texas' problem  
14 with the crabs -- you say, well, why is  
15 such a problem through the -- in the  
16 tonnage that you saw that was lost. You  
17 ask me and this is the reason why.

18 We've got a problem with red drum,  
19 black drum, too. Red drum is also a  
20 gamefish in these states that I  
21 mentioned and others. When you take one  
22 species and let it proliferate to such a  
23 degree -- and thank you for writing that

1 article in the paper about wild hogs.  
2 Tremendous multiplication.

3 Let me tell you something about  
4 redfish. They can live up to 60 years.  
5 And guess what? They eat tons of crabs.  
6 Clean some. What's the best bait for a  
7 redfish? Crabs. Crabs. It's up and  
8 down the Gulf Coast. They're going to  
9 run the crabber out of Louisiana, and  
10 they already don't allow sponge crabs.  
11 Why do we continually miss the main  
12 point of what's going on?

13 You think you got trouble with wild  
14 hogs. Do the math. When you got one  
15 redfish up to three to four years that  
16 can produce up to a million-and-a-half  
17 to five million -- I would love to  
18 see --

19 MS. JONES: Time.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Bates --

21 MR. BATES: I just started. Okay.

22 -- the multiplication factor in  
23 what's being lost with these feral

1           redfish.

2           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  They're calling you,  
3           Mr. Bates.

4           MR. BATES:  Many more things I want to say to  
5           y'all.  But thank y'all for not allowing  
6           the gamefish status.

7                    The letter that I handed y'all is  
8           just a preliminary letter, but we are  
9           tired of seeing our stuff covered up in  
10          Mobile Bay by this 150 thing that we  
11          see --

12          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  Mr. Bates?

13          MR. BATES:  Believe it or not -- I mentioned  
14          it last time -- you're covering up what  
15          the good Lord put there, live natural  
16          oysters, live clam reefs.  You are  
17          allowing -- or the State of Alabama is  
18          allowing --

19          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  Thank you very much.

20          MR. BATES:  -- massive devastation in Mobile  
21          Bay and still --

22          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  Mr. Nelson, you're next.  
23          Mr. Bates is taking up all your time.

1           You've got two minutes and ten seconds.

2           MR. MELTON: Can I talk from right here?

3                     Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Wynnton  
4           Melton, Geneva County. I've been here a  
5           lot of times, too, about 48 consecutive,  
6           I think.

7           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I don't think you've  
8           missed a single meeting.

9           MR. MELTON: I know. It's been about 48 of  
10          these in a row. Seen a lot come and a  
11          lot go.

12                    I'm here speaking on behalf of all  
13          the dog hunters, coon hunters, deer  
14          hunters. It's a grand sport. I put a  
15          picture of our club up there for you. I  
16          wanted to say about that -- and I've  
17          heard it said by conservation  
18          officials -- that a deer killed on a  
19          legal, honorable dog deer drive brings  
20          more enjoyment to more people than any  
21          animal harvested in the state of  
22          Alabama. And I sort of want to document  
23          their 18 deer. All those folks had a

1 great time with it.

2 We're doing well. The improvement  
3 is unbelievable. In the last several  
4 years these tracking devices we have now  
5 are helping so much with dog control.  
6 You can train and track and keep up with  
7 it so much better. Nothing will ever be  
8 100 percent, but it's getting pretty  
9 darn close.

10 The rogue hunters are about gone in  
11 our part of the world. I can't speak  
12 for the rest. Don't know what 220 is,  
13 but I'm here to plead with you, hey,  
14 don't give us a bunch more regulations.  
15 We're doing quite well. We don't need  
16 the anxiety of having to go out and  
17 worry more and more and more. It's like  
18 punishing a child when they do bad. You  
19 get good results. Punishing a child  
20 when they do good, you get an angry  
21 youngster.

22 So, please, we appreciate you. Seen  
23 a lot come and a lot go. Hunting with

1           hounds is a great tradition. We enjoy  
2           it. We just appreciate you and know you  
3           have a hard job. But, please, please,  
4           don't regulate us right out the door.  
5           Just let us hunt, have a good time, and  
6           we'll do our darndest to make it as easy  
7           on you as we can. Thank you.

8           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Floyd Nelson.

9           MR. NELSON: I can say what I want to say in  
10          about two minutes.

11                 That proposal number 50, we're  
12          against this that's on this marsh area.

13                 Also, spending two-and-a-half  
14          million dollars on NRPA funds, what  
15          they're doing, they're dredging out  
16          Mobile ship channel up there, and  
17          they're covering our oyster reefs up.  
18          I've been up there. I work up there.  
19          I'm a fisherman. I can't catch no more  
20          fish up there. They're gone. I run  
21          aground where they piled the mud up in  
22          the water where we always run with our  
23          boat. Well, we run aground in that mud.

1           That's how much mud is up there.

2                     Radcliff Materials dug all of our  
3 reefs up on the east side of the river.  
4 Now they want to dig all of them -- or  
5 cover them up on the west side. And  
6 that's our mother reefs. That's the  
7 ones that spawns -- let the spawns come  
8 down the Bay and catch on the reefs down  
9 there. And that's where we get our  
10 seafood -- our oysters from.

11                    If they can get this  
12 two-and-a-half-million dollars, that's  
13 what they have to bear. That's the  
14 state docks. Well, they get another 20  
15 million after they get that. And when  
16 they get the 20 million, no telling what  
17 they'll do with it.

18                    That's all I wanted to say.

19                    Appreciate it.

20           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Nelson.

21                    Next we have Michael Best.

22           MR. BEST: Michael Best from Cullman, Alabama.

23                    I have a form up there that's got my



1 name on it if y'all want to look through  
2 it. What I'm here for is -- I'm coming  
3 before you today to request changes in  
4 the current laws considering bowfishing.  
5 My request is so more people with  
6 disabilities can enjoy this sport.

7 I have friends that run the Fallen  
8 Heroes, Incorporated, a nonprofit, that  
9 is currently taking disabled veterans  
10 out bowfishing. During a discussion we  
11 saw a need to have changes made to the  
12 current laws to make it easier for all  
13 disabled vets to be able to participate  
14 in the sport.

15 The team at Fallen Heroes have  
16 specially -- specialty equipment to  
17 allow wheelchairs on their boats, but  
18 currently taking a vet out with missing  
19 arms or limbs or nerve damage -- they  
20 can take the vet out, but they do not  
21 have -- cannot participate basically.  
22 You know, if you can't pull a bow, you  
23 can't participate.

1           Alabama currently has a law that  
2           allows spearfishing or use of a  
3           speargun, but it's only if the gun is  
4           submerged under water. So my idea is to  
5           be able to fire a device above water  
6           that is powered the same as a speargun  
7           with rubber delivering the power instead  
8           of the limbs of a bow or crossbow.  
9           Being able to use the rubber would make  
10          the device more manageable to being  
11          fired one-armed.

12          I know several states have legalized  
13          slingbows. It's basically a slingshot  
14          designed to shoot arrows. You can find  
15          slingbows on the commercial market. I  
16          am asking something along these lines  
17          but with a grip so the arrow can be  
18          released by a trigger, basically a cross  
19          between a slingbow and a speargun.

20          I said I had designed a device --  
21          and there's pictures of it -- that I  
22          would like to see if we could get  
23          legalized for use in the state. I

1           contacted -- now, this is -- when I  
2           first built this was back last July.  
3           And I contacted Chief Dodd with the  
4           Alabama Game and Fish Division who said  
5           he saw no problem with the idea other  
6           than the fact that it didn't follow the  
7           current law.

8           I appreciate the opportunity to  
9           bring this to your attention, and if  
10          there's something we could do to help  
11          some of our disabled veterans out, I'd  
12          appreciate it.

13         CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Best.

14         MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?

15         CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes.

16         MR. CAGLE: I have a question.

17         CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Patrick, you have the  
18          floor.

19         MR. CAGLE: Are you proposing to have this  
20          done with a reel on it so it will --

21         MR. BEST: Oh, yeah. That's -- well, that's  
22          the whole thing. We can't -- I didn't  
23          go any further with it because you can't

1           go test it if it's illegal.

2       MR. CAGLE:   Got you.

3       MR. BEST:   So it's going to have a reel on it.

4           The boat has -- you know, there's a crew  
5           on the boat.  So at least -- you know,  
6           even if you're one-handed, you're able  
7           to take the shot, and then the crew can  
8           actually reel your fish in for you.

9       MR. CAGLE:   So it would work off a standard  
10           bowfishing line?

11       MR. BEST:   Yeah.  It's going to be a standard  
12           bowfishing line, standard bowfishing --  
13           you know, a 20-inch.  Instead of the big  
14           arrow, it would be the 20-inch  
15           bowfishing arrow that's for a crossbow.

16       MR. CAGLE:   Okay.  Thank you.

17       CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  I have one question.

18           What about safety issues?  You know,  
19           there's a -- when you're bowfishing,  
20           it's a lot of movement.  Is there a  
21           safety on it?  Once that thing is  
22           cocked --

23       MR. BEST:   Well, I mean, I'm -- we're not

1           quite there yet. Again, you know, I'm  
2           not sure -- and, you know, I'm not for  
3           positive that this design that I got  
4           will work.

5           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I see. So it's in the  
6           developmental stage?

7           MR. BEST: It's in developmental stages. But,  
8           you know, if we can change the law where  
9           we can use rubber instead of just the  
10          power of the limbs of a bow or a  
11          crossbow, we could go a lot further.

12          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: There are a lot of  
13          people bowfishing, a lot of people in  
14          the boat, a lot of movement.

15          MR. BEST: Oh, yeah, yeah.

16          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: That could be -- you  
17          know, it's --

18          MR. BEST: Oh, I understand.

19          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Safety has to be a  
20          consideration.

21          MR. BEST: I understand that. I understand  
22          that.

23          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All right. Thank you.

1 MR. BEST: Uh-huh (positive response).

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker will be  
3 Michael Carter.

4 MR. CARTER: First off, I want to thank the  
5 board for everything you do. We all  
6 appreciate it.

7 My name is Mike Carter. I am a  
8 licensed fishing guide for Lake  
9 Gunterville and Tennessee River. My  
10 wife, Sharon, she has the main points of  
11 what we're here for, the Lake  
12 Gunterville Conservation Group, and I'm  
13 going to go over just a few things.

14 What we're looking at is the decline  
15 of the fishing on Lake Gunterville.  
16 For years and years of Bass, FLW,  
17 everybody has always recognized  
18 Gunterville Lake as one of the top  
19 lakes in the country. One of the  
20 comments this weekend was the -- one of  
21 the elite bass-fishing lakes in the  
22 country. And with this decline that  
23 we've seen -- I've fished this lake all

1 my life, been a licensed guide for 12  
2 years. And several of us have seen this  
3 decline of this lake.

4 And, no, it's not a massive decline.  
5 I mean, there -- people are still  
6 catching fish, but when you get a lot of  
7 people coming down in groups and  
8 tournaments and they see the decline  
9 themselves, they don't want to come  
10 back. They're looking at other lakes.  
11 Bass didn't even have them in the top  
12 ten this year. Could be political or  
13 whatever. But that impact -- that  
14 impacts the tourism when they see that.  
15 It impacts the tourism. They barely  
16 made top five in the Southeast. Bass  
17 also had a rating of number two as the  
18 most overrated lake -- number two in the  
19 country, the most overrated lake.

20 These are the things that hurts the  
21 economical impact of not only  
22 Gunterville but Scottsboro or Marshall  
23 and Jackson Counties. And that's what

1 we're here to talk to you about is the  
2 possibility for the help to try to get  
3 something done for the lake, a  
4 restocking program, changing the creel  
5 limit, get something done to try to help  
6 the lake out.

7 We don't want to turn these  
8 tournaments away. We don't want to turn  
9 the tourists away. This is what we  
10 want. This is how we make our living,  
11 between your bait shops, your  
12 restaurants, hotels, et cetera. We want  
13 to try to do something to try to help  
14 this lake and get it back healthy where  
15 it used to be and get it back where it's  
16 more noticeable; instead of having a  
17 negative impact, get a positive impact  
18 and bring everybody -- bring everybody  
19 back to the lake. That's all I have.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mike.

21 MR. CARTER: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker is Brandon  
23 Jackson.



1 MR. MARTIN: Excuse me, Commissioner --  
2 Chairman.

3 Chris, do you mind giving us some of  
4 the information -- you and I talked  
5 about this earlier before the meeting.  
6 We were talking about Gunter'sville. A  
7 lot of people -- I hear it, too, that  
8 Gunter'sville is low, but would you share  
9 your thoughts that we had.

10 MR. NICHOLS: Yes. My name is Nick Nichols.  
11 I'm chief of fisheries for the Wildlife  
12 and Freshwater Fisheries Division.

13 We actually have heard a lot of  
14 comments from some folks reflecting  
15 these same concerns about Lake  
16 Gunter'sville over the last year and a  
17 half or so. Lake Gunter'sville is  
18 probably one of the best-studied  
19 reservoirs in the state. Besides the  
20 work our own staff has done on Lake  
21 Gunter'sville to standardize sampling and  
22 creel surveys, we've actually had two  
23 studies that we funded through Auburn

1 University that looked at the fishery at  
2 Guntersville as well as Wheeler.

3 Right now the status of Guntersville  
4 Lake is it's at its -- about what we'd  
5 call its 30-year average in terms of the  
6 quality of the fishery. It's right on  
7 track with the way it's been for the  
8 last 30 years that we have data on the  
9 reservoir.

10 What has been seen -- what's been  
11 perceived by some folks is we had a very  
12 strong year class back in 2008. That  
13 year class was like two-and-a-half times  
14 larger than you would normally see on  
15 the lake. And that year class -- since  
16 the fish do have a longevity of ten  
17 years or less, that year class has now  
18 left the fishery. And it was also  
19 followed by two weak year classes.  
20 However, we've got some new year classes  
21 coming on now, and we expect and  
22 anticipate the fishery is going to turn  
23 up a little bit.

1           But there's nothing in terms of a  
2           creel limit change or a stocking program  
3           that's going to have any biological  
4           significance on how that fishery  
5           performs. And that's basically our  
6           data. That's what it supports.

7           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

8           MR. CARTER: Thank you.

9           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our next public speaker  
10           is Brandon Jackson.

11          MR. JACKSON: Good morning. Thank you for the  
12           opportunity. We appreciate all the work  
13           that the board does. I wanted to thank  
14           DCNR and their conservation officers  
15           that police the Sipsev Fork area of our  
16           fishery. They do a great job -- an  
17           excellent job, actually, in making  
18           themselves known and greeting people and  
19           talking to them on the river.

20                    But I'm here to talk about the  
21           Sipsev Fork and the trout fishing there.  
22           There is a -- a great opportunity with  
23           that fishery. It is a wonderful

1 opportunity, a singular opportunity  
2 within the state for year-around  
3 opportunities to catch rainbow trout.  
4 We would like to see more people have  
5 that opportunity to catch those fish,  
6 have an opportunity to see them.

7 There is a study that will begin  
8 this year in order to determine more  
9 closely where those fish are going,  
10 what's happening with them, where  
11 they're moving within the river, and we  
12 look forward to the results of that  
13 study.

14 But in the meantime, we do feel that  
15 there are certain recommendations. And  
16 you should have received a handout from  
17 me concerning the recommendations that  
18 we would like to see implemented in  
19 order to help this fishery and make it  
20 open to angling -- for anglers  
21 throughout the state and throughout the  
22 U.S.

23 If the Sipsey Fork -- if you take

1           that river and look at it, it's  
2           basically -- especially in the upper  
3           sections -- a series of small ponds  
4           connected to one another. And what's  
5           happening now -- what we see happening  
6           now is -- is that they stock our trout.  
7           On the Sipsev Fork this year, in 2017,  
8           we will hopefully be able to have --  
9           it'll never be above for this next year  
10          40,000 trout stocked in that river for  
11          the year. It's going to be less than  
12          40,000.

13                 There is a -- what I think is a twin  
14                 sister to this river, and it's called  
15                 the Little Red River. It's the Greers  
16                 Ferry tailrace. So it's a tailrace just  
17                 like ours. It has very similar  
18                 topography, similar access, similar  
19                 opportunities, except for they have --  
20                 many of these regulations that we're  
21                 proposing, they have those in place  
22                 already, and yet they're stocking  
23                 180,000 fish. Same things. Just

1 different areas.

2 In order to preserve our 40,000, we  
3 propose a catch-and-release section and  
4 some other ideas there that you'll see  
5 within that in order to help those small  
6 ponds that are closest to the dam. Even  
7 though they're connected, when they  
8 stock, those fill up with fish, but  
9 right now anglers can come in and if  
10 they're the first ones there, they take  
11 all the fish out of those small ponds.  
12 And it takes a much longer period of  
13 time for those fish --

14 MS. JONES: Time.

15 MR. JACKSON: -- to come back.

16 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Jackson.

17 The next speaker is Michael Key.

18 MR. KEY: I would like to thank the board, our  
19 commissioner, our chairman, our  
20 directors, our chiefs, and our members  
21 of staff for this opportunity.

22 I know it's been mentioned among us  
23 trout fishermen about a quality zone in

1 an area below Lewis Smith Lake. We  
2 already have a quality zone. It's been  
3 established for decades. And I see no  
4 sense in trying to establish something  
5 we already have.

6 Family and friends and strangers  
7 have fished by different methods  
8 alongside one another for decades. Some  
9 sit on coolers. Some sit on five-gallon  
10 buckets. Some sit in chairs. Some  
11 wade. And they all enjoy the sport of  
12 fishing the way they like to fish.

13 You see, our quality zone, it's got  
14 the highest number of trout that we  
15 stock. You can hear kids when they  
16 catch a trout. You'll hear them --  
17 they're so excited. And if you're  
18 within earshot, you can't help but  
19 smile. And they want to get right back  
20 in the water to try to catch another  
21 one. It's there for everybody, no  
22 matter how you fish or what method you  
23 fish by, as long as they're legal.

1           I have actually as an adult enjoyed  
2           fellowship and friendship with people I  
3           did not know. I met them there and  
4           actually just got to know one another  
5           from those experiences, through good  
6           experiences. And most of the time just  
7           being there means a whole lot. We relax  
8           under the strain of trying to catch a  
9           fish. Does that make any sense to  
10          y'all?

11           It's really part of recreation. And  
12          we want to make sure we don't lose any  
13          of our rights, any of our outdoor  
14          activities on the Sipsey Fork.

15           And we're also losing trout, but  
16          it's not because of anglers. We  
17          actually came in and remade the Sipsey  
18          Fork. We channelized it again. We  
19          knocked out three shoals that were barn  
20          doors to keep the striper out except  
21          during generation or post-generation as  
22          the water was receding into Bankhead  
23          Lake.



1           Now, don't have nothing against the  
2           striper. Hey, he's doing what he was  
3           supposed to do. And our Chief Nichols,  
4           he actually predicted the next world  
5           record would come out of our Black  
6           Warrior channels, and it did. And I'm  
7           going to tell you what. It's not just  
8           because of shad. And I'm not a  
9           biologist, but I am --

10       MS. JONES: Time.

11       MR. KEY: -- an everyday man.

12           But that's part of the problem. If  
13           I may, that is part of the problem. The  
14           anglers are not taking those fish. Very  
15           few are the anglers taking. We need to  
16           try to get ahead of these stripers a  
17           little bit. Let's increase the limit  
18           after the studies are done in  
19           anticipation of there being no limit.

20       CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Key.

21       MR. KEY: Thank you, sir. Thanks to everyone.

22       CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Well, we certainly value  
23           our Sipsey Fork trout fishing. It's a

1            huge recreational opportunity for  
2            Alabama.

3            The next speaker is Kevin Linn.

4            MR. LINN: Good morning. I'm Kevin Linn from  
5            Marshall County and Jackson County,  
6            Alabama.

7            COMMISSIONER GUY: Speak up. Speak up,  
8            please, sir.

9            MR. LINN: Kevin Linn from Marshall County and  
10           Jackson County.

11           We've got a tremendous asset in  
12           north Alabama with that Tennessee River  
13           chain. It's a tremendous asset, one  
14           that we don't even have to spend money  
15           on to bring people in that spend their  
16           dollars in our stores and businesses, et  
17           cetera.

18           Lately, I don't know if we need more  
19           attention to it or if we just need to  
20           get some teeth and some laws that can  
21           help our guys in brown enforce things.  
22           But we've got to -- we've got to kind of  
23           groom this chain of rivers up there to

1           be able to continue through economic  
2           downturns, which there might be some  
3           because of, you know, the health of the  
4           fish and the downturn in the survey, et  
5           cetera. You know, how long are we going  
6           to have to pay for those downturns when  
7           we could do some little things that  
8           would change the lake in a positive  
9           fashion.

10           If you go in and Jordan-Hare was  
11           only 60,000 seats, you would build  
12           40,000 more. Because that's what you  
13           do. You know, you go in there, and if  
14           there's a call and a demand for  
15           something, you meet it. You know, if  
16           you go and lease a piece of land or buy  
17           a piece of land as a hunting property,  
18           you go in there and you improve it. You  
19           know, you don't go in and say, well,  
20           we're in the middle of a 30-year norm  
21           and we're on the downside of that; let's  
22           not do anything. You go in and say  
23           let's put some food plots in, you know,

1           let's create this kind of habitat.

2           So let's get this lake healthy again  
3           and be able to create some of the things  
4           we need to there. Even if we are within  
5           cyclical norm -- which I agree with the  
6           biologists. I know we're in that  
7           downturn of the norm, but why accept  
8           that. I don't feel like when we've got  
9           all these people coming in that we don't  
10          have to spend a dollar to get here -- to  
11          get, why accept them not coming in when  
12          we could make some small changes. And  
13          you'll hear about some of the other  
14          small changes that could be made when  
15          more people are going to speak to you  
16          today.

17          But we need some help there, folks,  
18          because we've got a great asset that  
19          we're not taking full advantage of. I  
20          hear things about needing more income  
21          from license fees and things like that.  
22          Send the guys in brown up there. And I  
23          know you have. In the last year I've

1           seen more up there than I have in the  
2           last ten years.

3           I've been living on the lake for 15  
4           years, doing business on the lake for  
5           25. I own Waterfront Tackle up there,  
6           too. So I get this from everybody  
7           coming in. It's not just my opinion.  
8           Talk to hundreds of people in the course  
9           of a year. I know you're coming to  
10          Guntersville next week -- or next  
11          month -- excuse me -- to visit us, and  
12          we'll have some more information then.

13          But, please, please, open up to the  
14          possibility of not just leaving  
15          something status quo but helping us make  
16          it better by small steps. Nothing big.  
17          Not saying any one will work. I'm  
18          saying the aggregate total of five or  
19          ten or 15 different plans that we've got  
20          I'd sure like for you to look at. We  
21          could use your opinion and support.  
22          And, in turn, when we keep bringing  
23          these people in like we have and these

1 big organizations come in, that's going  
2 to continue to kick money back into the  
3 coffers, and that's going to continue to  
4 keep the excitement level up for buying  
5 fishing licenses, et cetera.

6 So I guess my time is up.

7 MS. JONES: Time.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Linn.

9 Our next speaker is Sharon Thomas.

10 MS. THOMAS: I represent, also, the Lake  
11 Guntersville Conservation Group in  
12 Jackson and Marshall Counties. And I,  
13 too -- this is a vast body of water that  
14 has increased pressure year after year  
15 from anglers throughout the U.S.,  
16 tournaments that are going to be coming  
17 more and more each year such as the  
18 Bassmasters, the BFL. We just had the  
19 FLW tournament, ABT, ABA. Big Bass  
20 Splash will be here in April. And local  
21 tournaments, wildcat tournaments, high  
22 school, and even college tournaments are  
23 beginning to fish this lake. And that's

1 kind of a bucket list for everybody to  
2 fish Lake Guntersville.

3 And as Mike Carter said, this lake  
4 has dropped in standings as being  
5 overrated. And the biologists -- I know  
6 they have their paperwork to do and  
7 they -- they've got their stats. But  
8 these gentlemen that get out here and  
9 beat the water every day fishing --  
10 whether it be a guide, whether it be  
11 just your local fisherman or someone  
12 like that -- they know what's going on.  
13 And there are so many people that say,  
14 you know, we're not coming back, people  
15 from Kentucky that I've talked with,  
16 Ohio, different places like that. They  
17 say the fish are not here. And where  
18 are they going?

19 They're going to the next adjoining  
20 state, Tennessee, to Chickamauga Lake  
21 where they stocked them back several  
22 years ago. And they are flourishing.  
23 And that's one reason I'm here today, to

1           ask the state -- which I sent papers to  
2           all of you, to the governor, to Gunter  
3           Guy and -- to help us in re-establishing  
4           what we did have in restocking and  
5           dropping the creel limit. And I know  
6           the creel limit has been discussed as  
7           not being that much, but every little  
8           bit helps.

9           We have programs that we are going  
10          to try to implement later on in trying  
11          to keep our fish alive, keep our fish  
12          well. And from that standpoint -- it's  
13          not just, hey, we want fish. It's just  
14          we got to work together in this. And  
15          north Alabama provides one of the best  
16          lakes in the country, and we want it to  
17          stay -- or get back up to number one  
18          rather than falling in the ranks.

19          That's all I've got to say to you.

20          Thank you so much.

21          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. Thomas.

22          Next speaker, Tyler Moses.

23          MR. MOSES: I'd just like to thank y'all for



1           your service, and I'll decline the  
2           opportunity. Thank you.

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Tyler.

4                       Next we have Eddie Jolley.

5           MR. JOLLEY: Good morning. My name is Eddie  
6           Jolley from Auburn in Lee County. And I  
7           have prepared a document for you that  
8           you should find, I think, in front of  
9           you by now. It's dealing with the  
10          approval of the use of crossbows to hunt  
11          turkeys.

12                    Okay. I think it's quite evident  
13          across the country that crossbows are  
14          very popular. In fact, you gentlemen  
15          have seen fit to approve the use of  
16          crossbows to hunt big game such as deer.  
17          Big game are hunted across the country,  
18          whether it's bear or caribou or moose or  
19          elk. I looked to see how many states in  
20          the South have approved the use of  
21          crossbows for hunting turkey. 11 states  
22          were surveyed, and I have excerpted some  
23          information and presented it to you.

1 Out of those 11 states that were  
2 surveyed, ten of those have already  
3 approved the use of crossbows. One  
4 state has not done that, and that is  
5 Alabama.

6 So my question to you is would you  
7 approve the use of crossbows to hunt  
8 turkey in Alabama. There are a lot of  
9 benefits to that. Number one, we  
10 already know that the crossbow is a very  
11 effective weapon. Modern crossbows are  
12 very efficient. They are very accurate.  
13 And they can do a really nice job of  
14 harvesting an animal. We have many,  
15 many videos, television programs that  
16 depict the harvesting of wild turkeys  
17 with crossbows.

18 We also have to think about the  
19 ability to hunt certain areas of our  
20 state. We are experiencing urban  
21 sprawl. So some of our areas may not be  
22 suitable for hunting with guns because  
23 of that sprawl. So hunting with a

1 crossbow may be an alternative. Same  
2 thing for hunting inside city limits  
3 where it's approved.

4 Some individuals may have  
5 limitations that prevent the use of  
6 hunting with longbows or compound bows.  
7 So being able to hunt with a crossbow  
8 would be a viable alternative.

9 Okay. You're also able to bring in  
10 family members to help -- to teach them  
11 how to hunt; okay? And it's not a loud  
12 noise. And it's a weapon that could be  
13 easily used and trained -- or the  
14 individual could be trained to use that.  
15 In fact, this year my wife approached me  
16 about hunting deer for the first time in  
17 a long, long time, and I told her we had  
18 to be able to practice and learn how to  
19 use our crossbow. Within just moments  
20 of practicing, she was ready to go.

21 Chuck, in fact, she bought a hunting  
22 license. So that added to your  
23 percentage increase; okay?

1                   So, you know, we have an  
2                   opportunity --

3           MS. JONES: Time.

4           MR. JOLLEY: So I'm asking you to go ahead and  
5                   approve the use of crossbows. We're the  
6                   only state in 11 states from Florida to  
7                   Missouri, from Louisiana to North  
8                   Carolina that haven't approved the use  
9                   of crossbows to hunt turkeys. Thank  
10                  you.

11          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Jolley.

12                   Next speaker, Curtis Anderson.

13          MR. ANDERSON: If you don't mind, I would like  
14                   clarification first from Mr. Sykes. Did  
15                   he say that there was going to be no  
16                   change at Swan Creek Management Area, or  
17                   do I need to go ahead and make my  
18                   presentation?

19          MR. SYKES: No, sir. You need to make your  
20                   presentation. I said there were none at  
21                   this present time.

22          MR. ANDERSON: Okay. Thank you.

23                   Yes. My name is Curtis Anderson.

1 I'm here opposing options one, two,  
2 three, and four for changes at Swan  
3 Creek Management Area. The changes take  
4 no consideration in the fact that  
5 fathers and grandfathers want to carry  
6 their school-age children to Swan Creek.  
7 They get out at 2:40 in the afternoon.  
8 They jump in the back of a pickup truck  
9 and change clothes to try to get down  
10 there to hunt that afternoon. And  
11 closing at 12 o'clock, you can forget  
12 that.

13 You can't teach a child -- when he's  
14 out there on the soccer field, that's  
15 not one on one. When he's on the  
16 football field, it's not one on one. In  
17 that duck blind, that's one on one. How  
18 would you close at 12 o'clock and  
19 alleviate those children from hunting  
20 and from us teaching them?

21 Number two, one of the proposals --  
22 how would the swing-shift people --  
23 right there around Swan Creek you've got

1 Toyota swing shifts. You've got Daikin.  
2 You've got Amoco, Montsano, 3M. You  
3 know, you're just alleviating a  
4 tremendous amount of people that want to  
5 hunt Swan Creek Management Area. I  
6 can't see that it makes sense.

7 I understand that Drew feels like  
8 the count is way down -- the kill count.  
9 You know, you can't control that. I  
10 know people think you can. We haven't  
11 had any cold fronts in three years.  
12 Anybody that's a duck hunter knows -- we  
13 shoot migratory birds. All these  
14 resident ducks around here, all they are  
15 is trading back and forth from one  
16 place. And if you think that you're  
17 going to outsmart them by closing at 12  
18 o'clock, they're going to be in there in  
19 the morning. As soon as they hear boat  
20 motors, all the headlights -- it doesn't  
21 take them long to figure out what's  
22 going on.

23 I've been doing it -- I started

1 hunting at Swan Creek 53 years ago. I  
2 believe I know what Swan Creek needs,  
3 and it's not to close at 12 o'clock and  
4 it's not to cut out our hunting hours.  
5 I have different ideas and so do a  
6 multitude of other people, other hunters  
7 that they've asked me to represent here  
8 today.

9 So that's my speech. And I hope  
10 that you will please give us the  
11 opportunity before any decision is  
12 made -- let us have one-on-one  
13 conversation or group conversation.  
14 This is not the place for it. Thank  
15 you.

16 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chuck, do you want to  
17 address any concerns with Mr. Anderson?

18 First of all, there has been no  
19 proposed changes, are there?

20 MR. SYKES: No.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And our biologists have  
22 basically sent out a survey, and from  
23 that survey -- I think 70 percent of the

1 hunters who turned in the survey  
2 suggested changes, that they felt that  
3 changes were necessary.

4 Chuck, can you go ahead and -- you  
5 probably have ...

6 MR. SYKES: Mr. Chairman, I'll be brief.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. Sure.

8 MR. SYKES: What Mr. Anderson said y'all can  
9 take to heart. He's hunted Swan Creek  
10 for 53 years, and nothing has been  
11 changed in 53 years. How many other  
12 things are we doing the same way we did  
13 53 years ago?

14 We're not trying to limit anything.  
15 We're trying to make it better. We  
16 haven't proposed anything. Drew simply  
17 sent out a questionnaire to all of the  
18 hunters there, got some options.

19 Mr. Stimpson helped us last year at  
20 Mobile and the Delta down there putting  
21 in some different management tools that  
22 was tremendous this year. That's all  
23 we're doing is looking at some options.



1           Nothing has been done right now. We're  
2           just looking.

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Chuck.

4           Mr. Anderson --

5           MR. ANDERSON: And we welcome management  
6           tools. We don't welcome cutting the  
7           hours that we get to hunt. You know,  
8           you buy a license, sir, to hunt 60 days,  
9           not to hunt 30 days.

10          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: So, Mr. Anderson, what  
11          happens is our biologists will take a  
12          critical look at what is best for our  
13          resources. These are federal migratory  
14          birds. And the changes that we -- if  
15          any changes are made -- and, again,  
16          there's no -- there's been no proposed  
17          changes. Those changes, if they are  
18          instituted, would be what we feel is  
19          best for, you know, our migratory birds  
20          in that area.

21          MR. ANDERSON: I understand. And I know  
22          you -- I understand that you --

23          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And you want your

1           grandkids and their kids to continue to  
2           have great duck hunting there. That is  
3           a great resource. So I think now we're  
4           just in the process of discovery.

5           MR. ANDERSON: Thank you.

6           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Grady, you have the  
7           floor.

8           MR. HARTZOG: Sir, one -- sir, if you would go  
9           back to the mic.

10          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Anderson.

11          MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Anderson, if you would go  
12          back to the mic.

13          MR. ANDERSON: Sure.

14          MR. HARTZOG: Of course, I'm one of the  
15          waterfowl hunters that's on this board,  
16          and Raymond is on the board. And, like  
17          he said, last year we did some work  
18          through Ben's help in Mobile that  
19          everybody loved. We made changes. You  
20          said you could make some recommendations  
21          to make it better. What would you tell  
22          our biologists to make Swan Creek  
23          better?

1 MR. ANDERSON: The biologists?

2 MR. HARTZOG: Yeah. What would you say would  
3 make --

4 MR. ANDERSON: I've got a proposal.

5 MR. HARTZOG: -- Swan Creek a better  
6 management area?

7 MR. ANDERSON: I've got a proposal written,  
8 and we're having -- we're starting back  
9 up a club called North Alabama Waterfowl  
10 Association. It was there in our area  
11 for years. I was on the board. The  
12 great Tommy Carter helped us out. Right  
13 now Danny Crawford -- he's our  
14 representative for Limestone County. He  
15 is behind it a hundred percent. He even  
16 told me I could use his name today.

17 But cutting hours -- the only thing  
18 I'm here for is to say cutting hours --  
19 you pay for a hunting license for 60  
20 days. Cutting those hours by 40  
21 percent -- there's a lot that could be  
22 done -- I know a tremendous amount can  
23 be done. DU -- I understand from

1           Drew -- I met with him personally  
2           Wednesday. DU is going to come in and  
3           help some. I'd like to know more about  
4           that. A lot of it is education.

5                     It's not overhunted. I hunted down  
6           there this year. Every day I hunted in  
7           the afternoon I heard less than 20  
8           shotgun shells go off. You're setting  
9           there saying -- people are talking and  
10          running their mouth, youngsters, that  
11          don't even -- on this survey --

12       MR. HARTZOG: When you get that report written  
13          as to what you feel would make Swan  
14          Creek better, get that report to us.  
15          Because --

16       MR. ANDERSON: I've got --

17       MR. HARTZOG: -- ducks need rest. Ducks need  
18          a place to feed and to operate. And so  
19          it's been a success in Mobile. You go  
20          to Arkansas, which is one of the best  
21          duck-hunting states. They close their  
22          management areas down. They rest their  
23          management areas.

1           So when you get your report written  
2           as to what you feel like Swan Creek --  
3           what would benefit Swan Creek, we would  
4           love to look at it. Because I and  
5           Raymond and Ben, all being waterfowlers,  
6           anything we can do to make it better,  
7           but we've still got our biologists that  
8           tell us other than that. And so,  
9           anyway, when you get the report, we  
10          would love to see it.

11       MR. ANDERSON: Thank you.

12       CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any other comments from  
13          the board?

14       MR. JONES: Yes. Mr. Anderson, you referenced  
15          a club. You do realize this is a public  
16          area to hunt and a public thing, not a  
17          club issue?

18                So I just want to stress that. This  
19          is a public resource.

20       MR. ANDERSON: I absolutely understand. Thank  
21          you.

22       CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

23                Any other questions or comments from

1           the board?

2                           (No response.)

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker, Joey  
4           Flowers.

5           MR. FLOWERS: Morning, board members. My name  
6           is Joey Flowers. I'm from Baldwin  
7           County, Alabama. I'm representing the  
8           Alabama Hog Dog Hunters Association and  
9           speaking on their behalf.

10                   The first topic I'd like to discuss  
11           is the 2016 wildlife management area hog  
12           dog hunt that we had from September 1st  
13           through the 10th this year -- or this  
14           past year. We had about 62 hunters that  
15           reported back to me about their kills.  
16           And we had about 217 hogs reported for  
17           that two -- or ten days. We had 98  
18           boars, 117 sows, and two barred hogs  
19           within that ten days.

20                   We're asking if we can try to extend  
21           those days just to eliminate that much  
22           more. A lot of these people that wanted  
23           to hunt couldn't hunt those days because

1           they were working out of town or just  
2           couldn't get off of work. So we're  
3           asking if we can extend those days a  
4           little bit more or even open up more  
5           management area in other areas that will  
6           help out with that cause also.

7           I don't think -- from what I was  
8           told, there was no misconducts. No one  
9           got in trouble, no transporting anything  
10          illegal on the Lower Delta Wildlife  
11          Management Area. So if the board would  
12          consider trying to open up more days for  
13          us and open up more wildlife management  
14          area.

15          The next thing is our Wounded  
16          Warrior hog hunts that we do every year.  
17          It's been going really well. We're  
18          getting a lot of people wanting to come  
19          in and participate and hunt and stuff  
20          like that, and we're getting a lot of  
21          landowners that usually don't allow dog  
22          hunting come forward and, you know,  
23          letting us use their property, which has

1           been really successful. I think the  
2           year before last we caught 52 in a day  
3           and a half, and this past year I think  
4           we caught 23 and real big, nice  
5           trophies. And I think some of the  
6           Wounded Warriors even had three of them  
7           they were able to get mounted and put on  
8           their wall. So it was really neat.

9           Our association is footing the bill  
10          for these Wounded Warriors coming out  
11          from out of state to pay for their  
12          hunting license because most of them are  
13          out-of-state Wounded Warriors. So we're  
14          doing that.

15          My next topic of business is killing  
16          hogs on the spot when we catch them,  
17          especially during the summer months.  
18          It's really hot. And most of the time  
19          when you kill them, they're going to  
20          waste. We cannot savour the meat unless  
21          we're able to tie them up, stage them in  
22          a certain place until after the hunt,  
23          kill them, and take them home. And how



1           the laws are written we can't do that.  
2           So we would like to ask if the board  
3           would consider coming up with a  
4           regulation to where we can savour the  
5           meat so it's not being ruined in the  
6           summer heat.

7                     I got a little saying out of  
8           Proverbs 12:27 that says "The man who  
9           hunts game and kills it -- it does  
10          not -- and does not take possession of  
11          it for eating is a slothful man." We  
12          don't want to be like that. So I would  
13          like for you guys to take that into  
14          consideration.

15       MS. JONES: Time.

16       MR. FLOWERS: And just real quick, my last  
17          topic was coming up with something to  
18          make it mandatory for all dog hunters to  
19          have tracking collars on their dogs.  
20          You heard some of the other people talk  
21          about it earlier. We need to come up  
22          with something that will help eliminate  
23          a lot of these dogs getting off their

1 property.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Flowers.

3 MR. FLOWERS: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And, Mr. Flowers, we  
5 certainly appreciate your hard work with  
6 the veterans.

7 MR. FLOWERS: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Patrick, did you have a  
9 question?

10 MR. CAGLE: This question is for Chuck or  
11 Keith.

12 Can the department -- you know, I  
13 know y'all have been working  
14 successfully with the hog dog hunters  
15 association, you know, and I encourage  
16 y'all to continue to work with them to  
17 see if maybe there is some opportunities  
18 to extend days, maybe two weekends on  
19 management areas of the ones that can be  
20 opened up. You know, we appreciate  
21 their effort to work with the  
22 department, and I encourage the  
23 department to continue to work with them

1           to just, you know, find more  
2           opportunities that don't cause conflict  
3           with the other uses of the WMAs.

4           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Flowers.

5           MR. FLOWERS: Thanks.

6           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our next public speaker  
7           is Tammi Hudson.

8           MS. HUDSON: Mr. Commissioner, Mr. Chairman,  
9           and Board, I'm Tammi Hudson. I live in  
10          Clarke County. I normally hunt the  
11          disabled hunting areas, and I come every  
12          year and thank you for those areas.

13                 This past year I was -- this season  
14                 I did not get to deer hunt the disabled  
15                 hunting areas. I had a family member  
16                 that was very ill and did not get to  
17                 deer hunt this year. But y'all listened  
18                 and Mr. Sykes opened up one of them for  
19                 turkey hunting. So come turkey season,  
20                 I will be trying to harvest a turkey.

21                 And Mr. Bunn says that I won't be  
22                 able to do that. So I hope I'll be able  
23                 to come back and show you that I did.

1           He says that that's not the way it  
2           works, but we're going to -- we're going  
3           to try to show you that I can get one;  
4           okay?

5           MR. BUNN: I hope you get one.

6           MS. FLOWERS: So I want to thank you for that,  
7           Mr. Sykes. And, hopefully, maybe we'll  
8           be able to try it on a few more next  
9           time.

10                   And I just want to say that me and  
11           my family, we appreciate being able to  
12           hunt every different way that we can for  
13           deer hunting. We bow hunt, we stalk  
14           hunt, and we deer dog hunt, and we  
15           appreciate being able to do that. And  
16           we just appreciate our resources that we  
17           have. We appreciate the job that y'all  
18           do. Y'all try to do a good job managing  
19           our resources. We appreciate that.

20                   I try to have a good story about the  
21           law enforcement each year when I come  
22           up. I wasn't -- didn't have any  
23           interaction with them this year. But I

1           try to let them know that we appreciate  
2           all that they do and appreciate the  
3           service that they do and the risks that  
4           they have every day when they go out on  
5           the job. And I want to say that we  
6           appreciate that.

7           Okay. And I want to say that --  
8           like the first man that talked about  
9           deer dog hunting, I just want to put in  
10          that I would appreciate it if we would  
11          try to let -- we're all doing as good as  
12          we can to regulate ourselves with our  
13          tracking systems and so forth and if we  
14          could cut down on as little regulation  
15          as possible. Because we are doing a  
16          good job, I think, trying to regulate  
17          ourselves on that. And that's all I  
18          have to say today.

19          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Tammi, I'm going to give  
20          you Mr. Bunn's e-mail address to send  
21          him a picture of that turkey this  
22          spring.

23          MS. FLOWERS: I have his e-mail address and I

1           will. I'm going to.

2           MR. BUNN: Send me some pictures.

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our next speaker is  
4           Michael McAlpine.

5           MR. McALPINE: Morning. Michael McAlpine.  
6           I'm with BHA, the Bow Hunters of  
7           Alabama. You know, we established in  
8           1967 to support hunting rights, and  
9           we've worked hand in hand with the DCNR.  
10          We've had a great relationship with  
11          them.

12                    This past few months it was brought  
13                    to our attention about the ATV use on  
14                    management areas and they was tearing  
15                    the roads up. One in particular was  
16                    Skyline Management Area. So we was  
17                    approached and wanted to know where we  
18                    stood with ATV use.

19                    And we are a hunting organization.  
20                    We are not opposing any regulations that  
21                    y'all impose in closing roads because we  
22                    are a guest in y'all's house. So, you  
23                    know, anything we can do to help and

1 support DCNR with anything, you have  
2 full BHA support.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you. I think the  
4 Bow Hunters Association do a great job  
5 in the state of Alabama. I'm a life  
6 member. And I appreciate all the hard  
7 work you guys are doing. We need to get  
8 more members involved. We need -- and  
9 we need to get more of you-all to sign  
10 up for BHA.

11 MR. McALPINE: Yes. And one other thing. I  
12 don't know if y'all know it or not, but  
13 the last weekend in February we're  
14 hosting a Reinhardt 100 tournament down  
15 at Lake Eufaula State Park. That is 50  
16 North American game animals and 50  
17 African game animals. It's a two-day  
18 event. So, I mean, we're actually going  
19 to have a life-size giraffe. He's  
20 19-foot tall. So, you know, it's a --

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: It would be worth coming  
22 down to see that giraffe. Thank you.

23 The next public speaker is Kayla

1 Cooper.

2 Thank you, Ms. Cooper.

3 MS. COOPER: Thank you for giving me the  
4 opportunity to speak today. My name is  
5 Kayla Cooper. I am here today on behalf  
6 of the Alabama State Coon Hunters  
7 Association. I am their  
8 secretary/treasurer. I'm also a member  
9 of the --

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Could you get a little  
11 closer to the mic?

12 MS. COOPER: Oh, I'm sorry.

13 Alabama State Coon Hunters  
14 Association. I'm also a member of the  
15 Alabama Hog Dog Association and a member  
16 of the United Blood Trackers  
17 Association. I do wounded-game recovery  
18 with my dogs in addition to hog hunting  
19 and coon hunting.

20 Thank you for allowing me to speak  
21 to you. And I especially want to thank  
22 the Alabama Conservation enforcement  
23 officers department which has approved a



1           thousand-dollar grant for our Coonhound  
2           Youth State Championship. And so we're  
3           really excited about that and everything  
4           we're going to get to do with the kids  
5           at our state championship in May.

6           The main reason I'm here today is  
7           concern for the new field trial permit  
8           that has been proposed. We have a lot  
9           of clubs in Alabama. They license  
10          events through multiple registries:  
11          UKC, AKC, PKC, ACHA, NKC. I'm licensed  
12          as a judge for several of them.

13          Proposing the new field trial to  
14          three a year cuts down tremendously on  
15          the clubs having people come from out of  
16          state. A lot of our clubs are  
17          struggling.

18          There was an article published in  
19          Field & Stream back in 2008 about  
20          competition hunting saved coon hunting.  
21          We as an association represent the  
22          pleasure hunters. We also represent the  
23          competition hunters. And this permit is

1           really, really cutting down on people  
2           wanting to come from out of state.  
3           Because we only get three a year per  
4           club, and they're hosting 15, 30, 50  
5           events. It doesn't cover it all.

6           We don't want to do anything to hurt  
7           the participation with the clubs,  
8           especially at a lot of the events we  
9           have that are benefit events. I know  
10          the Clarke-Washington County Coon  
11          Hunters Association has donated over  
12          \$235,000 to St. Jude's in the past  
13          several years with their events. These  
14          type of events are stuff that we want to  
15          keep going not only to preserve the  
16          sport and the tradition but also for all  
17          the good that they do for the youth  
18          events, for the YEP program that runs  
19          the UKC that gets kids into hunting.  
20          And having that permit limits a lot of  
21          those opportunities.

22                   Thank you for allowing me to speak.

23   CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. Cooper.

1 Commissioner, you have the floor.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: I just wanted to recognize  
3 Chuck to speak to Ms. Cooper's issues  
4 here because that's -- I appreciate your  
5 comments, but, you know, when you say  
6 limit you to three, that's three free  
7 ones. So I'm going to let Chuck address  
8 it.

9 And I would want to point out to the  
10 board -- and I think maybe we've talked  
11 a lot -- if not, we'll go over that, and  
12 we'll certainly consider any comments.  
13 But that reg was never meant to address  
14 anything but quail and duck field  
15 trials.

16 So we'll look at what you're  
17 requesting. But, Chuck, would you --

18 MR. SYKES: Well, I got to feel like Chris  
19 Blankenship for two speakers anyway.

20 Look, it is three free. They can  
21 have as many field trials as they want.  
22 All we're asking is buy a small game  
23 license. That's it.

1           We had one club that had 120 permits  
2           a couple of years ago. That's a little  
3           excessive. We did a -- Chief Dodd did a  
4           sweep of all the clubs that requested  
5           permits. The average was less than  
6           three per club. So we thought we were  
7           being very generous with allowing three  
8           free permits per each club. They can  
9           have a hundred after that. They just  
10          need to buy a license.

11         COMMISSIONER GUY: Chuck -- I'm sorry. And  
12          then, if you would, address the issue  
13          about the out-of-state -- out-of-state  
14          issue where somebody is coming from out  
15          of state, meaning that -- some of those  
16          places don't even allow them to do field  
17          trials. They get to come here and do  
18          them, at least up to three --

19         MR. SYKES: Some of the -- one phone call I  
20          got that really sticks in my mind -- and  
21          this may be not the norm. But I had a  
22          guy that says with this \$20 license  
23          these people are not going to be able to

1 drive from Canada to come to my field  
2 trial, and if they can't come to this  
3 field trial, they're not going to be in  
4 the winning to win the truck. If you're  
5 bringing a truck, trailer, dogs, all  
6 your equipment from Canada and coming  
7 down to a field trial, a \$20 license is  
8 not going to prohibit you from enjoying  
9 that activity. I'm sorry. And I'm not  
10 trying to be ugly. But that was a  
11 legitimate phone call that we got.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Commissioner.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: And could I just make one  
14 more point?

15 So the other point, ma'am, is this,  
16 too: It takes a lot of effort, a lot of  
17 manpower hours, a lot of administrative  
18 functions to do what y'all are asking  
19 for. Consequently, as we mentioned  
20 earlier, we don't get state dollars, no  
21 general fund money. So we have to also  
22 look at what we provide to you through  
23 our law enforcement section, our

1 wildlife section, all the people -- just  
2 so you'll understand. I'm not trying to  
3 be ugly. I want you to understand.

4 When we help with these things --  
5 because there has to be somebody that  
6 comes there, spends time, makes sure  
7 that people are obeying the laws and  
8 this kind of thing. So when we look at  
9 this, I just want you to know it wasn't  
10 some helter-skelter type of action on  
11 our part. It was to also try to support  
12 what you need when y'all put on these  
13 field trials through monies we need to  
14 get administratively.

15 MS. COOPER: And I absolutely understand that  
16 and would never have any problem with  
17 paying for a permit, never did. I was  
18 actually when I applied for the first  
19 one quite surprised they were free  
20 because I expected to pay a fee. No  
21 problem paying a fee.

22 What I might suggest is, if  
23 possible -- and I reread the e-mail I

1           was sent multiple times as I was sitting  
2           up here in the crowd before I came down.  
3           The way the e-mail was worded does not  
4           convey that the first three are free or  
5           that you're allowed any after that. And  
6           it says in the e-mail that, yes, it was  
7           originally designed for bird dog field  
8           trials, which I have participated in,  
9           also, but that they also issue them for  
10          raccoon, fox, squirrel, and it made  
11          mention of others. So that's why it  
12          became a concern of ours and was brought  
13          to our attention as an association by a  
14          lot of small game hunters.

15        COMMISSIONER GUY: And can I just -- and just  
16                briefly -- so I appreciate those  
17                comments. And that's what we're trying  
18                to do, get it right now.

19        MS. COOPER: Yeah.

20        COMMISSIONER GUY: It was a matter of  
21                interpretation over about 40 years that  
22                was causing us, like I say, a lot of  
23                manpower and that expense. So I promise

1           we'll work with you. Just work with us  
2           in understanding what we're trying to do  
3           here, and I think we'll all come to find  
4           a common place.

5           MS. COOPER: We'd absolutely love to work with  
6           you. And that's another reason I'm here  
7           today is to start establishing a working  
8           relationship between the state coon  
9           hunters association and the conservation  
10          board. Because a lot of our membership  
11          and our officers were very dormant for  
12          years and years until new membership and  
13          management took over.

14          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Hartzog, you have  
15          the floor.

16          MR. HARTZOG: One question, Chuck. Is the fee  
17          per club event or per entrance?

18          MR. SYKES: Club event. So one -- they can  
19          have 150 participants for \$50.

20          MR. HARTZOG: I mean, the entry fees that they  
21          take in can more than cover a \$50  
22          permit. I mean, that's not a problem.

23          MS. COOPER: We also pay portions back to the



1 registries. And I'm not sure how or  
2 where the board is and stuff of the  
3 license fee that we pay to UKC. We pay  
4 not only a license fee for the event,  
5 but we also pay per dog entered, so ...

6 MR. HARTZOG: I know.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. Cooper.  
8 We're looking forward to working with  
9 you. Thank you for coming forward.

10 MS. COOPER: Thank you so much.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our next speaker will be  
12 Richard Wallace.

13 MR. WALLACE: Thank you. My name is Richard  
14 Wallace. I'm from Killen, Alabama, and  
15 that's in Lauderdale County.

16 I was a conservation officer for  
17 almost 39 years. I retired in 2010. 36  
18 of those years was in Lauderdale County  
19 as a conservation officer. This past  
20 year we were part -- or a part of my  
21 county -- the east portion of my county  
22 was put on restricted doe days. We went  
23 from having a 57-day doe season to

1           having an 18-day doe season.

2           I worked that county as a  
3           conservation enforcement officer, and I  
4           have been from one end of that county to  
5           the other for 36 years. There are just  
6           as many deer in the east end of  
7           Lauderdale County as there are in the  
8           west end of Lauderdale County.

9           I sat in a shooting house with my  
10          grandson this year who does not care to  
11          hunt very much. And I explained to him  
12          that, look, we can't shoot does; we'll  
13          have to shoot bucks. Now, my grandson  
14          comes and hunts with me probably twice a  
15          year. And, like I say, he's not a  
16          hunter. But he does like to go with his  
17          grandfather.

18          We sat in that tree stand -- I mean,  
19          that shooting house, and there were  
20          probably 20 unantlered deer that came in  
21          the field. He didn't get to shoot. Of  
22          course, I didn't get to shoot. We go  
23          home and he won't come back. He sat and

1 watched those deer and realized that he  
2 had better things to do by playing a  
3 video game.

4 If we had a problem -- and I worked  
5 hard to try to establish a deer herd in  
6 Lauderdale County. If we had a problem,  
7 I would be one of the very first ones to  
8 say something needs to be done. But we  
9 do not have a problem with deer in the  
10 east part of Lauderdale County. And I  
11 am requesting that whatever this board  
12 decides as far as a season for the east  
13 part of Lauderdale County, consider that  
14 I think whatever happens in the west end  
15 of Lauderdale County should happen in  
16 the east part of Lauderdale County.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Wallace, I know you  
19 have -- you have to have an excellent  
20 relationship with our conservation  
21 officers. I would suggest that, Chuck,  
22 maybe you could spend some time, you  
23 know, a few minutes with Mr. Wallace.

1 MR. WALLACE: I have.

2 MR. SYKES: We have.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay.

4 MR. WALLACE: I have already spoken to him,  
5 and he was very receptive to me. And I  
6 appreciate that. I do.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I feel that you  
8 definitely deserve that.

9 MR. WALLACE: In my years -- my years of  
10 experience working with the department,  
11 I had probably the best job in the  
12 world. I worked with -- Captain Johnson  
13 was my last supervisor. Captain Askew  
14 was a lieutenant for me. I enjoyed that  
15 tremendously.

16 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Well, we certainly  
17 appreciate your service that you brought  
18 to the state in the past.

19 Grady, you have the floor.

20 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Wallace -- and correct me if  
21 I'm wrong, Chuck. When we passed these  
22 different zones and passed the different  
23 seasons, did not we do it on a two-year

1           and so this would be the last year and  
2           then we were going to try to readjust  
3           those seasons for the following years?

4       MR. SYKES:   The only thing that was sunsetted  
5           with Mr. Cagle's motion was the extended  
6           deer season.  It didn't have anything to  
7           do with the zones.  The zone was -- if  
8           you had property in that zone like  
9           Mr. Wallace, the DMAP program is  
10          tailor-made to handle those issues on a  
11          specific landowner-by-landowner basis.  
12          And I think that's what Mr. Jones was  
13          wanting to speak about.

14       CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND:  Ray, you have the floor.

15       MR. JONES:  Yeah.  And I was going to say the  
16          deer management program -- Deer  
17          Management Assistance Program, to be  
18          precise, you can apply for that and have  
19          that done on the specific -- if you've  
20          got too many does on your property,  
21          that's the way to handle that is to go  
22          through that program.

23       MR. WALLACE:  We spoke about that earlier.

1 Mr. Sykes and I spoke about that  
2 earlier. I -- if I thought I was the  
3 only person who was having that type of  
4 situation, but I'm not. It's -- it's  
5 all of east Lauderdale County.

6 I don't -- you probably -- I don't  
7 know how many of you have ever been to  
8 Joe Wheeler State Park, but you cannot  
9 drive through Joe Wheeler State Park  
10 without nearly running over a deer.  
11 They're everywhere. They're -- I mean,  
12 it's not -- it's not a situation where  
13 I've got a problem with more deer on  
14 mine. They're everywhere. I mean, it's  
15 not a -- it's not a centralized --

16 MR. JONES: I understand. And I think our  
17 biologists can look at that on a --

18 MR. SYKES: I offered and Mr. Wallace is going  
19 to outline what his lines should be.  
20 And we'll get with our staff and have  
21 something for y'all before the next  
22 board meeting.

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Chuck.

1 MR. WALLACE: I certainly appreciate y'all  
2 listening to me.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Wallace.  
4 Thank you for coming.

5 The next speaker will be Billy Joe  
6 Johnson.

7 MR. JOHNSON: Thank y'all for the opportunity  
8 to speak with you today. I'm Billy Joe  
9 Johnson. I'm from Cherokee County. And  
10 just like Mr. Wally, I've got a problem  
11 with the split deer season -- split doe  
12 season. This was implemented into our  
13 county this year. And I talked with  
14 Mr. Sykes, and he suggested that we get  
15 together as a group up there and maybe  
16 propose some realignment of the lines.

17 I met with a little ad hoc committee  
18 we put together. Phillip Abney with the  
19 Natural Resources and Conservation  
20 Service, one of your retired biologists,  
21 Tracy Nelson, was on that, Harlan Starr,  
22 who is a sitting member on the National  
23 Wild Turkey Federation Board of

1 Directors, and myself. We talked about  
2 this redistribution of the lines, and it  
3 just -- it just didn't need it. We --  
4 the whole county is completely full of  
5 the doe population that we seem to be  
6 wanting to protect here. And we  
7 couldn't decide any area that needed  
8 excluding to follow the guidelines.

9 So what we -- what we decided to do  
10 was to determine what problems this was  
11 creating for the county. There's some  
12 collateral damage going on with this.  
13 Don't know if y'all are familiar with  
14 our deer processors that we have around  
15 the state. I'm sure you are. But I  
16 went and talked to those guys. They're  
17 looking at somewhere between -- one of  
18 my buddies, my neighbor, is looking  
19 between seven and \$9,000 down for this  
20 year income because of the provisions.  
21 This -- and a disturbing fact in this is  
22 the number of doe they've been -- I  
23 mean, bucks they've been processing.



1 Normally it's close to a 50/50 thing,  
2 maybe 60. They've been processing -- 70  
3 or 80 percent of the deer they processed  
4 this year have been little bucks.

5 Like Mr. Wally, I have grandchildren  
6 that I hunt with. And with the number  
7 of days that we have to provide this  
8 information to them, provide the  
9 activity to them, it's hard for us to  
10 get out there and be able to teach those  
11 young folks about good solid deer  
12 hunting. I've always known that when  
13 bucks are on -- I mean, does are on the  
14 field, those are opportunities for -- to  
15 fill the freezer, to put meat in the  
16 freezer. A little buck comes on the  
17 field. You show him a chart that the  
18 Alabama Wildlife Federation has got that  
19 we have in each shooting house that  
20 shows you the need and what letting that  
21 little buck pass would do for the herd.

22 MS. JONES: Time.

23 MR. JOHNSON: We're killing those little bucks

1           in Cherokee County. That's what's  
2           really disturbing.

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Johnson?

4           MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

5           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: That's your three  
6           minutes.

7           MR. JOHNSON: Okay. That's my three minutes.

8                        Lastly -- I was waiting -- I was  
9           waiting for that young lady to give me  
10          my three minutes.

11          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: She actually did.

12          MS. JONES: I did. I said "time."

13          MR. JOHNSON: Oh, did she?

14                        Oh, the last thing I want to add is  
15          that if y'all can do anything to help us  
16          with this -- with this split season, we  
17          would appreciate it.

18          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

19          MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

20          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our next speaker is Pete  
21          McCoy.

22          MR. McCOY: My name is Pete McCoy. This will  
23          be really short.

1           First of all, I appreciate all that  
2           y'all do for us as hunters here in the  
3           state.

4           Also, I appreciate you extending the  
5           season this year, ten days for deer  
6           hunting. Yesterday I was able to  
7           harvest the largest buck of my life.  
8           Somehow this deer knew when January 31st  
9           was. I've been hunting this deer for  
10          three years. Got tons of trail camera  
11          pictures. And they've all been  
12          February 1st and after when he decided  
13          to start showing up. So yesterday  
14          morning I got out there early, and I was  
15          able to get him. He didn't get the  
16          e-mail that the season had changed. So  
17          I appreciate you extending the season.

18          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Congratulations. Send  
19          us a picture, Pete.

20                        Next speaker, Rick Baxter.

21          MR. BAXTER: Good morning. Rick Baxter from  
22          Washington County, Alabama.

23                        First and foremost, I want to thank

1 every member that returned my phone call  
2 December the 27th. I was on an  
3 information-gathering project. Some of  
4 you I didn't get ahold of because I  
5 didn't have your phone number. But the  
6 ones that did, it was the week after  
7 Christmas, and you took the time out of  
8 your day to call me back -- and I really  
9 appreciate that -- with that information  
10 we were putting together to figure out  
11 how many complaints we were having in  
12 the state against dog hunters hunting  
13 for deer.

14 At that time I talked to seven  
15 different board members, I believe it  
16 was. We had three at that time in the  
17 whole state. All right. Since then  
18 it's up to 65. That number has  
19 increased. We knew that was coming.  
20 From last year, the report that you  
21 have, I'm sure, was 272. 75 percent  
22 decrease. As Mr. Melton said, we're  
23 doing -- we accepted a challenge from

1 the board, from Commissioner Sykes -- I  
2 mean, Director Sykes, Commissioner Guy  
3 to clean up our act.

4 I'm a member of the -- I'm the vice  
5 president of the Alabama Dog Hunters  
6 Association. We work hard. Lonnie, the  
7 president, has traveled. I have  
8 traveled all over the country -- or all  
9 over the state this year trying hard.  
10 We have helped. We are not the end  
11 result. The end result is the  
12 individual hunter that has taken the  
13 challenge to be better and be stewards  
14 of what we do. And they've accepted  
15 that, and they have exceeded.

16 So with that said, I'm in the same  
17 boat Mr. Melton is in. If you've got to  
18 put a regulation on us, then take one  
19 away from us.

20 The encroachment law, that's -- I  
21 want the individual held -- I want to be  
22 accountable for what I do. I don't want  
23 my cousin, my brother, or someone else

1 taking something away from me because of  
2 what he's doing. But with that said,  
3 with the encroachment law, if you're on  
4 a permit system, he could still do that.

5 I hunt in a county that half the  
6 county is on a permit system. I hunt in  
7 Clarke County. Highway 17 divides the  
8 permit. Okay. So Hebron, a 13,000-acre  
9 hunting club, they're over there with a  
10 permit system. Now you implement this.  
11 They could still have one guy -- and I  
12 have many friends that hunt that club.  
13 They have one guy. He gets a ticket for  
14 the third try, whatever. He gets a  
15 ticket. That could still shut his whole  
16 club down because it hurts the permit  
17 system. That to me is double jeopardy.

18 All I ask is you consider that and  
19 think about that when you're making the  
20 decisions on this. The permit system, I  
21 do think it had its place at the time.  
22 It's worked in places. It has helped us  
23 tremendously. One other thing that I

1 think has helped is the ten days back in  
2 December. The 272 complaints going to  
3 65, I would attribute that -- cutting  
4 the dog hunting off at January the 15th  
5 to probably 50 percent of your complaint  
6 decrease.

7 MS. JONES: Time.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Baxter.

9 MR. BAXTER: One last thing.

10 Mr. Wallace, to get that boy out  
11 from in front of those computer games  
12 and video games, bring him to Choctaw  
13 County. We'll put him in a buggy with a  
14 bunch of beagle puppies, and he won't  
15 play video games no more, I can promise  
16 you. Thank you.

17 MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Gary. You have the  
19 floor.

20 MR. WOLFE: The number that he just spoke of,  
21 is that the updated number that's -- do  
22 we know that updated number of what he  
23 spoke of?

1 MR. SYKES: I'm going to let Chief Lewis  
2 answer that question.

3 MR. WOLFE: As a board member, I don't know  
4 what that number is. I'd like to know  
5 what that number is.

6 MR. LEWIS: End of the year total is 181  
7 complaints that were received on dog  
8 deer hunting statewide.

9 MR. WOLFE: Okay. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our next speaker is  
11 Lonnie Miller.

12 MR. MILLER: I'm Lonnie Miller, the president  
13 of the Alabama Dog Hunters Association.  
14 I'm here basically to thank you guys for  
15 hearing us and hearing our voice.

16 The report that I got from Chief  
17 Lewis was 65 roughly. Last year when  
18 Kevin Dodd gave it to me, it was 242  
19 complaints, not 272. And I did not and  
20 have not checked with him since the  
21 season went out. And, of course, as  
22 I've told several of you -- a few of you  
23 in the past week or so, the report is



1 not accurate. And I can tell you a  
2 prime example.

3 Last year -- you know, well, the  
4 bottom line is we don't know if it's  
5 substantiated complaints or not. We  
6 don't know if it's a phone call, did  
7 they catch the dog -- is it a  
8 substantiated complaint or is it a phone  
9 call, if they call you guys or -- you  
10 know, and I'm not in no way here to  
11 disrespect Chief Lewis or the  
12 department. But what my point is and  
13 what I said last year, we have to have  
14 chain of command. It's got to go from  
15 the landowner that catches the dog to  
16 the top and back down through us and you  
17 guys. And if it don't do that, anybody  
18 can call and complain.

19 I personally through -- Kevin Dodd  
20 sent me some information on some people  
21 that are here today at this meeting.  
22 And I called these people, and some of  
23 the stuff was valid. Some of it was

1 not. And I did research on my end, sent  
2 GPS documents, you know, from our  
3 Garmins.

4 So the point being, we need to --  
5 that report needs to be valid, you know,  
6 not -- with all due respect to Chief  
7 Lewis, I asked him -- and Kevin Dodd and  
8 I were working on the report to get the  
9 proper number of acres, the proper  
10 number of clubs in the counties. And I  
11 had worked all spring and part of the  
12 summer with Kevin in doing that -- or  
13 Chief Dodd.

14 And, you know, of course, some  
15 people think that report is not  
16 important. It's very important. Like I  
17 told Jeff Martin yesterday on the phone,  
18 that report is very important because  
19 if -- it needs to be the proper number  
20 of acreage, the proper number of dog  
21 clubs. And I think in one county it may  
22 list 13 dog clubs. Well, there's 19 dog  
23 clubs in that county. Well, if you

1 start doing the math, maybe the problem  
2 is not as bad as it really seems and,  
3 then again, maybe it is.

4 I'm not here to say that there's not  
5 problems because we do have a few hot  
6 spots. But I can tell you we made a big  
7 change. And we need to make sure  
8 that -- I agree with what Mr. Melton  
9 said. I don't want any type of  
10 legislation or any kind of -- any more  
11 laws or rules. Give us a chance and --  
12 so what?

13 And people said it's a year. It's  
14 only been a year.

15 MS. JONES: Time.

16 MR. MILLER: It's only been a year. But I can  
17 tell you, we made a big change.

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Commissioner, you have  
19 the floor.

20 COMMISSIONER GUY: So Lonnie, first of all,  
21 let me say this: I think the point that  
22 needs to be made here is that -- and I  
23 think I've said this publicly -- is that

1 y'all have worked well with us, and I  
2 appreciate the dog hunters association  
3 and you doing so. I know you take a lot  
4 of heat from your membership sometimes  
5 because I don't think they quite  
6 understand -- and I'm saying it  
7 publicly -- what we're trying to do.

8 So thank you, number one, for  
9 working with us. Thanks to all the dog  
10 hunters for trying to eliminate the  
11 complaints that we have, but we still  
12 have them; right?

13 So all we're trying to do -- and I  
14 want to be clear about this -- is to try  
15 to reduce those complaints. Those  
16 conflicts, as you well know, are  
17 probably the majority of the issues we  
18 deal with during the hunting season;  
19 right?

20 So we're not -- we are not -- let me  
21 state it unequivocally -- trying to do  
22 anything to, you know, stop dog deer  
23 hunting. We are just trying to work

1 with you guys to try to minimize those  
2 conflicts between dog deer hunters and  
3 others. And I promise you and I promise  
4 the people in here that if you'll  
5 continue to work with us and listen to  
6 what we're trying to do -- and we'll  
7 listen to what y'all's concerns are -- I  
8 think we will get there. But there has  
9 to be a mentality, like you've shown so  
10 far, of working through those issues for  
11 the benefit of everybody. And that's  
12 what I want to thank you for.

13 And so, yes, reducing those  
14 conflicts -- the number of complaints  
15 has been tremendous. And I thank you  
16 and I thank all of the people that have  
17 worked to get it there. And what do we  
18 always say?

19 It's always the bad apples that  
20 cause everybody else the problem; right?  
21 That's always what it is. Because as a  
22 whole -- it's not the dog deer hunter as  
23 a whole, just like there are bad stalk

1 hunters and bad this, that, and the  
2 other. So what we're trying to do is  
3 get to the -- is get to help you -- help  
4 you as an association address those bad  
5 guys that aren't really wanting to  
6 conform.

7 So I just want to say that publicly.  
8 I know that you've tried to make sure  
9 your organization knows that. And I  
10 want to thank you for sitting down with  
11 us and having some hard discussions.

12 MR. MILLER: And we appreciate the  
13 relationship that we've had with you  
14 guys as well. And, you know, it's a  
15 work in progress, but I can tell you  
16 that it's very important to get the  
17 complaints substantiated. And, you  
18 know, as far as the -- you know, if it's  
19 not a substantiated complaint -- you  
20 know, I used to be a prison guard, and  
21 if it wasn't in writing, it did not  
22 happen. And we have to -- we have got  
23 to document the case. And I agree with

1           what Rick said. It's my responsibility  
2           to keep my dog on my property, period.  
3           And that's what I say. And it's got to  
4           be that way.

5           COMMISSIONER GUY: Let me just make one  
6           clarification here. And I may be wrong.  
7           I'll look to my folks.

8                        So to substantiate the complaint,  
9           though, isn't that after warnings --  
10          written warnings or no?

11          MR. LEWIS: A substantiated complaint is --  
12          when I say total, that's the total  
13          number of complaints we received  
14          regarding dog deer hunters. Within  
15          those, if it's a permitted county, we  
16          would have substantiated complaints  
17          where an officer went out and  
18          investigated this. We have a picture of  
19          the dog where the dog is right there.

20          Of course, another --

21                        (Brief interruption by the court  
22                        reporter.)

23          COMMISSIONER GUY: You have to stand up,

1 Chris. Our court reporter needs to hear  
2 what you're saying.

3 MR. LEWIS: Substantiated complaints are -- if  
4 we have a permitted county, permitted  
5 club, if we get a complaint, we'll go  
6 out and investigate that. And if we can  
7 verify a dog intrusion, we can verify  
8 with either proof of the dog there or  
9 the dog still there, we recover it, we  
10 call that a substantiated or confirmed  
11 complaint.

12 On permitted clubs, we get a call, a  
13 dog intrusion. We get out there.  
14 There's nothing there. We log that as  
15 an unconfirmed complaint. Either way  
16 it's still a complaint that we receive  
17 that we responded to.

18 If it's not a permitted county, it's  
19 just -- it's a complaint. We go  
20 investigate it. We don't do a report  
21 since it's not a permitted county.

22 Permitted clubs, we do reports for  
23 each club based on the number of



1 complaints they get. Each club will get  
2 a letter at the end of the season if  
3 they had complaints, confirmed or  
4 unconfirmed. They will get a follow-up  
5 letter at the end of the season: Hey,  
6 this is what you had; what are we going  
7 to do in the future to address it?  
8 Those are on the permitted clubs.

9 Unpermitted clubs, we don't have --  
10 we don't have relations with -- or we  
11 don't follow up with them. We don't --  
12 we go out there. We deal with the  
13 problems. If they're there, they're  
14 there. If they're not, we don't contact  
15 them afterwards.

16 COMMISSIONER GUY: So do you have that, then,  
17 about substantiated and unsubstantiated  
18 broken down?

19 MR. LEWIS: With the permitted -- if it's a  
20 permitted club, yes.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: If it's not --

22 MR. LEWIS: If it's not, it's just a --

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: So I would just ask you to

1 do this: Provide that to the board and  
2 we can -- and we'll talk to Lonnie about  
3 those.

4 MR. LEWIS: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Thank you.

6 MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes.

8 MR. WOLFE: So do I understand the ones that  
9 you're talking about is just the numbers  
10 that are permitted counties? Did I  
11 understand that right, or that  
12 includes -- the number you gave us was  
13 everything?

14 MR. LEWIS: The number I gave you is  
15 everything we received statewide --

16 MR. WOLFE: Statewide.

17 MR. LEWIS: -- whether it's a permitted county  
18 or not. And some of those complaints  
19 come from counties that have been closed  
20 to dog deer hunting for years, and we'll  
21 get complaints there.

22 Some of the complaints, you know,  
23 it's hard -- they're complaints we

1           receive, but they're from dogs in  
2           Mississippi -- hunters in another state  
3           running into Alabama. But, again, it's  
4           a dog deer complaint, and we record all  
5           of those.

6           MR. MILLER: One complaint on the report was a  
7           dog in a pen barking on a hunting club.  
8           That was a complaint. And so --

9           MR. LEWIS: I strike those from my total. I  
10          had some complaints about dog deer --  
11          deer dogs being shot. I strike those  
12          from our report, too, at the end of the  
13          year.

14          MR. MILLER: But in Butler County -- and I  
15          know Butler County had one issue. Me  
16          and Mr. Hartzog talked about it earlier.  
17          As a prime example, there's a pack of  
18          yard dogs running deer and, you know --  
19          and so, you know, if a landowner calls,  
20          hey, I got some hunting -- you're dog  
21          hunters -- yeah, we're dog hunting or --  
22          you know, I don't hunt in Butler County.  
23          I hunt in Covington County.

1           But it's not fair for the dog  
2 hunters to get complained -- you get  
3 complaints because somebody has got dogs  
4 out and they run deer. It just happens.  
5 That happened in Baldwin County this  
6 year, you know. And that's what I'm  
7 saying.

8           And don't get me wrong. I really  
9 appreciate what Chuck has done and Chris  
10 and all the folks. I'm good with that,  
11 and I want to continue a relationship.  
12 But I cannot accept more punishment or  
13 restrictions at this point in time. My  
14 membership is not going to want to do  
15 that. It's not me. It's my membership.  
16 And we're going to vote on whatever you  
17 guys decide to do as to what they want  
18 to do. But I know it's my  
19 responsibility to keep my dog in my --  
20 in my -- on my property. I agree with  
21 that 100 percent. Thank you.

22           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

23           Next public speaker -- excuse me,

1           Chuck.

2           MR. SYKES: I'm sorry.

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: No problem.

4           MR. SYKES: I understand their position on  
5                    unsubstantiated complaints. I  
6                    understand it. That's why the way that  
7                    reg is written now, whether you're in a  
8                    permit county or not a permit county,  
9                    you have to get two written warnings by  
10                   one of our officers, not word of mouth,  
11                   not a made-up, trumped-up complaint.  
12                   It's got to be investigated just like on  
13                   a permit county. That would solve the  
14                   problem.

15          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Chuck.

16                    Any questions from the board?

17                    (No response.)

18          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker, William  
19                    Allen.

20          COMMISSIONER GUY: Go ahead. You've only got  
21                    three minutes.

22          MR. ALLEN: Well, I may concentrate on one.

23                    My name is William Allen. Everybody

1 calls me Andy. I live in Andalusia,  
2 Alabama, Covington County. But this  
3 concerns the -- actually being in favor  
4 of the implementation of a permit system  
5 for Butler County, particularly the area  
6 between Highway 10 and Highway 106.

7 I lease approximately 250 acres of  
8 Soterra land there. And I'm surrounded  
9 by some leased land, Willard Timber  
10 Company, which is leased by a  
11 dog-hunting group which basically is  
12 giving dog hunters a bad name. They  
13 have little or no respect for adjoining  
14 landowners or lessees. They do all they  
15 can to bend the rules solely for their  
16 benefits. They get my pattern down.  
17 Adjoining club members, they get their  
18 pattern down. They come in there. They  
19 throw their dogs out.

20 I supplied the board -- each of you  
21 have -- I think it's 14 pictures of  
22 those dogs on my food plots that you'll  
23 see those times in the middle of the

1 day, or there's Sunday when I as a  
2 minister am not there. So they're doing  
3 this at times when they think they can  
4 get away with it.

5 This year, on the 26th of November,  
6 I caught them setting up part of my land  
7 and their land as well to run it. And  
8 they had not throwed the dogs out. And  
9 once I got there, within about five  
10 minutes they all came and they all got  
11 up to the gate and all left. But the  
12 story was that they were trying to cut a  
13 dog off that had come in from way far  
14 away. The trouble is they have no land  
15 in that area that they're supposed to be  
16 running. It's permit land, and their  
17 lease specifies from their own overseer  
18 they are not to run dogs on this  
19 property.

20 So they also -- when they're caught,  
21 they use the old statement that, well,  
22 we're trying to cut this dog off running  
23 from two miles away. Also, they have an

1           attitude. We've done it for 40 years.  
2           We'll keep doing it. You're just going  
3           to have to live with it.

4           Also, they use the statement that my  
5           dog can't read property lines. So,  
6           therefore, you know, they're on my road.  
7           They're lined up on my road. So they've  
8           got their gun right here at the driver's  
9           seat. You know, they're not trying to  
10          cut a dog off. They're trying to shoot  
11          that deer when it crosses the road going  
12          through the middle of my property.

13          So they're also mixing alcohol,  
14          driving, guns, and kids --

15       MS. JONES: Time.

16       MR. ALLEN: -- all at one time.

17                 Thank you for your time. Thank you  
18                 for listening.

19       CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Allen.

20                 Which board member is Butler County?

21                 Patrick, you may want to talk with  
22                 Mr. Allen and address some of his  
23                 concerns, and if you could report back



1           to us the next board meeting. Thank  
2           you.

3           Next speaker is Michael Eiser.

4           ME. EISER: Hey, I'm Mike Eiser. I represent  
5           a still hunt club in Coffee County, and  
6           we're highly encouraging you or begging  
7           you to please put a permit system in  
8           Coffee County.

9           And let me preface this by saying  
10          that I have nothing wrong -- nothing  
11          wrong with dog hunting. It's fun. It's  
12          exciting. I've done it before. But  
13          when you've got the type of encroachment  
14          we have in our club in our area, it's  
15          not fun anymore.

16          We've got -- this year alone we have  
17          six documented cases of dogs being  
18          captured on our property. We have tons  
19          of our hunts being ruined by rogue dogs  
20          running across our property. And I  
21          can't for the life of me figure out how  
22          Coffee County has escaped the permit  
23          system so far.

1           We're not dealing with the Lonnie  
2           Millers of the world. We're not dealing  
3           with the guys he described as do it and  
4           do it right and do it well and do it by  
5           the law and engage the techniques that  
6           help cut down on complaints. We don't  
7           have those guys here in Coffee County.  
8           We got the guys that don't give a crap.  
9           And our recourse -- what is our recourse  
10          if we come up with a single man -- if  
11          he -- this happened recently. We  
12          know -- we have caught those dogs --  
13          we've got a guy criminally  
14          trespassing -- charges and arrest made  
15          for criminal trespassing on our  
16          property.

17                 So if you can't get the type of guys  
18                 that we want to have deer dog hunting  
19                 privileges in Coffee County, give us the  
20                 permit system. Give us something. Give  
21                 us something with some teeth, some  
22                 recourse to protect our interests.  
23                 Because there's nothing more aggravating

1           than working your butt off for years and  
2           hundreds of hours and all off season.  
3           Oh, you sit down on your stand the first  
4           day you can get there and have dogs come  
5           running across your property. When you  
6           do catch them, you bring them out there.  
7           They say, oh, well, my dog can't read  
8           signs. Well, I get that. Well, give us  
9           the permit system. Give us something to  
10          hang our hats on.

11                   And, again, nothing against any dog  
12          hunter in this property -- in this room.  
13          You're doing it and doing it right.  
14          It's the jerks that are in our county  
15          that are ruining it for us, and they're  
16          ruining it for you.

17          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Patrick, I think that's  
18          your congressional district.

19          MR. CAGLE: Yes.

20          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: If you could get with  
21          Mike.

22          MR. CAGLE: I've been discussing this with  
23          folks in their club and folks in the

1           adjoining club, and it's a discussion  
2           we're going to need to continue to find  
3           the best resolution.

4           MR. EISER: Can we get a vote or get a -- how  
5           do we get you guys to vote on a permit  
6           system for our county?

7           MR. CAGLE: Anything we vote on would be at  
8           the next board meeting --

9           MR. EISER: Okay.

10          MR. CAGLE: -- on March 4th.

11          MR. EISER: Well, I'm begging. Anybody who is  
12          opposed to the Coffee County permit  
13          system, please call me and tell me why.  
14          I want to know.

15                    And recently we had an incident that  
16                    involved a dog hunter who escalated to  
17                    the point of pulling a gun on us.  
18                    That's got to end. This is a powder keg  
19                    in Coffee County. You can't have that.

20                           (Multiple speakers.)

21          MR. EISER: Read the police report. Read the  
22          police report. The sheriffs were  
23          called. They had -- we had to -- his

1 members had to physically restrain --

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Hey, Mike --

3 MR. EISER: -- him from getting his gun.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Let's go ahead. We'll  
5 take this up.

6 MR. EISER: Fair enough. Thank y'all. Now  
7 I'm going to get out of here before I  
8 get shot.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The next speaker is  
10 Kaelyn Fillingim.

11 MS. FILLINGIM: I like to move around too much  
12 to keep the mic in the stand.

13 My name is Kaelyn Fillingim, and I  
14 am from Coffee County. I have several  
15 memories in my childhood about hunting  
16 with my daddy. He would let me name all  
17 the dogs after my favorite princesses.  
18 We had Cinderella, Snow White, and even  
19 Sleeping Beauty.

20 It breaks my heart when I realize  
21 how much hunting participation has  
22 dropped. 50 percent of hunters are over  
23 the age of 47. With declines like these

1 and cuts and restrictions on any type of  
2 hunting, this will negatively impact  
3 license sales and potentially affect  
4 everyone in the room.

5 The proposed encroachment or leash  
6 law states it shall be unlawful for any  
7 person for the purpose of deer hunting  
8 to permit a dog to enter onto, cross, or  
9 remain upon property of another after  
10 request not to allow entry of said dog  
11 onto property has been communicated to  
12 that person by the owner of such  
13 property of authorized person.

14 I'm here representing all dog  
15 hunters in Alabama, not the Alabama Dog  
16 Hunters Association.

17 So you mean to tell me with this law  
18 that my pet "Shooter" who wears sweaters  
19 and takes selfies will suddenly be  
20 deemed unlawful if he chases a butterfly  
21 across a property line? What determines  
22 that that dog is a deer dog or that that  
23 dog was actually chasing a deer? Who

1 makes this determination?

2 For this proposed law to be enacted,  
3 every landowner will have the ability to  
4 act as an animal control officer. This  
5 law will turn neighbors against each  
6 other.

7 Why are we not promoting hunting?  
8 We are all hunters. We should not  
9 distinguish one type of hunter from  
10 another. Whether you're a stand hunter,  
11 coon hunter, quail hunter, dog hunter,  
12 or bird hunter, we are all aiming to  
13 achieve the same purpose. More  
14 restrictions do not fix problems. They  
15 simply create them. I know many of your  
16 childhoods, like mine, were formed  
17 around the memories we made hunting with  
18 our daddies, brothers, uncles, and  
19 friends.

20 Social media plays a prevalent role  
21 in all of our lives. Anti-hunting  
22 groups are constantly trying to prove  
23 hunting to be unethical. Some have even

1           called dog hunters barbaric. We need  
2           every hunter in the room to join  
3           together to keep those childhood  
4           memories alive because before this fight  
5           is over we will need everyone and all  
6           types of hunting.

7           Dog hunters are no longer  
8           apologizing when we are not guilty of  
9           anything. The days of bowing down are  
10          over, and we are here standing up for  
11          what we all know is right. I know that  
12          I will be a dog hunter in Alabama as  
13          long as I live with the hopes that this  
14          advisory board and Conservation  
15          Department does not put this sport to an  
16          end. Dog hunters are here following the  
17          rules and restrictions that are in place  
18          just like every other type of hunter in  
19          this room.

20         CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: You have the floor,  
21                 Mr. Wolfe.

22         MR. WOLFE: I don't know who can answer the  
23                 question. The law you read, I'm not



1 familiar with that law that pertains to  
2 what we're talking about.

3 MS. FILLINGIM: It's the leash or  
4 encroachment --

5 MR. WOLFE: Chuck, can you -- can anybody  
6 here -- is that a local law that you're  
7 talking about in your area?

8 MR. SYKES: That -- that was last year's reg.  
9 The one this year says two written  
10 warnings -- it's in y'all's packet --  
11 two written warnings by a conservation  
12 enforcement officer, not any other law  
13 enforcement branch. So it's not a  
14 verbal warning. This is a  
15 substantiated -- which is what the dog  
16 hunters association wanted. This is a  
17 substantiated complaint.

18 MS. FILLINGIM: The proposed questions would  
19 still be in place even if they were  
20 written warnings; correct? I mean,  
21 because you're still going -- you're  
22 still going to have the question of  
23 whether the dog is a deer dog or if the

1           dog was chasing a deer. I'm not sure  
2           how you make the differentiation or how  
3           that would work.

4           MR. WOLFE: Yeah. But you've got to  
5           investigate it. You've got to find out  
6           whose dog it is and invest -- I mean,  
7           that's what the officers are for.

8           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Kaelyn.

9           MS. FILLINGIM: Thank you.

10          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker, Susan  
11           Morrow.

12          MS. MORROW: Good morning, Chairman --  
13           afternoon. I don't know what time it is  
14           now. I'm Susan Morrow. I'm from Mobile  
15           County. I'm here to talk to y'all about  
16           dog hunting.

17                    Dog hunters in the last several  
18           years have worked very, very hard. We  
19           have disassociated ourself with the bad  
20           dog hunters. We do it right, and we  
21           keep getting more and more restrictions  
22           put on us.

23                    Dog hunting is fun. As she said

1           earlier, we should all band together to  
2           keep all types of hunting going. You do  
3           away with dog hunting and you're going  
4           to lose a lot of license sales. You  
5           think you won't, but you will. And  
6           we've worked so hard. And, now, if  
7           there is a problem -- and as you said --  
8           the officers, they need to arrest these  
9           people.

10           We have disassociated ourself with  
11           the bad dog hunters. We are not law  
12           enforcement. We cannot arrest them.  
13           And they will continue to do it anyway,  
14           whether y'all stop dog hunting in  
15           Alabama or you don't. And the only way  
16           that that complaining is going to stop  
17           is for somebody to start arresting these  
18           people and getting them. I mean, you  
19           know, you can set up a sting or  
20           something if you have to, but show us  
21           that it's actually happening this way.  
22           And so I'm asking y'all to, please, look  
23           at that.

1           And I'm also asking for more WMAs to  
2 be opened. I understand that a lot of  
3 the counties have been closed to dog  
4 hunting. But this is a state property  
5 that you lease or Forever Wild.

6 Mr. Guy, he can open it up just on that  
7 state property for a hunt.

8           Yes, we lost Scotch. And I know all  
9 of you that's been here have heard me  
10 say. Scotch was the best organized dog  
11 hunt you would ever go on. It was. We  
12 lost Boykin. So y'all gave us Geneva.  
13 And, yes, I went to the Geneva hunt, and  
14 I will say this: I took my  
15 seven-year-old grandson, and he got to  
16 stay out of school to go. And when we  
17 got there, after we -- we was told to  
18 get our little numbers and all and get  
19 in line -- well, show our license.

20           And so we got in line, and then they  
21 had a little meeting, called us all over  
22 there. And we was sold by Mr. Miller  
23 that do not put your hands on our dogs;

1 do not catch our dogs; we will catch our  
2 dogs. He said -- and somebody said,  
3 why? And he said, well, it could be  
4 that you put two male dogs in a box and  
5 they go to fighting, and we don't want  
6 our dogs hurt. Then he come up with the  
7 dogs might bite you. And I'm thinking,  
8 oh, Lord, what kind of dogs are we in  
9 the woods with? Because there was  
10 nowhere to --

11 MS. JONES: Time.

12 MS. MORROW: -- register your dogs to go.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Ms. Morrow --

14 MS. MORROW: Ask me a question so I can  
15 continue.

16 But, please -- I will wind it up.  
17 But my grandson asked me -- he said,  
18 Mawmaw, does this mean that if a dog  
19 comes up and looks at me with them big  
20 eyes I can't catch him? I said, yes,  
21 son, that's what it means. He says,  
22 let's go home right now. It was not  
23 family oriented. It was like get in

1 line, stay right there. It was -- if it  
2 would have been my first dog hunt, it  
3 would have been my last.

4 And I wish that y'all would look at  
5 opening up some more. They can be  
6 organized hunts. It was done with state  
7 people. So I wish y'all would do that.

8 And, also, Lonnie Miller does not  
9 speak for me as a dog hunter in this  
10 state and a lot of other dog hunters in  
11 this state.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. Morrow.

13 MS. MORROW: Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The next speaker, Donald  
15 Nelson.

16 MR. NELSON: Thank you, gentlemen, for  
17 allowing me to speak this morning. I'm  
18 going to try to be as quick as I can. I  
19 am friends with Mr. Lonnie Miller and  
20 Ms. Morrow back there, so I love them  
21 both.

22 Okay. I'm Colonel Don Nelson,  
23 United State Marine Corps Retired. Some

1 of y'all know me as Mayor Don Nelson --  
2 ex-mayor now -- 16 years in our little  
3 town. But what I'm saying is 32 years I  
4 took an oath to defend the freedoms of  
5 this country, also the states -- the  
6 state of Alabama. I'm a deacon at my  
7 church. I'm a trustee at my church.  
8 And the reason I'm telling you this is  
9 not to beat my chest. It's to say I'm  
10 not an outlaw and I'm not a renegade.  
11 I'm just a good American that was raised  
12 in this country, and I appreciate that.

13 I killed one buck deer this year on  
14 my family's 200 acres, confirmation  
15 number 172B80924202. And I had a flip  
16 phone, so it was a challenge to do that.

17 I dog hunted for over 50 years, and  
18 I enjoyed that in the area I hunted. I  
19 haven't killed a deer on that club in  
20 ten years. I don't even carry a shotgun  
21 no more. I enjoy going with my dogs.

22 And I'm -- and, like I say, what I  
23 want to do, I want to thank Pat Cagle

1           for calling me this year. There was a  
2           complaint on the club that I belong to,  
3           and I appreciate Pat for calling me and  
4           alerting me to that problem about a dog  
5           intrusion. Left 80 acres of my land,  
6           went over for 30 minutes. The landowner  
7           called me. I'd already put some  
8           safeguards in place. Got chewed out and  
9           I took it. I can take it from a man.  
10          I'm a marine. I can -- if I do wrong,  
11          I'll own up to what I did.

12                 But I thank Pat for calling me. I  
13                 had already said no more dogs on that  
14                 property, that we have to alleviate that  
15                 problem. And there's been no more  
16                 complaints, I don't believe, from that  
17                 piece of property there.

18                 We've purchased over -- my group of  
19                 folks I hunt with, we purchased over  
20                 \$50,000 worth of tracking collars, all  
21                 the systems that's associated. We're  
22                 getting ready to buy another \$5,000  
23                 worth of shock collars. We're trying to



1           implement the whistle training of these  
2           younger dogs. My dogs are 12 to 14  
3           years old. They're like me. An old dog  
4           is hard to teach a new trick, but we're  
5           trying.

6           We also put a perimeter road that is  
7           a mile around the perimeter of our  
8           property to stop this problem here. We  
9           have had one problem in our area, and I  
10          think the young lady talked about it.  
11          These dogs, they're pets. And where I  
12          hunt at, there's two Labs -- two black  
13          Labs. There's a Collie dog. He looks  
14          like a wolf. I'm surprised he hadn't  
15          got shot because he looks like a coyote.  
16          And a tri-colored Walker dog. They've  
17          been reported to Lieutenant Randall Lee,  
18          I believe, in Andalusia through one of  
19          our members there that those dogs had  
20          been running all summer. They're still  
21          running right now. And my members have  
22          seen them. They ran three bucks under  
23          one of them during stalk season. I do

1 both stalk hunt and dog hunt, and I  
2 enjoy both. I take my grandson, and I  
3 hope I have the opportunity.

4 I'm -- we haven't had a complaint in  
5 the past two years. We did this year.  
6 Every year I come here I ask Mr. Hartzog  
7 and I ask Pat since he's been on the  
8 board have you had any complaints the  
9 last two prior years, no. This year,  
10 yes. We slipped up. I regret that we  
11 had the complaint.

12 MS. JONES: Time.

13 MR. NELSON: But I feel like we've rectified  
14 it. The only thing I would ask you to  
15 do is, please, don't put us on the  
16 permit system in Butler County and that  
17 that regulation about -- that you  
18 consider that you wouldn't do that.  
19 Thank you for your time.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Nelson.

21 MR. NELSON: Any questions?

22 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Patrick, you have the

1 floor.

2 MR. CAGLE: Don, I want to thank you. I did  
3 hear some complaints in Butler County.  
4 I talked to Lonnie. I talked to Don.  
5 Before I talked to them, I talked to  
6 Nate Foster, the enforcement officer in  
7 the area, and, you know, figured out  
8 there were issues that needed to be  
9 corrected.

10 Don came forward at my request to  
11 work with Lonnie, and they came up with  
12 a set of recommendations that they're  
13 going to voluntarily impose to prevent  
14 the problem. That's the model we all  
15 need to be following. Because just  
16 fighting every year at this board  
17 meeting, you know, one side against  
18 another is not going to get us anywhere.

19 At the end of the day, the goal is  
20 to minimize conflict. We'll never end  
21 it all. But if everyone takes  
22 responsibility for their own actions and  
23 keeps their dogs from continuously going

1           on others' property, the sport is going  
2           to continue and we're going to have less  
3           problems. And taking these voluntary  
4           actions and -- you know, under Don, you  
5           know, with him leading his club in that  
6           direction and Lonnie's help, that's the  
7           model we need to be following.

8           If there's a problem, let's identify  
9           a real problem and come up with a  
10          voluntary solution to solve it. It  
11          makes it easy on us, and it makes it  
12          easy on the club. Because, you know, at  
13          the end of the day it's -- if dogs  
14          continuously come on a neighbor's  
15          property, it's a problem that's going to  
16          get fixed one way or another. The best  
17          way is the easiest way. So thank you.

18       MR. NELSON: Thank you for alerting me to that  
19          problem. I will correct anything, shut  
20          my dogs down to let other people hunt  
21          theirs. It is a privilege, and I thank  
22          y'all for your time and what you do.  
23          Thank you, gentlemen.

1           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Nelson.

2                     Our next public speaker is Larry  
3           Ollis.

4           MR. OLLIS: My name is Larry Ollis. First I'd  
5           like to start by thanking each of y'all  
6           for allowing me to be here and speak to  
7           y'all this morning.

8                     I'm a dog hunter in Talladega  
9           National Forest. This past season our  
10          dog season was shortened from 58 days to  
11          36. Of the 36 days we were allowed to  
12          hunt, we had to have our dogs out of the  
13          woods and in the box by noon. Of the 36  
14          days that we had to run dogs in the  
15          national forest, only nine of those fell  
16          on -- or 11 fell on Saturday or Sunday.

17                    Most folks have got to work Monday  
18          through Friday. We can't hunt during  
19          the week. Of the 11 that fell on a  
20          Saturday and Sunday, two of those were  
21          Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

22                    I want to know what's being done by  
23          this board to give us our season back,

1 if anything, what's being looked at to  
2 give us our season back in the Talladega  
3 National Forest.

4 Mr. Miller his self said that a lot  
5 of the complaints that have come in --  
6 when he sat down and worked with the  
7 board to reduce our season, a lot of the  
8 complaints that have come in about dog  
9 hunters in the national forest were  
10 unfounded, unsubstantiated, whatever he  
11 wanted to call it. The bottom line is,  
12 without any proof -- if there's no  
13 investigation, if there's no proof that  
14 our dogs have even trespassed, then why  
15 was our season took away? Why were we  
16 cut down?

17 That's about the only question I  
18 really got this morning. Other than  
19 that, I'd just like to say that -- just  
20 like Ms. Morrow said, the ADHA no longer  
21 represents every dog hunter in the state  
22 of Alabama. Lonnie Miller does not  
23 represent every dog hunter in the state

1 of Alabama. He don't represent me. He  
2 don't represent the guys I hunt with.  
3 He don't represent half the guys in  
4 Talladega National Forest. He has no  
5 business speaking for us. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Martin.

7 MR. MARTIN: I want to say working with Lonnie  
8 has been an absolute pleasure.  
9 Talladega National Forest had a lot of  
10 big issues. He called me the other day,  
11 and I said, I mean, I've had one  
12 complaint, and it wasn't -- and said,  
13 hey, it's not perfect, but it's a heck  
14 of a lot better than it ever has been.  
15 So I wouldn't slam Lonnie that bad. I  
16 mean, he's -- what's been going on has  
17 been working. So, you know, I say  
18 continue on.

19 But, Lonnie, I appreciate everything  
20 you've done because it's been -- it's  
21 been a pleasure working with you, and I  
22 think we have a great working  
23 relationship.

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any other questions from  
2 the board? Comments?

3 (No response.)

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our final public speaker  
5 is Joe Thomas.

6 MR. THOMAS: I just -- I know that a lot of  
7 y'all heard from me on the telephone  
8 calling complaining about dogs. I don't  
9 have nothing against dog hunting, people  
10 who hunt dogs. But when a man owns a  
11 piece of property and he's not allowed  
12 to hunt it because they're running dogs  
13 over it and you're offending your  
14 neighbor, that ain't right no matter  
15 what. I mean, you know, if I was  
16 offending my neighbor and stopping him  
17 from hunting, he'd be down here raising  
18 Cain about me. Well, I hadn't stopped  
19 him from hunting. I mean, you'll never  
20 hear a dog hunter say that --

21 And I ain't talking about the good  
22 dog hunters. I'm talking about folks  
23 that are outlawing.



1           -- come up and say, oh, those still  
2 hunters messed me up; they went in the  
3 woods; they're too quiet.

4           I mean, there ain't but one argument  
5 here. The dog hunters don't want to  
6 stop dog hunting, of course. I don't  
7 want to see it stopped. But the whole  
8 argument is you got still hunters that  
9 can't hunt their land like mine. I  
10 drove an hour and a half to hunt my  
11 land. I get up there -- and I caught  
12 the dogs twice. One man said, oh, it  
13 was his yard dog. Well, it -- you can  
14 ask the game warden. It wasn't. But, I  
15 mean, he was just, you know, using any  
16 excuse he can. I mean, if you got to  
17 lie about doing something, you know you  
18 ain't up to no good anyway.

19           But the last dogs I caught, I called  
20 the game warden and sent pictures and  
21 all that, but -- they hunted in Escambia  
22 County, which I -- my land is at the  
23 back of -- starts at Escambia County. I

1 live in Baldwin County. Well, Baldwin  
2 is under a permit system. Mr. Wolfe and  
3 Mr. Stimpson told me about it. But in  
4 Escambia County, they run their dogs  
5 across there and, you know ...

6 I asked that fellow when they took  
7 him his dogs back, you know -- I said,  
8 did y'all hunt? He said, oh, yeah, we  
9 had a good time today. I said, I didn't  
10 get to hunt; I had to catch your dogs.  
11 I mean, he -- you know, he didn't care.  
12 He's going to do the same thing the next  
13 day. He said he was going hunting the  
14 next day, you know. And you couldn't  
15 stop him.

16 So, I mean -- you know, I mean, I  
17 understand they got the right to dog  
18 hunt. I'm not asking the board to stop  
19 that at all. What a man does on his  
20 property to me is his business. But he  
21 ought to be able to do what he wants to  
22 on his own property. He ought to have  
23 the right to. He pays a note and taxes,

1           you know. I mean, if a dog come over --  
2           your neighbor's dog come over and turned  
3           your garbage over every day, you'd get  
4           ticked eventually. You know, it ain't  
5           right. And I thank all.

6           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Thomas.

7           MR. DOBBS: Real quick, Mr. Chairman.

8                     Mr. Thomas, one question. Where do  
9           you hunt? Where exactly? You said  
10          Escambia --

11          MR. THOMAS: No. Baldwin. In Lottie,  
12          Alabama, the Baldwin and Escambia County  
13          line.

14          MR. DOBBS: I don't know where you're -- what  
15          road? What county road?

16          MR. THOMAS: Highway 61 is the highway. It  
17          goes up towards Atmore. My address is  
18          Atmore.

19          MR. DOBBS: Okay. Thank you.

20          MR. THOMAS: Thank you, sir.

21          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Commissioner.

22          COMMISSIONER GUY: So I want to make one  
23          comment. I probably shouldn't make it,

1 but I'm going to make it anyway.

2 So I heard a lot of people bashing  
3 Lonnie. And that's fine. You're  
4 entitled to your opinion. There might  
5 be others that bash other folks in the  
6 dog deer hunting association or  
7 whatever.

8 Here's what I was listening to and  
9 trying to make sure you understand: You  
10 know, the one thing that I think we've  
11 appreciated about Lonnie is that we're  
12 trying to make decisions based on real  
13 facts, real issues, and we're trying to  
14 work and have been trying to work  
15 through things that are true. Be  
16 careful who you listen to about issues  
17 because this -- and I always talk about  
18 it like social media or whatever. You  
19 know, somebody hears something and they  
20 thinks it's the gospel. Better make  
21 sure whoever are your leaders are  
22 telling you truthful statements about  
23 what we are trying to do. I admonish

1           you in that because if you base your  
2           emotions on false information, you're  
3           making a mistake, no matter who your  
4           leaders are.

5           Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: This concludes the  
7           public hearing.

8           Grady, you can have the floor.

9           COMMISSIONER GUY: Patrick.

10          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Excuse me. Patrick.

11          MR. CAGLE: Go ahead. I'll come behind him.

12          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: No. Go ahead.

13          MR. HARTZOG: Go ahead, Patrick.

14          MR. CAGLE: I just want to remind everyone  
15               that the regulation that Director Sykes  
16               has talked about -- I believe it's -- I  
17               believe it's well written. It would  
18               take -- you know, you would get two  
19               documented written warnings that your  
20               hunting dog -- and the idea that it  
21               would not be hunting dogs is not the  
22               case. I mean, our officers have enough  
23               on their plates. They're not going to

1           be chasing yard dogs deciding whether  
2           they're hunting dogs. You know, to have  
3           a legal hunting dog, you have to have a  
4           collar on them. You know, that's all  
5           just -- but a regulation that would  
6           allow a landowner to report the dog, you  
7           would have to see the collar. If the  
8           same member of your club has their dogs  
9           caught three times and the first two  
10          times are a warning on a neighbor's  
11          property, that third time there's a  
12          problem. I think that's a simple -- a  
13          simple regulation.

14                 But the choice here isn't nothing or  
15                 something. The choice is between  
16                 continuing to add counties on a permit  
17                 system where there's documented problems  
18                 or going to this system that holds  
19                 individuals accountable. So it's  
20                 important to remember that. We're not  
21                 talking about doing nothing or doing  
22                 something. It's simply the choice of  
23                 what mechanism we use, are we going to

1 hold individual club members responsible  
2 or is the whole club going to suffer for  
3 the actions of a few bad actors. Thank  
4 you.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Grady Hartzog has a  
6 special presentation.

7 MR. HARTZOG: David, could I get you with your  
8 camera and all, please, sir?

9 Could I ask Shawn Battison with  
10 Ducks Unlimited to come down?

11 I'd like Gunter and Chuck to come  
12 down. I would like Raymond and Warren  
13 to come down.

14 You know, guys, the Conservation  
15 Department -- I sit on the board of  
16 Ducks Unlimited, and Ducks Unlimited is  
17 a viable organization that does an awful  
18 lot of good in the state of Alabama and  
19 the prairies of Canada to produce ducks  
20 which migrate down and -- so we can have  
21 them at Swan Creek and all the other  
22 WMAs. But, you know, over the years the  
23 department as well as Ducks Unlimited

1           has had a special friend that has helped  
2           the department as well as Ducks  
3           Unlimited get some legislation passed  
4           that helped both the Conservation  
5           Department and Ducks Unlimited.

6           Last year we had the scientific-data  
7           collection, which I think Fred will tell  
8           you they had been trying for years and  
9           years and years to get passed. This  
10          individual helped lobby the legislature  
11          and pushed for it and got it passed.  
12          Ducks Unlimited wanted an increase in  
13          the Duck Stamp bill, and this guy worked  
14          his ass off and got the legislature to  
15          approve a Duck Stamp bill.

16          We had a lot of help from different  
17          senators. We had Senator Whatley. We  
18          had McCutcheon, which always got us on  
19          the floor to finally get the bill  
20          passed. Reed Ingram and Randy Davis.  
21          We had an awful lot of friends in the  
22          legislature.

23          But at this time I'd like to call



1           Chauncey Wood forward to receive an  
2           award from the Conservation Department  
3           as well as from Ducks Unlimited.

4           And, Gunter, if you will read the --  
5           here you go, Gunter.

6           COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Thank you.

7           In recognition as a Ducks Unlimited  
8           conservation leader, for your support of  
9           the Alabama Department of Conservation  
10          and Natural Resources, and on behalf of  
11          the Alabama Duck Stamp to further  
12          waterfowl conservation in Alabama and on  
13          the breeding grounds of Canada, we  
14          recognize Chauncey D. Wood, III.

15          Chauncey.

16          MR. HARTZOG: Again, thank you, Chauncey.

17          And just to tell you how Chauncey is  
18          still working, the Conservation  
19          Department presently has two bills in  
20          the house. One is a college license so  
21          that the college students can buy  
22          in-state licenses and also working on  
23          increasing the age limit on license, and

1 Chauncey is doing that.

2 I can tell you that you don't want  
3 Chauncey on your bad side because he can  
4 get a lot done in the legislature, and  
5 he has been a great friend to the  
6 Department of Conservation and to Ducks  
7 Unlimited.

8 So thank you, Chauncey, for all  
9 you've done.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chauncey, once again,  
11 congratulations.

12 The next order of business is a  
13 motion for approval of license for CPI.  
14 I think that's Raymond Jones.

15 Do you have a motion?

16 MR. DOBBS: Mr. Chairman, I would like to  
17 propose that motion.

18 That pursuant to Section 9-11-68 and  
19 9-11-69 that we approve -- I make a  
20 motion that we approve the increase of  
21 the hunting and fishing licenses and  
22 fees based on the increases as set forth  
23 in the consumer price index.

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Can we get a second?

2 MR. JONES: Second.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any discussion?

4 (No response.)

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?

6 (All board members present respond  
7 "aye.")

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

9 (No response.)

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Motion carries.

11 Is there any other old business from  
12 the board?

13 (No response.)

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: If not, we will move to  
15 new business.

16 Is there any new business that needs  
17 to be discussed from the board?

18 Grady.

19 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, all I would like  
20 to do is -- I'm talking about promoting  
21 hunting and promoting the kids. Barbour  
22 County Youth Hunt is February the 25th.  
23 It's the largest youth hunt in the state

1 of Alabama. It's the third largest in  
2 the country.

3 So on February the 25th, if you've  
4 got some kids that want to have a good  
5 time, bring them down to the Barbour  
6 County Management Area. I guarantee you  
7 they'll be fed well and they'll have a  
8 good time. They'll learn skeet  
9 shooting, archery, BB guns. It's a --  
10 they actually carry them out and  
11 squirrel hunt, raccoon hunt. So  
12 February the 25th, put that on your  
13 calendar and come out and let the kids  
14 have a good time.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Joey, do you have a  
16 motion?

17 MR. DOBBS: Additional new business,  
18 Mr. Chairman, a general statement  
19 that -- regarding the proposed  
20 regulations included in our packets from  
21 both Marine Resources Division, Fish and  
22 Game, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries,  
23 as well as the additional packet that

1           was with those to be added, that those  
2           will be voted on at our next meeting as  
3           new business.

4           And another piece of new business,  
5           things that we have discussed in the  
6           past about the dog deer encroachment  
7           rule, which is part of this package, to  
8           be further clarified, some minium  
9           acreage requirements that we discussed  
10          in the past for leaseholders for dog  
11          deer hunting. And that is all that we  
12          have discussed.

13          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

14                 And these will be considered for  
15                 voting the next meeting; am I correct?

16          MR. DOBBS: Yes, that's correct.

17          CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All right. Let the  
18                 minutes reflect that.

19                 Grady, you have the floor.

20          MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman -- and I've gotten  
21                 with Chuck and Keith. There is a typo  
22                 error in the waterfowl that we can kill  
23                 11 mallards, not four. So that needs to

1           be changed before we vote on it at the  
2           next meeting.

3           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Grady.

4                    Any further new business from the  
5           board?

6                            (No response.)

7           CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: If not, the final agenda  
8           item is announcement of the date and the  
9           location of the next meeting. And that  
10          next Conservation Advisory Board Meeting  
11          will be March 4th, 2017, at Gunterville  
12          State Park.

13                    If there's no further business, this  
14          concludes today's meeting. We  
15          appreciate everyone coming out. See you  
16          on March 4th.

17  
18  
19                            (Meeting adjourned at  
20                            approximately 12:26 p.m.)

21  
22  
23

\* \* \* \* \*

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 February 11, 2017.

The foregoing 214 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 15th day of May 2017.

Tracye Sadler Blackwell  
ACCR No. 294  
Expiration date: 9-30-2017  
Certified Court Reporter  
and Commissioner for the State  
of Alabama at Large