

STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
Lake Guntersville State Park  
Guntersville, Alabama  
March 4, 2017

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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Proceedings taken before Tracye  
Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter, ACCR  
No. 294, and Commissioner for the State of Alabama  
at Large, at Lake Guntersville State Park,  
Guntersville, Alabama, on Saturday, March 4, 2017,  
commencing at approximately 8:58 a.m.

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BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Dr. Warren Strickland, Chairman
- Commissioner N. Gunter Guy, Jr.
- Commissioner John McMillan
- Dr. Gary Lemme
- Mr. Austin Ainsworth
- Mr. Raymond Jones, Jr.
- Mr. Grady Hartzog
- Mr. Joseph Dobbs, Jr.
- Mr. T.J. Bunn, Jr.
- Mr. Patrick Cagle
- Mr. Ben C. Stimpson, Jr.

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CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The March 4th, 2017,  
Conservation Advisory Board meeting is  
now called to order.

I certainly hope every one of you  
have made plans to take advantage of  
this beautiful day today. You can see  
we have lots of sunshine. It's a little  
cool this morning. The turkeys are  
gobbling.

The entire board would like to  
welcome all of you to the beautiful

Guntersville State Park, and the board  
also would like to extend its invitation  
to the folks who sponsored this meeting  
in this great venue. We certainly  
appreciate you all having us up today.  
At this point please discontinue all  
cell phone usage.

Now, the first order of business is  
the delivery of the invocation.

Mr. Jones.

MR. JONES: Thank you. If you would bow your  
heads with me, please.

Our Heavenly Father, I want to thank  
you so much for this beautiful spring  
morning. And as outdoorsmen, as we  
wander through the woods and the forest  
glades, we truly marvel at how great  
thou art.

Heavenly Father, we would ask your  
blessings on this meeting today, ask us  
to make sound, wise decisions for the  
resources that you've entrusted to us.  
Please be with all the people that are

here and the families that they  
represent. And thank you for your son  
Jesus who died on the cross for our  
sins. In His name we pray, Amen.

CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Jones.

The next order of business is the  
introduction of the ex-officio members  
of the Conservation Advisory Board.  
Commissioner Gunter Guy,  
Commissioner of the Department of  
Conservation and Natural Resources.

John McMillan, Commissioner of the  
Department of Agriculture and  
Industries.

Dr. Gary Lemme, Director of the  
Alabama Cooperative Extension System.  
Curtis Jones, Deputy Commissioner.

Gentlemen, we certainly appreciate  
all the service that you provide for the  
state of Alabama for conservation.

Next will be the introduction of the  
board members as well as the  
congressional district that each board

1 member represents. Please start from  
 2 the far end of the table, speak into the  
 3 mic, and give us your congressional  
 4 district and name.  
 5 MR. BUNN: T.J. Bunn, Congressional  
 6 District 7.  
 7 MR. AINSWORTH: Austin Ainsworth, District 4.  
 8 MR. STIMPSON: Ben Stimpson. I think I'm  
 9 District 1.  
 10 MR. CAGLE: Patrick Cagle, District 2.  
 11 MR. JONES: Raymond Jones, District 5.  
 12 MR. HARTZOG: Grady Hartzog, District 2.  
 13 MR. DOBBS: Joey Dobbs, District 6.  
 14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Is that it?  
 15 Okay. And may the minutes reflect  
 16 that Mr. Martin is not present today.  
 17 Okay. The next order of business is  
 18 approval of the agenda -- excuse me --  
 19 is approval of the minutes of the last  
 20 meeting. I don't think we have a draft  
 21 available of those minutes.  
 22 Okay. We will have a formal draft  
 23 and at the next meeting will make formal

1 approval of those minutes.  
 2 Commissioner Gunter Guy.  
 3 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, sir. Thank you,  
 4 Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Board. Just  
 5 have a couple of items we'd like to take  
 6 care of this morning.  
 7 One thing that I did want to do  
 8 first is -- and I may -- if I miss  
 9 somebody, I apologize. But I did want  
 10 to acknowledge Representative Tommy  
 11 Hanes. Did I not see Representative  
 12 Hanes here?  
 13 Representative Hanes, thank you for  
 14 being here today. And I understand your  
 15 dad is with you. Thank you, sir, for  
 16 being here today.  
 17 Did I miss any other officials that  
 18 are here today?  
 19 If you would, please stand and let  
 20 us know who you are. We always  
 21 appreciate both state and local  
 22 government officials being here, so  
 23 thank you.

1 Next we want to make a couple of  
 2 presentations. And if I could ask  
 3 Chuck -- Director Sykes to come forward  
 4 and, also, Captain Johnny Johnson.  
 5 Is Johnny here?  
 6 If y'all will stand here for a  
 7 minute. I want to make a few  
 8 introductory statements, if I may.  
 9 The men and women of the Department  
 10 of Conservation and Natural Resources  
 11 who serve as law enforcement officers  
 12 are a highly skilled, professional,  
 13 courageous, and dedicated group of  
 14 individuals. They serve to protect,  
 15 promote, and preserve our natural  
 16 resources, and I might add, they do a  
 17 damn good job at it.  
 18 However, as sworn law enforcement,  
 19 they also are called upon to serve and  
 20 protect the public. Oftentimes that  
 21 goes unnoticed to many of us. They  
 22 don't seek attention for this. They  
 23 just do their job, sometimes in the face

1 of grave danger to our citizens, other  
 2 law enforcement agencies, and most  
 3 importantly themselves.  
 4 Today we want to begin a continuing  
 5 practice of recognizing those  
 6 Conservation law enforcement officers  
 7 who distinguish themselves by their acts  
 8 and deeds in the course of their job.  
 9 We want all the people of this state to  
 10 know and recognize what an exemplary  
 11 group of people we have working for this  
 12 agency, and we want to thank them from  
 13 the bottom of our hearts.  
 14 At this time I would ask the first  
 15 officer we want to recognize, Senior  
 16 Officer Thomas Traylor, to come forward,  
 17 please, sir.  
 18 Officer Traylor.  
 19 If I may, let me read this to  
 20 everyone: On July 9, 2016, Senior  
 21 Officer Thomas Traylor was on patrol in  
 22 the Swagg community of Randolph County  
 23 when he heard a call for assistance at a

1 nearby residence broadcast out by radio.  
2 A man in that area had fired upon  
3 deputies of the Randolph County  
4 Sheriff's Department and barricaded  
5 himself in a travel trailer with a  
6 hostage.

7 Shortly after Officer Traylor  
8 arrived on the scene, the barricaded  
9 subject opened fire gravely injuring a  
10 deputy from Randolph County Sheriff's  
11 Department. Officer Traylor immediately  
12 returned fire and continued to fire  
13 until the downed officer could be  
14 rescued and transported to a Life Flight  
15 helicopter.

16 Throughout the several-hour  
17 standoff, Officer Traylor continued to  
18 provide aid and cover to the officers  
19 around him, several of whom were  
20 suffering from heat exhaustion. The  
21 standoff, which had come to involve  
22 state and local officers from multiple  
23 jurisdictions, ended when the gunman

1 took his own life.

2 The selfless actions of Senior  
3 Officer Traylor helped to save the life  
4 of a fellow law enforcement officer and  
5 limited any further loss of life.  
6 Senior Officer Traylor distinguished  
7 himself through an act of gallantry that  
8 reflects only the highest traditions of  
9 Conservation law enforcement service and  
10 profession. Please join me in  
11 recognizing Senior Officer Traylor for a  
12 job well done.

13 I think Mr. Sykes has a certificate  
14 he would like to read to Officer  
15 Traylor.

16 (Mr. Sykes reads certificate.)

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: At this time I'd like a  
18 second group of officers to please come  
19 up and be recognized.

20 Lieutenant Michael Casalini, Senior  
21 Officer Adam Fuller, Officer Ben Kiser.

22 On February 16 at 2:45 a.m., our  
23 officers received a request from the

1 Calhoun County Sheriff's Office  
2 regarding needing assistance  
3 apprehending a subject who had torched a  
4 home, stolen multiple weapons, and shot  
5 at several deputies. He was considered  
6 armed and dangerous.

7 Our officers were familiar with the  
8 forested area where the subject had  
9 fled. Multiple state, city, and federal  
10 law enforcement agencies were involved  
11 in the manhunt. Most of them were not  
12 prepared for searching for an armed  
13 individual in the heavily forested area,  
14 but not the case with our game wardens.

15 Casalini, Fuller, and Kiser did not  
16 hesitate nor did they stand by and wait  
17 on others. They were prepared for this  
18 event and went into the thick brush and  
19 heavy cover searching for the suspect.  
20 They apprehended the heavily armed  
21 suspect without harm to him or our  
22 officers. The suspect had two assault  
23 rifles fully loaded, one in the firing

1 position.

2 In my opinion and the opinion of  
3 many others, the suspect's fate may have  
4 been different were he to have  
5 encountered officers less attuned to  
6 meeting armed subjects in the woods.  
7 These officers' actions on this day may  
8 have saved the lives of our citizens  
9 and/or of other law enforcement. Please  
10 join me in recognizing these officers,  
11 Casalini, Fuller, and Kiser, for a job  
12 well done.

13 MR. SYKES: I'm just going to read one of the  
14 three if that's all right with you.

15 (Mr. Sykes reads certificate.)

16 COMMISSIONER GUY: I also want to thank this  
17 gentleman right here, Johnny Johnson --  
18 Captain Johnny Johnson, who supervises  
19 these men and does such a great job for  
20 our department.

21 Thank you, Johnny, very much.

22 MR. SYKES: I want to take just a second.  
23 Many of you that have been coming to

1 these board meetings for the past  
2 several years have grown to know and  
3 respect Chief Kevin Dodd of our Law  
4 Enforcement division. Kevin retired in  
5 January, and we appointed a new chief  
6 last week. Now the new chief, Michael  
7 Weathers, is joining us in the  
8 Montgomery office as the new chief of  
9 Law Enforcement.

10 And Captain Carter Hendrix will be  
11 moving to the Montgomery office and  
12 assuming Matt's duties as administrative  
13 captain in the Montgomery office.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman, I have two  
15 other quick items.

16 I want to thank those officers again  
17 and all of our law enforcement who are  
18 here today and really appreciate  
19 everybody's job.

20 Next I just wanted to say to the  
21 board, you'll see this packet right  
22 here. This was done by Tammy  
23 Herrington, a friend of the department

1 who works real hard to -- you know, on  
2 information about what all we do on our  
3 lands, the recreational value, what  
4 we -- hunting and fishing and everything  
5 else. And it's very interesting reading  
6 in terms of the economic impact on our  
7 state and the jobs created.

8 And I wanted to share that with you.  
9 I hope that you'll get some value out of  
10 that, and it might help us all promote  
11 what we do here in the Conservation  
12 Department. So I'd appreciate you just  
13 taking a minute to look at that. And I  
14 want to thank Tammy and her group for  
15 providing that to us.

16 And then, lastly -- I need to put on  
17 my glasses. Oh, yeah. I, too, wanted  
18 to thank Greg -- is Greg Lein here?

19 Greg, would you stand up. I want to  
20 thank Greg -- he's our Parks director --  
21 for giving us this great venue. Like  
22 the Chairman said, it's a wonderful  
23 venue. We always enjoy coming here.

1 And I don't know -- I didn't see  
2 Michael Jeffreys. Is he here this  
3 morning?

4 I don't know if he's here. But  
5 Michael Jeffreys is the superintendent  
6 here. We want to thank Michael and his  
7 staff for just a really great venue.  
8 They work real hard to make this park  
9 what it is and hope that everybody will  
10 come back whenever they can to help  
11 support our Parks system.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Commissioner.

14 At this time the board would like to  
15 acknowledge the press for the great job  
16 that you do covering these meetings.

17 The next agenda item is the public  
18 hearing. For those who will be  
19 participating in the public hearing,  
20 when your name is called, please come to  
21 the microphone. You're limited to only  
22 three minutes, and that will be strictly  
23 enforced. State your name and the

1 subject you wish to talk on.

2 There will be absolutely no  
3 interference from the audience. In  
4 addition, all board members are asked to  
5 please address the Chair before taking  
6 the floor.

7 Do we have a list of the ...

8 Okay. We have a rather extensive  
9 list here. So we're going to definitely  
10 strictly enforce the three-minute rule.  
11 So once the buzzer goes off, we would  
12 appreciate it if you would return to  
13 your seat.

14 Okay. The first speaker we have is  
15 Terry Brown. Mr. Brown, if you would  
16 approach the microphone, please.

17 MR. BROWN: My name is Terry Brown. I'm here  
18 to talk about Gunter'sville Lake.

19 I've been a part of this great lake  
20 for over 40 years. In this time I have  
21 seen her at her best. As a young man, I  
22 have witnessed her poison, pressure  
23 until fishing became tough. Tournaments

1 were not as big a thing back then as  
2 they are now. Bassmasters refused to  
3 come back to this lake till they quit  
4 poisoning it. People stopped coming.  
5 Boat ramps in the late summer, winter,  
6 and early spring belonged to the locals.

7 Eventually the poison stopped, grass  
8 came back, and the lake became even  
9 better than before. The Florida-strain  
10 was stocked. The genetics changed. In  
11 the late '90s a 15-inch fish averaged a  
12 pound-nine. Now they average a pound --  
13 two-pound-eight. In the '90s, a  
14 20-pound bag was outstanding. 25 pounds  
15 was the talk of the town. Now a  
16 30-pound bag is not uncommon. In the  
17 early '20s, it would take 20 pounds just  
18 to cash a check in a big tournament.

19 Times have changed. Mistakes in the  
20 past have been repeated. Poisons are a  
21 greater scale than ever before. The  
22 fish leave the areas that are poisoned,  
23 and they congregate in smaller areas.

1 The larger tournaments returned,  
2 including Bassmasters, and was made  
3 famous by television how great this lake  
4 was. But the downfall had already  
5 begun. Pressure on this lake became  
6 intense. Enforcement by the state  
7 became a thing of the past.  
8 Out-of-state meat hunters increased,  
9 poisons continued. Areas that I've  
10 caught fish my whole life were getting  
11 harder to get bit at.

12 It's even hard to find a good bream  
13 bed to take a child to anymore. The  
14 boat ramps are full of out-of-state  
15 people that have no stake or desire to  
16 preserve what we have.

17 Young people, including those young  
18 guides who have only fished this lake  
19 the last five or six years, don't have a  
20 clue what's already been lost.

21 I've had out-of-state people, mostly  
22 good people, ask me just how do you  
23 catch fish here. Because they come down

1 here for a week and only catch a few  
2 during the prime time of the year. Even  
3 the big tournaments don't see the bags  
4 of a few years back. A few good sacks  
5 and then the weights drop drastically.

6 During the fall when this lake is  
7 full of young school bass, you can load  
8 a -- locate a school just about  
9 anywhere. They're not there anymore.

10 The pressure on the spawning areas  
11 is intense. Too many fish are taken by  
12 meat hunters and tournament fishermen  
13 alike before they can do their job.  
14 Also, TVA keeps a -- should keep a  
15 constant level -- water level on this  
16 lake, but they fluctuate it. So we  
17 don't have a good spawn. We hadn't had  
18 a good spawn in years.

19 The state does surveys and says  
20 there's nothing wrong. The biologists  
21 say our fish population is just fine.  
22 But those of you who make a living on  
23 this lake, those like us who this lake

1 is life and a part of us, spend a lot of  
2 time on this lake, we know better. We  
3 see the changes every day. It's like  
4 watching a loved one with a deadly  
5 disease slowly slip away.

6 Us older people know what she can  
7 be. We know she can be fixed. We've  
8 seen it before. We have seen her the  
9 number-one lake in this country, and  
10 we're watching her fall. We want our  
11 children and our grandchildren to know  
12 her at her best.

13 If the pressure in this lake  
14 continues, we need to provide stock.  
15 It's not for fish to catch but to help  
16 our broodstock. We're already getting  
17 our enforcement back, and they are doing  
18 a great job. I hear all the time  
19 they're out checking, and that makes me  
20 happy.

21 MS. McCULLERS: Time.

22 MR. BROWN: We need them. You guys are doing  
23 what you're supposed to do, and I

1 appreciate it.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Brown?

3 MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: That's your three

5 minutes.

6 MR. BROWN: Oh, okay.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

8 The next speaker is Michael Key.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman, may I just

10 say -- I'm going to -- I'm asking our

11 timer to give a 15-second warning. That

12 way they can have that 15 seconds to

13 wrap up.

14 So when she gives a 15-second

15 warning, if y'all have got a final say,

16 that's when I would do it, for everybody

17 that's speaking. Thank you.

18 MR. KEY: I'm Michael Key. I'm the owner of

19 Sipsey Fork Outfitters in Walker County.

20 I'm here concerning our put-and-take

21 fishery for the trout.

22 I apologize for failing to verbally

23 list on the record ...

1 Am I close enough now?

2 I apologize for failing to verbally

3 list on the record the requested

4 considerations before the CAB meeting

5 held last February the 11th in

6 Montgomery. Please reference the folder

7 I presented at that time for a printed

8 copy of these considerations.

9 Number one, increase the trout creel

10 limit to ten per day per person in

11 anticipation of recovering thousands of

12 trout stocked and lost to either

13 predation, malnutrition, and eventually

14 totally removing the creel limit so

15 anglers can harvest our trout. This is

16 a put-and-take fishery.

17 Number three -- or number two,

18 continue the diverse methods of fishing

19 and types of baits and lures used in our

20 quality zone. It was established as a

21 choice for everyone years ago.

22 Number three, brown trout will not

23 be released into the waters of Alabama.

1 We don't need another apex predator,

2 non-native species that can become

3 invasive.

4 Number four, no commercial activity

5 in our quality zone. The only

6 controversy we have ever experienced

7 here has been from commercial interests

8 moving into our state and trying to

9 separate, exclude, and dictate how we

10 fish. These trout are acquired by the

11 people of Alabama either through trade

12 or mitigation and stocked in our public

13 water. They belong to us.

14 We appreciate and depend upon our

15 Freshwater Fisheries section to continue

16 stewardship of the development of this

17 trout fishery. It is a huge success by

18 the people and for the people of Alabama

19 and our guests. Our DNR Freshwater

20 Fisheries and Enforcement sections are

21 to be commended for all the hard work

22 performed to ensure the recreational

23 value of this high-quality put-and-take

1 fishery. Thank you so much.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Key.

3 The next speaker is Kevin Linn.

4 MR. LINN: Could I have the time he didn't

5 use?

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Pardon?

7 MR. LINN: Could I have the time he didn't

8 use?

9 First of all, I want to say thank

10 you to all you gentlemen. You've done a

11 really good job down in the south part

12 of the state with the snapper. I think

13 that a lot of the programs that you put

14 into place and tweaking has helped a lot

15 down there. We need you here now. We

16 really do.

17 We've got some ideas of things that

18 we could do to make this lake great

19 again. Because we are suffering. You

20 know, we're down -- last year it was 20

21 percent from the year before. Now we're

22 down about 33 percent over the year

23 previous, two years ago, with sales of

1 rentals, with our fishing tackle  
2 business, with the guide services. They  
3 can all tell you. We're all down.

4 What we need -- what we need is  
5 restocking. I know that's not what the  
6 biologists say, but I think that that  
7 would help us a great deal. We could  
8 look at other lakes and say so. If you  
9 disagree, would you make it -- give us a  
10 path to do it ourselves? I think we  
11 could accomplish that if we needed to.  
12 So that's one of the things I think we  
13 need.

14 I think we possibly need some  
15 off-limit fishing areas similar to what  
16 you did down south, you know, changing  
17 some of the spawning areas to off limits  
18 during the spawning time. I think that  
19 will help out a lot.

20 I think another thing we need to do  
21 is give these guys in the brown shirts  
22 some tools, like we talked about before,  
23 to enforce some of the problems we've

1 got going on here. We've got meat  
2 hunters coming in and taking 500 fish  
3 out of here, and all they've really got  
4 to say is, well, I'm sorry, Officer,  
5 that cooler full of fish I brought from  
6 Tennessee, you know, or that came from  
7 home; that's not from these lakes.  
8 There's nothing they can do about it.

9 Well, if we can stop the chronic  
10 wasting disease by not allowing people  
11 to bring deer into the state, surely we  
12 can stop them being able to use the  
13 excuse of, well, I caught these fish in  
14 Tennessee; you know, these aren't native  
15 fish. We need some laws, some actions  
16 like that. We need something to give  
17 these guys a way of standing up and  
18 saying that's enough, that's enough.

19 Gillnetting is another issue. I  
20 think that there was a law slipped back  
21 in here, if I'm not mistaken -- I think  
22 it was by a Jackson County judge -- that  
23 reestablished gillnetting as being legal

1 in the state waters. That kills us.  
2 You know, that's not exclusive to bass.  
3 It's every kind of fish. But it really  
4 needs to be looked at again.

5 Cormorants, I know, are probably not  
6 something you can do anything about. I  
7 think there's a federal law against --  
8 or a federal case, I think, in  
9 California against shooting them -- I  
10 shouldn't say shooting them --  
11 eliminating them.

12 Creel limits, I don't know how much  
13 that would do. I think it would help a  
14 great deal, you know, if we cut down on  
15 the creel limits but definitely on  
16 possession limits. You know, there  
17 should be no reason for anybody to have  
18 over ten fish ever, no matter what the  
19 excuse is, if that's the possession  
20 limit.

21 And then, finally, for as much as  
22 this Tennessee River system --

23 MS. McCULLERS: 15 seconds.

1 MR. LINN: Thank you.

2 -- brings in, we've really got to  
3 have some more enforcement support and  
4 checking out there. You know, these are  
5 great guys. They do a really good job.  
6 But we need more of them here. We need  
7 more resources allocated to the top part  
8 of the state for a little while. Thank  
9 you, gentlemen.

10 MR. AINSWORTH: Mr. Chairman?

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Austin. You have  
12 the floor.

13 MR. AINSWORTH: Kevin, can you come back,  
14 please, if you don't mind?

15 You mentioned the private dollars  
16 for the restocking efforts. Is that  
17 something that y'all are for if we can  
18 do it?

19 MR. LINN: Yeah. If you -- if we could get  
20 state money, of course, we'd rather have  
21 that, and we'd use our money for other  
22 things. But in the absence of having  
23 state funding for stocking, sure. You

1 know, let us hold tournaments that raise  
2 money to help stock.

3 MR. AINSWORTH: I think getting state funds is  
4 farfetched, but I think --

5 MR. LINN: I think so, too.

6 MR. AINSWORTH: -- working with the  
7 department -- I think we could with  
8 private funds get the stocking that you  
9 want and help alleviate some of the  
10 concerns.

11 MR. LINN: Yeah. It's just like any of us do  
12 on private ground. You know, we're  
13 willing to put our money where our mouth  
14 is for our own places and the lakes  
15 where we fish. It's where we make our  
16 living and where you hunt deer or turkey  
17 or anything else. It's -- we're willing  
18 to put into it. Just take the brakes  
19 off of us is all we're really looking  
20 for and help us with some of these other  
21 little issues of enforcement.

22 MR. AINSWORTH: Sure. Okay. Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any further questions

1 from the board members?

2 Yes, Mr. Hartzog.

3 MR. HARTZOG: One question: Talking about the  
4 bag -- the lake getting in worse shape,  
5 I ate supper here last night with some  
6 people from Guntersville, and they were  
7 saying the FLW just got through and it  
8 took, what, 78 pounds to win. That's a  
9 pretty good -- that's a pretty good  
10 take.

11 MR. LINN: It is.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, it's not. No, it's  
13 not.

14 MR. LINN: If you look at the top ten, you  
15 know, it's -- after that it falls off  
16 considerably. But if you look at two or  
17 three or four years ago, that 25-pound  
18 bag -- it took 35 pounds to win. It's  
19 steadily declining, and what's out there  
20 now is smaller fish.

21 I'm not saying that they're not on  
22 the 30-year average, but I'm just saying  
23 we need to help that 30-year average

1 along because there's cormorants out  
2 there and there's -- there's ten times  
3 the amount of boats out there catching  
4 the same number of fish that are on that  
5 average. And if we could boost that, we  
6 could improve the asset that we have  
7 rather than just watch the asset that we  
8 have be depleted. So that's what we're  
9 after from that.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Linn.

11 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Patrick, you have the  
13 floor.

14 MR. CAGLE: Can any of our enforcement  
15 officers speak to the concern if someone  
16 is caught over the possession limit?  
17 Can they avoid enforcement if they  
18 simply claim that they caught them in  
19 another state or --

20 MR. WEATHERS: Yeah. There's a possibility  
21 for that. We can address it. You know,  
22 typically the fish that people are  
23 taking out of state are going to be

1 processed. If our guys catch someone  
2 with 500 fish on the water, you know,  
3 they can handle that. That's not an  
4 issue. Once they're removed from the  
5 water and they're processed, that's a  
6 separate issue and much harder to deal  
7 with.

8 MR. LINN: Correct. And I understand that  
9 that's how they do that and that's how  
10 you know they do it, too. They go  
11 fishing three or four times a day, go  
12 out and catch the legal number of fish,  
13 bring them back, clean them, put them in  
14 the cooler, and go out and catch them  
15 again. And they'll do that each time.

16 So if you can't catch them doing  
17 that, if we could just keep them from  
18 possessing more than 10 fish or whatever  
19 it is for no matter what reason, then we  
20 could nip that problem.

21 MR. WEATHERS: Certainly we could look at it.

22 MR. CAGLE: Yeah. I think that would be great  
23 if the department could look at it and



1 make some recommendations if the board  
2 needs to consider that, what can be done  
3 internally to strengthen up that  
4 enforcement mechanism.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Patrick.

6 Any further questions?

7 (No response.)

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Kevin, thank you.

9 The next public speaker is Sam Mash.

10 MR. MASH: I'm here today to talk about -- I'm

11 glad I followed him because my concern  
12 today is law enforcement.

13 First I'd like to thank all the  
14 conservation officers that are here  
15 because without them we would have  
16 nothing.

17 But I moved down here five years ago  
18 because of the lake. The lake was  
19 fantastic fishing. Every day I came  
20 since then -- every year it's gotten  
21 worse and worse and worse. And if I  
22 would have come to this lake today, I  
23 would not have moved to Alabama. You

1 know, I'm retired military. So it's  
2 important that the lake is here. I  
3 brought business to this town and this  
4 city. I've already bought two homes. I  
5 pay taxes. The area is going to lose  
6 out greatly on the thing.

7 But the law enforcement on the lake  
8 is, in my opinion, slim to none. I come  
9 from a state where if you do something  
10 wrong on a lake, you're going to be  
11 caught. So I urge you -- or, you know,  
12 I wish you could offer these officers  
13 more help, you know, maybe in the ways  
14 of deputies or some way of more law  
15 enforcement on the lake.

16 As of right now, nobody -- nobody  
17 really respects the law enforcement  
18 because they never, ever get caught. I  
19 mean, I sit on the dock, and I watch  
20 people do stuff illegally. And they  
21 don't care because there's no fear of  
22 the law enforcement.

23 What I believe is if we couldn't,

1 you know, give them more help, if we  
2 could up the presence. Presence is like  
3 the -- that will put fear into some --  
4 you know, some of the fishermen. I  
5 don't know whether you agree with me or  
6 not, but that's the way I think about  
7 it.

8 And on the part of meat hunters, I  
9 know meat hunters. I've met friends  
10 down here and a lot of them. I have a  
11 friend that now lives here from  
12 Kentucky. And they came down here -- 25  
13 of them -- for years and years and years  
14 and would take hundreds of bass apiece  
15 home, hundreds. I'm not talking -- I'm  
16 talking thousands, I guess.

17 You know, the guy admitted to me  
18 himself -- he says, we used to come down  
19 here and take 3-, 400 bass home apiece  
20 in a five-day trip down here. Now that  
21 he lives here, he feels that that was  
22 wrong.

23 But his friends come every year. He

1 talks to them every year. And I  
2 continuously hear the same thing from  
3 him where they're taking way over the  
4 limit. And I believe the reason for  
5 that is because of the lack of fear of  
6 being caught. You know, we just need  
7 some more presence. I mean, you know,  
8 it takes three hours to drive around  
9 this place, and I don't think one or --  
10 one conservation officer can make enough  
11 presence to help that.

12 We had our first meeting on the  
13 lake --

14 MS. McCULLERS: 15 seconds.

15 MR. MASH: Ten seconds?

16 What he said about the creel limit,  
17 what they do in other states if you are  
18 camping, you only should have ...

19 MS. McCULLERS: Time.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: You can go ahead and  
21 finish.

22 MR. MASH: Well, what he said about the  
23 possession limits -- and like I come

1 from the state of Pennsylvania. In  
 2 Pennsylvania, if you are at a camp or  
 3 camping at a campground, a non-permanent  
 4 resident, your total fish possession is  
 5 allowed double the limit. So if the  
 6 officer comes to a campground and he  
 7 opens up a cooler with 300 filets in it  
 8 and he counts two people, he can start  
 9 writing a ticket immediately.

10 And I believe that is what we need  
 11 on this lake. We need some kind of camp  
 12 creel limit, and I believe it will help.  
 13 These people that come here and kill our  
 14 fish need to know they're not going to  
 15 get away with it.

16 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Mash.

17 MR. JONES: Mr. Chairman?

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes. Go ahead,  
 19 Mr. Jones.

20 MR. JONES: Mr. Mash, I would suggest when  
 21 your friends from Kentucky come back in  
 22 town that you let one of our officers  
 23 know so they can come out there and they

1 can check that. It takes everyone, and  
 2 we cannot allow -- if we know illegal  
 3 activity is going on, then you need to  
 4 report it.

5 MR. MASH: Firstly, they're not my friends.

6 Secondly --

7 MR. JONES: That's even better.

8 MR. MASH: Secondly, my friend that lives here  
 9 now -- I guess he would be a friend.

10 But, secondly ...

11 I lost it, but ...

12 MR. JONES: Help your officers out.

13 MR. MASH: Well, I mean -- well, here's what I  
 14 was going to say: Secondly, that  
 15 doesn't always work because I've made  
 16 many -- I've made numerous phone calls.  
 17 I stood and watched a guy put 13 short  
 18 bass in a bucket. I called the  
 19 commission. Nothing happened. I've  
 20 done this numerous times. So I  
 21 appreciate your comments, sir, but I  
 22 have done that; okay? I believe it's up  
 23 to you guys to do that.

1 And to you -- I want to say one more  
 2 thing to you, sir. Check your FLW  
 3 numbers from the past years, and you'll  
 4 see that it took 20 pounds of bass to  
 5 win 20th place on this lake, not 27  
 6 pounds to win it. Check your numbers  
 7 and then you will find out that you are  
 8 wrong.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Mash.

10 MR. MASH: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chuck, could I have you  
 12 address the law enforcement efforts here  
 13 on Guntersville?

14 MR. SYKES: Mr. Chairman, if you don't mind,  
 15 I'll let Captain Johnson address the law  
 16 enforcement.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Captain Johnson.

18 MR. JOHNSON: Thanks, Chuck.

19 Mr. Mash -- I believe it was -- yes,  
 20 sir. We will continue to check for  
 21 out-of-season people doing things,  
 22 violating the law. And we have caught  
 23 several people and arrested people from

1 Kentucky and a lot of states. A lot of  
 2 non-residents get blamed for stuff that  
 3 they do, and a lot of them are unethical  
 4 fishermen. We will continue to do it.

5 As far as him seeing things from his  
 6 pier, some of that could be related to  
 7 illegal boating activity, I guess. And,  
 8 you know, we do enforce the boating  
 9 laws.

10 There is a lack of marine police  
 11 presence on all our lakes now. I don't  
 12 agree with it either, but that's the way  
 13 it is right now. And I don't know a lot  
 14 we could do about that. But we will  
 15 continue and work details around  
 16 Guntersville and Scottsboro and do  
 17 everything we can do to catch these  
 18 unethical poachers of our fish.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

20 Commissioner.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman, may I just  
 22 add to what Raymond said. He took the  
 23 words out of my mouth.

1 You know, despite what Mr. Mash  
 2 said, there's a lot of people that don't  
 3 want to get involved and don't want to  
 4 turn in people that are doing things  
 5 illegally. And that's not just fishing.  
 6 That's hunting, everything. We need the  
 7 people in this state to recognize that  
 8 when people are violating the laws,  
 9 they're hurting your resources; okay?  
 10 They're your resources. You have got to  
 11 take part in that first.

12 Secondly, as Captain Johnson  
 13 noted -- and he also stole my thunder --  
 14 we lost a marine police who used to help  
 15 us a lot on the lakes. And ALEA -- you  
 16 know, they're with ALEA now, and we  
 17 don't have any control over that.

18 But when it comes to our officers --  
 19 and everybody recognizes that they do as  
 20 good a job as they can. Please  
 21 understand, too, that we don't get any  
 22 general fund money. I'll keep saying  
 23 this. I'll keep beating this horse

1 until people realize that we can only  
 2 hire enough officers based on people  
 3 supporting our agency through buying  
 4 hunting and fishing licenses.

5 We have people in the legislature  
 6 who are trying to get us money from  
 7 other places, but until that time --  
 8 that's the other thing you've got to do.  
 9 If you see somebody that doesn't have a  
 10 hunting license or a fishing license,  
 11 let us know.

12 MR. MASH: Sir, can I ask one thing on that --

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: No, sir. No, sir. No,  
 14 sir. You've had your say. Thank you,  
 15 though.

16 We've just -- I wasn't directing  
 17 that to you. I'm directing it to  
 18 everybody. We've got to know when  
 19 people are being illegal with our  
 20 resources.

21 So I know most of you in this room  
 22 are not that. I would suspect that most  
 23 of y'all are complying with the law.

1 But others -- there's lots of others who  
 2 don't, Mr. Chairman, as we well know on  
 3 this board, lots of others. And every  
 4 time we can put on one more officer that  
 5 we need, then we are protecting your  
 6 resources. Thank you, sir.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Commissioner.

8 The next public speaker -- Grady,  
 9 you have the floor.

10 MR. HARTZOG: As to what Gunter just said,  
 11 I'll remind y'all -- you were talking  
 12 about not wanting to get involved.  
 13 There is a "1-800" Game Check number  
 14 that you can call. It's answered 24  
 15 hours a day. If you see a violation,  
 16 call the GameWatch number. It's a 1-800  
 17 number. They don't have to know who it  
 18 is that's reporting it, but report the  
 19 violation. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Grady.

21 Excellent point.

22 Chuck Ryan. Approach the mic,  
 23 please.

1 MR. RYAN: Good morning. My name is Chuck  
 2 Ryan. I am the owner of the business  
 3 known as Creekstone Lodge. As our name  
 4 implies, we provide lodging for  
 5 sportsmen. My business is specifically  
 6 geared towards duck hunters and  
 7 fishermen.

8 I took over this business in 2006.  
 9 I was worried at that time that our  
 10 business would decline because of gas  
 11 prices hovering around \$4 a gallon. But  
 12 I was wrong. Business improved. It got  
 13 better. I built on. My lodge now is  
 14 twice the size as when I purchased it.  
 15 Every room I built on gets filled during  
 16 fishing season. Later on I was worried  
 17 that the recession of 2008 would kill my  
 18 business. Again, I was wrong. Business  
 19 improved.

20 People come to Guntersville from as  
 21 far away -- my customers as far away as  
 22 Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa. The  
 23 reason they come here is they want to

1 catch fish. They want to catch a lot of  
 2 fish. And they want to have the  
 3 opportunity of perhaps landing a trophy.  
 4 Two of my customers have moved here, one  
 5 from Indiana, one from the Atlanta area.  
 6 They moved here specifically to fish and  
 7 duck hunt on the lake.

8 These fishermen and sportsmen today  
 9 are very saddened. They watch the  
 10 Internet. They read the magazines.  
 11 They look at the fishing blogs. They  
 12 know that the lake is in a decline. And  
 13 many of them are choosing now to go  
 14 somewhere else to try and find that  
 15 trophy.

16 These guys come in with very  
 17 expensive outfits, a lot of them  
 18 exceeding a hundred thousand dollars;  
 19 boat, equipment, a truck to pull it  
 20 with. And they bring lots of money with  
 21 them. They spend that money with me,  
 22 with the fishing guides and on and on  
 23 and on, restaurants, gasoline. And

1 normally the first week of March my  
 2 lodge is full. For this coming week I  
 3 have two rooms rented. Now, that's a  
 4 decline.

5 I support anything that can be done  
 6 to enhance --

7 MS. McCOLLERS: 15.

8 MR. RYAN: -- the reputation of the lake. I  
 9 myself am a transport. I come from the  
 10 state of Indiana. And I consider it a  
 11 privilege to live in beautiful northeast  
 12 Alabama.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Ryan.

14 MS. McCOLLERS: Time.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker, Sharon  
 16 Thomas. Approach the mic, please.

17 MS. THOMAS: Thank you, gentlemen. I  
 18 appreciate you taking the time to  
 19 listen. They said most of everything  
 20 that I was going to say, so I'll make it  
 21 short.

22 This does not pertain to fishing,  
 23 but I meant to say this in Montgomery

1 last time about our doe season in  
 2 Jackson County east of the Tennessee  
 3 River, which I deer hunt. And that  
 4 takes away our doe days. And this year  
 5 and last year you would see 15 does per  
 6 one buck, and yesterday I counted about  
 7 25 does in my pasture. And something --  
 8 I mean, there's not that many killed,  
 9 but still there needs to be something  
 10 changed back to like it was, maybe a doe  
 11 a day, because we are overrun with does  
 12 in our area.

13 Now I'll go to the fishing aspect of  
 14 it. And, like I said, these gentlemen  
 15 made various statements as to what we  
 16 are trying to do. And I appreciate the  
 17 wardens and the law enforcement. And  
 18 talking about not wanting to call, I'm  
 19 one that does a lot of calling to Johnny  
 20 Johnson, trust me, and they are on their  
 21 toes when I call. And I live  
 22 overlooking the river, and I see a lot  
 23 and I turn in a lot, so -- but

1 considering what steps from your  
 2 perspective that can help us in our  
 3 endeavor, I would appreciate it.

4 I think they said most of it for the  
 5 economic part and for the restocking and  
 6 the creel limit. And I myself, I've  
 7 lived on the lake for all my life, and I  
 8 know what I'm seeing myself. I also  
 9 fish. And we just need your assistance,  
 10 your -- whatever you can add to the  
 11 program and help us do what we need to  
 12 do. And if it's restocking ourself,  
 13 that's -- that's a go. But we would  
 14 like your help.

15 But I was very disappointed -- you  
 16 may not like what I'm going to say. But  
 17 when we was in Montgomery, I understood  
 18 that y'all committed \$10 million to the  
 19 red snapper program in efforts to help  
 20 the red snapper program. Could you  
 21 explain that to me, if I did  
 22 misunderstand that, to restock like a  
 23 coastal area?

1 There was a gentleman that spoke  
2 about that, a biologist.

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: Go ahead and finish your  
4 comments, ma'am.

5 MS. THOMAS: Okay. Well, that was just --  
6 that was -- I was wanting someone to  
7 explain that to me.

8 But we just need your help in  
9 helping restock our area and get it back  
10 to number one, because Guntersville was  
11 number one at one time.

12 MS. McCOLLERS: 15.

13 MS. THOMAS: And I appreciate -- like I said,  
14 these gentlemen spoke most of what I had  
15 down to say, so that took a lot off of  
16 me. But I appreciate your time to  
17 listen and thank you.

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

20 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman.

21 If you'll wait, Ms. Thomas.

22 Kevin, can you address that or -- I  
23 think I can, but you'd be better to do

1 it.

2 MR. ANSON: Yes, sir.

3 Yes, ma'am. The \$10 million came  
4 from appropriations through Congress to  
5 the Gulf through the National Oceanic  
6 and Atmospheric Administration.

7 \$5 million of that was direct  
8 appropriations from some language that  
9 Senator Shelby put into the spending  
10 bill, and that was to look at  
11 assessments of red snapper populations  
12 Gulfwide and particularly looking at  
13 artificial reefs and artificial  
14 structures and incorporating that data.

15 The other \$5 million went into the  
16 Sea Grant program and looking at, again,  
17 information on how to best collect  
18 information related to artificial reefs  
19 and red snapper.

20 MS. THOMAS: Okay. Well, I just -- I just  
21 wanted someone to verify and for me to  
22 understand more of what was said that  
23 day.

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: So, Ms. Thomas, that means  
2 it's all federal money and all  
3 specifically appropriated. None of our  
4 dollars went into that.

5 MS. THOMAS: Yes. Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: And can I ask you a  
7 question real quick?

8 MS. THOMAS: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: And maybe somebody  
10 mentioned this and I missed this.

11 Several people have spoken from the  
12 Lake Guntersville Conservation Group.  
13 Is that --

14 MS. THOMAS: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. How many members are  
16 there? How many members --

17 MS. THOMAS: There's not too many that want to  
18 commit. They don't like -- it's like  
19 they don't want their names being out  
20 there. But there's probably -- at our  
21 last meeting -- we had maybe 125 at the  
22 last meeting. But, there again, we have  
23 supporters, but either they have other

1 commitments or can't make it to our  
2 meetings.

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: May I ask a follow-up,  
4 Mr. Chairman?

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Commissioner.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: So I think it was Mr. Linn  
7 maybe that said something about the  
8 private funding.

9 MS. THOMAS: Yes, Kevin Linn.

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: And so where would that  
11 funding come from?

12 MS. THOMAS: I went to Scottsboro Thursday --  
13 Scottsboro, Alabama. And I'm working on  
14 a bank account so people -- if they do  
15 make donations, it will be tax  
16 deductible. And I should know something  
17 within the next week or two on that,  
18 that aspect of it.

19 I always have a backup plan. And,  
20 of course, you know, if you do not help  
21 restock, then we can go to that aspect  
22 of it. But it will be coming from  
23 businesses as well as private citizens

1 donating for that.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. And may I ask  
3 another follow-up?

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Commissioner.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Could I ask Director  
6 Sykes -- just so we're -- before we  
7 leave -- I think we're about off of this  
8 subject.

9 So do you mind just addressing, if  
10 you could -- would that be something --  
11 I saw you shake your head indicating  
12 "possibly." We would not have any  
13 objection to that. But maybe, more  
14 importantly, is there somebody that  
15 could kind of answer generally how much  
16 money it would take for that kind of  
17 effort, if you know? Or maybe Fisheries  
18 knows.

19 MR. SYKES: I can call Chief Nick Nichols up,  
20 and he can address -- I mean, the money  
21 to stock a 60,000-acre watershed is  
22 going to be astronomical. But there is  
23 a procedure where they can apply for a

1 permit through us to do private  
2 stocking.

3 But, Nick, if you would like to  
4 address it.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: And, Nick, I know I caught  
6 you off guard, but --

7 MR. NICHOLS: No. That's fine.

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you.

9 MR. NICHOLS: My name is Nick Nichols. I'm  
10 chief of Fisheries, Wildlife and  
11 Freshwater Fisheries.

12 We do have a program where we can  
13 provide permits to individuals or  
14 entities that wish to stock fish in  
15 public waters. We issue sometimes  
16 between eight and ten permits a year.

17 Now, a lot of those permits go for  
18 folks that may do stockings to support  
19 youth fishing events, catfish, but we  
20 have issued permits -- in fact, we  
21 issued one last year. There's been an  
22 application on my desk now this year for  
23 a small stocking of largemouth bass in

1 Weiss Lake, which we will approve that  
2 permit.

3 The thing I would be remiss in not  
4 saying at this point, though, is that  
5 natural reproduction of largemouth bass  
6 is not a limiting factor in these  
7 systems. The natural production of  
8 largemouth bass found in Lake  
9 Gunterville is probably approaching  
10 five to 10,000 fingerlings per acre per  
11 year.

12 So a stocking of one or two or three  
13 fingerlings per acre per year would be  
14 biologically insignificant. But if they  
15 want to request a permit to do such a  
16 stocking, we will approve it as long as  
17 we are sure that the fish are coming  
18 from a source where we don't have a  
19 disease or an invasive-species issue.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Nick.

21 Any more questions from the board?

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Ms. Thomas, thank you.

1 MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker, Mary  
3 Carole Jackson. If you would approach  
4 the mic, please.

5 MS. JACKSON: I'm Mary Carole Jackson, and I  
6 am from Cullman, Alabama. And we run  
7 the -- my husband and I run the  
8 Sipsey -- the Riverside Fly Shop. I do  
9 know where we run that. So I want to  
10 thank you guys for the opportunity to  
11 speak.

12 Last time y'all had the meeting we  
13 discussed -- through several PowerPoints  
14 there was presentations from DCNR  
15 demonstrating that the State of Alabama  
16 had a desire to implement regulations  
17 that are similar to surrounding states  
18 in different aspects, chronic wasting  
19 disease, including -- and also snapper.  
20 As the other states have also proven,  
21 that is economically beneficial and  
22 practical.

23 What I'm asking is today that you

1 would consider doing the same thing and  
2 following suit with the Sipsey Fork  
3 trout stream. In North Carolina and in  
4 Tennessee and even on the tailwaters in  
5 Arkansas, anglers are only allowed one  
6 rod to trout fish.

7 So I come to ask you to consider  
8 implementing a regulation that each  
9 angler may only use one rod at a time  
10 and that that rod must be attended at  
11 all times. The regulation will reduce  
12 hooking mortality and reduce the  
13 interference with other anglers fishing  
14 in that limited space.

15 So we also request that the state  
16 implement a quality zone. So each month  
17 3,000 rainbow trout are stocked near the  
18 dam. The trout then have the ability --  
19 the first 13 miles are considered trout  
20 stream. They can actually range further  
21 than that. But the first 13 miles are  
22 considered trout stream. So the trout  
23 are then able to travel that 13 miles

1 leaving only a small percentage in that  
2 first half-mile section.

3 In the status report on the Sipsey  
4 Fork released in January by DCNR, they  
5 cited the White River in Arkansas as a  
6 river with exceptional fish mortality.  
7 But even with that fish-mortality issue  
8 on the White River and the Norfolk, they  
9 still stock over a million trout.

10 Both of those have quality zones  
11 that allow anglers to use single-hook,  
12 artificial-only gear and catch and  
13 release the trout. This technique, the  
14 single-hook, artificial only, has proven  
15 to reduce the mortality of the fish, and  
16 they keep more fish in the quality zone  
17 for higher catch rates.

18 So the majority of the bait  
19 fishermen -- according to the status  
20 report, the majority of the bait  
21 fishermen are already fishing outside of  
22 that proposed quality zone where they  
23 are harvesting the fish. However, the

1 bait fishermen that are not  
2 harvesting -- even if they're not  
3 harvesting trout in that quality zone,  
4 the technique that is used --

5 MS. McCULLERS: 15.

6 MS. JACKSON: -- has a 48-percent hooking  
7 mortality, thus further reducing the  
8 total number of fish available to the  
9 other anglers in the area.

10 And we're not asking to deprive  
11 those fishermen of the harvest. It just  
12 puts them into the area that they were  
13 already fishing in.

14 MS. McCULLERS: Time.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. Jackson.

16 Ms. Jackson, I have a question for  
17 you.

18 MS. JACKSON: Yes, sir.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: What percentage of  
20 fishermen on the Sipsey do you feel have  
21 more than one rod? Is that a big  
22 problem?

23 MS. JACKSON: It is somewhat of a problem.

1 It's not a huge problem. What we see  
2 is -- especially after the stocking,  
3 we'll have guys that come down and in  
4 places that are -- especially in that  
5 top section, you'll have guys that will  
6 put in four or five rods. And what they  
7 do -- because you're right on that  
8 stream. What they do is they take up  
9 section -- a huge section of the stream  
10 that would be available to multiple  
11 anglers.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I see.

13 MS. THOMAS: And once they're hooked -- once  
14 those fish are hooked, if they're not  
15 immediate -- because it's trout. It's  
16 not a bass. The trout are much more --  
17 for lack -- they're not as hardy. Let's  
18 just put it that way.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I see.

20 MS. JACKSON: They're like the super model of  
21 fish, so ...

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. Jackson.

23 Are there any other questions?

1 (No response.)

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. Thank you.

3 MS. JACKSON: All right. Thank you guys.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Wait. We have one  
5 question. Grady.

6 MR. HARTZOG: Well, not really a question  
7 for -- how is the Auburn study coming?

8 MR. SYKES: Nick.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Is that Nick?

10 MR. NICHOLS: It's me again.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: If you would approach  
12 the mic, please.

13 MR. NICHOLS: Nick Nichols, again, chief of  
14 Fisheries, Wildlife and Freshwater  
15 Fisheries.

16 We have a new Auburn study that  
17 officially started October 1 of this  
18 year. Dr. Steve Sammons is the  
19 principal investigator. He has a  
20 graduate student who has a good bit of  
21 trout water experience that's going to  
22 be the lead student on it.

23 But that project has just started

1 this year. It's a two-year study. So  
2 we probably won't see the end report  
3 probably for another year and a half,  
4 two years.

5 But what the main purpose -- what  
6 they're going to be looking at is we  
7 know from the preliminary creel survey  
8 that our own folks have done, which was  
9 about a 22-month creel survey, only  
10 about 30 percent of the fish that are  
11 being stocked up there right now are  
12 even being caught, much less harvested  
13 or -- or being lost to hooking  
14 mortality.

15 So we're trying to get an answer  
16 from the Auburn study to determine what  
17 is happening to that other 60 percent of  
18 those fish that are being stocked so we  
19 can better determine what our stocking  
20 strategies or management strategies  
21 would be.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Nick.

23 Next speaker, Mr. Gann Bryan.

1 Approach the mic, please.

2 MR. BRYAN: I'm Gann Bryan from Madison  
3 County, and the topic that we're talking  
4 about is the Swan Creek Waterfowl  
5 Management Area Improvement Plan. I  
6 have emailed every person on the CAB --  
7 and I don't know if you got it or not.  
8 I emailed everybody a proposal that we  
9 had put together.

10 So at the end of February, Drew  
11 Able, the area manager of Swan Creek,  
12 notified us that there would be a poll  
13 to decide on having a resting period for  
14 ducks, and there were five options.  
15 There was close it at noon every day,  
16 close it three days a week, close it at  
17 noon every day and close it two days a  
18 week, or no change at all.

19 And we didn't have a whole lot of  
20 time to deal with that. But the votes  
21 basically came in -- I'm going to get  
22 this -- the votes basically came in the  
23 majority didn't want any change at all;

1 okay?

2 Now, with that being said, we  
3 understand that a change is going to be  
4 made. So at that point we regrouped,  
5 got together and talked over the  
6 options, and realized that we needed to  
7 compromise because they are trying to do  
8 what's best for the ducks.

9 And so we had a meeting. That  
10 meeting had people that represented over  
11 200 hunters at Swan Creek. I have their  
12 names and the county that they live in  
13 on my spreadsheet, and I'll give that to  
14 you guys.

15 So we have 210 people that have  
16 agreed that they prefer to close it at  
17 noon every day with a caveat that we  
18 have a couple of chances at the end of  
19 the season to hunt all day. And the  
20 option that they liked was December 26th  
21 through January 1st and then the last  
22 week of season that we get to hunt all  
23 day.



1 A few things. The reason that we  
2 prefer the hunt-till-noon option is if  
3 we close it Tuesday, Wednesday,  
4 Thursday, there are going to be a lot of  
5 swing-shift workers that only have a  
6 two-day-a-week season. So that wasn't  
7 good.

8 Then if we close it Tuesday,  
9 Wednesday, Thursday, everybody is going  
10 to hunt on Friday. I promise you, it'll  
11 be like opening day out there. And  
12 that's going to hurt the weekend hunters  
13 because Saturday is not going to be near  
14 as good as Friday was.

15 The other thing is, it's my  
16 understanding and our understanding that  
17 all of the WMAs in Arkansas close at  
18 noon and some of them have an option at  
19 the end to hunt some all day. So,  
20 again, the close-at-noon option is the  
21 one that we choose.

22 MS. McCULLERS: 15.

23 MR. BRYAN: And there were three polls done,

1 and one of them was online and one of  
2 them was Drew's and one of them was  
3 ours. And 299 people choose to close it  
4 at noon, and 143 choose to close it two  
5 or three days a week.

6 MS. McCULLERS: Time.

7 MR. BRYAN: Thank you, gentlemen.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chuck, would you like to  
9 address the board in regards to some  
10 proposed regulation changes?

11 (Inaudible portion.)

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. Fine. So we'll  
13 have -- we'll wait until Mr. Engle and  
14 Mr. Wolk have made their presentation.  
15 And then, Chuck, we'll have you come  
16 forward.

17 MR. SYKES: Okay.

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next we have Reb Engle.

19 MR. ENGLE: I'm Reb Engle from Madison County.

20 I support the close at noon. I want to  
21 see if there's something better we can  
22 do to rest the ducks. If they do that  
23 in Arkansas and it seems to work, then

1 we're all willing to do that. I would  
2 make one caveat that you have no control  
3 over.

4 I've hunted out there for 47 years.  
5 I know everything from (inaudible) or  
6 whatever. I've experienced it all in  
7 that regard, and I have watched what the  
8 seasons have been like.

9 The reason we need to make a change  
10 supposedly is the duck numbers are going  
11 down, and I know one of the main reasons  
12 at Swan Creek that duck numbers are  
13 going down. You can't deal with that  
14 because it deals with federal.

15 Whiteside has not been planted. And  
16 if you know anything about our area, you  
17 understand that's part of the refuge.  
18 We used to hold about 20,000 ducks  
19 there. We hold about 4,000 ducks. And  
20 those are the ducks that come into Swan  
21 Creek. And it hasn't been planted in  
22 the last couple of years.

23 You know, over in another area it

1 held 30-something-thousand ducks on  
2 Wheeler. We don't have any control of  
3 that. But to say our fix is we have to  
4 do this to make it better, as long as  
5 those places over there are not being  
6 planted, we're going to get the same  
7 results. It won't really matter what  
8 you do.

9 I appreciate your time. And to all  
10 of you officers, hang in there. There  
11 are some of us that are willing to step  
12 up.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Engle, can I ask you  
14 one question before you step away from  
15 the mic?

16 It seems like you've done some  
17 investigation with Arkansas and how they  
18 handle their duck season. How do they  
19 handle permanent blinds in their WMAs?

20 MR. ENGLE: We are very unique in that regard.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Arkansas.

22 MR. ENGLE: You have some that are there that  
23 have been there historically; okay?

1 With that being the case, they'd go  
2 out and build blinds up in trees and  
3 that was theirs. And it was on a main  
4 river. And there has been fights that  
5 have occurred because of that because  
6 why is it yours, why can't it be mine, I  
7 got there first.

8 We have a very unique system at  
9 Swann where there is management and  
10 control. It's something that everybody  
11 in this country if they want to do has  
12 the option to do.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I understand. So how  
14 does Arkansas handle permanent blinds is  
15 my question.

16 MR. ENGLE: Arkansas --

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: In WMAs.

18 MR. ENGLE: In the past they've allowed  
19 permanent blinds to be built. You've  
20 got, you know, guys that are out there  
21 in --

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I don't think you can  
23 have permanent blinds --

1 MR. ENGLE: You've got guys that have -- guide  
2 services that if you've ever been there,  
3 they're on the White River, and they got  
4 a permanent blind right there.

5 MR. HARTZOG: That has been repealed, though.

6 MR. ENGLE: Yes, sir. That has been  
7 challenged, and lately that has  
8 occurred. These I might say -- these  
9 are not permanent blinds we're talking  
10 about.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Hartzog, do you  
12 want --

13 MR. HARTZOG: No. I was just -- and I  
14 apologize for not recognizing the Chair  
15 first.

16 But in Arkansas on the White River  
17 and the White River National Wildlife  
18 Refuge, there were a lot of guide  
19 services that was operated there 30, 40  
20 years ago, and they had permanent  
21 blinds. They had these boats that were  
22 tremendous.

23 But, anyway, there is no commercial

1 hunting now on the White River, and  
2 those blinds are no longer allowed on  
3 the White River.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

5 Next public speaker is Joseph Wolk.

6 If you would approach the mic, please.

7 MR. WOLK: Thank you for the time. My name is  
8 Joseph Wolk from Madison County. I  
9 would like to just confirm what Reb  
10 Engle and Gann had said.

11 We do support closing at 12 for the  
12 betterment of the hunting for all. And,  
13 you know, we -- we are in this business  
14 to protect the game, preserve the  
15 waterfowl. We have seen declining  
16 numbers. We do not support the closing  
17 of several -- you know, Monday,  
18 Wednesday, whatever. Because if you  
19 hunt, you know that you have success  
20 based on -- on waterfowl on weather  
21 fronts, and you could miss those days  
22 totally. And it would give everyone an  
23 opportunity to hunt every day that they

1 wanted to hunt.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Wolk.

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman?

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Wolk, may I ask a  
6 question?

7 Do you have one of the blinds at  
8 Swan Creek?

9 MR. WOLK: Yes. I enter a blind every year.

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: And how many -- and how  
11 long have you had a blind there?

12 MR. WOLK: The first blind I put in was 1981.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. So in the last  
14 ten years, how many years have you  
15 gotten a blind?

16 MR. WOLK: I didn't last year, didn't the year  
17 before.

18 COMMISSIONER GUY: So did you hunt with  
19 somebody else if you didn't get one, or  
20 are you just going and walking in?

21 MR. WOLK: I got permission to hunt other  
22 blinds.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. So you -- all right.

1 What about Mr. Engle and Mr. Gann?

2 I should have asked them. Do they  
3 also have blinds?

4 MR. WOLK: They do.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. Thank you,  
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can I speak to that?

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: No. Thank you, sir.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chuck, can you take the  
11 floor and address the proposed changes  
12 in regulations for Swan Creek?

13 MR. SYKES: Mr. Chairman, if it's okay, I'm  
14 going to let Chief Gauldin address that.  
15 He's been working with Drew and Seth,  
16 and he is intimately familiar with Swan  
17 Creek.

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Keith.

19 MR. GAULDIN: Our mission of our section is to  
20 try to promote a quality hunting  
21 experience for everybody that we can.

22 In regards to duck hunting, since  
23 2007, I believe, we've had a 78-percent

1 increase in our state duck stamp sales.

2 We've had a wide increase in the number  
3 of duck hunters on the resource, but we  
4 have the same resource that we had at  
5 that initiation, if not less, because of  
6 stopovers. And we've got a shorter  
7 migration --

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Actually, it went from  
9 about 17,000 in 2007 to about 30,000.

10 MR. GAULDIN: 30,000.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yeah. Significant  
12 increase.

13 MR. GAULDIN: That's a significant increase.

14 In trying to maintain that quality  
15 hunting experience, we have to somehow  
16 manage the hunter disturbance and  
17 hunter -- you know, hunters going into  
18 those areas to try to encourage more  
19 waterfowl use. And we looked at the  
20 12-noon closure, but being the Tennessee  
21 River Valley is a stopping point for a  
22 lot of those birds, we felt that we may  
23 have those birds habituated to utilizing

1 these areas after noon, after the  
2 hunting time is over.

3 So we looked at that day closure in  
4 other states that have had the same  
5 problem, and that was what we felt was  
6 the best thing to go to were those day  
7 closures. That way each Friday when  
8 that season opened back up it would be  
9 like an opening day basically.

10 MR. JONES: Mr. Chairman?

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes. You have the  
12 floor, Mr. Jones.

13 MR. JONES: So I guess you're saying because  
14 we have more birds that stay in our area  
15 and less birds that are new birds that  
16 are coming in on a regular basis is the  
17 reason that you would like to have the  
18 days in the middle of the week closed?

19 MR. GAULDIN: That's correct.

20 MR. JONES: Okay.

21 MR. GAULDIN: And that way we have -- you  
22 know, he had talked about the shift-work  
23 folks. That way we have two weekdays

1 available for those folks and two  
2 weekend days for those folks that work,  
3 you know, during the week as well.

4 And with Swan Creek being so close  
5 to Wheeler, those birds will trade out  
6 from the river back to Swan Creek and  
7 then back to Wheeler. And if those  
8 birds come to Swan Creek and get shot at  
9 every single day of the week, they're  
10 much less likely to utilize that area.  
11 And if we do that 12-noon closure, they  
12 may be habituated to utilizing that area  
13 after noon when there's nobody on the  
14 water there, which would decrease the  
15 hunting quality of that area.

16 So if we do that three-day closure,  
17 it's much more likely that those birds  
18 would become more vulnerable to harvest  
19 during those days that the area could be  
20 hunted.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER GUY: I'm sorry I haven't talked  
23 with you about this. But the issue of

1 the lottery or whatever for the blinds,  
2 are we going to address that, Keith?

3 MR. GAULDIN: We're looking at options, just  
4 as we have with these day closures as  
5 well, trying to figure out what other  
6 states have done successfully and what  
7 kind of headaches other states have had  
8 that have tried to implement the same  
9 program. But we are looking at options  
10 and trying to do that not this year but  
11 maybe in the coming years.

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: And let me just say for the  
13 record, I don't begrudge anybody for  
14 having the opportunity to hunt as much  
15 as they can.

16 MR. GAULDIN: Sure.

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: It just seems like that  
18 system is possibly preventing -- and I'd  
19 like really for us to look at that --  
20 preventing others from having an  
21 opportunity to come in there and hunt.  
22 Because it does seem, to me, exclusive  
23 or like a big club. And, you know, if

1 somebody wanted to get involved in that,  
2 I just want to make sure everybody has  
3 an opportunity.

4 Like I say, I'm not begrudging those  
5 who have taken advantage or used that  
6 situation. But I do -- I do -- I  
7 understand we've got a great  
8 duck-hunting, you know, resource in  
9 north Alabama. And I'd like to just  
10 make sure we do the best we can to make  
11 it available to everybody for that  
12 reason, so -- and I'll leave it up to  
13 y'all, but just maybe look at some other  
14 states and see what they do.

15 MR. GAULDIN: Well, just like our deer-hunting  
16 programs in our wildlife management  
17 areas, we don't have the areas open the  
18 entire season to promote more quality  
19 hunting opportunities during those  
20 finite number of hunts. It would be the  
21 same way for the waterfowl hunting  
22 opportunities as well. You can't expect  
23 the resource to be hammered day in, day

1 over, over, and over and then expect the  
2 quality of hunting to be consistent. So  
3 that's the reason.

4 You know, we -- we don't like to  
5 limit the opportunity, but there's  
6 certain limitations. You have to manage  
7 the human pressure as well to increase  
8 the resource and utilize the area.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Commissioner.

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: Since he brought it up,  
11 too, the issue about the federal  
12 government not planting those other  
13 areas, can you address that?

14 MR. GAULDIN: Yes, sir.

15 Yeah. The Fish and Wildlife Service  
16 on their national wildlife refuges,  
17 they've moved away from planting a lot  
18 of -- well, having a lot of contract  
19 farming on those areas. They prohibit  
20 the use of any GMO crop, which is  
21 basically what we all eat, GMO corn,  
22 where they spray Roundup and stuff.  
23 It's basically a herbicide-resistant

1 plant. And, also, the neonicotinoid  
2 seed coatings to prevent weevils from  
3 getting on seeds, they prevented that  
4 use on those refuges as well. So it  
5 makes those farmers utilize more  
6 intensive pesticide practices to have a  
7 successful crop. Which they are still  
8 planting some over there at Wheeler from  
9 what I understand, but it's a lot more  
10 intensive of a practice now.

11 And we're actually looking into some  
12 research of waterfowl concerning -- as  
13 Wheeler restricts their use of those --  
14 those agriculture practices, where those  
15 waterfowl go, what practices -- whether  
16 those waterfowl go to private lands, if  
17 they utilize our public areas more. So  
18 we'll probably initiate that next year,  
19 I believe.

20 COMMISSIONER GUY: And I would just ask you to  
21 continue to work with our federal  
22 partners over there at the U.S. Fish and  
23 Wildlife Service --

1 MR. GAULDIN: Oh, certainly. We've got a good  
2 relationship.

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: -- to see if we can help  
4 out in that regard.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Let me just clarify a  
6 couple of things.

7 So with the three-day proposed  
8 closure Tuesday, Wednesday, and  
9 Thursday -- there's, what, about 60 days  
10 total?

11 MR. GAULDIN: Yes, sir.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And we'd still have  
13 about 42 days?

14 MR. GAULDIN: That's correct.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Now, are we talking  
16 about limiting the number of shotgun  
17 shells per individual?

18 MR. GAULDIN: It's --

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: 25; am I correct?

20 MR. GAULDIN: That's correct.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay.

22 MR. GAULDIN: In possession while they're in  
23 the field.

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Very good.

2 MR. GAULDIN: And that decreases a lot of  
3 skybusting and folks shooting at  
4 birds --

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The last two weeks of  
6 the season every day; am I correct?

7 MR. GAULDIN: That's correct.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All right. Just want to  
9 make sure.

10 MR. GAULDIN: And, also, before they could  
11 launch their boats at 2 a.m., and we're  
12 moving that time to 4 a.m. to lessen the  
13 disturbance factor from those folks.

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

15 Any other questions?

16 MR. JONES: Mr. Chairman?

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Jones, you have the  
18 floor.

19 MR. JONES: Chief, could you quickly -- I know  
20 that we've greatly revamped our  
21 management plan for Swan Creek as well  
22 as many other areas in our WMAs --

23 MR. GAULDIN: That's right.

1 MR. JONES: -- with a focus on ducks. Could  
2 you tell us all a little bit about that?

3 MR. GAULDIN: You know, last year we  
4 implemented the regulation for the  
5 Mobile-Tensaw Delta, which was very  
6 successful from the constituents I  
7 talked to and being in the field down  
8 there. And we restricted -- the  
9 Mobile-Tensaw Delta Waterfowl Management  
10 Area consists of about, I think, 10,000  
11 acres just north of the Mobile Causeway.  
12 And we closed the hunting Monday and  
13 Tuesday, and Wednesday through Sunday  
14 they could hunt, I believe, till 2 p.m.  
15 And south of the causeway they could  
16 hunt, you know, seven days a week. And  
17 we also created a refuge in that void  
18 area between the causeway and the  
19 interstate.

20 And, you know, it was a very  
21 difficult year for waterfowl because we  
22 had 80-degree temperatures all  
23 throughout January. I think most folks

1 harvested the majority of their ducks in  
2 December as opposed to January, which is  
3 sort of opposite of what it historically  
4 is for waterfowlers in Alabama.

5 But from the folks I talked to --  
6 one more thing: We did have one bay  
7 that we restricted any kind of gasoline  
8 motor use to decrease the disturbance  
9 factor from folks using the mud motors  
10 and service-drive motors. And they  
11 either paddle in there or use an  
12 electric trolling motor in there. And  
13 those folks are quite successful. That  
14 did hold a lot more birds than it had  
15 historically.

16 MR. JONES: Well, I was really speaking more  
17 of what the management practice -- like  
18 with -- up here with Drew -- like what  
19 Drew and Seth have done as far as  
20 planting and revamping how historically  
21 the state has managed it.

22 MR. GAULDIN: Yeah. Historically, we used to  
23 plant a lot of corn on these areas.

1 That's pretty intense. It's a lot of  
2 money in seed and fertilizer.

3 And both of those young biologists  
4 have been sent to a moist soil plant  
5 workshop held up north, and they're  
6 utilizing more native-seed-producing  
7 plants like barnyardgrass, other  
8 waterfowl-preferred plants that come up  
9 naturally if you allow them to do so.  
10 And they're incorporating that. That  
11 way, in case we have some type of blight  
12 or army worms get on our corn crop, we  
13 still have an alternative food source  
14 for those birds there.

15 And at Swan Creek we've also -- I  
16 think several years back we implemented  
17 the 25-shell limit and did a  
18 scattered-day close. We closed the  
19 dewatering units at Raccoon Creek and  
20 Mud Creek on Monday and Wednesday. But  
21 that didn't really have the effect  
22 that -- from what we -- we talked to  
23 other states and the research

1 illustrates that a three-day closure  
2 would be the optimal amount of time to  
3 allow those birds to utilize an area,  
4 utilize it long enough to become  
5 habituated in the utilized area and  
6 become comfortable to hopefully imprint  
7 those areas more often than what our  
8 previous program would do.

9 MR. JONES: Okay. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chief, I just want to  
11 make sure -- when you're working on a  
12 plan for Swan Creek, that it is WMA  
13 land, as we all know, and access has to  
14 be fair and equal. Everyone has to  
15 have, you know, equal access and  
16 opportunity. Because it is not a  
17 private club. It's for public access.

18 MR. GAULDIN: I agree totally.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And the board feels very  
20 strongly about that.

21 MR. GAULDIN: As do I.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

23 MR. GAULDIN: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Grady.

2 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, I would just like  
3 to recognize that a lot of the  
4 additional research and work done on the  
5 WMAs is mainly thanks to Raymond down  
6 there that hosted a dinner to help raise  
7 the funds and then brought in a friend  
8 of Chuck's to do a study on each one of  
9 the waterfowl WMAs, Jody Pagan. And  
10 Jody is probably one of the most  
11 pronounced waterfowl biologists in the  
12 country.

13 So I just think we owe Raymond a  
14 round of applause for stepping to the  
15 plate and raising those funds and  
16 getting Jody here to do the research  
17 and -- or do investigations on the WMAs.  
18 So thank you, Raymond.

19 MR. DOBBS: Hear, hear.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Jones, we appreciate  
21 your effort. Keep up the good work.

22 MR. JONES: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next public speaker,

1 James Henry. Approach the mic, please.

2 MR. HENRY: My name is a James Henry,  
3 Guntersville, Alabama, Marshall.

4 Gentlemen, I'd like to address deer  
5 hunting here. I notice everything has  
6 been fishing and other things here, but  
7 my focus is on deer hunting.

8 I own -- right across the river over  
9 here behind the highway department, I  
10 own 425 acres over there, and I lease it  
11 out to, you know, some boys there. And  
12 some of their -- because I hear rumors  
13 coming out that y'all are doing that,  
14 y'all are doing that. So I want y'all  
15 to address it.

16 You know, we've -- I've had the game  
17 warden check us out over there. We  
18 plant the food plots and everything. I  
19 told them we were putting corn out in  
20 fields according to the state law. We  
21 put it a hundred -- a hundred yards  
22 out -- out of sight of deer. So we  
23 complied with that. We're hearing that

1 y'all may change that and allow corn to  
2 be somewhere else.

3 Second, I wonder if there's a  
4 possibility you could move deer season  
5 two to three weeks later than what you  
6 normally do, and that would push it over  
7 into February a little bit more.

8 And, third, is there a possibility  
9 to do it like Tennessee where you kill  
10 deer by tags?

11 And then, lastly, you know, I've  
12 heard it mentioned here, you know, that  
13 the fear of law enforcement is not  
14 really here. I'd like to see the fines  
15 increase more heavily. And what I don't  
16 see in this book or anywhere on your  
17 hunting license is how much those fines  
18 are. The game warden I talked to -- I  
19 said, what is a fine for hunting deer  
20 illegally at night? He said \$2,000.

21 And then he said -- and then he added  
22 that it's a \$1,000 fine for hunting on  
23 private property without permission

1 there.

2 I didn't know these things. I think  
3 the fines ought to be increased more and  
4 advertised more. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Henry.  
6 Commissioner.

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Henry, you want to get  
8 those answers -- we can answer those  
9 questions right now.

10 Chuck, do you want to do it, or do  
11 you want me -- you can go ahead, and  
12 I'll go after you.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chuck, you have the  
14 floor.

15 MR. SYKES: I think everybody can hear me from  
16 here. Am I good, Tracye?

17 Okay. Let's see. The first  
18 question was the board allowing  
19 something other than the hundred-yard  
20 rule. That's not under the board's  
21 control. That is completely  
22 legislative. That is done by statute.

23 They are -- they have addressed that

1 for the past 15 years and will continue  
2 to do so. It did pass the House floor  
3 Tuesday. I'm assuming it will be taken  
4 up in the Senate next week. But that  
5 is -- that's nothing the board can  
6 control. That is all by your  
7 legislature.

8 As far as moving the season later,  
9 we have got all the data that we need to  
10 show that we are trying to allow people  
11 to hunt the rut in different parts of  
12 the state. We have got to -- this goes  
13 back to the fishing pressure on  
14 Gunter'sville and the duck pressure.  
15 We've got to give them time to rest  
16 sometimes. So I think stopping it  
17 February 10th is probably as far as  
18 we're willing to push right now.

19 Tags. We are not recommending tags.  
20 It's not going to work in our opinion.  
21 Most states that have tags historically,  
22 they're going away from that to a much  
23 more user-friendly system like our Game

1 Check system. People can beat a tag  
2 just like they beat anything else. An  
3 outlaw is going to always be an outlaw.

4 As far as the increased fines go,  
5 again, that would be legislative that  
6 would have to take action to increase  
7 the fines.

8 And I hope that answered all of the  
9 questions.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Chuck.

11 COMMISSIONER GUY: Except that I would add one  
12 thing to the fines.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Go ahead.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: There's a misconception out  
15 there that we get the fine money. Most  
16 of the money for fines goes to the court  
17 system, folks. It doesn't come to us.

18 We get very little money --

19 MR. SYKES: Less than three percent of our  
20 overall budget since I've been the  
21 director for the past four years has  
22 come in through fines.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: You might have a ticket

1 that's \$200. We might get \$50 of it.  
 2 The rest of it goes to the court system.  
 3 So, please, don't think we're getting  
 4 all that money. That's just the way the  
 5 system works. Thank you.  
 6 MR. HENRY: Sir, on the Game Check, how many  
 7 deer were killed this time?  
 8 MR. SYKES: There were 82,000-and-some-odd  
 9 deer reported. That wasn't how many  
 10 were killed, but that's how many were  
 11 reported through Game Check.  
 12 MR. HENRY: Thank you.  
 13 MR. SYKES: Yes, sir.  
 14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: About 38 percent of what  
 15 you --  
 16 MR. SYKES: Yes, sir.  
 17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker, Terry  
 18 Kennedy. Approach the mic, Mr. Kennedy.  
 19 MR. KENNEDY: Hope y'all don't mind a little  
 20 show-and-tell. Hang on just a second.  
 21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: You've got three  
 22 minutes.  
 23 MR. KENNEDY: It doesn't smell.

1 Commissioner Guy, distinguished  
 2 board, I appreciate this opportunity to  
 3 speak to y'all this morning. My name is  
 4 Terry Kennedy. I'm a white-tailed deer  
 5 farmer from Toney, Alabama.  
 6 My wife and I started this business  
 7 about 30 years ago. We've raised two  
 8 children who are adults now that helped  
 9 us throughout the business in doing all  
 10 aspects of farming like you would  
 11 anything else. I'm here today to talk  
 12 about the issue of CWD with respect to  
 13 semen importation.  
 14 Our end customers are hunters from  
 15 all over Alabama and the country. Those  
 16 customers have grown to expect  
 17 white-tails that normally are dream  
 18 white-tails. For the past eight years  
 19 or so, we've been artificially  
 20 inseminating our deer in order to meet  
 21 the growing demand for the dream  
 22 white-tail. The results have been  
 23 phenomenal.

1 A year ago we sold the buck that  
 2 just won the largest typical white-tail  
 3 in Alabama at our state convention last  
 4 month. And these horns here, he refused  
 5 to shed for about two days after the  
 6 event. I think he would have come in  
 7 close to second.  
 8 I say that not to brag about my own  
 9 individual farm at all. But as many  
 10 other Alabama farms, we could not have  
 11 grown these magnificent animals without  
 12 imported semen. Not only does semen  
 13 importation allow us to compete within  
 14 Alabama, but it's absolutely necessary  
 15 to compete nationally.  
 16 With Alabama being a closed state to  
 17 the importation of live deer, which I  
 18 totally support 100 percent, it makes  
 19 semen importation that much more  
 20 important in bringing the nation's top  
 21 genetics into our herds. Without it  
 22 there would be less genetic diversity  
 23 from farm to farm that will cause

1 stagnation in growth and competitiveness  
 2 within our growing industry.  
 3 In closing, there's no scientific  
 4 proof that CWD can be spread through  
 5 semen. No state in the U.S. has a deer  
 6 industry that's closed its borders to  
 7 deer semen importation. Please let your  
 8 decision today or in the future  
 9 regarding semen importation and CWD be  
 10 rooted in evidence and scientific fact  
 11 and not in fear or speculation. Thank  
 12 you.  
 13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.  
 14 Mr. Kennedy, I think we've received  
 15 some information that's been distributed  
 16 to the board that has demonstrated that  
 17 there is a minimal risk of transmission  
 18 from -- you know, of spongiform  
 19 encephalopathy from semen or embryos.  
 20 Am I correct, Chuck? Is that --  
 21 MR. SYKES: Yeah.  
 22 MR. KENNEDY: Okay. Thank y'all very much.  
 23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker, Greg



1 Stewart.

2 MR. STEWART: Mr. Chairman, Commissioner,  
3 members of the board, my name is  
4 Dr. Greg Stewart. I work with the  
5 deer-breeding industry in ten different  
6 states. That's our livelihood. I hold  
7 advanced degrees which include a lot of  
8 information about epidemiology, and I've  
9 worked in specific pathogen-free  
10 programs on seven continents.

11 I'm here today to -- and there was a  
12 brochure that you were given some  
13 information.

14 This disease -- this chronic wasting  
15 disease has been studied since 1967. It  
16 is interesting to note that the highest  
17 concentrations of infections or  
18 percentage of infections radiate out  
19 from research institutions in our  
20 country. It's also interesting to note  
21 that we have neighboring states that  
22 have turned up positive after restocking  
23 programs for live animals in the elk

1 category. We've got a significant  
2 problem in Arkansas right now which has  
3 not involved any sort of deer-breeding  
4 facilities, et cetera.

5 So all of us live and breathe by  
6 what's known as a North American  
7 Conservation -- Wildlife Conservation  
8 Model, and that goes back to Teddy  
9 Roosevelt. And one of -- this model is  
10 managed by what we call the "Seven  
11 Sisters." And the seventh principle or  
12 "Seventh Sister" is that our  
13 livestock -- our wildlife is going to be  
14 managed in a science-based manner. And  
15 we've studied this disease, and in no  
16 species that I'm involved in can we tell  
17 you that either semen or embryos has  
18 been involved in the transmission of  
19 this agent.

20 It's -- there's a lot of information  
21 in your package, but the most recent was  
22 we took semen from the epididymus of two  
23 known positive deer and sent them to a

1 high research institution. And they  
2 used an amplification assay to try to  
3 see if semen from deer that had tested  
4 positive was indeed positive, and this  
5 turned out negative over the course of  
6 28 replicates. So it's very difficult  
7 to make a case that semen is involved in  
8 the transmission of this disease.

9 You guys have closed the borders  
10 here. I applaud you for that. I think  
11 that's wisdom.

12 In Texas, I've been intimately  
13 involved with the new regulations in  
14 testing on antemortem testing versus  
15 postmortem testing. I serve on several  
16 advisory boards, both nationally and in  
17 certain states. Texas first got CWD  
18 because an animal walked across the  
19 border. And so the best risk and the  
20 most risks are from live animals moving  
21 around --

22 MS. McCULLERS: 15.

23 MR. STEWART: -- between research institutions

1 or just walking across borders.

2 But I deal in theoretical risk  
3 versus real risk. And there's no  
4 scientific basis for excluding semen  
5 from the state of Alabama.

6 MS. McCULLERS: Time.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Stewart.

8 MR. BUNN: Mr. Chairman?

9 Dr. Stewart, I appreciate you --

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: T.J., you have the  
11 floor.

12 MR. BUNN: Please.

13 Dr. Stewart, I appreciate you coming  
14 here today and appreciate your  
15 expertise. As to the state of Alabama,  
16 this board, what in your opinion can we  
17 do in a proactive manner to -- I know  
18 it's -- there's no way to prevent CWD a  
19 hundred percent whether it comes from,  
20 like you say, a deer walking across the  
21 border or people bringing in -- breaking  
22 the law and knowing our laws and  
23 bringing live deer in, et cetera. What

1 do you think we can do as a board to be  
2 proactive to help CWD from coming to the  
3 state of Alabama?

4 MR. STEWART: I think to ensure, Mr. Bunn,  
5 that live animals do not come in here  
6 and, also, what we call specific risk  
7 materials don't come in here. So that  
8 is carcasses that include brain, spinal  
9 cord, et cetera. If you decided to  
10 promulgate regulations to prevent  
11 specific risk materials from coming in,  
12 I think you would be applauded for that.

13 MR. BUNN: Okay.

14 MR. STEWART: Live animals walking across is a  
15 big risk. Feces, urine, saliva, most  
16 animals, that's how they're infected.  
17 And we know that some states have  
18 elected not to do anything, but -- and  
19 let's put this in perspective.

20 In most states -- the Southeast is  
21 lucky. I live in Georgia, but I work  
22 all over the country. We don't have a  
23 high risk of CWD. We don't have a high

1 incidence of CWD. We don't know why  
2 that is. But in most states the  
3 incidence of deer rabies is higher than  
4 the incidence of CWD. And deer rabies  
5 is pretty rare.

6 MR. BUNN: But the trend does seem to me that  
7 it is coming our direction.

8 MR. STEWART: It's -- you know, if you look at  
9 the history of this thing, Mr. Bunn, it  
10 started out in the late '60s around Fort  
11 Collins, Colorado, where they were  
12 researching transmissible spongiform  
13 encephalopathies. And then animals and  
14 materials were swapped with other  
15 universities and research institutions  
16 over the next 15 or 20, years.

17 And it's interesting to note that  
18 near the University of Wisconsin is the  
19 highest incidence of CWD in the country.  
20 The state of Wisconsin burned 83 percent  
21 of their budget for two years, spent  
22 \$34 million trying to bring  
23 sharpshooters in and kill all these

1 animals in a 1700-square-mile area, and  
2 at the end of the day they had more deer  
3 in the area than they had before and the  
4 incidence of CWD went up. So that's not  
5 the answer.

6 Wyoming has elected to do nothing  
7 about it. They don't have a deer  
8 farming/deer breeding industry. If you  
9 look at their kills over the last 13  
10 years for deer -- mule deer and  
11 white-tail, the harvest has not gone  
12 down, and they have a pretty high  
13 incidence in certain areas.

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

15 Patrick, you have the floor.

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

17 I just wanted to say that last year  
18 the board did pass a regulation that  
19 prevents anyone from bringing in an  
20 animal unless it's deboned meat or a  
21 cleaned skull plate from any state  
22 that's known to have CWD. So we have  
23 passed that regulation --

1 MR. STEWART: Beautiful.

2 MR. CAGLE: -- to prevent that material from  
3 coming in.

4 MR. STEWART: The other thing that I think is  
5 kind of overlooked in terms of your  
6 question is the importation of forage  
7 products from heavily positive areas of  
8 our country.

9 We bring a lot of alfalfa -- we move  
10 a lot of alfalfa around in this  
11 industry. Some of it comes from really  
12 highly positive areas in Colorado and so  
13 forth. You know, it's interesting to  
14 kind of see that at times the threshing  
15 and the baling of this will have deer  
16 parts in it. That's an interesting  
17 thought to be looking at over the course  
18 of time.

19 I think we probably should encourage  
20 the growth and production of sericea  
21 lespedeza in south Alabama or rhizoma,  
22 perennial peanut hay, rather than  
23 bringing alfalfa in here from Idaho and

1 Wyoming and Colorado.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

3 MR. DOBBS: Mr. Chairman?

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: You have the floor.

5 MR. DOBBS: Dr. Stewart, this is all very  
6 interesting. May I ask you, what  
7 brought you to our meeting today?

8 MR. STEWART: I was asked by the Alabama Deer  
9 Association to come, without  
10 compensation, to serve as a science  
11 resource for this board.

12 MR. DOBBS: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: It's very helpful.  
14 Mr. Stewart, thank you for taking the  
15 time and coming and addressing the  
16 board.

17 Any other questions from the board  
18 members?

19 (No response.)

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: If not, we'll proceed to  
21 our next speaker.

22 Mr. Ken Yelvington, come to the mic.

23 MR. YELVINGTON: Chairman, I appreciate

1 everything that you guys are doing.  
2 You're doing a great job out there,  
3 gentlemen, what you can with what you  
4 got. I am Ken Yelvington, Madison  
5 County, and I would like to talk about  
6 crossbows in turkey hunting.

7 We are one of the only states in the  
8 South that does not allow turkey hunting  
9 with a crossbow. Crossbows, vertical  
10 bows, they've all been around a long  
11 time. And here in the last decade  
12 crossbows have come a long ways to  
13 include the engineering of the  
14 crossbows, the arrows. And everybody  
15 benefits, everybody, because it  
16 translates to more hunters in the field.  
17 More hunters enjoy it. You keep hunters  
18 in the field longer as far as being  
19 older. You get the young people  
20 interested in them early. And it's just  
21 something I do not understand why  
22 crossbows are not allowed to go with  
23 turkey hunting. Maybe somebody could

1 help me out.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Yelvington, maybe I  
3 can help you. Now, this is just my  
4 opinion.

5 I've bowhunted all my life. I  
6 started when I was age 12. You know,  
7 all of the -- I have hunted every big  
8 game animal in North America with a bow  
9 and arrow, and I will say without a  
10 doubt the most difficult one to  
11 consistently harvest is a turkey.

12 I agree with you. The technology,  
13 bows, arrows, crossbows, compounds --  
14 I'm a big fan, significantly. But the  
15 problem is that killing a turkey with an  
16 arrow is incredibly difficult unless you  
17 shoot him in the head. It's a very  
18 small kill zone. The great majority of  
19 archers would shoot that turkey in the  
20 wrong place. And even if you hit them  
21 perfectly, the recovery rate is about 50  
22 percent.

23 So my fear is that right now we are

1 having questions in regards to the  
2 turkey population in the state of  
3 Alabama. You know, last year that was  
4 all the controversy. You know, we're  
5 not sure exactly where we are. The  
6 gobbler numbers were down in some areas,  
7 and we got a lot of complaints.

8 If you legalize crossbows, I feel  
9 that you're going to have a lot more  
10 people in the field, as I think you  
11 said, but you're going to get a lot of  
12 wounded birds as a result of that. It  
13 has nothing to do with how much you  
14 practice. It has nothing to do with the  
15 accuracy of the equipment. It's a very  
16 difficult bird to harvest with an arrow.

17 If there's anybody in the audience  
18 that's done a lot of turkey hunting with  
19 a bow, if they're honest with  
20 themselves, the harvest rate -- it's  
21 not like shooting a deer. It's very  
22 difficult to kill one with -- even with  
23 that perfectly placed arrow. That's my

1 concern.

2 Now, this is just one individual.

3 The board members may have a different  
4 perspective. That's my perspective  
5 because I hunted them for many years.

6 Actually, I stopped because of those  
7 very reasons.

8 MR. YELVINGTON: Dr. Strickland, I agree with  
9 you 100 percent to a certain point, but  
10 the regulation right now, to me, just my  
11 personal opinion, does not make sense.

12 And as it stated in my paper, you  
13 can take a crossbow. You can precrank  
14 it with a crank or you can pull it back,  
15 and you put that bolt in the trough  
16 where the arrow is launched from. Once  
17 you do that, it becomes an issue of  
18 marksmanship, and you're holding steady.  
19 That allows that hunter to concentrate  
20 on that spot.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: How big is that spot,  
22 Mr. Yelvington? How big do you think  
23 that spot is?

1 MR. YELVINGTON: Probably ...

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yeah, that's right.

3 MR. YELVINGTON: Yeah. I hunt turkeys. I  
4 bowhunt all the time.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. Most of the  
6 turkeys that I see are still moving. If  
7 you'll get them to stop --

8 MR. YELVINGTON: I grant you. I grant you.  
9 But what I'm saying is, is that you  
10 allow for a recurve and a compound bow  
11 which has a lot of opportunities for man  
12 mistakes. You know, you get fatigued.  
13 You can't hold it. You get to move.  
14 With a crossbow, once you get it cocked  
15 and in position, it becomes like a  
16 firearm.

17 MS. McCULLERS: 15.

18 MR. YELVINGTON: You can concentrate on your  
19 animal, concentrate on your aiming  
20 point, get you a nice sight picture, and  
21 squeeze the trigger. And you're more  
22 likely to hit your bullseye than you are  
23 if you had to hold a recurve or --

1 MS. McCULLERS: Time.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Go ahead,  
3 Mr. Yelvington. I took some of your  
4 time. I'm going to give you a few more,  
5 sir.

6 MR. YELVINGTON: Oh, you could concentrate  
7 more on actually having a good, clean,  
8 humane kill with a bow.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: But what you said, more  
10 than likely. More than likely.

11 MR. YELVINGTON: Well, you know what, nothing  
12 in this life is a sure thing. And with  
13 the -- I promise you that a crossbow --  
14 or I cannot actually say. But a  
15 crossbow shooter is probably going to be  
16 more accurate, more consistent than a  
17 recurve or a compound bow at any given  
18 day if you practice and you do your  
19 stuff.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you,  
21 Mr. Yelvington.

22 MR. YELVINGTON: Thank you.

23 MR. BUNN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to

1 address --

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: T.J., you have the  
3 floor.

4 MR. BUNN: Yeah, I do. I'm sorry.

5 I'm a big turkey hunter myself. By  
6 no means am I good enough to harvest a  
7 turkey with a crossbow or a compound  
8 bow. I don't even try it. It's hard  
9 enough for me to kill it with a shotgun.

10 But I do agree with you. You know,  
11 I do find it a little contradicting that  
12 we can hunt them with compound and  
13 recurve bows, now, but we can't use a  
14 crossbow.

15 I do -- I just want to state I do  
16 agree that it would be -- to me, if  
17 we're going to let them -- if we're  
18 going to let people hunt with compound  
19 bows and recurves, we should include  
20 crossbows as well. I think it is a  
21 more -- I guess -- I don't know if you  
22 want to say ethical way. If you're  
23 going to kill -- if you choose to kill

1 one with a bow and arrow, maybe it's a  
2 more ethical way and more accurate way  
3 to kill them. Because this -- I can't  
4 imagine trying to kill a turkey unless  
5 you're sitting in a blind, I guess, with  
6 a -- having to pull back and everything.

7 And, like I said, I own a crossbow  
8 myself, and I still wouldn't try it  
9 because I don't think I could do it.  
10 But the lack of movement you would have  
11 with a crossbow I would think would give  
12 you a -- would be a lot more indicative  
13 to kill that --

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Well, if I had to make a  
15 decision, I wouldn't advise them to  
16 shoot with anything other than a  
17 shotgun, number sixes.

18 MR. YELVINGTON: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you,  
20 Mr. Yelvington.

21 Anyone else have any questions from  
22 the board?

23 (No response.)

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our next public speaker,  
2 Lonnie Miller.

3 MR. MILLER: Good morning, guys. I'm Lonnie  
4 Miller, the president of the Alabama Dog  
5 Hunters Association. Thank you guys for  
6 having us here today.

7 And basically I want to let you guys  
8 know we represent 17 chapters in 19  
9 counties in the state. We recently  
10 included Marengo County last Saturday in  
11 our association. And they got 17  
12 members and, actually, are going to be  
13 signing some more up here soon. And  
14 that's just for them to have a voice in  
15 the state for us to come here. And if  
16 we have an issue in those counties, we  
17 could have a way or mechanism to  
18 communicate with them. If Chief  
19 Weathers or Chuck or somebody has an  
20 issue, we can call those counties.  
21 That's the importance of that.

22 We as an association do not want to  
23 see any regulations or restrictions

1 added this year. And I know we talked  
2 about over the past two or three weeks  
3 and at the last Advisory Board meeting  
4 about the dog encroachment. We don't  
5 want to have any more restrictions.  
6 However, we put a vote out to all the  
7 chapters, and the majority of the  
8 chapters of our association have agreed  
9 to accept the dog encroachment if we  
10 have to have something, provided the  
11 permit system is removed.

12 And I know there are probably some  
13 folks that don't want to do that.  
14 However, we're still going to stick to  
15 the fact that it is double jeopardy.  
16 There's no reason to punish the county  
17 or the club or whatever. We do want to  
18 punish the individual, and I stand  
19 before you today again and say that.  
20 It's my responsibility to keep up with  
21 my dog, but I don't want what I do to  
22 jeopardize my county.

23 As Mr. Jones prayed earlier, you

1 know, I just -- I just -- I just hope  
2 that the CAB will make sound and wise  
3 decisions with what you do today.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

5 Grady, you have the floor.

6 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, has Lonnie been  
7 given a copy of the interpretation that  
8 we've --

9 MR. SYKES: Yes, sir, he has.

10 MR. HARTZOG: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker, Rick  
12 Baxter. Approach the mic, please.

13 MR. BAXTER: Good morning. Rick Baxter, vice  
14 president of Alabama Dog Hunters  
15 Association.

16 Same thing Lonnie is saying. This  
17 year we did decrease the complaints  
18 tremendously, and all we ask is let's  
19 see if that is real numbers. Give us  
20 this year and then let's reconvene and  
21 let's try again and see. If the dog  
22 encroachment is something that needs to  
23 be put in place, let's try to get

1 everybody on board with it without the  
2 permit or with the permit, however it  
3 needs to go. But give us one year -- is  
4 all I'm asking -- to see if the  
5 numbers -- what we did this year -- not  
6 us, not as the association -- the  
7 hunters of the state of Alabama.

8 At the last Advisory Board meeting  
9 Commissioner Guy said what we need --  
10 what he wants and what you want is to  
11 decrease those complaints. We're trying  
12 and we're trying hard. And so we ask  
13 one year -- give us another year -- to  
14 see if what we're doing is really  
15 working to help us with that.

16 And that's all I ask today is to  
17 please consider to leave it one year  
18 just like we got it right now and then  
19 let's go again; okay?

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any questions from the  
22 board?

23 (No response.)

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Baxter.

2 Next speaker, Susan Morrow.

3 Approach the mic, please.

4 MS. MORROW: Good morning. I'm Susan Morrow  
5 from Mobile County. I'm here today to  
6 speak to y'all about deer dog hunting  
7 representing "Turn 'Em Loose" and  
8 Alabama Hunting Dog Alliance.

9 There's a lot of our hunters in  
10 here -- in our state that are not  
11 members of the ADHA, and we are working  
12 hard to get everybody on board. But as  
13 I said at the last meeting in February,  
14 that the dog hunters have done  
15 everything that we have been asked and  
16 that we can do without just stopping dog  
17 hunting, and that's not what we want to  
18 do. We would ask the board not to put  
19 any more rules or regulations on us.

20 And we would also ask the board to  
21 look at the tickets that are wrote for  
22 dog deer hunting and the tickets that  
23 are wrote for stalk hunting. And we had

1 complaints, but there's always going to  
2 be complaints. Anybody can pick up a  
3 phone and call and complain. And a lot  
4 of people don't even know if it's a  
5 hunting dog or just a yard dog. There  
6 are yard dogs that will go and hunt on  
7 their own, believe it or not. I have  
8 seen Chihuahuas running deer. Yes, I  
9 have. I have seen Rottweilers running  
10 deer. And they're yard dogs or house  
11 dogs.

12 So we would ask the board to look at  
13 this. All we really want is our  
14 God-given right to hunt with the  
15 traditional method that we want to  
16 within the reason of the law of the  
17 State of Alabama. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. Morrow.

19 Next we have Ray Peoples. Ray,  
20 would you approach the mic, please.

21 MR. PEOPLES: Good morning. I'd like to thank  
22 the board and Mr. Guy for giving me the  
23 opportunity to speak. And I would like

1 to say I appreciate the difficult job  
2 that you all have to do.

3 And I would like to begin by saying  
4 that the hunters of the Talladega  
5 National Forest are of a special breed  
6 in the sense that it's a love for Cheaha  
7 Mountain and the national forest. The  
8 men, women, boys, and girls that hunt  
9 there are generational hunters. And  
10 what I mean by that is, you know,  
11 they've hunted there their whole life.  
12 You know, they were brought up there by  
13 their father and his father before him  
14 to this place.

15 It's not the bounty or the abundance  
16 of game but the love of a place that  
17 they hold near and dear to their hearts.  
18 The national forest is not some leased  
19 land where members or clubs come and go  
20 or the lease is lost. This is a land of  
21 the common man where people hunt because  
22 they've hunted there their whole life  
23 and given the opportunity to go

1 somewhere else and hunt they wouldn't  
 2 do. They would continue to go to the  
 3 national forest to hunt. If you take  
 4 the two weeks -- well, let me rephrase  
 5 that -- the 23 days that were lost --  
 6 most of those guys continue to go to the  
 7 national forest and just stalk hunt.  
 8 The hunters of the national forest were  
 9 devastated when our days and time were  
 10 cut. And, like I said, it was, I  
 11 believe, 22 days. The time was cut as  
 12 well on the days that we had left to  
 13 12 o'clock.

14 So a couple of us reached out to  
 15 Lonnie Miller of the Alabama Dog Hunters  
 16 Association, and we created what is the  
 17 Talladega-Clay chapter of the Dog  
 18 Hunters Association. And we've really  
 19 worked hard to partner with the national  
 20 forest, Gloria Nielsen, Carl Petrick.  
 21 We've had some independent work days in  
 22 the national forest, you know, where we  
 23 went and picked garbage up, you know,

1 whereabouts in the national forest,  
 2 different groups, different places.

3 We're also planning to work with the  
 4 national forest and Gloria on  
 5 April 22nd, which is Earth Day, and  
 6 we're going to try to, you know, partner  
 7 with them and do some more cleanup.

8 And we've worked really hard to  
 9 reduce the number of complaints from  
 10 these -- from the landowners as well.  
 11 We had a meeting in Oxford -- I believe  
 12 it was last May, which is when we  
 13 created our chapter. And we had several  
 14 game wardens --

15 MS. McCOLLERS: 15.

16 MR. PEOPLES: Well, let me sum it up by this:

17 To my understanding, the last that I  
 18 heard, there was four complaints against  
 19 the dog hunters in the Talladega  
 20 National Forest.

21 MS. McCOLLERS: Time.

22 MR. PEOPLES: And what we're asking is that  
 23 you give us our days and our time back,

1 please.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Peoples.

3 MR. PEOPLES: All right. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The next speaker needs  
 5 no introduction, Mr. Avery Bates.

6 MR. BATES: Boy, y'all are in for it today.

7 Everybody on the board, I don't know  
 8 if you swear to uphold the laws of the  
 9 State of Alabama and the U.S.  
 10 Constitution -- put your hand on the  
 11 book, raise your right hand. You swear  
 12 to do that. It's an oath. I believe a  
 13 lot of people in the past have sworn on  
 14 a *Field & Stream* -- not the true book,  
 15 but a *Field & Stream*.

16 We've got property rights that's  
 17 given to us and civil liberties that's  
 18 given to us not only by God but by this  
 19 state and by our U.S. Constitution. It  
 20 has been torn up, thrown away. They  
 21 have given our property rights to  
 22 special-interest groups. They've let  
 23 special-interest groups come in here and

1 take your property -- these properties  
 2 away from them by covering up the bay  
 3 with silt and dirt by giving it to  
 4 certain groups and taking it away from  
 5 the people that enjoy eating it.

6 Got a number of people here today  
 7 that enjoy catching it and giving it  
 8 through to the public. And that's  
 9 according to the state law 9-12-125 if  
 10 you want to know where that's at.

11 These commercial businesses feed the  
 12 people of Alabama and a lot of this  
 13 country. God give us that right in  
 14 Genesis 9. This is His book. A lot of  
 15 you swore on it. A lot of you didn't  
 16 agree to it because you turned to the  
 17 *Field & Stream* and took our liberties  
 18 away from us.

19 You give our fish -- our redfish to  
 20 a special-interest group. You give our  
 21 speckled trout to a special-interest  
 22 group. You've took them away from the  
 23 restaurants and markets, food that we

1 enjoy.

2 This man here is Department of  
3 Agriculture Commissioner. He  
4 understands how important food is in the  
5 state of Alabama. And I want to let you  
6 know the people back here that catches  
7 the crabs and does what the good Lord  
8 give them the liberty to do, to farm the  
9 sea, it is a business for them. It is a  
10 business for many people throughout this  
11 state. But when you take seafoods or  
12 you make a regulation -- this man can't  
13 make a regulation that would hamper or  
14 interfere with any industry, law 928.  
15 If he does, he's breaking the law. We  
16 don't want our representatives, our  
17 commissioners, our people that's in  
18 authority to disobey this book and God's  
19 book.

20 The reason I keep pointing to this  
21 book, Jimmy Evans who used to say the  
22 greatest book I have --

23 You remember Jimmy Evans?

1 He was attorney general.

2 -- the greatest law book I have in  
3 this state is over here on the corner of  
4 my desk. It was an old King James  
5 Bible.

6 You know what? The law of nature  
7 has been violated in this state. What  
8 is the law of nature?

9 MS. McCULLERS: 15.

10 MR. BATES: Well, in that law the tide does  
11 rise and fall, and the river runs  
12 downstream or downhill.

13 Guess what happens when you allow  
14 them to pollute, to cover up, or to take  
15 away the property that belongs to these  
16 people?

17 MS. McCULLERS: Time.

18 MR. BATES: You are breaking the law. And  
19 there's a lot more laws you need to go  
20 by, the Magnuson-Stevenson (sic) Act,  
21 Title III, Section 301.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Bates.

23 MR. BATES: Y'all have a good day. Come eat

1 with us Tuesday. You have your  
2 invitations in the mail.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: We got the invitations.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. BATES: We appreciate you.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All right. The next  
7 speaker, Eric Esbenson.

8 MR. ESBENSON: My name is Eric Esbenson. I'm  
9 from Mobile County. I'm a commercial  
10 crabber. I've never attended one of  
11 these meetings. I want to thank you for  
12 having me today to speak.

13 I have been crabbing since 1976. I  
14 originally crabbled in Maryland till '89.  
15 I crabbled in Apalachicola, Florida,  
16 until 1994. Now I've been crabbing in  
17 Alabama since 1994.

18 My biggest concern right now is the  
19 quality of the bay. It has been  
20 degraded tremendously in the last ten  
21 years. I see that we have a high  
22 concentration of nitrates in the bay  
23 these days.

1 I am educated, by the way. I do  
2 have a college degree in physical  
3 science. I am a meteorologist too.  
4 I am -- I am -- worked for that.

5 But, anyway, what I'm concerned  
6 about is the amount of runoff and the  
7 amount of nitrates that are making it in  
8 the bay and the habitat that is being  
9 decreased so rapidly in the bay.  
10 Something has to be done. And I see  
11 that -- I don't see a lot of  
12 communication between the health  
13 department or ADEM and the Conservation  
14 Department for cleaning the bay. And  
15 now they want to put these regs on us  
16 about not harvesting sponge crabs along  
17 the coast.

18 It sounds like it's the crabber's  
19 fault, but it's not the crabber's fault.  
20 The quality of the water is going down.  
21 By June you can't catch anything in four  
22 foot of water because the quality has  
23 been degraded so bad.



1 When I first came here in 1994, I  
2 could catch -- I could stay away from  
3 the beaches. I could work that edge at  
4 six to eight foot and catch and make a  
5 living. Now I have to go and find two  
6 to three foot of water.

7 I have never seen anything like  
8 this. I've crabbed in Maryland. I've  
9 crabbed in Florida. And I've crabbed in  
10 Alabama. All my life. And what I'm  
11 seeing is terrible. I don't think this  
12 bay will last any longer if we don't do  
13 anything. I see that -- the ADEM and  
14 the Conservation Department have to work  
15 together. I don't see that. I don't  
16 read anything about that.

17 Another thing is -- I want to  
18 address is I use a biodegradable trap.  
19 You have proposed using biodegradable  
20 doors now on the traps. My trap is all  
21 metal. It degrades in less than two  
22 months.

23 I brought a brand new one, and I

1 brought an old one that has degraded.  
2 This is what we used years ago.

3 What I use is a zinc bar. And what  
4 I do is I change the zinc bar every  
5 month or two months when I bring them in  
6 and rotate and clean. We have to clean  
7 our traps. The quality of the water is  
8 so poor now --

9 MS. McCULLERS: 15.

10 MR. ESBENSON: -- a trap can't stay in the  
11 water for more than two to three weeks  
12 at a time without being washed.

13 So I thank you for listening to me,  
14 and I hope we can clean the bay up.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Eric.

16 MR. ESBENSON: Thank you.

17 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?

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

20 MR. HARTZOG: Educate me. What's a zinc bar?

21 MR. ESBENSON: A zinc bar is an anode, the  
22 same thing you would put on a prop on a  
23 motorboat to keep the metal from

1 deteriorating from electrolysis.

2 Okay. The metal trap that I've  
3 always used, which is -- which I'm  
4 accustomed to because I've been using it  
5 since 1976 -- it's actually less labor  
6 for me. It protects the trap from  
7 degrading; okay? But if I don't have  
8 that trap up in eight weeks, seven  
9 weeks, and put a new zinc bar on, it'll  
10 be gone in less than a month.

11 So what I'm asking is, can you make  
12 the metal trap exempt from having the  
13 degradable door?

14 MR. DOBBS: Mr. Chairman?

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Joey.

16 MR. DOBBS: One quick question: In the other  
17 states you fished were you required to  
18 have biodegradable panels or doors, and  
19 were you required to have escape --

20 MR. ESBENSON: In the state of Florida we did.  
21 In the state of Maryland we did. And  
22 that was years ago. I left Maryland in  
23 '89.

1 We all had to paint our traps. We  
2 all -- if you did not paint your traps,  
3 you could not stay in business because  
4 of the amount of nitrates, the growth on  
5 the traps. It wasn't bad here in 1994  
6 when I got here. It is now like that.

7 MR. DOBBS: We understand that. And I  
8 appreciate that very much, and this  
9 whole board does. We do communicate  
10 with ADEM, but that is a whole 'nother  
11 group of people -- the Corps of  
12 Engineers, the Alabama Department of  
13 Environmental Management, the Port  
14 Authority, and Public Health, the health  
15 departments in Mobile and Baldwin  
16 Counties.

17 And there are problems. We agree  
18 with that. But there's not much that we  
19 can do. We want to help you, and we  
20 want to make things better. But one of  
21 the things -- and I'd leave this to  
22 Kevin. I'm going to let him -- but if  
23 you -- the next worst thing would be

1 stopping part of the season because the  
2 recruitment -- or we don't have the  
3 crabs. I hear you.

4 MR. ESBENSON: Well, I think the problem --  
5 another problem is with -- and I've been  
6 here since '94 -- the redfish population  
7 has doubled. Now it's going to triple.  
8 If you put more redfish in the water,  
9 you're just going to degrade the amount  
10 of crabs. You're going to degrade the  
11 amount of shrimp.

12 I have a theory, also, that in some  
13 areas near the river mouth that the bull  
14 reds are so thick that they're driving  
15 the shrimp and driving the crabs out of  
16 the water.

17 MR. DOBBS: Well, our time is up. And that is  
18 something that maybe after all the  
19 speakers come up, if it's okay with the  
20 Chairman, if we would let Chief Anson --  
21 Kevin Anson, the biologist, speak to  
22 this, and maybe he can answer some  
23 questions for all of us.

1 MR. ESBENSON: Thank you.

2 MR. DOBBS: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Patrick, did you have a  
4 question?

5 MR. CAGLE: I think Mr. Dobbs' comments  
6 covered it.

7 MR. ESBENSON: Just one other thing. I do  
8 have two of those traps, an old one and  
9 a new one, in the back of my truck if  
10 anyone wants to see it. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Eric.

12 The next public speaker is John  
13 Inthavong. If you would approach the  
14 mic, please.

15 I may have pronounced the last name  
16 incorrectly. Inthavong.

17 MR. BATES: We have a number of Asian  
18 crabbers. This is one of them.

19 MR. INTHAVONG: Hi, my name is John Inthavong.  
20 I am a crabber. I used to work in state  
21 of Florida. The cotton rope that they  
22 use is -- only one month and a half it  
23 broke off to close the door. So in the

1 300 traps it one month and a half broke  
2 off all and then we have to change that.  
3 That's why I against that, the cotton  
4 rope for the trap.

5 MR. BATES: You want me to help you?

6 MR. INTHAVONG: Yeah.

7 MR. BATES: Thank the good Lord for our Asian  
8 crabbers. If it wouldn't be for them,  
9 we wouldn't have our crabs picked hardly  
10 either. So I'll finish him out.

11 The crab population today is being  
12 decimated by several things, but we are  
13 putting other strains on him by the  
14 spawn crab law and the other regulations  
15 that's put him out of business in other  
16 states and drove him to Alabama.

17 We want to keep him in business. We  
18 don't want y'all to pass a regulation to  
19 put him out of business and stop him  
20 from crabbing.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Bates.

22 MR. BATES: 70,000 redfish was turned a'loose  
23 by the state. Kevin can tell you that.

1 And one crabber said, where did they  
2 turn them a'loose? I said, it don't  
3 make no difference. They got tails on  
4 them. If you turn 70,000 crabs -- I  
5 mean, redfish a'loose, they're going to  
6 eat millions of pounds of crabs.

7 He's going to lose by the open doors  
8 rotting the strings. He's going to  
9 lose if you make some of this sponge  
10 crab law --

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Bates, you're taking  
12 the gentleman's time. We're going to  
13 have to move on. Thank you.

14 The next public speaker, Tony  
15 Johnson. Approach the mic, Mr. Johnson.

16 MR. TONY JOHNSON: I'm Tony Johnson. I'm  
17 concerned about the spawn crab. They're  
18 saying that they're going to save us by  
19 keeping us from saving the spawn crab.

20 In Mississippi we -- and they had  
21 that law for -- in Louisiana and  
22 Mississippi they've had that law for  
23 years, and it hasn't helped none. I

1 mean, you can catch thousands of pounds  
2 of spawn crabs, but the good crabs, you  
3 never see them. And they're going to  
4 stop it in Alabama.

5 And, I mean, it hadn't done no good  
6 in Louisiana or Mississippi. And all  
7 we -- most of our spawns stay out in the  
8 Gulf, and it don't -- we just catch a  
9 few of them, you know, just to survive.

10 But if they cut that out, it's going  
11 to just -- it's going to be like two or  
12 three months out of the year that we  
13 won't be able to survive. And it hadn't  
14 helped down there, so I can't see it  
15 helping at home, you know. Appreciate  
16 it.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

18 The next public speaker, Roger  
19 Johnson. Approach the mic, please.

20 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: Hey, Board. I'm Roger  
21 Johnson. That was my brother, Tony. As  
22 you can tell, we love to speak in front  
23 of groups. Probably my worst fear. I

1 dropped out of my second year in college  
2 because I had to take a speech class.

3 I promise y'all I don't want to be  
4 here today. It's taking away from a day  
5 of work to support my family, and our  
6 livelihood is in y'all's hands.

7 I want to oppose the experimental  
8 regulations proposed by the DMR. They  
9 were -- they will be there to stay until  
10 the commercial crabber -- and will only  
11 create other problems that will -- that  
12 we can't overcome. And, yes, they are  
13 experimenting with our lives, not only  
14 to -- I don't have time to address all  
15 three of them that they're putting on  
16 us.

17 But like Mr. Bates said, y'all could  
18 come eat with them. All of y'all board  
19 members, if anybody wants to ever come  
20 crabbing with me for two weeks and see  
21 the work we do and the work that goes  
22 through with crabbing and what it would  
23 take for us to replace these panels all

1 the time.

2 The guy back here said he had a  
3 biodegradable trap. We got  
4 biodegradable traps. If we don't keep  
5 zincs in our plastic-coated traps, we're  
6 patching constantly, constantly. We  
7 can't hardly keep up with it.

8 There are so many -- there are so  
9 many waters in the state of Alabama  
10 closed to crabbers. It's impossible for  
11 it to be overfished. Does anybody in  
12 freshwater know anything about closed  
13 waters?

14 We have closed waters, a lot of  
15 closed waters. We cannot overfish a  
16 crab. You can't do it.

17 We need to go the other way.  
18 Instead of more regulations put on us,  
19 we need to have some overturned like our  
20 bottom that's been taken away over the  
21 years.

22 The real problem is the water  
23 quality in the bay. The DMR cannot fix

1 our problem. We cannot fix our problem.  
2 Y'all can't fix our problem. It's not  
3 enough money in this room or in this  
4 state to fix our problem until the water  
5 quality is solved.

6 They're wanting to build another  
7 spoil island below the -- in Mobile Bay.  
8 It's going to choke our bay some more.  
9 It's going to hold our pollution more.

10 Like I said, I -- I can't tell you  
11 what I got in my mind. I don't have  
12 enough time in two weeks to tell you.  
13 Y'all are welcome to come with us, me  
14 and my brother. He would -- he's got a  
15 big, nice crab boat. We'd take y'all  
16 any day of the week or for weeks and let  
17 y'all see --

18 MS. McCULLERS: 15.

19 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: -- what goes on.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Commissioner, you have  
21 the floor.

22 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Johnson, let me -- I  
23 just want to make sure I understand.

1 I've been listening.

2 So do you -- is there a problem with  
3 the crab population or not in your mind?

4 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: We don't really think so  
5 because we've survived. We've survived  
6 these regulations put on us from the  
7 past taking our waters. We're  
8 survivors. We've adapted to them taking  
9 our bottom away. When they do that,  
10 they push us in one corner.

11 The pollution has gotten worse in  
12 the bay. That's pushing us out of the  
13 deep water into the shallow water. Now  
14 when you try to go out of -- by the  
15 Battleship, you can walk across the crab  
16 floats. It's not our fault. We've been  
17 pushed to that.

18 COMMISSIONER GUY: I'm not saying it's your  
19 fault. Don't get me wrong. I'm not  
20 saying it's your fault. We're trying to  
21 figure out how to fix what I understood  
22 to be a diminished crab --

23 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: Unless you fix the water

1 quality.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. So let's assume  
3 that. You do realize that we're not in  
4 charge of water quality. I mean, we --

5 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: Yeah, I understand that.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: Just so you understand  
7 that.

8 Okay. So I hope -- and I assume you  
9 are -- that you're assisting us --

10 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: If you want the numbers to  
11 come up of our crab catch, give us our  
12 bottom back, and we will show you crab.  
13 If you take -- if you take any  
14 industry -- if you take the ability to  
15 work that bottom -- it's just like  
16 farmland. It grows up with weeds. It's  
17 no good.

18 The best fishing and crabbing any --  
19 ask jack crevalle people or people that  
20 fish on the bottom. The best bottom  
21 there is, is when a shrimp troll comes  
22 by. You can go back behind where that  
23 shrimp troll went. That's the fertile

1 water. It stirs it up. It makes food.

2 It's the best -- I mean, I can't tell  
3 y'all everything that we know.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: I understand. So you're  
5 talking about more open areas, which  
6 is -- ADEM closes the waters; right,  
7 Kevin?

8 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: Well, we had red --

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: Hold on. Let me -- are we  
10 closing those?

11 MR. ANSON: Well, ADEM reviews the water  
12 quality as has been discussed earlier.  
13 We work with the public health  
14 department for closure of those waters  
15 for the oysters and the harvesting of  
16 oysters.

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, we technically close  
18 them, but we base it on what they  
19 provide to us.

20 Okay. Yes, Mr. Johnson.

21 MR. BANNON: The closure areas he's referring  
22 to is actually the -- like the channels  
23 and the rivers where it's prohibited for

1 crabbing to occur. I think -- is that  
2 correct, Mr. Johnson?

3 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: Well, out of the rivers  
4 and above the causeway and things like  
5 that.

6 You've got to be careful with how  
7 you regulate things. And it needs to be  
8 a certain amount of conservation, but  
9 it's gotten to the point where we can't  
10 survive. And if we could overturn some  
11 regulations, it would help us  
12 tremendously.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. I hear you. I just  
14 want you to understand -- it sounds like  
15 you're talking to us about a lot of  
16 different parts --

17 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: There's so many parts.

18 COMMISSIONER GUY: -- that don't involve us.

19 And I don't say that we won't work with  
20 you on that, but we're just trying to --  
21 I think you understand our Marine  
22 Resources. You've been working with  
23 them in the past. You know we're very

1 cognizant in trying to be helpful in  
2 everything we do for the commercial  
3 fishermen as well, like everyone else.

4 So I appreciate your comments. Thank  
5 you.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

7 MR. ROGER JOHNSON: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next public speaker is  
9 Donnie Mizell. Approach the mic,  
10 Mr. Mizell.

11 MR. MIZELL: Good morning. My name is Donnie  
12 Mizell. I own a company in Mobile  
13 called Blue Crab Trading Company. 45  
14 commercial fishermen work for me. Each  
15 one of those boats has a deckhand or  
16 two. So what the conservation has asked  
17 y'all to approve to do is not only going  
18 to affect me as a businessman; I'm also  
19 a fisherman. It's going to affect about  
20 150 families that work for just my  
21 company.

22 They have no data to prove that  
23 stopping egg crab is going to help.

1 They clearly said that they want to  
2 close it for three years to try it.  
3 Closing an industry just to try it  
4 without proof to me makes absolutely no  
5 sense.

6 Two years ago Louisiana tried to  
7 enact this trap door to be put into all  
8 the fishermen's crab traps. And they  
9 looked at the cost assessment of it, and  
10 each trap door was \$1.75. And this trap  
11 door disintegrates in about 18 months.  
12 So then they figured out, well, why  
13 would we do that anyway; we're going to  
14 make all the fishermen have to go to  
15 this extra cost to be able to work.

16 Most fishermen already have the  
17 escape ring that they're talking about.  
18 It's required in Louisiana, in  
19 Mississippi, and in Florida. That we're  
20 not really too worried about because  
21 most of us already have it.

22 One option to their escape ring  
23 would be -- one option to their

1 biodegradable door would be to attach  
2 these escape rings with galvanized hog  
3 rings. And those galvanized hog rings  
4 would disintegrate within a  
5 two-to-three-month period and they could  
6 be replaced. Once that escape ring  
7 falls off of that trap, that leaves a  
8 three-inch hole, a square hole instead  
9 of a 2 5/16ths round hole.

10 And that will prevent cotton -- if  
11 you've ever seen a crab get in a gillnet  
12 and if he stays in that gillnet  
13 overnight, that crab will eat a hole big  
14 enough for two or three people to walk  
15 through. So these crabs are going to be  
16 eating on this cotton string or  
17 whatever -- however they want to attach  
18 it. And, you know, if you put 500 out  
19 January 1st, within a month and a half  
20 you go out one day and all of a sudden  
21 all your pots are wide open. You've  
22 lost your whole catch.

23 And right now crab prices are so

1 high. If I went out tomorrow and all my  
2 pots were open because a biodegradable  
3 panel fell off, I could lose \$1500 in a  
4 day's work. And that would be  
5 devastating if you had all the fishermen  
6 in Alabama doing that.

7 As far as the egg crab goes, not all  
8 fishermen fish for egg crabs. Most  
9 of -- 50 percent of the fishermen in  
10 Alabama fish in the head of the bay.

11 MS. McCOLLERS: 15.

12 MR. MIZELL: 50 percent fish in the lower end  
13 of the bay. If you close that, you're  
14 going to put 100 percent of the  
15 fishermen in the head of the bay.  
16 Recreational fishermen could not play  
17 around and go fishing up the bay because  
18 there would be so many crab traps. It  
19 would create a navigational hazard.  
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Mizell.

22 Our final public speaker is  
23 Mr. Nophadonh Vongkeo. Mr. Vongkeo.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I can speak for him.  
2 He says that's okay. He -- everybody  
3 said what he wanted.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. Very good.  
5 Before we convene into our next  
6 agenda item, which is old business --

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry.  
8 Do you mind if we just have Kevin or  
9 Scott to stand up and address some of  
10 those issues for us?

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Sure.

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: Would you mind,  
13 Mr. Chairman?

14 MR. ANSON: Yes, sir. So just to address a  
15 couple of the points from the  
16 speakers --

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: Kevin, she's going to want  
18 you to --  
19 (Brief interruption by the court  
20 reporter.)

21 MR. ANSON: So I think Chris had mentioned  
22 earlier and you mentioned it today,  
23 Commissioner, you know, that our mission

1 with these regulations is not to really  
2 put people out of business. We  
3 obviously understand that this may  
4 inconvenience them and such, but our  
5 ultimate goal is to try to conserve the  
6 resource.

7 Chris provided in the presentation  
8 at the last Advisory Board meeting a  
9 graph or a slide in the presentation  
10 that kind of indicated the trend of blue  
11 crab catches in Alabama. And it's been  
12 around 1.4 million pounds for the last  
13 five years, I believe. It had been up  
14 to two and a half to three million  
15 pounds in the decades prior to that.

16 So we're trying to look at things  
17 that we can control and can propose to  
18 try to conserve the resource. So some  
19 of these items, you know, again,  
20 concerning the escape rings -- trying to  
21 get the crabs that may be caught in  
22 there that, quite frankly, they wouldn't  
23 have to cull through, plus that might

1 not survive if there's a ghost trap or a  
2 trap loses its float, and those traps  
3 can continue to fish long-term.

4 The issue with the biodegradable  
5 panels, there's a couple of different  
6 ways that you can go about doing this.  
7 Several states have already implemented  
8 biodegradable traps. There's been  
9 research to show that on ghost traps in  
10 Louisiana, they kill about 27 crabs per  
11 year. So if you multiply that times,  
12 you know, many dozens, hundreds of  
13 traps, you could really start to lose or  
14 waste the resource there.

15 And just to go back to red drum,  
16 that is another issue that we have to  
17 deal with in management of multiple  
18 species within our purview. We have  
19 stock, and we are currently trying to  
20 raise red drum. Red drum is managed in  
21 partnership with other states in the  
22 Gulf region and the National Fisheries  
23 Service. It spends its adult life

1 primarily in federal waters.  
2 And so we manage that cooperatively.  
3 And right now, in order to not get in  
4 any management trouble with the feds,  
5 the states have to maintain a certain  
6 escapement rate, and that's the number  
7 of fish that make it offshore, if you  
8 will.

9 And so each of the states determines  
10 that escapement rate, and Alabama's  
11 escapement rate has been climbing over  
12 the years closer to the threshold. And  
13 so we are looking at red drum to try  
14 to -- to increase those -- the number of  
15 juvenile fish that are staying closer to  
16 shore that people could go and catch.

17 I don't know if there's anything  
18 else that you want to -- are there any  
19 specific questions that you have?

20 COMMISSIONER GUY: I've got a few follow-up,  
21 if you don't mind.

22 So the red drum, that's kind of like  
23 a multistate federal requirement?

1 MR. ANSON: Yes, sir. Again, NOAA places the  
2 responsibility of looking at the  
3 escapement -- the numbers of juvenile  
4 fish or fish just before they reach  
5 maturity going offshore and becoming  
6 part of the broodstock.

7 There is currently -- since the late  
8 1980s, with the blackened redfish craze  
9 that went on with Chef Paul Prudhomme,  
10 there was a large increase in the  
11 commercial landings of red drum. And  
12 the feds at that time went ahead and  
13 closed that fishery down.

14 So there's been no harvest of red  
15 drum in federal waters in the Gulf of  
16 Mexico since the late '80s. And so  
17 that's -- the default management method  
18 was just to see -- make sure there was  
19 enough escapement, again, because there  
20 was a large recreational fishery inshore  
21 when in state waters there was -- the  
22 feds said, well, we need enough of those  
23 coming offshore to maintain broodstock.

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, you know I don't like  
2 the feds, but let me ask you this: Is  
3 there biological support for their  
4 argument that the red drum is causing  
5 concern with the crabbing?

6 MR. ANSON: Well, there's certainly some --  
7 some case to be made for that. You  
8 know, there's habitat laws that have  
9 been brought for -- specific to blue  
10 crabs and the abundance of blue crabs.  
11 Landings of blue crabs Gulfwide has been  
12 on the decline for the last eight to ten  
13 years.

14 So there's several different things  
15 that have been pointed to that loss of  
16 habitat, the drought conditions, which,  
17 you know, ties in with habitat. And  
18 then an increase in the red drum  
19 population has also been thought to  
20 impact the population.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, what does NOAA say  
22 about that?

23 MR. ANSON: Well, not much related to that

1 problem. Again, they manage species by  
2 species, as you're well aware. And  
3 so -- and they're not concerned about  
4 blue crabs because that's more of a  
5 state fishery. And so the state has  
6 managed that. And so they're interested  
7 in the end goal, which is having enough  
8 red drum, and de facto they manage that  
9 by making sure enough juvenile red drum  
10 are making it offshore.

11 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. So their regulations  
12 could be having an impact, then, is  
13 what I hear you saying on --

14 MR. ANSON: And there's been attempts on the  
15 Gulf Council to try to open up a new  
16 fishery to harvest red drum either  
17 through recreational fisheries or  
18 commercial. The problem with that is  
19 they use the excuse that there's no data  
20 to support opening it; and, hence,  
21 there's no data because there's been no  
22 fishery. So it's kind of a conundrum in  
23 trying to establish a fishery --

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, I'd just ask all of  
2 those out here that were speaking to us  
3 today -- you know, you need to -- just  
4 need to voice your concerns as much with  
5 the federal government agencies as you  
6 do with us to help us out.

7 Lastly, Mr. Mizell -- I believe it  
8 was -- that spoke, the one that owns the  
9 crab company, he said something about  
10 the ring and then something around that  
11 that would be different than what we're  
12 proposing. Can you -- I know I'm  
13 catching you off guard. Is there  
14 anything possible there?

15 MR. ANSON: I just -- just speaking for  
16 myself -- I haven't had a chance to talk  
17 with Chris Blankenship about it -- is  
18 that that's certainly an option that we  
19 could look into for sure. And I think  
20 it might have some applicability here in  
21 our situation.

22 COMMISSIONER GUY: I've got one more, and then  
23 I promise this will be the last one.

1 So before we get to our old business  
2 today -- I don't know -- at some point I  
3 would just like to know, if y'all could  
4 address the board, if there are any  
5 modifications or changes in the proposed  
6 regs that we need to deal with. I think  
7 that would be helpful to the board.

8 I'm not saying -- you know, just  
9 given what people are hearing, we're  
10 trying to understand what's best, and  
11 I've heard some understanding that there  
12 might be some acceptable types of things  
13 we could do with them. So I just want  
14 to make sure if that is okay with Marine  
15 Resources and the biological support for  
16 that, that we do it the right way. So  
17 we're going to depend on y'all to help  
18 us get to that.

19 MR. BANNON: Yes, sir, Commissioner.

20 To address the escape rings, the  
21 size was determined based -- those  
22 are -- the two standards are 2 5/16ths  
23 and 2 3/8ths. The 2 3/8ths -- the

1 neighboring states -- which some of  
2 these guys work between the states --  
3 was chosen merely to keep them from  
4 having to manage two different size of  
5 gear.

6 There is some data that supports  
7 that that larger ring does allow some  
8 legal-size crabs to escape. So we are  
9 not opposed to the 2 5/16ths, which  
10 would be a change. So I think we could  
11 support that --

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: Is that the one Mr. Mizell  
13 was talking about that falls out?

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, sir. It's  
15 actually -- like most of us have  
16 square-mesh traps. We cut out four  
17 (inaudible) --

18 COMMISSIONER GUY: So y'all are talking about  
19 the same thing?

20 MR. BANNON: Yes, sir.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. That's all I wanted  
22 to make sure of.

23 MR. BANNON: But the extra portion that he

1 discussed is something that we had not  
2 discussed with -- if that ring -- it  
3 occupies a certain amount of space  
4 bigger than that 2 5/16ths, that if that  
5 became the biodegradable panel, that is  
6 not an item that we had discussed  
7 previously. That's the first time that  
8 I have had that presented to me that  
9 that could become the biodegradable  
10 panel. So I think that is an option  
11 available based off some discussion with  
12 the industry and with the director. So  
13 I think there's some possibility to have  
14 some further discussion on that ring and  
15 using that as a biodegradable panel.

16 And as Mr. Esbenson pointed out, he  
17 is -- and the guys in here may can  
18 answer this question.

19 His trap is a biodegradable trap  
20 because it is a non-vinyl-coated trap;  
21 is that correct?

22 MR. ESBENSON: Yes.

23 MR. BANNON: Okay. We were unaware that

1 anybody was still using that type  
2 material.

3 MR. ESBENSON: I do it because of cost. It's  
4 cheaper for me. And I've been doing it  
5 since 1976.

6 MR. BANNON: And I believe -- but I think he's  
7 the only person that talked about could  
8 there be an exemption for that. We were  
9 unaware that anybody in the industry was  
10 using that type trap.

11 MR. ESBENSON: And the material that I use on  
12 my trap -- if you go to making them use  
13 a cotton rope, that material that I use  
14 will be much easier to use  
15 (inaudible) --

16 COMMISSIONER GUY: We got it. Thank you, sir.

17 MR. BANNON: Which is allowed. That metal  
18 would be allowed.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Dobbs, you have the  
20 floor.

21 MR. DOBBS: Would you please explain to us  
22 what sponge crabs are or spawn crabs are  
23 and how they fit into the program. And,



1 also, would you explain about the  
2 derelict traps or ghost traps and their  
3 removal or collection.

4 MR. ANSON: So you have -- sponge crab is a  
5 crab that is bearing eggs or the eggs  
6 become fertilized and she's keeping  
7 those under her abdomen to provide a  
8 little bit more protection while they go  
9 through development. And then she  
10 releases those, and they're just free  
11 swimming and such at that point.

12 The point with releasing the sponge  
13 crabs was, again, trying to be proactive  
14 and trying to assist the population of  
15 crabs to have more crabs. And right now  
16 we allow for sponge crabs to be taken  
17 back and processed and harvested. So  
18 having those crabs go back into the  
19 water would then just afford an  
20 opportunity for those eggs, at least in  
21 that clutch, to be released and to be  
22 part of the population.

23 As far as the ghost crab -- the

1 ghost fishing, it got mentioned in a  
2 comment earlier about if they don't have  
3 a biodegradable panel in there, they can  
4 remain intact for an extended period of  
5 time. The comment was made relative to  
6 the extra growth due to the extra  
7 nutrients that are being put into the  
8 bay.

9 That actually can help protect the  
10 crab trap and keep it intact and doesn't  
11 allow the process of corrosion to occur,  
12 or minimizes that. And so it extends  
13 that life of that crab trap in a sense.  
14 And that's -- I don't know if I answered  
15 that question or not.

16 MR. DOBBS: What about the programs to --

17 MR. ANSON: Yeah. So we have -- periodically  
18 we have derelict crab trap removal  
19 programs. We've got one scheduled here  
20 at the end of the month.

21 And what we do is we just notify the  
22 fishermen. We put out an announcement  
23 saying that we're going to close down

1 certain areas that we demarcate and say  
2 that, you know, you must remove your  
3 crab traps at that time. Any traps that  
4 are remaining in the water at that time  
5 are considered litter. And then we work  
6 with local conservation groups and just  
7 concerned citizens, and they have set up  
8 volunteers that go out and collect those  
9 derelict traps.

10 And we have some limited data in the  
11 past. We're going to attempt to collect  
12 more data associated with this derelict  
13 crab trap removal program that kind of  
14 gets into the numbers of crabs that are  
15 found at least in the traps and sizes of  
16 crabs and that type of thing and try to  
17 build some of that database. We have  
18 limited data at this time.

19 MR. DOBBS: Roughly, in the area that you  
20 would want to close and clean up, how  
21 many traps will you get in ten acres?

22 MR. ANSON: Well, it depends on where you go.  
23 We have certain areas within our

1 jurisdiction that the water visibility  
2 is -- makes it much easier to try to  
3 find traps and remove traps. And those  
4 are the areas like Perdido Bay, Little  
5 Lagoon and such.

6 And then we have other areas where  
7 the visibility is not very good, and you  
8 may just have to rely on low tides. You  
9 know, and they try to schedule them --  
10 try to schedule the events during low  
11 tide so it's easier to see the traps and  
12 for folks to find them and remove them.

13 And it's hard to say how many traps  
14 you would find in a certain -- in an  
15 area because certain areas -- ten-acre  
16 areas have just larger numbers of --  
17 concentrations of traps because that's  
18 where more crabs are found.

19 But in the past I think we've had  
20 maybe a couple of hundred, 300 traps at  
21 most maybe that we've had --

22 MR. DOBBS: That you found?

23 MR. ANSON: Yes, that have been found and

1 removed during our derelict crab trap  
2 removal events.

3 MR. BANNON: I have one additional ...

4 When the regulation comes up under  
5 old business, under the -- if you have  
6 your crab regulation, under that  
7 additional highlighted area for -- for  
8 number six, the size of the unobstructed  
9 escape ring, we would be agreeable to  
10 make that 2 5/16ths in the regulation as  
11 opposed to the 2 3/8ths to meet the  
12 needs of the fishermen to allow them to  
13 retain -- you know, ensure that they  
14 retain legal-size crabs. Our intention  
15 is not to release any legal-size crabs.

16 COMMISSIONER GUY: Would that include the --

17 MR. BANNON: That would be different -- that  
18 would be more of the escape opening. I  
19 think that would have to be looked at on  
20 a broader scale and have some  
21 discussions regarding that. I'm not in  
22 a position to make any agreement on the  
23 escape panels.

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: So would you and Chris make  
2 sure y'all discuss that with them and  
3 see --

4 MR. BANNON: Yes, sir.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: -- if there's some ways  
6 that y'all can work with them on that,  
7 please?

8 (Inaudible portion by unidentified  
9 speaker in the audience.)

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: She's having trouble  
11 hearing.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've got one thing you  
13 really need to hear.

14 Kevin just said 1.4 million pounds  
15 of crab was landed in Alabama last year.  
16 That number has got to be incorrect. I  
17 landed 522,461 pounds of crab at my shop  
18 alone. There's no way I landed half of  
19 the catch in the state of Alabama.

20 MR. ANSON: So we have a landings reporting  
21 system that has been in place since  
22 2001, and that requires seafood dealers  
23 to report seafoods that are harvested --

1 or landed in Alabama regardless of where  
2 they're caught. And so that's -- that's  
3 a requirement. Seafood dealers are  
4 required to report those landings, and  
5 that's where we derive the data from.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: So you're just reporting  
7 the numbers you're getting?

8 MR. ANSON: That's correct.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Grady, you have the  
10 floor.

11 MR. HARTZOG: One question: If we're going to  
12 refer this matter -- I mean, I was kind  
13 of concerned, like you are, about if the  
14 square deal would work.

15 Is there any way of us putting --  
16 instead of having to wait a year before  
17 we pass another regulation, could this  
18 board go ahead and grant Chris to work  
19 with the crabbers and if that is a  
20 viable means to go ahead and add that  
21 into the regulation instead of having to  
22 wait a year?

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: We can pass the reg,

1 obviously, with the board's  
2 understanding that we'll work with them  
3 and try to get it where we could look at  
4 these other issues.

5 MR. HARTZOG: Okay. Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any other questions from  
7 the board?

8 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Patrick. You have  
10 the floor.

11 MR. CAGLE: Do we -- these regulations will  
12 apply to both commercial and  
13 recreational crabbers; is that correct?

14 MR. BANNON: That is correct. There's not a  
15 delineation in the regulation between  
16 the two.

17 MR. CAGLE: Could there be? I mean, could  
18 these apply to recreational now and to  
19 be considered later the effect on  
20 commercial? Is that possible?

21 And I ask that because I would  
22 imagine a lot of ghost traps are not the  
23 commercial guys but more so recreational

1 that put them out.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You make a real good  
3 point.

4 MR. BANNON: The difference between -- it  
5 would take a rewrite and some additions  
6 to make -- to separate recreational from  
7 commercial as far as the gear  
8 requirements. You know, our -- I think  
9 we would like to maintain some  
10 consistency because they -- you know, a  
11 lot of these guys make their own. Some  
12 of the recreational guys make their own,  
13 and they buy them already built.

14 The recreational aspect is a fairly  
15 small portion of the crab industry. It  
16 would be a little bit more challenging.  
17 We'd probably rather implement  
18 everything together and address both  
19 user groups together.

20 MR. CAGLE: Okay. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any other questions from  
22 the board?

23 (No response.)

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

2 We have one final public speaker,  
3 Mr. John Ward. Mr. Ward.

4 MR. WARD: Good morning, Commissioner. Good  
5 morning, Dr. Strickland and the board.  
6 My name is John Ward. I would like to  
7 speak on private landowners.

8 Y'all talk about there isn't  
9 (inaudible) for us hunters. Well, let's  
10 talk about private owners. We pay a  
11 state hunting license to hunt every  
12 year. Y'all claim that y'all own these  
13 state deers. Well, these private  
14 owners -- landowners shoot these deers.  
15 They don't even have a hunting license.

16 You know, and it's not fair to the  
17 dog hunters to pay our rights and the  
18 stalk hunters to pay for their hunting  
19 license, too, and these private estate  
20 homeowners -- landowners get to hunt  
21 these deers for nothing. They don't  
22 report nothing. We're got to report  
23 everything we do.

1 And, also, I would like to see that  
2 the ten days that y'all give us to hunt  
3 in February -- how about giving the dog  
4 hunters till the 31st of January to  
5 hunt. You know, we pay just as much as  
6 anybody out here. We probably pay more  
7 than anybody else. I mean, I've got  
8 stalk hunters in my club that now is  
9 going to get dogs and start running and  
10 see how it works because they've been  
11 lied to so much up here of how dog  
12 hunters treat people. That's not true.  
13 We treat everybody equal in our club.

14 But I would love to see the ten days  
15 go to bucks only, not does. Bucks.  
16 They don't get bred. What do you want  
17 to kill the does for? You may be  
18 killing two to three deer at a time.  
19 Make them hunt bucks only the last ten  
20 days.

21 And, like I said, I think -- y'all  
22 are talking about revenue. You go out  
23 to these private-owned landowners and

1 make them pay a hunting license. You'll  
2 get your revenues up.

3 We had 69 youth kids at our hunt  
4 this year. Every year we've got them  
5 down there (inaudible).

6 And I appreciate y'all's time.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Ward.

9 Chuck, I think Mr. Ward did bring up  
10 a good point. Is there any way that we  
11 could look at the additional revenue if  
12 everyone was required to purchase a  
13 license including private landowners?

14 I would be more than willing to buy  
15 one. Actually, I have.

16 MR. SYKES: As with a bunch of things that's  
17 been discussed, y'all can't do that. I  
18 wish you could. But, unfortunately,  
19 that's legislative.

20 Yes, we would love for everybody  
21 that uses the services of our officers  
22 and our biologists to have to purchase a  
23 hunting license since we don't get

1 general fund money. Of course we would.  
2 I mean, the first person that a  
3 landowner calls when they have an issue  
4 is one of our officers, but yet they're  
5 not paying into the system.

6 Look, I get it. Yes, sir. Amen. I  
7 vote for it. That's good. But I'm a  
8 realist. It ain't going to happen.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: So what we need to do as  
10 private citizens --

11 MR. SYKES: It's not going to happen. It  
12 would have to go through the  
13 legislature. It is not going to happen.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: Please contact your  
15 legislators.

16 MR. SYKES: I'm sorry. But it -- I would love  
17 for all of y'all to get together and do  
18 that, but --

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Well, let's start  
20 writing some letters to our legislators.

21 We need the revenue.

22 Mr. Ward, excellent point, sir.

23 Yes.

1 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: I wanted to ask you,  
2 Chuck, do you have any idea how many  
3 licenses that would amount to?

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Just private owner?

5 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Right.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Significant amount.

7 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: I mean, I -- you know,  
8 I own land, but I buy a hunting license  
9 and I go to other places.

10 MR. SYKES: There's a lot of us that do. I do  
11 as well. But, I mean, we sold 182,000  
12 big game licenses last year. There's  
13 way more than 182,000 people that hunted  
14 in the state.

15 Now, a lot of those are hunting  
16 without a license. We know that.

17 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Is there any kind of  
18 way to do a survey on that or something?

19 MR. SYKES: We could. We could look into  
20 that, but ...

21 I'm trying to figure out -- I'm not  
22 very political. I'm trying to figure  
23 out the best way to say this. But there

1 have been a couple of people that have  
2 brought up this is our God-given right.  
3 A lot of those landowners look at it as  
4 this is my deer; you can't tell me what  
5 to do; it's mine, on my property, and  
6 I'm going to do what I want to do. So  
7 it would probably double our license  
8 sales, if not more, if you could get  
9 everybody to comply with the regulation.

10 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Well, you know, and  
11 that's the first thing the legislature  
12 is going to say is how many are there  
13 and what kind of revenue and those kind  
14 of questions. If there was some way to  
15 do some decent survey --

16 MR. SYKES: We'll look into that.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: We've got a couple of  
18 board members. I'll start from T.J. and  
19 work down.

20 MR. BUNN: Thank you, Chairman.

21 You know, I find it kind of  
22 contradicting that a private landowner  
23 doesn't have to buy a state license to

1 hunt on his property but he recognizes  
2 that the State of Alabama owns the deer  
3 that he's hunting. So when people start  
4 talking about it's their God-given right  
5 to hunt on their property without a  
6 state hunting license, then why don't  
7 they just buy the deer from the state if  
8 they think they own them. Buy them.  
9 Get revenue that way. Let them buy the  
10 deer.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Patrick, you have the  
12 floor.

13 MR. CAGLE: Director Sykes, I agree with you.  
14 It's a -- you know, it's a high hill to  
15 climb to try to fight that  
16 legislatively, but I do think --

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Could you speak into the  
18 mic, Patrick?

19 MR. CAGLE: I do think the information that  
20 Mr. McMillan is discussing is a useful  
21 tool to get someone to help. If you use  
22 the number of folks that's got a HELP  
23 number so that they can comply with Game

1 Check and use that as a basis for some  
 2 estimates and then figure out, you know,  
 3 the complaints --  
 4 MR. SYKES: We can. We can look at that.  
 5 That would -- you know, that would be  
 6 landowners, that would be hunters over  
 7 65, and that would be hunters under 16.  
 8 So it's going to take a little while to  
 9 tease all that information out, but we  
 10 could look into it.  
 11 MR. CAGLE: Thank you.  
 12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any other board members?  
 13 Grady.  
 14 MR. HARTZOG: Yeah. I just -- talking about a  
 15 poll, let's do one right here.  
 16 How many of you are private  
 17 landowners? Raise your hand.  
 18 How many of you don't have a hunting  
 19 license?  
 20 Then you're over 65?  
 21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm 71.  
 22 MR. HARTZOG: So that's the reason you don't  
 23 have one.

1 And, sir?  
 2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm over 65.  
 3 MR. HARTZOG: All right.  
 4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Jones, did you buy a  
 5 hunting license?  
 6 MR. JONES: I bought -- I buy a license. I  
 7 do.  
 8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any other questions from  
 9 the board?  
 10 (No response.)  
 11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Commissioner, any other  
 12 business before we --  
 13 COMMISSIONER GUY: No, sir.  
 14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Before we go into old  
 15 business, I would like to have Patrick  
 16 Cagle take the mic. He has a special  
 17 resolution that he would like to  
 18 present.  
 19 MR. CAGLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
 20 I'd like to introduce a resolution  
 21 for this board to consider. I'll make a  
 22 motion to consider passing the  
 23 resolution I'm about to read.

1 The Conservation Advisory Board and  
 2 the Alabama Department of Conservation  
 3 and Natural Resources hereby declares:  
 4 Whereas, the Wildlife and Freshwater  
 5 Fisheries Division of the Alabama  
 6 Department of Conservation and Natural  
 7 Resources is responsible for promoting  
 8 and protecting the welfare of our  
 9 state's wildlife resources, including  
 10 the economic and culturally important  
 11 white-tailed deer and eastern turkey,  
 12 through the scientific assessment,  
 13 applied research, and enforcement  
 14 programs.  
 15 And whereas, an accurate assessment  
 16 of the deer and turkeys harvested by  
 17 hunters in our state each season is  
 18 essential data that Wildlife and  
 19 Freshwater Fisheries' biologists must  
 20 have to make fact-based decisions and  
 21 recommendations.  
 22 And whereas, Wildlife and Freshwater  
 23 Fisheries staff, under the leadership of

1 Director Chuck Sykes, has worked  
 2 diligently to develop an innovative and  
 3 user-friendly harvest data reporting  
 4 tool known as Game Check, which uses  
 5 21st-century communication technology to  
 6 make harvest data available in real-time  
 7 to both biologists and the public at  
 8 large.  
 9 And whereas, Director Sykes and  
 10 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries staff  
 11 launched an unprecedented campaign  
 12 awareness -- awareness campaign and  
 13 conducted over 50 educational seminars  
 14 throughout the state to show hunters how  
 15 to use Game Check and explain why our  
 16 biologists need this information to make  
 17 scientifically sound decisions.  
 18 Now therefore be it resolved, the  
 19 Conservation Advisory Board and the  
 20 Alabama Department of Conservation and  
 21 Natural Resources, in a duly constituted  
 22 and assembled meeting, recognizes and  
 23 commends the hard work, dedication, and

1 leadership demonstrated by the  
2 successful implementation of the Game  
3 Check program. Their efforts exemplify  
4 unwavering commitment to science-based  
5 wildlife stewardship and will ensure  
6 that future generations of Alabama  
7 hunters have access to the wildlife  
8 resources even greater than those we  
9 enjoy today.

10 So at this time I'll turn it over to  
11 the Chairman.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: A motion for approval?

13 MR. JONES: So move.

14 MR. HARTZOG: So move.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Second?

16 MR. BUNN: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?

18 (All board members present respond  
19 "aye.")

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The "ayes" have it. The  
23 motion carries.

1 MR. SYKES: And I would like to say I feel  
2 like Chris Blankenship now and Chris is  
3 feeling like me now.

4 Thank y'all very much. Look, it  
5 wasn't just me. It was everybody here  
6 doing -- going out and educating people.  
7 So thank y'all.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Well, we appreciate all  
9 of you-all's hard work. And Game Check  
10 has certainly been a success this first  
11 year. We had very little complaints,  
12 and it's been, you know, very well  
13 received. Very well done. Job well  
14 done. Thank you. Appreciate all of  
15 you.

16 The next agenda item is old  
17 business. We have quite a bit of  
18 housecleaning, a few motions that we  
19 need to clear up.

20 The first motion is for Swan Creek  
21 and Jackson County Waterfowl Management  
22 Area.

23 Mr. Jones.

1 MR. JONES: Mr. Hartzog.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Grady.

3 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, a motion for Swan  
4 Creek and Jackson County Waterfowl  
5 Management Areas.

6 In order to improve the waterfowl  
7 hunting quality on Swan Creek and  
8 Jackson County Waterfowl Areas, I'd like  
9 to make a motion to:

10 For the Swan Creek Waterfowl  
11 Management Area to close on Tuesday,  
12 Wednesday, and Thursday to provide rest  
13 days for waterfowl but allow hunters to  
14 hunt every day during the last two weeks  
15 of the season.

16 For the Jackson County WMA, which  
17 would include Mud Creek and Raccoon  
18 Creek Dewatering Areas, to close hunting  
19 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday to  
20 provide rest days for waterfowl but  
21 allow hunters to hunt every day during  
22 the last two weeks of the season.

23 To prohibit gasoline-powered motors

1 in the Mud Creek Dewatering Unit, the  
2 Raccoon Creek Dewatering Unit north of  
3 Highway 117.

4 For Crow Creek WMA, the portion of  
5 Jackson County WMA, to close hunting  
6 on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday to  
7 provide rest days for waterfowl but  
8 allow hunters to hunt every day during  
9 the last two weeks of the season.

10 For Swan Creek, Jackson County, and  
11 Crow Creek WMAs, the launching of any  
12 vessel is not allowed prior to 4 a.m.

13 And hunters are limited to  
14 possessing only 25 shells in the field  
15 to address skybusting and excessive  
16 shooting.

17 That's my motion, Mr. Chairman.

18 DR. LEMME: Second.

19 MR. STIMPSON: Second.

20 MR. AINSWORTH: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any discussion?

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?

1 (All board members present respond  
2 "aye.")

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Raise your hands so the  
4 court reporter can get it.

5 Opposed?

6 (No response.)

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

9 Next we have a motion for adoption  
10 of seasons and bag and creel limits  
11 provided in the February 4th, 2017, CAB  
12 packet.

13 MR. STIMPSON: Mr. Chairman?

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: You have the floor.

15 MR. STIMPSON: I make a motion that the  
16 Department of Conservation adopt the  
17 seasons and bag and creel limits and  
18 other regulations as contained in the  
19 packet provided to the board at the  
20 February 4, 2017, Conservation Advisory  
21 Board meeting, with the exception of  
22 providing a Sunshine provision for the  
23 220-2-.112. The Sunshine provision

1 would provide a two-year trial period to  
2 evaluate the effectiveness of the  
3 proposed regulation.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Second?

5 MR. JONES: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Jones, second.  
7 Discussion?

8 MR. DOBBS: Point of order.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Mr. Dobbs.

10 MR. DOBBS: Clarification on the -- on the  
11 motion, please.

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: Hey, Ben?

13 MR. STIMPSON: Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: If we could, could we take  
15 the last part out so we can address --  
16 because we were going to do the dog deer  
17 regulation separately.

18 MR. STIMPSON: Yes, sir.

19 COMMISSIONER GUY: Do you mind if we do that?  
20 Just omit that part and then I think  
21 it would help us, if you don't mind. So  
22 just adopt the seasons and bag limits as  
23 set out and then leave that last part

1 off.

2 MR. STIMPSON: Correct. Take out the  
3 Sunshine.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Yes, sir. And then we'll  
5 address that separately.

6 MS. WEBER: And then could I clarify that the  
7 meeting was February 11th instead of the  
8 4th.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: February 11th. Thank  
10 you.

11 So, Jennifer, do we need to reread  
12 the motion?

13 MR. STIMPSON: Do you want me to reread it?

14 MS. WEBER: Sure.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Why don't we restate the  
16 motion.

17 MR. STIMPSON: I'll restate it.

18 I make a motion that the Department  
19 of Conservation adopt the seasons and  
20 bag and creel limits and other  
21 regulations as contained in the packets  
22 provided to the board at the  
23 February 11th, 2017, Conservation

1 Advisory Board meeting, period.

2 MR. JONES: And I seconded it.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Second?

4 MR. DOBBS: Second.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any discussion?

6 MR. CAGLE: As for a point of information,  
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes.

9 MR. CAGLE: Does this include the crab --

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: That was under Marine.

11 MR. CAGLE: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?

13 (All board members present respond  
14 "aye.")

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

16 (No response.)

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The "ayes" have it.  
18 Motion carries.

19 Next we have a motion to approve the  
20 WMA Bonus Buck Program.

21 DR. LEMME: In an effort to increase WMA

22 utilization, WFF would like to allow a

23 bonus buck to be harvested from a select

1 collection of WMAs that will not count  
 2 towards their state three-buck limit.  
 3 The harvest will only be allowed on  
 4 certain WMAs and hunt dates in which the  
 5 WMA check station is operating. Hunters  
 6 will be required to bring their  
 7 harvested buck to the check station  
 8 where the WFF staff members can take  
 9 valuable biological data and Game-Check  
 10 the buck for the hunter. Only approved  
 11 WFF staff will be authorized to enter  
 12 the bonus bucks into the Game Check  
 13 system. I make a motion to approve the  
 14 WMA Bonus Buck Program.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Second?

16 MR. AINSWORTH: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: We have a second by  
18 Mr. Ainsworth.

19 Any discussion?

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?

22 (All board members present respond  
23 "aye.")

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

2 (No response.)

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: "Ayes" have it. Motion  
4 carries.

5 Then the next motion is Marine  
6 Resources. We need a motion for  
7 approval.

8 MR. DOBBS: I have a motion, Mr. Chairman.

9 I move that the proposed regulations  
10 concerning shrimping, oystering,  
11 crabbing, saltwater bag and possession  
12 limits that were presented by the Marine  
13 Resources Division at the February 11,  
14 2017, Conservation Advisory Board  
15 meeting be approved by the Conservation  
16 Advisory Board for implementation  
17 pursuant to further recommendations.

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Can I get a second?

19 MR. HARTZOG: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Discussion?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?

23 (All board members present respond

1 "aye.")

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

3 (No response.)

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: "Ayes" have it. Motion  
5 carries.

6 Next we have a motion in regards to  
7 the dog deer regulation.

8 MR. DOBBS: I have a motion, Mr. Chairman.

9 It's a motion to the board to accept  
10 the Dog Deer Encroachment Amendment as  
11 written and was provided in the packages  
12 and discussed at the February 11, 2017,  
13 Conservation Advisory Board meeting,  
14 Subset -- and will become -- as written,  
15 it will become Subset C to Regulation  
16 220-2-.112. Become Subset C. This  
17 amendment to become effective beginning  
18 with the 2017-2018 season.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Second?

20 DR. LEMME: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: It looks like we have  
22 some discussion.

23 MR. DOBBS: Okay. Then as a part to that --

1 as a part to that --

2 I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

3 -- this regulation may be reviewed  
4 at the first meeting of the Conservation  
5 Advisory Board in 2020.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Dobbs.

7 Any further discussion?

8 (No response.)

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: Can I discuss that?

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes. You have the  
11 floor.

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: Just so we're clear,  
13 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries  
14 discussed with me and we felt it best  
15 that this board seek such approval to  
16 sunset this for two years. That gives  
17 us an opportunity to take into  
18 consideration all of the comments that  
19 we've gotten from the dog deer hunting  
20 folks, as we had said before, working  
21 with them to try to improve on that  
22 system and to continue to work with them  
23 to see if there are any problems. You



1 know, we can address them during that  
 2 time and see what -- you know, so that  
 3 they're not necessarily permanent, but  
 4 we can look at them and then see if they  
 5 need to move forward or if they need a  
 6 particular revision.  
 7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Commissioner.  
 8 Any further discussion from the  
 9 board?  
 10 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?  
 11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Patrick. You have  
 12 the floor.  
 13 MR. CAGLE: I want to thank the Commissioner  
 14 for introducing that aspect of the  
 15 motion to sunset it. And just to  
 16 clarify, this board will be asked to  
 17 reconsider that, whether it stays in  
 18 effect or is modified in some way, to  
 19 help accomplish the goal we set out;  
 20 correct?  
 21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Correct.  
 22 MR. CAGLE: Thank you.  
 23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: So we have a second.

1 Discussion -- no further discussion?  
 2 (No response.)  
 3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?  
 4 (All board members present respond  
 5 "aye.")  
 6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?  
 7 (No response.)  
 8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: "Ayes" have it. Motion  
 9 carries.  
 10 And our final motion is a motion for  
 11 approval of all departmental  
 12 regulations.  
 13 MR. JONES: Mr Chairman?  
 14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Jones, you have the  
 15 floor.  
 16 MR. JONES: Okay. I make a motion to approve  
 17 all departmental regulations adopted  
 18 since the last approval.  
 19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Can I get a second?  
 20 MR. DOBBS: Second.  
 21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Discussion?  
 22 (No response.)  
 23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Commissioner?

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: No. Excuse me.  
 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 Are there any further motions that  
 10 need to come before this board?  
 11 Patrick.  
 12 MR. CAGLE: I guess this would be technically  
 13 under old business. So, yes,  
 14 Mr. Chairman.  
 15 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This  
 16 should qualify under old business. It's  
 17 an issue that was brought by a member of  
 18 the public at the previous meeting.  
 19 I move that the Conservation  
 20 Advisory Board amend the regulation  
 21 regarding "Legal Methods and Equipment  
 22 for the Taking of Commercial or Nongame  
 23 Fish," which is Regulation 220-2-.46, so

1 that Section (1)(f) reads as follows:  
 2 Bowfishing with any longbow,  
 3 recurve, compound, crossbow equipped  
 4 with a working safety, or sling bow  
 5 using barbed arrows attached by line to  
 6 the bow, float, or shooter.  
 7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Second?  
 8 MR. AINSWORTH: Second.  
 9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Discussion from the --  
 10 are we comfortable with --  
 11 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman, if I may.  
 12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Patrick.  
 13 MR. CAGLE: I want to explain exactly what  
 14 this is doing.  
 15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: So, Patrick, has that  
 16 been discussed with the -- have you  
 17 discussed your motion with them?  
 18 MR. CAGLE: Yes, I have.  
 19 Currently we allow bowfishing for  
 20 commercial or nongame fish. Obviously,  
 21 this wouldn't apply to anything outside  
 22 of that. We currently allow the use of  
 23 longbows, recurves, compound bows, or

1 crossbows. We do not have the provision  
2 that requires crossbows to be equipped  
3 with a working safety. We have that  
4 regulation -- if you use a crossbow for  
5 deer hunting, it has to have a working  
6 safety.

7 So this amendment adds that language  
8 to it that a crossbow, which is already  
9 legal, now must have a working safety.

10 And then it adds a provision that allows  
11 the use of a sling bow, provided its  
12 arrow -- a line is attached by the arrow  
13 the same way as with any other bow.

14 So that's what this does. It only  
15 applies to bowfishing of commercial and  
16 nongame fish.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Patrick, thanks for the  
18 clarification.

19 All in favor?

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

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

23 (No response.)

1 that I would like to read, please.

2 Whereas, this board has previously  
3 discussed the concerns of chronic  
4 wasting disease and other diseases that  
5 could negatively impact our deer herd,  
6 this board is desirous of protecting the  
7 public resources of this state from such  
8 a devastating disease or diseases.

9 Now therefore be it stated, the  
10 board supports the efforts of the  
11 Department of Conservation and the  
12 Conservation Commissioner, our  
13 Commissioner, to promote and promulgate  
14 any and all necessary rules and  
15 regulations to protect our resources,  
16 particularly the deer herd, in the state  
17 from the spread of chronic wasting and  
18 other diseases and to take necessary law  
19 enforcement and wildlife actions to  
20 support such rules and regulations  
21 wherever necessary.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Motion for approval of  
23 the resolution.

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Ayes" have it. The  
2 motion carries.

3 Any further motions from the board?

4 Yes, Grady.

5 MR. HARTZOG: No motion but old business.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay.

7 MR. HARTZOG: The Barbour County Youth Hunt  
8 was a great success. 258 kids took  
9 part. The biggest youth hunt in the  
10 state of Alabama and third largest in  
11 the country, so -- and a lot of the  
12 officers helped with putting on that  
13 youth hunt. So just thank you for the  
14 Foundation and helping support the youth  
15 hunt and the group of kids. They're our  
16 future.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Grady.

18 MR. DOBBS: Mr. Chairman, I think this  
19 qualifies --

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Mr. Dobbs, you have  
21 the floor.

22 MR. DOBBS: -- to this portion of business.  
23 I have a resolution by the board

1 MR. HARTZOG: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Grady, second.

3 Any discussion?

4 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Did you get a second?

5 DR. LEMME: Yeah.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yeah, we got that.

7 All in favor of the resolution?

8 (All board members present respond  
9 "aye.")

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: "Ayes" have it. The  
13 motion carries.

14 MR. DOBBS: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Dobbs.

16 Is there any further old business  
17 from the board?

18 (No response.)

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: If not, we'll move to  
20 the next agenda item, which is new  
21 business.

22 Is there any new business that needs  
23 to be discussed at this time?

1 Mr. Jones, you have the floor.

2 MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 I want to make sure that we go ahead  
4 and discuss at this meeting in new  
5 business the CPI index increases for  
6 licenses so we can take care of that at  
7 the next meeting that we have.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Jones.

9 MR. JONES: Yes, sir.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: So may the record note  
11 that that has been discussed in new  
12 business.

13 Is there any further new business  
14 from the board?

15 Grady, you have the floor.

16 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, I had -- in  
17 listening to the crossbow argument and  
18 your comments on longbow and recurves  
19 and all being less accurate than a  
20 crossbow, I'd really love for the staff  
21 to give us a report at the next meeting  
22 as to recommendations. If we've got a  
23 more likelihood of wounding a turkey

1 with a longbow or a recurve or whatever  
2 and a crossbow is more effective, either  
3 we need to look at the possibility of  
4 including the crossbow or excluding the  
5 others if they are unproductive means of  
6 taking a turkey.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I understand what you're  
8 saying. I think it all depends on the  
9 operator, you know, the nut behind the  
10 bolt, in other words.

11 But I understand exactly what you're  
12 saying, Mr. Hartzog, and we'll bring  
13 that up for discussion. If you could  
14 bring something to the board in regards  
15 to crossbows' accuracy, I guess, turkey  
16 harvest rates, wound rates, and things  
17 of that sort. I think that would be  
18 valuable information to help us make an  
19 informed decision.

20 And I have to agree with  
21 Mr. Yelvington. We want to get as many  
22 people in the field as we can; right?  
23 But we have to protect our wildlife

1 resource as well.

2 MR. YELVINGTON: I'm all for it, sir.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any further new  
4 business?

5 Patrick, you have the floor.

6 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman, I move that the  
7 board consider at the first meeting next  
8 year the proposal to limit on the Sipsey  
9 fishing for trout to one rod per angler  
10 and ask that Wildlife and Freshwater  
11 Fisheries review that and make their  
12 recommendation to the board to consider  
13 next year. Just limited to trout on the  
14 Sipsey, one rod per person.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Cagle.  
16 It's noted.

17 Any further new business? Anything  
18 else for discussion?

19 (No response.)

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Once again, any further  
21 new business?

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Do we have a -- if not,

1 we'll move to our next agenda item.

2 Do we have a date or location for  
3 our next meeting?

4 Yes, Commissioner.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman, unless  
6 something else comes up, we presently do  
7 not have a need for a third meeting, but  
8 we always keep that as an option if the  
9 board has matters that are  
10 unanticipated. So what we'll do is just  
11 stand down on a place --

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: So the next meeting will  
13 be announced when we have decided on a  
14 location and a date.

15 If there's no further new  
16 business -- yes, Grady.

17 MR. HARTZOG: One other thing. I think we  
18 really need to recognize Patti on the  
19 accomplishments of Forever Wild. I've  
20 seen this release and the economic  
21 impact and the impact Forever Wild has  
22 had for this state of Alabama. So I  
23 think we need to recognize Patti for all

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of her efforts.  
CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Patti, once again, we appreciate all your hard work. You have done a great deed again for the state of Alabama. Forever Wild has really provided a lot of valuable recreational property for our citizens to enjoy. Thank you for your hard work.  
If there is no further new business, we are adjourned.

(Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:01 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

\* \* \* \* \*

STATE OF ALABAMA:  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

I, Tracye Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large, do hereby certify that I reported the foregoing proceedings of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Board Meeting on March 4, 2017.

The foregoing 205 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 24th day of August 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tracye Sadler Blackwell  
ACCR No. 294  
Expiration date: 9-30-2017  
Certified Court Reporter  
and Commissioner for the State  
of Alabama at Large