

1 **STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF**
2 **CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES**
3 **ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**
4 **CAPITOL AUDITORIUM**
5 **MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA**
6 **February 20, 2016**

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10 **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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15 Proceedings taken before Tracye
16 Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter, ACCR
17 No. 294, and Commissioner for the State of Alabama
18 at Large, at the State of Alabama Capitol
19 Auditorium, Montgomery, Alabama, on Saturday,
20 February 20, 2016, commencing at approximately
21 9:00 a.m.

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1 BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

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- Dr. Warren Strickland, Chairman
- 3 Mr. N. Gunter Guy, Jr., Commissioner
- Mr. John McMillan, Agriculture Commissioner
- 4 Dr. Gary Lemme, Alabama Extension Service
- Mr. Austin Ainsworth
- 5 Mr. Raymond Jones, Jr.
- Mr. Grady Hartzog
- 6 Mr. Joseph Dobbs, Jr.
- Mr. T.J. Bunn, Jr.
- 7 Mr. Jeff Martin.
- Mr. Patrick V. Cagle
- 8 Mr. Ben C. Stimpson, Jr.
- Mr. Gary Wolfe

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CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: We're going to go ahead
 14 and get the meeting started. The
 15 February 20th, 2016, Conservation
 16 Advisory Board meeting will now come to
 17 order.

18

I hope every one of you have had an
 19 enjoyable outdoor experience this past
 20 hunting season. The entire board would
 21 like to welcome all of you to
 22 Montgomery, Alabama.

23

At this point would everyone please

1 discontinue cell phone usage.

2 Now, the first order of business is
3 the invocation which will be delivered
4 by Mr. Raymond Jones. Raymond.

5 MR. JONES: Bow your heads with me, please.

6 Our Heavenly Father, we thank you so
7 much for this beautiful day that gives
8 us the hope of a new spring.

9 Heavenly Father, we want to ask your
10 blessings on this meeting today, on the
11 men, women, and children, board members
12 and staff members that are coming
13 together to try to make the game animals
14 and the freshwater fisheries of our
15 state the best that they can be. Help
16 guide us in our decisions as you've
17 given us dominion over these animals.
18 Help us in our thoughts.

19 Also, Heavenly Father, we want to
20 thank you for the men and women that
21 fight for our freedoms so that we can
22 enjoy and have the right to keep and
23 bear arms and enjoy hunting in this

1 great state of ours. Watch over each of
2 us as we leave here today and take us
3 safely home to our families. In Jesus'
4 name we pray, Amen.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Amen.

6 The first order of business is
7 introduction of the new board members.
8 We actually have three new board
9 members.

10 First we have Ben Stimpson of
11 Mobile, Alabama. Ben is director of
12 corporate operations for Scotch Gulf and
13 Canfor Southern Pine. Ben and his
14 family are very active with wildlife and
15 forest management within our state.

16 Welcome to the board, Ben. If you
17 would like to make a couple of comments.

18 MR. STIMPSON: Appreciate it.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Ben is responsible for
20 oversight of over 50,000 acres. So he
21 has quite a bit of experience in
22 wildlife management. He's going to be a
23 very powerful addition to the board.

1 Once again, Ben, thanks for volunteering
2 your time.

3 Our next new member is Patrick
4 Cagle. And Patrick actually grew up
5 here in Montgomery. He's worked
6 extensively to promote the Alabama Black
7 Belt Adventures Association for two
8 years before becoming executive of the
9 JobKeeper Alliance. During those two
10 years Patrick worked closely with many
11 state officials to strengthen the
12 economy of Alabama's Black Belt by
13 promoting the region's excellent hunting
14 and fishing opportunities. Patrick,
15 welcome to the board.

16 MR. CAGLE: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our third new member is
18 Gary Wolfe of Fairhope, Alabama. Gary
19 is a native of Monroeville and owns and
20 operates burial services in Baldwin
21 County. He's an avid sportsman. And we
22 welcome Gary to the board as well.

23 Next I would like to introduce the

1 Commissioner of the Department of
2 Conservation and Natural Resources,
3 Mr. Gunter Guy.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The Commissioner of
6 Department of Agriculture and
7 Industries, John McMillan.

8 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Hello.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Director of the Alabama
10 Cooperative Extension System, Dr. Gary
11 Lemme.

12 DR. LEMME: Hello.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Deputy Commissioner,
14 Curtis Jones.

15 Gentlemen, we appreciate all of you
16 all's hard work. And, once again, the
17 board wants to recognize the service
18 that you have brought forth over the
19 years.

20 Next I'd like to introduce the
21 current board members as well as the
22 congressional district that they
23 represent. We can start at the far end

1 with Mr. Raymond Jones.

2 Raymond, if you would just speak
3 into the mic and give the congressional
4 district that you represent.

5 MR. JONES: Raymond Jones, Congressional
6 District Number 5.

7 MR. MARTIN: Jeff Martin, District 3.

8 MR. HARTZOG: Grady Hartzog, District 2.

9 MR. CAGLE: Patrick Cagle, District 2.

10 MR. BUNN: T.J. Bunn, Congressional
11 District 7.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Is that everyone?

13 Thank you, guys. We appreciate all
14 of your hard work.

15 And we have one special guest that
16 we would like to recognize, and that's
17 representative Jimmy Martin from Chilton
18 County. Thank you, Mr. Martin.

19 Commissioner Guy, you have a couple
20 of special recognition plaques.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 Appreciate that introduction. And I
23 want to take a few minutes today -- can

1 everybody hear me?

2 I want to take a few minutes to
3 first join Chairman Strickland in
4 welcoming our new board members,
5 Patrick, Gary, and Ben. We -- I look
6 forward to, of course, working with you.
7 I'm sure all of the staff in front of
8 you do as well. And we just want to be
9 there for you whenever you need us to
10 help you with anything you have.

11 Secondly, I want to also thank you,
12 Dr. Strickland, for your willingness to
13 serve as chairman of this board. You
14 know, you've been on this board before
15 and you bring a lot of experience, and I
16 have every bit of confidence in the
17 world you're going to do a fantastic
18 job. And, again, our department, our
19 employees, and I look forward to working
20 with you in any capacity you need us to.

21 As many of you are aware, we had
22 three board members step down last year
23 from service to our board for a -- what

1 I would call a well-deserved opportunity
2 to return to their normal lives. Being
3 a board member is not an easy job, and
4 their service is greatly appreciated by
5 this department and this state. I would
6 like to recognize them at this time with
7 a few words.

8 Dr. Bob Shipp served as a valuable
9 member of this board from May 21st,
10 2010, to March 28th, 2015. Dr. Shipp
11 could not be with us today because of a
12 prior engagement. But I would like to
13 say publicly that, you know, he was a --
14 he did so many things. I looked up his
15 resume, and I'm just going to try to
16 talk about a few things.

17 Professor emeritus at the University
18 of South Alabama and avid saltwater
19 recreational fisherman. He greatly
20 contributed to this board in all
21 matters, particularly with regard to
22 marine resource management and red
23 snapper research. He worked very

1 closely with our Marine Resources
2 Division on the red snapper issue
3 particularly, amongst other things, and
4 kind of put us on the right path where
5 we are today in trying to get back to
6 good red snapper fishing in the Gulf.
7 And Chris Blankenship, our director of
8 Marine Resources, will talk a little bit
9 about that today.

10 Like I say, Dr. Shipp could not be
11 here, but I want to thank him, as I'm
12 sure the board would, for his invaluable
13 service to us. And we will send him a
14 plaque of our appreciation and let him
15 know that.

16 Secondly, Bill Hatley served on this
17 board as a valuable member from February
18 1999 to June 2015, a long time. I think
19 what's important about that is -- I
20 checked with Mr. Moultrie -- Chairman
21 Moultrie and some others, and it is our
22 recollection and everybody else's he
23 never missed a meeting. That's a long

1 time, folks. That's almost 16 years and
2 never missed a board meeting.

3 Bill is also, you know, an avid
4 hunter, outdoorsman. He always offered
5 sound advice and input at our board
6 meetings for many years. I think he's
7 moved back maybe to his home county of
8 Chilton County, and hopefully he'll be
9 close enough that he'll come visit us as
10 well. He had a conflict today as well
11 and said he's sorry he couldn't be here.
12 But we will be providing him with, also,
13 a plaque of our appreciation in that
14 regard.

15 The last person that I want to talk
16 about briefly is Dan Moultrie. Dan
17 stepped down from his position after
18 serving as chairman and a valuable
19 member of this board from March 29 of
20 2003 to June 18, 2015. That's more than
21 12 years that he also served. And, you
22 know, I don't know if he missed a
23 meeting, but if he did, he didn't miss

1 any while I was here.

2 Most everyone in this state and in
3 this room, you know, and every other
4 state, I should say, knows Dan Moultrie.
5 He is internationally recognized as the
6 founder of Moultrie Feeders and Game
7 Cameras which was founded in 1980.

8 And, by the way, in 1980 -- I found
9 out -- I've got to talk about this. Dan
10 and I found out after I met him the
11 first time we went to Auburn University
12 together at the same time, 1974 through
13 1978. He is internationally recognized.
14 I'm not. So I took a wrong path. If I
15 could have caught up with him at that
16 time, it would have been really nice.

17 But when I assumed this job -- what
18 I want to talk about with Dan is this:
19 When I assumed this job in 2011, I
20 didn't know Dan. He didn't know me.
21 And I think the best thing that I can
22 say about him is he was always helpful.
23 He was always respectful, both to me and

1 to everybody else that I ever saw him
2 interact with. He always wanted my
3 input. He never talked about his input.
4 He always wanted to know what is it you
5 would like to do or we need to do as a
6 department.

7 He provided great leadership. He
8 worked tirelessly as chairman. As
9 Warren knows already, you know, a lot of
10 things come to you because, you know,
11 you just have to -- besides what these
12 men do next to me, the chairman takes on
13 much more responsibility. And he never
14 backed down from a phone call. He never
15 backed down from talking to many of you
16 out here. I bet if we raised hands,
17 there's no telling how many of the
18 people right out here he's talked to
19 personally. He was a source of quality
20 conservation-related information. And,
21 you know, that's what I believe made him
22 a great chairman, and that's why I
23 appreciate what he did.

1 And there's many other things I
2 could talk about, but I think that -- to
3 me, I tried to just narrow it down to
4 what was important to me, and I think
5 many others would say the same thing up
6 here on this board.

7 One other thing I want to talk about
8 is he works with the conservation --
9 he's chairman of the conservation
10 foundation that we have, which is a
11 501(c) (3). And I think maybe many of
12 you know this, but he didn't -- he
13 didn't raise all the -- he didn't put in
14 all the dollars himself. He didn't do
15 all the work. Many, many people --
16 many, many people worked with us on
17 raising money. But I can say this:
18 Looking back over the five years I've
19 been here, he substantially contributed
20 to this.

21 You might find this a little bit
22 shocking. But through the Governor's
23 One-Shot Turkey Hunt and other

1 fund-raisers, the Lynn Boykin
2 scholarship at Auburn University has
3 over \$500,000 in its endowment. Hunters
4 Helping the Hungry has raised over
5 \$650,000 to feed hungry folks through
6 the food banks. And we did that with
7 privately raised money, no tax dollars.

8 We've got youth hunting coming up
9 and Archery in the Schools, all of that.
10 If you just take the Lynn Boykin
11 Scholarship, the Hunters Helping the
12 Hungry, and then now we've begun two
13 more scholarships, one in Dan's name and
14 one in Larry Drummond's name, that's
15 another hundred thousand dollars.
16 That's over a million dollars that I can
17 just pinpoint right there that Dan was
18 substantially involved in raising
19 because of his abilities to reach out to
20 the hunting communities and industries
21 in this state.

22 And so, anyway, I just thank Dan for
23 that. He constantly promoted our

1 department and our state, and for all he
2 has done, we owe Dan a great deal of
3 gratitude and our best wishes for the
4 future.

5 I do want to -- before I bring him
6 up I want to recognize that some of his
7 family is here along with Dan. Patti,
8 his wife, is here. Ashley is here. And
9 his son Daniel can't be here because
10 he's in a fishing tournament. Imagine
11 that. He's fishing over at Auburn.

12 So, Dan, if you would, I would like
13 for you to come down front, and I have a
14 few tokens of our appreciation.

15 So the first thing, everybody gets
16 one of these. And it just says
17 presented to Mr. Dan Moultrie for his
18 dedicated service to the Conservation
19 Advisory Board, March 29, 2003, to June
20 18, 2015.

21 Having served as chairman for a long
22 time --

23 (Brief interruption by the court

1 reporter.)

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: We can't give you the
3 gavel. We have to keep it because we
4 don't have enough money to replace it.
5 But I did want to give you a token
6 gavel, you know, for your service. And
7 I think it just says Dan Moultrie,
8 Chairman of the Conservation Advisory
9 Board, and it's got the dates on there,
10 Dan.

11 MR. MOULTRIE: Thank you very much.

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: Lastly, you know, the word
13 "emeritus" means, I think, distinguished
14 service. It means above and beyond. It
15 means that, you know, maybe you've
16 stepped down but you're not entirely
17 gone. We're going to call on you from
18 time to time.

19 And so I want to present you with
20 this appreciation which just says this:
21 Dan Moultrie, Chairman Emeritus,
22 Conservation Advisory Board, March 2003
23 to June 2015.

1 MR. MOULTRIE: Thank you so much.

2 Real quickly -- three minutes,
3 Betsy.

4 Real quickly, best commissioner,
5 best Conservation Advisory Board in the
6 United States. Y'all enjoy.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The board again
8 recognizes the valuable contribution
9 that Bill Hatley, Bob Shipp, and Dan
10 Moultrie have made over the years. They
11 will be missed.

12 Dan, have a great day. We're going
13 to miss you, buddy.

14 MR. MOULTRIE: Thank you, Doc.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The next order of
16 business will be the approval of the
17 minutes -- actually of the last two sets
18 of minutes from February 28th, 2015, and
19 March 28th, 2015. Now, those are action
20 items and will require a voting -- an
21 approval from the board.

22 So I would like to take them
23 separately. First we'll have a motion

1 for approval of the February 28th, 2015,
2 minutes if there are no amendments or
3 corrections.

4 MR. HARTZOG: So move.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Can I get a second?

6 MR. JONES: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Discussions?

8 (No response.)

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?

10 (All board members present respond
11 "aye.")

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

13 (No response.)

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Motion carries.

15 Okay. The February 28th, 2015,
16 minutes have been approved.

17 The next action item is approval of
18 the March 28th, 2015, minutes. Can I
19 get a motion for approval?

20 MR. JONES: So move.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Second?

22 MR. MARTIN: Second.

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any discussion?

1 (No response.)

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All in favor?

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

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

6 (No response.)

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. So both sets of
8 minutes from 2015 are now approved.

9 And the next item will be comments
10 from Commissioner Gunter Guy. And I
11 think he's out of the room now. We have
12 a couple of PowerPoint presentations
13 that are next on the agenda as well.
14 And I don't know -- can we ask the
15 Commissioner how he wants to handle that
16 because he's one of the presenters?

17 We'll just wait for a few seconds
18 until he gets back in.

19 It sounds like that we've had a
20 fairly successful deer season. I've had
21 the opportunity to talk to a lot of the
22 hunters across the state. Although it
23 was unseasonably warm, we still got some

1 great bucks, particularly from the
2 southern part of Alabama. And I'm sure
3 we'll hear a little bit more about that
4 as the --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. So we'll go ahead
7 and go with the PowerPoint.

8 Okay. I think we're going to move
9 the board members down to the front.
10 Great. And we'll go ahead and just go
11 forward with the PowerPoint
12 presentation.

13 I think, Chris, we'll have you
14 present your presentation first, and
15 then we'll follow up with your
16 PowerPoint presentation.

17 MR. BLANKENSHIP: Good morning. For the ones
18 that don't know, I'm Chris Blankenship.
19 I'm the director of the Marine Resources
20 Division for the Department of
21 Conservation. I just wanted to give a
22 brief overview of our Snapper Check
23 program and some of the issues with red

1 snapper for the board.

2 Before I start with the program,
3 first I want to say thanks for helping
4 us move forward with the Snapper Check
5 program two years ago. That was
6 something that really had not been done
7 in the state where we -- really it's
8 something that had not been done
9 anywhere in the country to have a census
10 type of reporting system for a fishery.
11 And so I really appreciate y'all
12 allowing us to be groundbreaking in
13 Alabama and to really see the success of
14 this program. And so I just wanted to
15 share some of those results with you.

16 Just as a reminder, we began this
17 program in 2014. It was the first type
18 of program anywhere in the country where
19 they're doing the census reporting for
20 fish from the public. Before people
21 land with their red snapper, before they
22 take them off the boat, they're required
23 to report those fish through our system.

1 Only one report is required per vessel
2 because right now red snapper are still
3 just caught from vessels. They're
4 almost plentiful enough to be caught
5 from shore from here, but we haven't
6 quite gotten there yet. So we're still
7 just requiring a report from vessels.

8 You can report via smartphone app
9 and through our app either online or
10 through a toll-free number, the
11 844-REDSNAP number, and we have provided
12 paper reports at our coastal boat ramps
13 for people that either had trouble with
14 their electronic devices or didn't have
15 a smartphone to be able to do that since
16 they are required to be reported before
17 they're taken off the boat.

18 You know, we don't ask for a lot of
19 information. You know, we ask for the
20 number of anglers, the fish harvested,
21 how many dead/discarded red snapper they
22 had, you know, the vessel registration
23 number so we can track it to the vessel,

1 what county they landed in, whether it
2 was a private trip or a chartered
3 fishing trip, and then whether they used
4 a public access site or a private access
5 site. Because that was some information
6 that was needed by the statisticians for
7 us to be able to make some
8 determinations that there was a
9 different reporting rate between people
10 that use the public boat ramps and
11 people that reported at their houses.

12 And then our enforcement and our
13 biological staff met people at the dock
14 and checked their catch, you know,
15 measured their catch. And then we
16 compared the information that they got
17 at the dock to what was reported by the
18 individuals to get what we call a
19 correction factor --

20 (Brief interruption.)

21 MR. BLANKENSHIP: -- to check their
22 information to make sure, again, that
23 they reported correctly and to help us

1 to get a correction factor. And we'll
2 talk a little bit about the correction
3 factor as we get to some of the other
4 slides. I'll try and make this not a
5 very statistic-laden presentation but
6 more just on the positives and the
7 aspects of the program.

8 For the 2015 season you can see that
9 we have this broken down. There's a lot
10 of information on this chart. The big
11 thing I want you to see is the estimated
12 pounds harvested in the lower right-hand
13 corner. We estimated that there were a
14 1,045,000 pounds of red snapper landed
15 in Alabama during the 2015 season. And
16 that's broken down. During the federal
17 season the charter boats landed, you
18 know, a little less than 400,000 pounds.
19 The private fishermen -- private
20 recreational fishermen on that third
21 column -- or third row down landed a
22 little over 600,000 pounds.

23 And then during the state season,

1 which is -- we had a 30-day -- a 31-day
2 red snapper season just in state waters
3 during the month of July, and then
4 Florida had a season as well, a state
5 season. And since we're so close to
6 Florida, we did have some people that
7 fished in Florida waters that landed
8 those fish in Alabama, and we counted
9 those as being landed in Alabama as, you
10 know, a part of our landing requirements
11 and reporting requirements. But you can
12 see that that was -- of the million
13 pounds, that was less than 50,000 pounds
14 that were caught during the state
15 season.

16 The reporting methods -- we think
17 this is very important information to
18 share. The majority of the people --
19 the online and the app are essentially
20 the same thing, the way that that --
21 it's just a different way that you go
22 about accessing the Website, whether you
23 do it through the Pocket Ranger app or

1 whether you just do it through the
2 Outdoor Alabama Website.

3 So about 70 percent of the people
4 are reporting electronically with their
5 smartphones. 17 percent are using the
6 844-REDSNAP. And 13 percent are using
7 the paper. The paper is convenient for
8 people -- my own father -- you know,
9 they have a smartphone, but he was using
10 the paper. And, you know, I asked him,
11 why are you using the paper? And he
12 said, because I didn't want to learn how
13 to do it on my smartphone. So I showed
14 him it took less than a minute for them
15 to report on the smartphone. So the
16 first two days he used the paper. The
17 rest of the season they used the phone.
18 He said that was a much better method.

19 So we're going to do a better job
20 this year of trying to educate the
21 public. The Mobile Boat Show is going
22 on right now, and we're spending some
23 time there letting people know how to

1 report electronically and to try and get
2 more -- less use of the phone and the
3 paper and more use of the app.

4 I just wanted to share this one
5 slide with you here, the red or the
6 vessel reports and then the 24-hour
7 clock. I just wanted you to see that we
8 received reports from people on fishing
9 trips -- you know, every hour of the day
10 we have reports from people. There were
11 people that come in in the middle of the
12 night, people that come in, you know,
13 early in the morning reporting fish. So
14 it's important to have that electronic
15 means that they can report. And, you
16 know, we had good compliance at
17 different -- you know, all times of the
18 day we had people reporting.

19 This is just a slide -- we collected
20 this information mainly to help us with
21 our -- to look at our manpower and make
22 sure that we were using our own people
23 efficiently. So this is one thing that

1 we're able to do with this type of
2 reporting system is to see that of the
3 4400 reports of red snapper trips, you
4 know, 3,000 of those were in Baldwin
5 County. So we have used this
6 information over the last two years to
7 move some of our manpower from Mobile
8 County to Baldwin County to distribute
9 that more evenly so that we can make
10 sure we have good coverage because of
11 the way the population has changed and
12 the way the fisheries are being used.
13 Just another type of information that we
14 can pull pretty easily from the
15 self-reported information.

16 So this is a slide that I think
17 shows the extreme value of the program.
18 In 2014, if you remember from last year,
19 we estimated that about 455,000 pounds
20 of red snapper were landed in Alabama,
21 and the federal government estimated it
22 was about 1.2 million. This year those
23 same percentages hold pretty close. You

1 know, we estimated there were a
2 1,045,000 pounds caught. The federal
3 estimate was a little over 2.3 million
4 pounds.

5 So you can see that it's -- so you
6 can see that it's 63 percent less in
7 2015 and 56 percent less -- or 63 less
8 in '14 and 56 percent less in 2015. So
9 essentially the federal government is at
10 least double-estimating what's caught in
11 Alabama. And so when we have a quota,
12 which is what we're fishing off of, a
13 quota -- so when they're saying that
14 we're catching twice as many pounds as
15 we're catching, our season could
16 theoretically at least be twice as long
17 as it is now if they used our data
18 instead of theirs. So looking ahead,
19 we're going to continue that program.
20 We plan to do that again in 2016. It
21 will still be mandatory for the
22 fishermen.

23 There's another group that's working

1 with the charter industry to install
2 some electronic reporting on their
3 vessels. It's not a state program, but
4 we are willing to partner with them to
5 make the program successful. If they do
6 that, that would not just be for red
7 snapper. That would be for all species.
8 And so we're -- you know, we're looking
9 at how to take that data and integrate
10 it into our Snapper Check program so the
11 people wouldn't have to report twice.
12 We can use the data that's reported
13 under the other program.

14 You know, we didn't have as good
15 participation from the private
16 recreational fishermen this year as we
17 would like. You know, we only -- we
18 didn't have -- we had about 25 to 30
19 percent of the people that reported
20 correctly when they reported. So
21 we're -- we didn't issue -- we had not
22 issued any tickets the last two years,
23 since it was a new program, for

1 nonreporting. And so we plan to begin
2 enforcing that this year and making sure
3 that we're trying to get it -- the most
4 accurate information as possible from
5 everyone.

6 And so then, you know, the whole
7 purpose of putting this program together
8 was that we felt like that the federal
9 government was overestimating the
10 snapper that was being landed in Alabama
11 and was causing us to have these
12 shortened seasons. And we wanted to
13 develop another program that would be
14 more accurate and that we would be able
15 to use that for the landings for
16 Alabama.

17 This is the second year of our
18 program, and so we've been involved with
19 NOAA and their statisticians all
20 throughout the process in order to get
21 our program certified as a method that
22 can be used to manage a quota -- to
23 manage the quota for Alabama or to use

1 our information to put into the federal
2 management.

3 In December we had a meeting in
4 Mobile, and NOAA sent, you know, their
5 chief scientists from Washington. They
6 sent three of their chief scientists
7 from Washington and some other
8 statisticians and consultants that they
9 had. And they came to Mobile and we had
10 a good, you know, two days going over
11 our data with their data. And I know
12 that sounds very boring, and it was a
13 semi-boring two days when you're just
14 talking about data and methods. But,
15 you know, I wanted to keep that in green
16 because I wanted you to see that that is
17 a big deal.

18 It was a big deal to get them to
19 come to Alabama to go through our
20 program. It really shows that we've
21 gotten the attention of not only the
22 southeast regional people in NOAA, but
23 we've got attention of the people at

1 headquarters. And they see that what
2 we're doing is valuable and they see
3 that it has merit. And so they wanted
4 to come down themselves and go through
5 the data. And we made a great deal of
6 progress in December, and we're fairly
7 close, I think, to being able to certify
8 our program as an acceptable method for
9 red snapper reporting in the Gulf of
10 Mexico.

11 The federal government in the
12 Omnibus Budget bill that passed in
13 December extended our state waters for
14 reef fish management from three miles to
15 nine miles. You know, we've done that
16 in our state legislature a couple of
17 years ago, and it was recognized
18 federally for this year in that bill.
19 Since it was in a budget bill, it's only
20 for that budget year, as long as that
21 budget is in effect. And so we're
22 working with Senator Shelby and Senator
23 Sessions and some of our congressional

1 staff to make that more -- to make that
2 permanent, not just to be from year to
3 year. But they're also working, if we
4 can't make it more permanent, to include
5 it in next year's budget so that we'll
6 continue to keep that -- keep that nine
7 miles for fisheries management -- for
8 reef fish management.

9 And then another thing that Senator
10 Shelby has done is he added two
11 provisions in the budget. One was to
12 send about \$10 million to different --
13 to two different -- to NOAA and then to
14 the Sea Grant to help with
15 data-collection issues, things that need
16 to go into the stock assessment. And
17 then he also provided money in the
18 budget for a third-party stock
19 assessment for red snapper.

20 So those two things on the federal
21 side should go a long way to have a
22 better picture of what the red snapper
23 fishery is. And, you know, all of this

1 is being done here in Alabama and in our
2 congressional delegations in Washington
3 to try and extend that season to get
4 people more fishing opportunities.

5 We're still discussing the Alabama
6 red snapper season. We have not set
7 that -- set that season yet or made a
8 recommendation for that season. The
9 federal season will not likely be set
10 until early April when the federal
11 season comes out. We anticipate that it
12 will probably be similar to what it was
13 last year, about ten days or less for
14 the private recreational fishermen and
15 about 40 to 50 days for the charter
16 fishermen. But they won't make a
17 determination on that until sometime in
18 April.

19 Any questions?

20 I tried to go through that pretty
21 quickly. But I do just want to say that
22 that -- our program, I think, shows that
23 this type of a system works.

1 Mississippi has now copied what we
2 started. They're doing the same thing
3 in Mississippi, and it's mandatory there
4 for red snapper. Other states are
5 looking into how to make that work in
6 their states.

7 And so I think it's very beneficial
8 what we've done here in Alabama. It was
9 the first program of its kind in the
10 country, and I think it's gotten the
11 attention of not only NOAA but other
12 states that are looking to find better
13 ways to do things. And we appreciate
14 the -- we appreciate the flattery of
15 them copying our program. We'll be glad
16 to -- if they could find some other
17 things that make it work better, we'll
18 copy parts of theirs to make this
19 program even better in the future.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible.)

21 MR. BLANKENSHIP: The question was how did the
22 compliance factor work. If I can go
23 back a few slides.

1 We have what's called a correction
2 factor. This is oversimplifying it.
3 Kevin Anson is our chief biologist.
4 Kevin is really smart and he knows -- he
5 can tell you a whole lot more about this
6 chart than I can. Some of it you might
7 understand. Some of it you might not
8 after he finishes talking to you
9 because, like I said, he's really smart.

10 But the trip correction factor,
11 which is the fourth column from the end,
12 essentially it's a reverse proportion.
13 If we have -- if you have 50 percent of
14 the people that reported correctly that
15 we validated and 50 percent that didn't,
16 you would double our estimate to make up
17 for the 50 percent that didn't report.
18 Does that make sense?

19 And so this is -- that was a
20 simplified version, but there's a lot of
21 things that go into it. You know, when
22 our biologists see them at the dock, you
23 know, we check the Alabama registration

1 number and all the information, the
2 number of fishermen, the number of fish
3 that they have against what was
4 reported, and then from that we come up
5 with this overall correction factor.
6 And so you just multiply what was
7 reported by the correction factor to get
8 the estimated harvest.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Before you had this
10 harvest data how far off were you?

11 MR. BLANKENSHIP: Before we had this data we
12 don't know. You know, that was the
13 purpose for implementing this program.
14 You know, we felt like that it was
15 wrong, but you can only tell somebody
16 that you think they're wrong so many
17 times because you had to have something
18 to go back to. And so having the data
19 has made all the difference in the
20 world, you know, being able to have
21 these conversations now that we have
22 some empirical data to compare to their
23 data.

1 MR. HARTZOG: Chris, where does NOAA get their
2 data if they don't have any collection
3 process?

4 MR. BLANKENSHIP: Well, they have a collection
5 process, but theirs is much more
6 statistically based. They do telephone
7 surveys of households and other methods
8 to get the amount of effort, the number
9 of fishing trips. Our biologists are
10 the ones that actually collect the
11 weight and size information at the dock.
12 And so, you know, we're pretty -- that
13 information is pretty accurate.

14 It's the -- it's the effort
15 estimation is why theirs is so high.
16 They're estimating many more trips than
17 we think are taking place. And it's all
18 because it's -- it's a random telephone
19 survey of households. And it's -- for a
20 state like ours with a small coastline
21 the -- the values are so varied and it's
22 difficult for it to have any accuracy.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: Chuck, you want to come up

1 and make yours, please, sir?

2 MR. SYKES: Over the past couple of years when
3 we've presented these PowerPoints it was
4 basically our division making
5 recommendations to the board of what we
6 proposed. We're going to do something a
7 little bit different this year. The way
8 we're going to handle it --

9 (Brief interruption.)

10 MR. SYKES: All right. We're going to do
11 something different this year. We're
12 going to -- instead of making one
13 proposal -- we listened to questions
14 that we had from hunters and landowners.
15 We also listened to questions that we
16 had from the board. We tried to answer
17 as many of those as we could, and we're
18 going to present some options of some
19 things that we've got data that we can
20 handle. And we're going to let the
21 board between this meeting and the next
22 meeting talk to the constituents and
23 come back to us with which option y'all

1 would like to go with.

2 And before I get into all of that --

3 (Brief interruption.)

4 MR. SYKES: All right. Let's try this again.

5 Before we get into the
6 recommendations, I've just got a couple
7 of questions that I want y'all to think
8 about. What percentage of Alabama
9 residents do you think buy a hunting
10 license?

11 Just think about that a little bit.
12 Think about not this group. I'm hoping
13 everybody in this room bought a hunting
14 license.

15 4.8 million people in Alabama as of
16 the 2014 census, that's how many hunting
17 licenses we sold. 3.7 percent of
18 Alabama residents bought a hunting
19 license in 2014. That's pretty sad.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Does that count
21 lifetime?

22 MR. SYKES: That's factored in, yes, sir.

23 All right. How does that impact our

1 budget?

2 I know there are a lot of landowners
3 in here. There's a lot of y'all that
4 understand that we are down drastically
5 on our law enforcement. Here's how loss
6 of license sells impacts our budget.

7 66 cents of every dollar goes to pay
8 for law enforcement. We cannot use any
9 of our federal dollars to pay for law
10 enforcement. So, therefore, when
11 license sales go down, the first thing
12 that goes is law enforcement support.
13 Y'all, we're at a 30-year low. I think
14 we've got 33 counties that's only got
15 one officer. We've got a couple of
16 counties that have no officer.

17 We have got to do a better job of
18 policing ourselves and policing our
19 neighbors and our fellow hunting-club
20 members to make sure that everybody buys
21 a license where we can afford to provide
22 the services that everybody is
23 accustomed to us providing.

1 All right. Here are some small game
2 changes. At the request of a lot of
3 small game hunters, rather than stopping
4 next year the last day of February, we
5 moved it to March 5th which takes in one
6 more weekend where people can enjoy
7 small game hunting.

8 There will be no closed season on
9 raccoons and opossums next year. We
10 tried a nuisance permit program that
11 y'all approved a couple of years ago for
12 people that want to trap on their own
13 property and hunt coons on their own
14 property for wildlife-management
15 purposes. It went so well. We received
16 no complaints. There's no sense in
17 having to continue with that program.
18 We suggest just no closed season.

19 At the request of quite a few of our
20 dove-hunting constituents, they asked
21 that we take a little bit of time off of
22 the front split and add it to the end of
23 the second split where they could take

1 advantage of hunting migratory birds as
2 they finally made it down to Alabama.
3 So September 10th through October the
4 30th and then December the 8th through
5 January 15th are the dates that we're
6 proposing for just the north zone. And
7 that basically mirrors the south zone.

8 Some Freshwater Fisheries
9 suggestions. In order to keep the
10 regulations consistent between Tennessee
11 and Mississippi, our Fisheries
12 biologists have the data to support a
13 15-inch limit on large-mouth bass. It
14 was already that way for small-mouth.
15 Now large-mouth is in that same
16 category, and that keeps the regulations
17 consistent between Alabama, Tennessee,
18 and Mississippi in the Pickwick
19 Reservoir.

20 Also have the data to support a
21 length limit on sauger to change it from
22 14 to 15 inches statewide. We're
23 recommending to delete the

1 hundred-percent cotton line requirement
2 on trotlines.

3 We're proposing that
4 Regulation 220-2-25 to be amended to
5 prohibit the importation of certain deer
6 parts. Only deboned meat, hides, and
7 antlers attached to the clean skull
8 plate can be brought into the state.
9 This is mirrored after many, many, many
10 other states, and it complements our
11 existing CWD response plan that was
12 instituted in 2012.

13 This is a big one. Some turkey
14 updates. We began an in-depth research
15 project with Auburn last year to finally
16 get some baseline turkey data. The
17 slide before that on Freshwater
18 Fisheries, if you noticed, I said we had
19 data to support, and we had data to
20 support. We don't have data to support
21 turkeys right now. We're getting it,
22 but historically we do not have baseline
23 data.

1 We've got an Avid Turkey Hunter
2 Survey, brood survey, and gobble counts
3 that were conducted, again, trying to
4 add to that baseline data. We conducted
5 turkey-hunter listening sessions. I've
6 seen several people in this room that
7 participated in that last year. It was
8 monitored by Auburn researchers to get a
9 better understanding of what hunters
10 wanted.

11 Based on those models -- now, this
12 is not in the field data. This is
13 models that Auburn has generated based
14 on what the hunters desired. To make
15 them happy, Auburn suggested to us that
16 we needed to drop the bag limit to three
17 birds and we needed to move the season
18 later. Instead of starting in March, it
19 needed to be pushed back toward April to
20 give those birds time to initiate
21 breeding and the hens to go on the nest
22 before the season.

23 Some antlerless harvest

1 recommendations. Based on landowner
2 consultations with our
3 technical-assistance group, meeting with
4 hunting clubs, our biologists
5 recommended a reduced antlerless season
6 in that orange zone up in north Alabama
7 to 20 days this year. The zones in
8 yellow and green will remain the same as
9 last season with a bag limit of one doe
10 per day.

11 For people in that orange zone, if
12 you have a piece of property -- because,
13 y'all, a lot of this is very
14 site-specific. There may be a property
15 owner in there that has a bunch of deer.
16 If they need to kill more antlerless
17 deer, they can get with us, with our
18 technical-assistance staff. We can get
19 them on the Deer Management Assistance
20 Program. We'll work them up the number
21 of does they need to kill, and they can
22 kill the sufficient amount needed to
23 manage that property.

1 Some suggested waterfowl changes.
2 Keith and our waterfowl biologists have
3 been talking with presidents of DU
4 chapters, some of our advisory board
5 members, a lot of our duck-hunting
6 constituents on possibly setting some
7 shooting-hour restrictions, some areas
8 that would be very limited access to
9 give ducks a resting place and also an
10 area between the Causeway and the
11 Interstate set up as a refuge.

12 The Corps of Engineers has
13 implemented a half-hour before sunrise
14 to noon time frame to waterfowl hunt on
15 areas from Demopolis north to
16 Mississippi along the Tenn-Tom Waterway.
17 We are engaging waterfowlers in other
18 areas to see if this is something that
19 those modifications need to be looked at
20 and expanded.

21 Our herd health and reproductive
22 efforts. Over the past -- well, since
23 '95 we've taken more than 3200

1 antlerless deer. Most of y'all know 90
2 percent of that has been done over the
3 past three years when we were trying to
4 define the line for our February season
5 shift. Our staff has worked extremely
6 hard to get this data where we could
7 justify doing what we did.

8 More than 230 locations have been
9 sampled throughout the state. We
10 continue to do that. We'll start in
11 north Alabama here soon, south Alabama
12 after turkey season. So this is
13 something that we're not going to quit.
14 We're going to keep on filling in the
15 gaps.

16 Some of the questions that we have
17 been getting that we have looked at this
18 data to try to offer the board some
19 solutions. There's some areas in
20 Zone A, which is the northern half of
21 the state, you can see those black dots
22 scattered around that have a late rut in
23 February just like people in south

1 Alabama do. We have had quite a few in
2 Zone B that have deer that rut in
3 December, and they want to be able to
4 hunt in December. We've had quite a few
5 of the dog hunters come to us and
6 request that they get their days back in
7 December and stop running January the
8 15th. So those were some of the things
9 that we looked at before making
10 recommendations.

11 Option one on deer season for next
12 year would be the same structure as this
13 year. The only thing that would change
14 would be calendar dates. Option two
15 would be start archery from one end of
16 the state to the other one October the
17 15th and run it through February
18 the 10th. In the south zone, or Zone B,
19 it would be buck only the first ten days
20 to keep in line with what we've been
21 saying for the past couple of years.
22 With the late breeding chronology, we
23 need those does. That added ten days

1 before they're available for harvest.

2 Firearm season for Zone A and B
3 would be November the 19th through
4 February the 10th. There would be no
5 December closure. And dog season
6 statewide would be November the 19th
7 through January the 15th in the areas
8 that allow dog hunting.

9 I'm glad Chris set this up pretty
10 well. Harvest reporting. Let me show
11 you our numbers.

12 Chris, you were sort of upset with
13 25-percent compliance. I'd give
14 anything for 25-percent compliance.

15 All right. As of February the 11th
16 of 2014, 19,903 deer were reported into
17 the Game Check system. How many of
18 y'all think we killed 19,000 deer? We
19 probably did that in one county.

20 2,012 turkeys were reported. They
21 probably killed more than that in
22 Marengo County.

23 February the 11th, 2015, the number

1 dropped to 16,000 deer, 1100 turkeys.
2 February the 11th of this year it kept
3 on dropping, 15,138.

4 Y'all, voluntary doesn't work. I
5 wish it did. We've given it three
6 years. I just want y'all to digest that
7 for just a few minutes. How many states
8 do not have some type of data-gathering
9 system, either physical tags, check
10 stations, or an online reporting?

11 There's really nothing else to say.
12 Do all the rest of them have it wrong?

13 This is not one of the games where
14 the last man standing wins in my
15 opinion. Harvest reporting -- I'm going
16 to give Chris and his guys props. Y'all
17 saw it. Y'all just saw the proposal.
18 It works. Guaranteed he got fishermen
19 more because he had data to substantiate
20 it.

21 So we wanted to poll the hunters and
22 ask them what they wanted. So we sent
23 out an e-mail survey to 127,000 hunters.

1 Had 12,000, almost 13,000 to reply,
2 which from what I understand for a
3 survey is pretty good numbers.

4 54 percent were supportive of a
5 mandatory reporting system. 23 percent
6 were opposed. What blew my mind was 23
7 percent didn't have an opinion. I
8 guarantee you there's nobody sitting in
9 this room that does not have an opinion
10 on it.

11 So the way I looked at it, if you
12 didn't have an opinion, you were for it.
13 Otherwise, you would have said
14 absolutely not, I don't want it. So
15 you're looking at 80 percent -- right at
16 80 percent that were not opposed to a
17 mandatory data-collection system where
18 we can do our jobs better.

19 Just like with what Chris saw on
20 Snapper Check, 70 percent wanted
21 smartphone or the Internet. Only 11
22 percent preferred to report through
23 their telephone. And I can tell you

1 through the three years that we've been
2 monitoring this the data we get off of
3 the telephone is not nearly -- it's not
4 the quality data that we get off of the
5 Internet or the app. There's a lot more
6 room for error.

7 The complete survey results can be
8 found at the Outdoor Alabama Website,
9 "Outdooralabama.com." That can answer
10 any of the other questions. And like
11 Chris, I blew through this pretty fast,
12 but I'm quite confident there's going to
13 be a bunch of questions that we will
14 discuss later.

15 So, Board Members, any questions
16 y'all have?

17 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Chuck, those other
18 states that have harvest reporting, how
19 many of those are just online?

20 MR. SYKES: A vast majority of them have gone
21 to online reporting. A lot of the
22 states that in the past had physical
23 tags and physical check stations,

1 they're trying to make it much more
2 hunter friendly. So the majority of
3 them are going -- they're going toward
4 an online reporting system.

5 Well, thank y'all.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: We're going to go ahead
7 and move forward. We still have quite a
8 bit on our agenda to get through.

9 I'd just like to take this time and
10 acknowledge the presence of the press.
11 We appreciate your presence here today.

12 Let's see. The next order of
13 business is public hearing. For those
14 of you participating in the public
15 hearing, when your name is called,
16 please come to the microphone. You are
17 limited to only three minutes, and
18 that's strictly enforced. State your
19 name as well as the subject you wish to
20 address. And please understand that no
21 interference from the audience will be
22 tolerated.

23 Let's see. I guess we'll go

1 directly into --

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: Can I make a comment?

3 Just for the people that are -- this
4 one isn't working.

5 For the people that are going to
6 speak and for the board members, our
7 court reporter, who must get it, has
8 told me that -- it looks like you've got
9 to get really close to the microphone.
10 I think that's the problem is that
11 people want to hold it away from them.
12 You've got to -- there you go. You've
13 got to put it up like that.

14 So for those of you who are going to
15 speak down here, if you don't mind me
16 just interjecting, please get close to
17 the microphone. And that lady right
18 there sitting there doing the court
19 reporting wants to get your, you know,
20 comments down correctly. So, you know,
21 try not to speak too fast and, you know,
22 just be patient and then speak into the
23 microphone. I appreciate that,

1 Mr. Chairman.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Commissioner.

3 Our first public hearing will be by
4 Jimmy Martin from Chilton County --
5 Representative Jimmy Martin.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: There's a few seats down
7 here if somebody doesn't have a place to
8 sit. We've got open seats down here
9 too.

10 MR. MARTIN: Representative Jimmy Martin from
11 Chilton County. I don't know why I got
12 on the back seat. It's a long way down,
13 you know.

14 Mr. Chairman, Commissioner Guy,
15 Commissioner McMillan, Members of the
16 Committee, I'm down here speaking on
17 behalf of the dog hunters in Chilton
18 County. And it is -- it has been in
19 such a way to where they have been
20 hunting in this area of over 4,000 acres
21 for probably 40 some-odd years. They
22 have had very little complications.

23 They are now in the process of

1 trying to get their dogs shock collars
2 and do what has to be done to keep them
3 off of other people's lands. But you
4 know as well as I do that when a dog or
5 anything else gets a scent and they
6 start following it, they're going to
7 follow it just as far as it goes.

8 Now, if it gets on somebody else's
9 property, if he will come and talk to
10 these fellows, I think they would have
11 an agreement, and they would try -- they
12 would try to keep their dogs off of that
13 property. But in my understanding there
14 was no speaking back and forth between
15 the people, and all of a sudden they
16 came down and told them, says, you don't
17 hunt dogs down here no more.

18 That may be I've got one part of it.
19 I don't know how much of it is true.
20 I've got a feeling most of it is. But
21 I'm here in favor of my dog hunters. I
22 would appreciate that y'all give serious
23 consideration of the dog hunters in

1 Chilton County.

2 And, of course, I think there's
3 other places you've got complications,
4 but in Chilton County they're working to
5 do their best to keep dogs off of other
6 property. They're using shock collars.
7 They're using GPS tracking and all this
8 sort of stuff. And I don't know much
9 else you can do other than -- you're
10 semi fooling with a dumb animal, and a
11 dumb animal is going to follow what he's
12 tracking.

13 So if y'all would give them serious
14 consideration, I certainly would
15 appreciate it. And I'm not a hunter,
16 but I have been out a few times. My son
17 is a hunter. I'm like Mr. Gary Wolfe up
18 there. I'm an undertaker by trade and
19 the part-time job is a representative.
20 But it don't get part-time, as you can
21 see. And I've been around Commissioner
22 McMillan and Commissioner Guy quite a
23 bit.

1 MS. JONES: Time.

2 MR. MARTIN: And your deputy up there, I've
3 been knowing him a long time, so --

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Representative Martin,
5 we certainly appreciate you taking the
6 time out from your busy schedule to come
7 out and represent your contingencies,
8 and we will definitely take that into
9 consideration. Thank you.

10 MR. MARTIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank
11 you, Members.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All right. Next up is
13 Avery Bates. Mr. Bates.

14 MR. BATES: Thank y'all. My name is Avery
15 Bates. I'm vice-president of Organized
16 Seafood Association, a long-time
17 commercial fisherman. And I hope you
18 hear me. And got several subjects.

19 We definitely want to do something
20 to help our commercial gillnetters,
21 especially on that three-inch so they
22 can keep fishing without having to buy
23 an extra 600-dollar license. It's

1 imperative to keep our people catching
2 flounder and sheepshead and stuff. So
3 we've discussed it with Chris. I think
4 Chris can live with it.

5 Chris has been good for us. There's
6 so many things that y'all have done I
7 want to thank you for, especially buying
8 that launching area down there at Delta
9 Port. That's a great asset to us for
10 our fishermen, both recreational and
11 commercial fishermen.

12 And, also, we got some other issues.
13 They're getting ready to dump a lot of
14 spoil up at the head of Mobile Bay where
15 people crab, fish, both recreational and
16 commercial fishermen. In the past we've
17 had terrible trouble with spoil covering
18 up oysters, covering up good fishing
19 bottoms. And this is going to be two
20 square miles. Commercial fishermen need
21 more bottom, not less bottom.

22 You know, according to state law
23 924, Part E, you're supposed to work

1 with our commerce and the commerce
2 department. We produce commerce. We
3 don't need less area to produce that
4 commerce. This will kill us forever in
5 that area from fishing.

6 And not only that, we've got places
7 down the bay we've seen covered up. We
8 have enough problem with silt covering
9 up things now. We know it will be
10 easier for the Corps, but the Corps
11 don't own this bottom. This belongs to
12 the people of the state of Alabama, and
13 the property that's produced from there
14 is your property too.

15 When you go to a restaurant and buy
16 good seafood, a lot of it comes from
17 Upper Mobile Bay. We don't need to lose
18 some of the shellfish bottom up the bay
19 because a lot of the spat and stuff
20 comes down the bay. A lot of the fish
21 is caught up there. They feed on these
22 reefs. And we don't need further
23 siltation. We do not -- we want the

1 spoil to be -- the spoil to be used in a
2 beneficial way. And there's lots of
3 areas that need the spoil, not up the
4 bay.

5 So keep in mind that's one problem
6 we're having. The other problem we're
7 having y'all see. We get to go back
8 oystering Monday on our public reefs.

9 And I want to invite y'all. We're
10 going to have March the 9th -- come eat
11 seafood with us down at the RSA
12 building. And I think everybody that's
13 been there, especially our
14 representatives in the past, have
15 enjoyed it. But through that invite,
16 remember when you take a bite of that
17 fish and eat them boiled shrimp,
18 remember who's catching that for you,
19 commercial fishermen. And we like to
20 cook it. We like to feed it to the
21 people of Alabama, the state.

22 And we got some areas we're having
23 problems with -- especially with our

1 health department. And we've seen
2 great -- great help from some other
3 areas in our oyster farming. Bill
4 Walton, Sea Grant, a wonderful plus for
5 us as commercial fishermen. We got a
6 number of oyster farmers down there that
7 is increasing all the time.

8 MS. JONES: Time.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Bates?

10 MR. BATES: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I love oysters and
12 seafood. Your time's up.

13 MR. BATES: Does anybody have any questions
14 about our oyster farming and -- we need
15 to cover some of these questions for
16 sure.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you very much.

18 MR. HARTZOG: Not for you, Mr. Bates. But,
19 Chris, with this new spoil area, what is
20 the -- can you explain to us if we're
21 opposing it, supporting it, any way of
22 stopping it if it is going to destroy
23 that much habitat?

1 MR. BLANKENSHIP: It's a proposal that's been
2 made by the Corps of Engineers to build
3 this island. It's going through an
4 environmental assessment now. So we are
5 working through that process with them,
6 you know, evaluating what it would do to
7 the oyster reefs, oysters or other
8 things. And so we're working through
9 that probably for the next couple of
10 years with the Corps.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Can I just make one
12 quick statement?

13 Board members, before you direct a
14 question to the speaker, please address
15 the chair so I can recognize you.

16 Any further comments from the board
17 for Mr. Bates?

18 MR. BATES: Any questions?

19 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Mr. Chairman, I wanted
20 to -- and should have kept Chris up
21 here, too, I guess. The red tide issue,
22 is that ...

23 MR. BATES: Oh, my goodness. I'm glad you

1 brought that up. We don't even have a
2 lab here with our health department to
3 even do what they call the mouse test.
4 You know, the red tide is a neurotoxin,
5 and we've been shut down a number of
6 months because of red tide, which is
7 death to our -- to our oyster industry.
8 It shuts down the whole state. There's
9 still some areas over there on the east
10 side of the bay that's got red tide in
11 there.

12 But keep in mind, we're losing board
13 of health people every year. And
14 without the board of health doing the
15 mouse test -- now, have y'all seen --
16 and then y'all have some out-of-state
17 sampling for -- what do they call
18 that -- outsourcing. It costs us \$1200
19 to send a sample to Maine or to Florida,
20 who don't want to do it for us.
21 They're -- and we don't -- we don't have
22 enough inspectors. We just lost
23 Mr. Dunn, and we're down now to a

1 skeleton crew. What does that mean
2 about red tide or high water or
3 water-classification sampling?

4 If you do not have enough water
5 samples per -- what we call
6 conditionally approved, if they do not
7 make enough by the state board of
8 health, the people with the FDA can shut
9 us down and ISSC, you know, your
10 Interstate Sanitation of Shellfish -- or
11 Interstate Shellfish Sanitation
12 Conference.

13 We have to maintain the amount of
14 samples both for red tide, both for
15 conditionally approved areas. We don't
16 have adequate personnel to do the
17 sampling in our board of health. We
18 just lost another one through attrition.
19 We lost two more the last three years
20 ago. Christine is one and Jeff McCool
21 is another one. If we get taken off the
22 Interstate shipping list by the FDA by
23 not having the proper equipment to do

1 the sampling, the proper personnel, then
2 you won't get oysters in Mississippi
3 from Alabama. You won't get to ship
4 them.

5 We are number one in the whole
6 country with oyster processing. Now,
7 consider the amount if we get to ship no
8 oysters out of the state because of lack
9 of satisfying the requests by the FDA
10 for the last two years. We haven't come
11 into that request of filling them
12 positions and doing the proper sampling.
13 It is critical that we maintain this
14 department's personnel so our oystermen,
15 the oyster farmers that Bill and them is
16 involved with that we need to keep -- so
17 if y'all got any power or any -- this
18 needs to go on record that the board of
19 health is in critical need of more local
20 personnel to do the water sampling, the
21 shock sampling. It is critical. And
22 we're at the point now where I'm afraid
23 that we're going to be in jeopardy of

1 not being allowed to go in these waters.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chris.

3 MR. BLANKENSHIP: Yeah. The red tide is very
4 unusual for our area and the second time
5 in 22 years I've been here that we've
6 had our waters shut down for red tide.
7 And with all the fresh water and the
8 rain we've had and the cold weather,
9 it's flushed that out. The health
10 department has done the surveys and
11 reopened our waters for -- the private
12 reefs reopened on Thursday, and our
13 public reefs will reopen on Monday
14 morning.

15 So it is -- it was an unusual
16 circumstance as long as it lasted here.
17 But it did shut down the oystering for
18 several months.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Bates.

20 MR. BATES: Thank you. David Wiggins said
21 it's needed bad. Put in a request for
22 two years. Haven't gotten any results.
23 So keep us in mind. We produce a lot of

1 food in this state, and we want to keep
2 doing it. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: We appreciate you,
4 Mr. Bates. Thank you.

5 Our next speaker is Russell
6 Cunningham. Russell, if you want to
7 approach the mic.

8 Is Mr. Cunningham present?

9 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Good morning, ladies and
10 gentlemen. My name is Russell
11 Cunningham. I'm from Birmingham. I'd
12 like to thank Commissioner Guy and the
13 board for allowing me to speak this
14 morning. I've been fishing in Alabama's
15 coastal waters pretty much all of my
16 life throughout the Gulf and the
17 Mississippi Sound. Some of my fondest
18 memories are fishing with my father
19 throughout the Gulf and the Mississippi
20 Sound.

21 I really would just like to take
22 this moment to thank Chris Blankenship
23 and Kevin Anson for their efforts in

1 managing -- along with DCNR, MRD -- in
2 managing our resource, making sure that
3 it's here for the future, here for my
4 children. And I'd also like to say that
5 things like the Snapper Check program
6 and their management of the snapper
7 season within our territory of waters to
8 me evidences that they're more than
9 capable of managing this entire resource
10 along with the other Gulf states.

11 So thank you again, Chris and Kevin.
12 Keep up the good work.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you,
14 Mr. Cunningham.

15 Our next speaker, Blakeley Ellis.

16 MR. ELLIS: My name is Blakeley Ellis, and I'd
17 also like to thank Commissioner and all
18 of you for volunteering your time and
19 serving on this board.

20 And I'm here to kind of do the same
21 thing Russell did, and that's to thank
22 Kevin Anson and Chris Blankenship for
23 all their hard work, for them going to

1 bat for recreational anglers and to not
2 only seeing that problem of the federal
3 government overestimating the amount of
4 fish that we're catching, but actually
5 coming to the table with solutions to
6 that problem to try to figure it out
7 with the Snapper Check. It's -- it's
8 innovative. They're bringing these new
9 ideas that the other states are copying,
10 and I couldn't be prouder to have Chris
11 representing us at these Gulf Council
12 meetings in D.C. And I think our
13 Department of Conservation is more than
14 capable of properly and fairly and
15 comfortably managing red snapper and
16 many, many other fish. But I just
17 wanted to give them a pat on the back
18 and tell them we appreciate them. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Blakeley.

21 Our next speaker, James Moyer.

22 MR. MOYER: Thank you, Commissioner. James

23 Michael Moyer. I'm from Birmingham. I

1 spend a lot of time down on the Gulf
2 fishing and am very happy with the
3 resources and the management of Chris
4 Blankenship that has allowed us to not
5 only enjoy the wonderful resource that
6 we have, but has gone to bat for the
7 recreational anglers to have real data
8 through that Snapper Check so that we
9 can manage our resources that we do have
10 here. And like the others have said, I
11 think -- or I know they're way more
12 capable of managing that asset than
13 doing it from a federal level.

14 But I'm excited to see the data that
15 he shared with us today and how they're
16 doing that and how that can help the
17 recreational angler moving forward.

18 Thank you for your time.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, James.

20 Our next speaker is Sybil
21 Deschaines.

22 MS. DESCHAINES: First I want to welcome

23 Dr. Strickland as our chairman. I'd

1 like to introduce myself to the new
2 members of the board that I have not had
3 an opportunity to meet.

4 I came before the advisory board in
5 1996 to ask for some help in Elmore
6 County. My offender was the president
7 of a hunting club from Elmore County.
8 He turned three packs of dogs loose on
9 my land from a public road out of
10 season. And I read in the newspaper
11 about the board meetings and some --
12 Cleburne County primarily had come
13 before the board and asked for help. I
14 thought if he can do it, I can do it.

15 So we got a partial-county
16 restriction -- excuse me -- on deer
17 hunting with dogs in Elmore County. And
18 there were a number of landowners at the
19 board meeting expressing the same need
20 for some help. So we organized Alabama
21 Sportsmans and Landowners Council to
22 work together to see if we could get
23 some help with the problems we were

1 having across the state. We have been
2 portrayed as against hunting, against
3 dog hunting, but we are not by any means
4 against any form of hunting. We just
5 ask that the laws of our state be
6 obeyed.

7 And we have had an impact, we feel,
8 across the state with help with other
9 counties. And we thank you very, very
10 much. It's been -- 1996 -- 20 years now
11 in Elmore County and people are still
12 thanking me for the effort. So thanks
13 to all of you.

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Ms. Deschaines is a very
15 familiar face here at our advisory board
16 meetings. Once again, it's great seeing
17 you. Tell your husband I said "hello."

18 The next speaker is Charles Foshee.

19 MR. FOSHEE: Thank y'all for listening to me.
20 I didn't come prepared to speak, didn't
21 have no notes or anything. But what I
22 was concerned about, I love to hunt that
23 Forever Wild land down below Selma,

1 around Cahawba, and they keep the gates
2 closed, except they open them about four
3 days of hunting season. And you can
4 look and tell my age that I'm not able
5 to do much walking in to hunt. They
6 have good roads in there. And I just
7 wondered if y'all had any influence on
8 maybe opening the gates more days or
9 something to that extent where elderly
10 people can get in there to hunt. Thank
11 you, sir.

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you. Mr. Foshee, I
13 just want to let you know that we've had
14 some other concerns about that. We will
15 get you -- we will try to get you some
16 more information on why we do that.
17 There are certain restrictions and
18 different things. But we've heard from
19 some other people like yourself, and we
20 obviously want to make those lands as
21 accessible as possible. So we will try
22 to let you know something.

23 Ms. Powell is not here today, but

1 her staff is. And so we'll check on
2 that and try to get back with you.

3 MR. FOSHEE: Thank you, sir.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Yes, sir.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Our next speaker is Stan
6 Graves.

7 MR. GRAVES: Mr. Chairman, Commissioner Guy
8 and Members of the Board, my name is
9 Stan Graves. I'm from Mountain Brook,
10 Alabama, and I am a property owner on
11 Dauphin Island. And I specifically
12 would like to talk to you about two
13 issues.

14 As I mentioned, I own property on
15 Dauphin Island. I was a former member
16 of the board of directors of the
17 property owners association for four
18 years. I have watched my -- or have
19 watched the shoreline recede over the
20 last 10 years about 120 to 150 feet,
21 lose elevation of four-and-a-half feet.

22 And the reason I bring this up is
23 because I recently read a document

1 that's called the Mississippi Coastal
2 Improvements Program for the Mississippi
3 barrier islands. In that document is a
4 proposal. That proposal is to sell
5 Alabama sand to Mississippi, a very
6 valuable resource, irreversible and
7 irretrievable loss of Alabama sand that
8 will go for restoring barrier islands in
9 Mississippi. I think this is an error
10 that we should not allow to go forward,
11 and I ask the advisory board to look at
12 that concern.

13 I have provided you documentation
14 that addresses most of what I'm going to
15 just mention briefly. And I would like
16 that to be introduced at -- for the
17 record to support what I -- my comments.

18 In that document the -- I wrote a
19 letter to Susan Reeves with the Corps
20 that outlines my concerns about the
21 irreversible and irretrievable loss of
22 this valuable resource. We've lost over
23 20-million cubic yards of sand due to

1 dredging from 1974 to 2000. If you go
2 back further, we have lost 40 million --
3 I'm sorry. I said -- it's 20 million
4 and 40 million -- cubic yards of sand
5 that needs to be addressed.

6 That sand going to Mississippi would
7 not allow -- that's a lost sand that
8 could be used for stabilization of the
9 shorelines of Dauphin Island which in
10 fact would help the fishermen here
11 because it protects the Mississippi
12 Sound, the ecological aspects of what
13 that means.

14 There are two projects taking place
15 today, the lining deepening of the
16 Mobile Ship Channel and the Alabama
17 Barrier Island Assessment -- Restoration
18 Assessment, both of which could produce
19 a need for a project to stabilize that
20 shoreline. So, therefore, that sand,
21 which will be gone, could be used for
22 that purpose. That is a deep concern.

23 MS. JONES: Time.

1 MR. GRAVES: Secondly, there's a letter from
2 Colonel Drake Wilson going back to 1975.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Graves, your three
4 minutes -- if you could --

5 MR. GRAVES: Okay. Let me -- I'll close it
6 by -- let me touch on my second subject
7 real quick.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Go ahead.

9 MR. GRAVES: There is an Alabama Open Records
10 issue that I have that I've been trying
11 to get information -- and letters
12 written to you, Commissioner Guy --
13 since last February. And that
14 information is related to the loss of
15 sand or the sand going to Mississippi.
16 And there's a Corps document included in
17 my documentation.

18 I need to get that information
19 because that's an Open Records request.
20 If y'all could help me with that, I
21 would greatly appreciate it. Because
22 I've had to hire an attorney and I can't
23 even get the information through the

1 attorney. So any help that y'all can
2 provide on that I would appreciate. And
3 thank you for your time.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any questions from the
5 board?

6 Grady.

7 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman.

8 Chris, can you kind of answer some
9 of his questions?

10 MR. BLANKENSHIP: I don't know that I'm the
11 right one to answer some of those.

12 MR. HARTZOG: Well, who would be the --

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman?

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: Grady, Patti is not here
16 today. Unfortunately she had a prior
17 engagement. And we can get you an
18 answer on that. It would take more than
19 a few minutes. The other staff is here,
20 but I think it would be better if you
21 could direct it to Patti who can get you
22 answers on that.

23 MR. HARTZOG: Well, Mr. Chairman, if we'll

1 just have a report at the next meeting
2 as to --

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay, Grady. And --

4 MR. HARTZOG: -- his concerns. Because, I
5 mean, it's concerning seeing that much
6 sand going to --

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And, Chris, could you
8 make sure that we make contact with
9 Mr. Graves when we can address some of
10 his concerns?

11 And I guess Patti, Commissioner,
12 would be the one that would --

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Yeah. We'll get the
14 information --

15 MR. GRAVES: Okay. If I may add, I have also
16 written a letter to the EPA asking them
17 to consider the Mississippi final
18 environmental impact statement be
19 deficient because it does not address
20 that lost sand and how it affects
21 Alabama.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

23 MR. GRAVES: And that's in the documentation

1 too.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Graves.

3 Our next speaker is Tammi Hudson.

4 Tammi, do you want to come down to the
5 mic?

6 And, again, I want to emphasize to
7 the speakers, make sure you speak
8 directly into the mic so our court
9 reporter will not have difficulty in
10 documenting your concerns.

11 MS. HUDSON: My name is Tammi Hudson. I live
12 in Clarke County, not far from Scotch
13 Management Area as a matter of fact.
14 And I want to talk a little bit about
15 the physically disabled hunting areas.

16 First of all, I want to thank you
17 for that. That's a wonderful resource
18 that the state has and we really
19 appreciate that. I also want to thank
20 y'all for the officers and biologists
21 and even the ladies that take our
22 reservations. They do a great job.
23 Everybody is very nice.

1 I had a situation happen to me up at
2 Marengo County. And the lady that takes
3 the reservations there, Donna, came up
4 with a solution that I thought was great
5 that probably should be implemented on
6 all of them that would prevent that
7 pretty much from happening any other
8 time. And I thought that was great.

9 I also want to thank a couple of
10 officers. I know that we're
11 shorthanded, as Director Sykes said.
12 And even being shorthanded, I had a
13 couple of situations happen.

14 December 28th there had been about
15 14 inches of rain that week in Lowndes
16 County. I was hunting at Prairie Creek
17 and carried a regular SUV there because
18 I didn't have any -- had never had a
19 problem there. Got stuck. And
20 Biologist Chris Jaworowski came on his
21 day off and pulled me out of that, and I
22 really appreciated that. He went above
23 and beyond.

1 Then on January the 14th I was
2 hunting in Marengo County. And my
3 husband had harvested a deer and we
4 couldn't find it. And so I had called
5 Sergeant Goddard. It was getting late,
6 really late, and it was supposed to
7 really rain that night. And we called
8 to see if he would give us permission to
9 come back in the next morning to look
10 for it. And he said, yes, but he asked
11 several questions, you know, said was he
12 sure that he hit it and this, that, and
13 the other, and we said yes. And he
14 said, well, go back and look one more
15 time, and if you can't find it, he said,
16 I have to go to Montgomery tomorrow, but
17 I have another officer that will come in
18 the morning and help y'all.

19 So we went back, looked again. We
20 were getting in the truck to leave, and
21 we saw somebody coming. Well, it was
22 Sergeant Goddard and Officer Porter. I
23 was so impressed with them. They asked

1 a few questions to make sure that we
2 really had probably hit the deer.
3 Sergeant Porter got on his hands and
4 knees looking for blood. Found three
5 little drops of blood. Anyway, we found
6 the deer. It was a beautiful
7 seven-point, 195-pound buck. It was
8 gorgeous. And they were thrilled. We
9 were thrilled.

10 So your officers do a wonderful job.
11 They go above and beyond. I'm sure you
12 get a lot of complaints. So I thought
13 you might want to hear some good news.

14 I came before the board several
15 years ago and asked about turkey hunting
16 on these disabled areas.

17 MS. JONES: Time.

18 MS. HUDSON: Is that my time?

19 I know it's available in Cherokee
20 County up at the Cherokee area now, and
21 I'm still asking for it in the other
22 areas.

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Tammi, we'll look into

1 that. Thank you.

2 MS. HUDSON: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And, once again, we want
4 to recognize our conservation officers.
5 They always go beyond the call of duty.

6 Chris, we're going to check and make
7 sure you didn't put in for overtime.

8 Our next speaker, David Campbell.
9 Approach the mic, please. And on deck
10 will be Buddy Howard.

11 MR. CAMPBELL: Hello, gentlemen. I'd just
12 like to thank Commissioner Guy and I'd
13 like to thank the members of the board
14 for this opportunity to speak to you
15 today. My name is David Campbell. I'm
16 from Birmingham, Alabama, and grew up in
17 Mobile.

18 I'm an angler. I've been fishing
19 the Alabama Gulf Coast since I was four
20 years old. I was a deckhand in my teens
21 and continue to fish -- saltwater fish
22 every year throughout the year with my
23 children and my wife. And I just want

1 to express to each one of you how much
2 these Alabama natural resources mean to
3 my family.

4 So I wanted to take just a quick
5 minute to go ahead and tell you thank
6 you, every one of you, for the job that
7 you guys have done and wanted to point
8 out a couple of things that I'm
9 extremely appreciate of.

10 First I'd like to thank Chris
11 Blankenship for garnering the BP money
12 that he has for Alabama through his hard
13 work in quantifying and qualifying the
14 losses that occurred during that spill.
15 I'd like to thank him for putting in
16 place programs as well that are
17 instrumental for the seafood industry
18 and will provide the retail markets for
19 our users and get our seafood to the
20 users. Thank you very much, Chris.

21 I want to thank Chris and Kevin
22 Anson, you know, for the work on the
23 artificial reef program. Thanks to you

1 guys, my kids are never without a fish.
2 Every single time we go out we'll catch
3 something even if we're not able to keep
4 it because it's not in season. But
5 thank you very much. I'm looking
6 forward to that -- seeing that go
7 forward even more now that we have the
8 nine miles out and seeing renewed
9 interest in more artificial reefs.
10 Thank you.

11 I want to thank Patti who's not here
12 today and Commissioner Gunter. I would
13 like to thank you for all the work that
14 you did in obtaining the BP fund
15 settlement and for the programs that
16 you're implementing to make sure that my
17 children and my children's children will
18 continue to enjoy the great natural
19 resources. Thank you very much.

20 I want to thank Chuck Sykes for
21 bringing the innovative programs that he
22 has brought, for the policies for the
23 waterfowl, for the deer, and for the

1 turkey and for Alabama's rivers and
2 streams. Thank you.

3 I would also like to thank Gregory
4 Lein for your work through the State
5 Parks in this difficult time. I know
6 that we've had a lot of problems with
7 the funding, but to see you being able
8 to keep the parks open, to have the Gulf
9 State Cottages and revamp Gunterville
10 and upgrading the trails is a
11 tremendous, tremendous benefit to us and
12 to the state.

13 Joey Dobbs who's on the board, he
14 represents the 6th district. Joey, I'd
15 like to thank you for always
16 representing our district and everybody
17 else in Alabama and for you always being
18 available when we need you.

19 And, finally, I want to thank Chris
20 one more time. I would like to thank
21 you for your success in implementing the
22 Snapper Checks. I can tell you that
23 every time that I have come back off the

1 boat or that I'm -- we've actually had
2 Snapper Checks at Boggy Point or
3 anywhere else that we've been. It's
4 very easy, very simple. And I'm looking
5 forward to those reaping benefits for us
6 and being able to get the actual numbers
7 that we need for the state to be able to
8 continue to do the things that maybe the
9 federal government hasn't been able to
10 do as a whole.

11 So thank you, gentlemen, and thank
12 everybody for everything that you've
13 done. I greatly appreciate it. Thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, David, for
16 addressing the board.

17 Next, Buddy Howard. On deck is Don
18 Jackson.

19 MR. HOWARD: I'm Buddy Howard. I'm from
20 Mountain Brook, Alabama.

21 I just want to thank the
22 commissioners and Gunter Guy and his
23 team for helping everybody in the state

1 of Alabama, the hunters and fishermen of
2 this state. I'm an avid hunter myself,
3 fisherman. And I would greatly
4 appreciate the support of the state to
5 regulate all of the compliance with the
6 red snapper and keep the compliance
7 within the state of Alabama. I know we
8 can do a better job here than what the
9 Feds can do. So please help us keep
10 that here.

11 And so we want to thank you again,
12 thank the team. We know we have great
13 people out there on the waterways, at
14 the lakes and down in the Gulf and out
15 at the hunting farms. So thank you so
16 much. Appreciate it.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Don Jackson. Adler
18 Rothschild is on deck.

19 MR. JACKSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
20 Commissioner, Board. I'm a political
21 advisor for the Bowhunters of Alabama,
22 also called BHA. And I'll have to
23 admit, my thunder got stolen by

1 Mr. Sykes.

2 I'm here to request that we take
3 Zone B archery season -- begin it at
4 October 15th instead of the 25th, not me
5 myself, but as a collective group, the
6 Bowhunters of Alabama. The archers in
7 that area want to enjoy the fall woods
8 without all the other farm hunters
9 sooner if they could.

10 We also -- and I think you had
11 mentioned that antlerless deer could not
12 be taken during that time because of the
13 late conception dates. We are totally
14 in agreement with that.

15 I don't know if you mentioned it,
16 but we had also thought that to keep the
17 number of days the same, that they
18 follow the same layoff or the
19 non-hunting period during the month of
20 December.

21 But, again, I say all that to say
22 y'all are doing a great job with
23 everything that you're doing and it

1 looks to me like we're headed in the
2 right direction and would just like to
3 say that we support beginning the
4 archery season earlier in Zone B.
5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Don.

7 Adler Rothschild. On deck is Van
8 Collins.

9 MR. ROTHSCHILD: Gentlemen, I appreciate being
10 here and letting you speak to me. My
11 name is Adler Rothschild. I'm
12 representing the Native American
13 Cherokee Group and the Cherokee Center
14 of Gaylesville, Alabama, which is in
15 Cherokee County.

16 Many of you may have already met or
17 seen the Sling Bow which Chief A.J. has
18 invented. It's approved in many states
19 for big game. It's approved in Alabama
20 for small game.

21 On the sheet -- you got a sheet
22 there that's got the specifications in
23 it. I think some of you may have met

1 Chief A.J. He's quite a character.

2 MR. MARTIN: Yes, he is.

3 MR. ROTHSCHILD: And he's very -- very into
4 his bow.

5 Like I say, it's approved. They've
6 shot alligators, grizzly bears, black
7 bears, feral hogs, turkeys and, of
8 course, deer with it. They would like
9 to get it approved in Alabama because
10 without approval they wouldn't want to
11 manufacture it here. They would like to
12 set up a manufacturing plant in
13 Gaylesville, Alabama, on the Cherokee
14 reservation.

15 The "Wall Street Journal" has had it
16 on the front page. They took the "Wall
17 Street" reporter out, and they shot two
18 big 200-pound hogs and killed it, and it
19 made the front page of the paper.

20 You have the technical
21 specifications on your sheet. The arrow
22 goes 185 feet per second with 30-inch
23 hunting bows, 30.60 FPE. I'm not a

1 bowhunter, so I don't know what that
2 means. 41 to 49 joules, which is the
3 power. And it's more than a 40-pound
4 bow.

5 And I don't know whether any of
6 y'all would like to hold it or see it,
7 but -- want me to bring it up there?
8 Does anybody want it?

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: I think we've all seen some
10 of the videos.

11 MR. ROTHSCHILD: Oh, okay. It's on his site,
12 ChiefAJ.com, pages and pages of video
13 showing actual shooting.

14 So we would ask you to approve this
15 for large game. It's already approved
16 for game, I believe, up to 30 pounds in
17 Alabama, and we would like it to be
18 approved for large game.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you,
20 Mr. Rothschild. We will take that into
21 consideration.

22 MR. ROTHSCHILD: Have any questions?

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any questions from the

1 board?

2 (No response.)

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

4 Next speaker is Van Collins. On
5 deck is Mr. Van Collins, III.

6 MR. COLLINS: My name is Van Collins from
7 Faunsdale, Alabama. I'm here to just
8 briefly tell the Commissioner Guy and
9 the board that his hard work in the past
10 to straighten out the discrepancies on
11 wheat and dates of wheat and -- in other
12 words, a dove practice was very
13 successful, that he's worked really hard
14 to get more dove hunters -- and the
15 whole board has -- in Alabama. And I
16 can speak for west-central Alabama.
17 We're overrun with dove hunters now, I
18 can tell you.

19 Dove hunting, you don't hear a lot
20 of talk about it, but it's very
21 important to a lot of us. And as he
22 said, Chuck stole my thunder. I was
23 here really lobbying to try to get the

1 November days deleted and some time
2 added into January because the weather
3 is good. And I could go into a hundred
4 reasons why it's better in January, but
5 I think obviously Chuck knows that and
6 the board must know that.

7 So I just want to say that there's
8 more people out there hunting, and it
9 may help the license sales. I hope it
10 does. I've been in the business for 50
11 years, whether it be hunting or
12 entertaining people and taking them
13 hunting. And I've entertained several
14 of you. And, you know, as you know, we
15 work real hard at it, and I think a lot
16 more people now because of the changes
17 are working real hard at it. And I just
18 want to thank everybody.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Collins.

20 Commissioner.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman.

22 I just want to say thanks to Vandy
23 for -- we've been working with Vandy and

1 value his input, Mr. Chairman, because
2 he does have a lot of people come and
3 dove hunt over there where he is.

4 But I do want to tell you, Vandy,
5 that it was cooperative, you know, work
6 with the Alabama Extension Service and
7 Dr. Lemme that got us there because they
8 were willing to revisit all those rules
9 and regulations. And I couldn't be -- I
10 couldn't say anything without
11 recognizing Dr. Lemme and the Extension
12 Service for what they contributed to
13 this as well. And, of course, it's hard
14 for me to give the federal government,
15 you know, props sometimes. But the U.S.
16 Fish and Wildlife Service was helpful in
17 that regard too.

18 But we are thankful and hopefully
19 it's paying off in getting some young
20 hunters out there as well as keeping the
21 old hunters happy.

22 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. I think it's paid off,
23 you know, ten-fold over. But I could go

1 into a thousand reasons why we want it
2 in January and could stand to lose it in
3 November. And I think the number-one
4 thing is migratory doves start to come
5 down later in the year. You know, there
6 are a lot of things that play into it.
7 I just think it's a really good move if
8 we get it done. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Collins.
10 Van Collins, III.

11 All right. The next speaker will be
12 Cliff Lane. On deck is Hale Smith.

13 MR. LANE: Good morning. I'm Cliff Lane out
14 of Geneva County. My deal here has to
15 do with turkey decoys mainly. We
16 designed this stake unknowingly knowing
17 that it's apparently illegal in the
18 state of Alabama. This is one thing we
19 was hoping that we could get passed in
20 that would make this decoy stake itself
21 legal.

22 It's not electronic. It's manual.
23 You have to do it -- work it with the

1 strings from your blind. The -- we feel
2 like it would work really well with
3 youngsters, because youngsters are
4 sitting in a blind and they get bored if
5 a turkey is not coming. But it gives
6 them something to play with in the
7 meantime while they're waiting and
8 learning.

9 We also feel like that this decoy
10 stake would be useful in hunting other
11 animals such as geese. I know that the
12 geese populations are getting overboard.
13 But this is -- this decoy stake is
14 capable of having more than one decoy
15 move at the same time. We had it with
16 turkey decoys -- moving turkey decoys,
17 as many as three at one time, and it's
18 very effective, I must admit.

19 We didn't realize that it was
20 illegal in the state of Alabama until
21 one of the retired officers wrote in a
22 little book about turkeys and said that
23 Alabama was one of the few states that

1 wouldn't allow any kind of movement of a
2 decoy, whether it be manually or
3 electronically. So we shut it down when
4 we found out. A buddy of mine called me
5 up and says, do you get so-and-so
6 magazine? I said, no.

7 We looked in the manual, the little
8 book that, you know, we get every year,
9 and we saw the small print that says
10 this is a composite -- you know,
11 condensed version. And so after a few
12 hours my wife was finally able to pull
13 it up on a computer, the main book for
14 the State of Alabama, and sure enough
15 you cannot have a decoy that will move
16 manually, electronically, or any size,
17 shape, or form other than wind. But
18 we're hoping that we can get it -- that
19 part changed. The State of Georgia as
20 well as the State of Florida both will
21 allow this.

22 But I think it would be great as far
23 as people who are elderly that aren't

1 able to run and shoot on a turkey
2 like --

3 MS. JONES: Time.

4 MR. LANE: -- young people are.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chuck, can I ask a
6 question?

7 Mr. Lane, don't -- what's the source
8 of that -- I know for a fact that that
9 is a law. Is there a reason that we
10 decided to put that law in effect that
11 we didn't want to use moveable decoys?
12 Do you think it really -- yeah. If you
13 could just address that briefly.

14 MR. SYKES: I would like to defer to Chief
15 Dodd who was here long before I was. It
16 was done before I got here.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. I don't mean to
18 put anyone on the spot, but I would
19 always be curious --

20 MR. DODD: It wasn't that long before you.

21 That was the board's decision at the
22 time. And I think if Mr. Moultrie is
23 still here he may have remembered some

1 of the discussions. But the regulation
2 does specifically say devoid of any
3 parts that -- or mechanical parts that
4 render it capable of movement, which
5 would include a string. That's a basic
6 machine or lever, so -- but that was the
7 board's decision.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. So my next
9 question --

10 MR. LANE: You can write me up later.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: My next question is, do
12 we feel that gives the turkey an unusual
13 disadvantage to have the decoy move?

14 I mean, I still don't under -- you
15 know --

16 MR. DODD: In speaking with Mr. Lane before we
17 started here, he admitted -- he said
18 that there was a couple of wise old
19 birds that no one could kill and then he
20 tried it and was able to kill them. So
21 that does give some indication that
22 mechanical or movable parts on the decoy
23 do improve its effectiveness.

1 But, again, that's the board's
2 decision and recommendations.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any questions from the
4 board?

5 MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

6 The other states -- what other
7 states that you referred to --

8 MR. LANE: Georgia and Florida. I got on the
9 computer and got with Florida, and they
10 sent me an e-mail saying that, yeah,
11 this decoy stake would be allowed to be
12 used in the state of Florida.

13 The State of Georgia, they sent me
14 an e-mail back. And I've got to go
15 refer to the game wardens in Georgia.
16 But I've got a nephew that's over there,
17 and he said that it's his understanding
18 that it could be used over there.

19 There's other stakes -- I mean,
20 there's turkey stakes that are used
21 nationwide. I've seen them in Cabela's
22 and, you know, Bass Pros and stuff of
23 that nature. The only difference

1 between theirs and mine basically is
2 mine -- you have to work it manually.
3 It's none of this electronic stuff that
4 you get out there and you flip a button.
5 When you make a movement, that turkey's
6 got just as much chance of seeing you
7 make that movement if you're not
8 completely camouflaged.

9 The movement of the turkey decoy
10 itself does enhance the bird. It's kind
11 of like trapping a bobcat. If you put a
12 pie pan up here and trap over here and a
13 piece of gum right there, he's going to
14 look at this pie pan, but he wants to
15 see what that gum is too. So,
16 therefore, it throws him off as far as
17 him being able to concentrate on this
18 object and this object because both of
19 them are moving. And that was the
20 concept that I came up with on designing
21 this thing.

22 The main thing is like older people
23 especially -- I know my turkey-hunting

1 mentor, he's in his 70s now, and I asked
2 him. I said, what's the problem with
3 your hunting? He says, Bo, I can't get
4 up and run them guns like I used to. He
5 said, my part -- my turkey hunting now
6 is limited to sitting somewhere and
7 hoping he'll come by and then when he
8 does come by hoping he'll come in on the
9 call.

10 But a lot of these wise old birds --
11 if any of y'all turkey hunt knows that
12 if a bird gets out there a hundred yards
13 and he sees a decoy sitting there, he's
14 going to stand there like a statue and
15 he's not going to move. I don't care
16 what kind of call, how good you are.
17 He's smart enough he's not going to move
18 unless something else moves.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Lane, I'm going to
20 have the Commissioner -- he had a
21 question.

22 MR. LANE: Yes, sir.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: I don't really have a

1 question. I just want to make a couple
2 of statements, Mr. Chairman, if I can.

3 Number one, Chuck and I just got
4 back from NWTF. And, you know,
5 Mr. Chairman and members of the board,
6 one of the biggest things we face every
7 year is the advancement of technology.
8 And so I don't begrudge your technology.
9 I don't begrudge any kind of thing. But
10 our duty is to protect the resource.

11 And so you saw Chuck's PowerPoint
12 earlier. Throughout the country there's
13 some concerns. And when we go to these
14 NWTF meetings, we're not going up
15 there -- we're talking to our partners.
16 And there's concerns about, you know,
17 turkeys and, you know, how good they --
18 you know, how good the population is
19 right now.

20 So the answer that I can tell you
21 that I brought back on not just a decoy
22 like this but on others that we're going
23 to have to be looking at, Mr. Chairman,

1 is the effect on the ability to take a
2 turkey unfairly, I guess is the best way
3 I could put it. And then, secondly --
4 and, again, I'm not speaking to you
5 directly on this on yours -- but the
6 safety. Because these things are
7 getting to be so good at what they do
8 that there's a possibility you can, you
9 know, be using them and be mistaken.
10 And there's a couple out there on the
11 market right now.

12 So what I would like to offer -- and
13 we could move on -- is just -- we're
14 going to be looking at all these things
15 to really answer whose question that was
16 down there, not just something like
17 yours but others. We've got to pay some
18 really close attention to -- I know
19 there's a lot of turkey hunters that
20 like using a lot of different kinds of
21 decoys, but there's just certain types
22 that we as a department have to look at
23 and evaluate. So we might need your

1 input on some of these, and we'll value
2 that. But a lot of discussion about
3 that.

4 MR. LANE: Okay. May I make one more
5 statement.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: One more, please, sir.

7 MR. LANE: I agree with -- they were talking
8 about knocking the limit of turkeys down
9 to three, and I totally agree to that
10 due to the amount of predators that I've
11 been seeing coming in the areas. One of
12 the major predators being the wild hog
13 is making a raccoon look bad as far as
14 turkey population goes.

15 And I think three is a good number.
16 I know that the State of Georgia and, I
17 think, Florida both have that same
18 amount, and that is a good number to go
19 with and it gives -- but when we was
20 hunting on this property in Cottonton,
21 Alabama, when I started there five years
22 ago, I found one turkey hen on the whole
23 property. It was due because of all the

1 wild hogs. In three years my partner
2 and I killed over 400 hogs off of 600 --
3 800 -- a thousand acres combined,
4 different properties. We killed over
5 400 hogs in a three-year period.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Lane, we'll take
7 your consideration.

8 MR. LANE: Okay.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. The board really
10 appreciates you coming. We're going to
11 have to move on, but thank you so much.

12 MR. LANE: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The next speaker is Hale
14 Smith. Jessica Flowers is on deck.

15 MR. SMITH: I'm Hale Smith from Marengo
16 County, and I came here to chat with you
17 guys about turkeys in the spirit of
18 protecting our resource.

19 I'm a land manager and sell land and
20 own land throughout T.J.'s district and
21 Ben's district. And through
22 conversations and personal experiences
23 with turkey hunting over the past few

1 years, there's a growing concern among a
2 lot of the landowners and hunters that I
3 deal with each year on a decline in the
4 population in many of those areas. I
5 know there's certainly pockets where
6 people have good turkey hunting and
7 don't see that, but there's also -- a
8 majority of the people I talk to are
9 suggesting there's a decline in turkeys,
10 and they're certainly for a reduction in
11 the number of turkeys that can be
12 harvested each year.

13 I didn't know that Chuck was going
14 to present the information that Auburn
15 is recommending from five to three, but
16 that's exactly what I was going to
17 propose here speaking with y'all today
18 is if we could go down a little bit and
19 be a little proactive and cautious while
20 this five-year study is going on that
21 we're conducting here to see exactly
22 what the data is and what it supports.
23 I think there's some feedback coming in,

1 though, that certainly says that there's
2 some areas that there's some reduction
3 in turkey numbers. And we're seeing
4 that over in west Alabama in many areas.

5 So I know there's probably some
6 contradictory information out there, but
7 I just wanted to convey to y'all what
8 we're seeing and urge you to consider
9 the reduction from five to three until
10 we know some better ideas about the
11 data.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Smith, you heard
13 from Chuck's presentation that this is
14 something that the Conservation
15 Department is keeping a close eye on.

16 MR. SMITH: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The board is very, very
18 aware. And we're just in the process of
19 gathering data, and we're going to make
20 a decision on how we're going to address
21 this.

22 But it's a pretty complex answer
23 when you look at turkey population

1 because you know birds. They have
2 cyclic trends as well. A lot of things
3 affect it, predation --

4 MR. SMITH: Yeah. There was some interesting
5 information in our -- the AWF put on a
6 turkey seminar this summer that we
7 attended down in Jackson. And one of
8 the fascinating things that came of that
9 to me was the success rate nowadays of
10 hunters compared to 20 years ago. And
11 it has a lot to do with the decoys and
12 the better equipment and technology and
13 stuff. But, also, one of the -- one of
14 the things that came out was that, I
15 think, 90-something percent of all male
16 turkeys are -- die from hunters in the
17 spring.

18 Is that what we talked about down
19 there? Wasn't it a large number of --
20 most male turkeys that die, die from
21 hunters in a window in the springtime.
22 So there is -- am I missing that?

23 MR. SYKES: I'm not familiar with that, but it

1 could be.

2 MR. SMITH: Was you listening?

3 MR. SYKES: I probably -- I was so mad at the
4 legislature --

5 MR. SMITH: You wasn't listening.

6 MS. JONES: Time.

7 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your time.

8 I appreciate your consideration.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Smith, we appreciate
10 you coming down.

11 MR. BUNN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to address
12 Hale. I just want to -- just want make
13 a few comments.

14 I've talked to Walter about this
15 issue, Hale, and I know y'all are close.
16 I just want to say Walter and Hale are
17 probably two of the most knowledgeable
18 people, especially in my district, on
19 the wild turkey. They're out in the
20 woods. They talk to a lot of hunters.
21 They oversee a lot of property. So we
22 really -- I know I really value both of
23 your opinions.

1 One thing I'd like to ask, I guess,
2 for your help on, we've talked a lot
3 about lowering the bag limit as a way to
4 address maybe a decline in the
5 population of turkeys. I'd like to get
6 y'all's thoughts maybe on some, I guess,
7 out-of-the-box theories or
8 out-of-the-box ideas besides lowering
9 the bag limit as, you know -- as we all
10 know how effective especially these
11 strutting decoys are and maybe looking
12 at how to address that, of course, the
13 hog population, how to address -- how to
14 address that. And any ideas that you or
15 Walter or any of your lessees or folks
16 you know -- any ideas besides lowering
17 the bag limit I would love to hear.

18 But thank you again and I appreciate
19 y'all calling me.

20 MR. SMITH: Thank you. And we'd love to meet
21 with you some other time.

22 MR. BUNN: All right. Thanks, Hale.

23 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Patrick.

2 MR. CAGLE: I just want to echo -- I just want
3 to echo T.J.'s comments and also say
4 that Hale and his partner, Walter, you
5 know, they manage a lot of land and they
6 really get it. I think they're probably
7 doing as well as you can when it comes
8 to making sure you have suitable habitat
9 for turkey and as well as controlling
10 the predators. The concern that they've
11 expressed to me, you know, gives me
12 concern because they're doing the right
13 things, and if they have a concern about
14 our turkey population, I think it's just
15 more the reason that we need to continue
16 to study it and hopefully come to terms
17 with what, if anything, may be affecting
18 our population. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next speaker is Jessica
20 Flowers. Ray Thompson is on deck.

21 MS. FLOWERS: Hello. My name is Jessica
22 Flowers. I'm from Baldwin County. I am
23 here to represent the Alabama Hog Dog

1 Hunters Association.

2 I want to thank y'all for this year
3 for giving us a part of management from
4 March 1st to March 8th and thank you to
5 Mr. Sykes for helping get us that and
6 trying to eliminate some of the hog
7 population on there.

8 And, also, I would like to address
9 one thing that we have going on is we're
10 not able to hunt at night. This is a
11 big issue during the summertime. During
12 the summertime we're not able to hunt
13 the dogs as long as we would like. One
14 or two hours is about max that we're
15 able to do to get out there. And it
16 puts detrimental on our dogs when you
17 run them in a hundred-degree weather.

18 A lot of the farmers -- and these
19 are all private landowners and farmers.
20 A lot of the farmers and private
21 landowners want the hogs gone. And in
22 order for us to do that, we have to be
23 able to hunt at night also. So we would

1 like for y'all to take in consideration
2 for us to get back on our nights and be
3 able to hunt our nights again also.
4 This will help your hog population. I
5 hear y'all up there talking about the
6 hog population. Well, let us take care
7 of it.

8 Another thing I would like, also, to
9 address is that we did get to where we
10 could not transport live hogs on the
11 same property. I get that. They don't
12 want us transporting live hogs. We get
13 that. But on transporting live hogs on
14 the same property, it gives us time to
15 regroup and hunt again. If we can get
16 the hog to the vehicle -- it will be
17 alive, but it's still on the same
18 property -- and continue hunting and get
19 the dogs away from it, we can continue
20 hunting. Instead of catching one hog,
21 we can catch six or seven in one day.
22 But if we just kill the hog there, it's
23 going to ruin during the hot summer.

1 You're going to get gnats on it and we
2 got to stop hunting and take it home.

3 So we're asking that you please give
4 us back the being able to transport on
5 the same property on private land. And
6 that's about it, but take it in
7 consideration, please.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any questions from the
9 board?

10 Chuck, would you like to address
11 some of her concerns?

12 MR. SYKES: Yeah. Just quickly, we allow
13 permits. Any landowner can call and get
14 a permit other than during deer season.
15 They can hunt them at night. They can
16 do whatever they want to do so far as --
17 if it's private landowners, this is not
18 an issue. We allow them to do that now.
19 All they need to do is get a permit.

20 MS. FLOWERS: We've had a few issues where the
21 landowner said that, you know, it was
22 taking them some time in order to get
23 with different ones in law enforcement

1 to get that straightened out.

2 But this is a nuisance animal. A
3 hog is a nuisance animal. If we can
4 hunt it during the day, I don't see the
5 reason why we have to have a depredation
6 permit to hunt it at night. That's just
7 my opinion and no offense.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. Flowers.

9 MS. FLOWERS: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The next speaker is Ray
11 Thompson. On deck is Charles Borden.

12 Mr. Thompson.

13 MR. THOMPSON: My name is Ray Thompson, and I
14 want to speak on the hog. I'm having a
15 problem processing the wild hog because
16 the state says it's a tame hog once you
17 shoot it. I think it should be a wild
18 hog and once you shoot it, it still be a
19 wild hog.

20 But I can't process it because the
21 fellow says that it is a swine. I
22 wonder could we change it to say that
23 it's a wild swine to be a wild hog.

1 Because I want to process it because
2 there's a lot of meat throwed away. I
3 looked at ten hogs this week weighing
4 over 200 pounds apiece, gilt hogs. Now,
5 I know the boar hog ain't fit to eat,
6 but the gilt is. And I had to tell them
7 that I couldn't do it because the
8 federal government says it's a tame hog
9 once you shoot it. I would like to have
10 address with that. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any comments from the
12 board?

13 (No response.)

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

15 Next speaker, Charles. On deck is
16 Caroline Graves.

17 MR. BORDEN: I'm Dr. Charles Borden. I'm a
18 lifelong resident of the Bankhead
19 National Forest, and I'm here to address
20 some of the same things that these other
21 folks are talking about.

22 We've had a decline and a lull --
23 for a number of years there's been a

1 decline in the deer population and the
2 turkey population on the Black Warrior
3 Wildlife Management Area. And we're not
4 going to solve it and the proposals I
5 have are not going to solve it. But
6 there are two or three things, I think,
7 that could be helpful.

8 One thing that was done this past
9 year is that two extra days were added
10 the first of the season for gun deer
11 hunts. These were the first two days of
12 gun deer hunting in the state of Alabama
13 on the -- on one zone in the Black
14 Warrior National Forest in the Bankhead.
15 We had over 2,000 hunters there for
16 those two days. They harvested five
17 deer in two days with over 2,000
18 hunters. That gives you an idea of how
19 many deer are there.

20 So I would ask that you eliminate
21 that this year. It was a failure. The
22 hunt was a failure. It was
23 nonproductive. It required a lot of

1 extra personnel to try to conduct it.

2 So I ask that you eliminate that.

3 The second thing is our deer
4 population is just very low on the
5 entirety of the forest for a number of
6 reasons. I would ask that you also
7 eliminate all antlerless deer harvests
8 both for bow and gun hunters. And I do
9 both. But it needs to be eliminated
10 until the deer population is such that
11 it could sustain that.

12 Our turkey population is down. Our
13 hog population is up. We've had a --
14 we've had discussions for a long time
15 about using dogs on the management area.
16 There's been concern because people
17 thought -- and rightly so -- that there
18 would be some illegal deer hunting with
19 dogs.

20 But I have a proposal that those --
21 we have a lot of people who like to dog
22 hunt for hogs, and my proposal -- and
23 they're hunting without guns. They're

1 going out and killing them with a knife.
2 And so I said, okay, that takes care of
3 both problems. If they want to go and
4 use their dogs to hunt hogs other than
5 during deer season or other than during
6 turkey season, then let them do it, day
7 or night, but without guns. That way it
8 eliminates the possibility and gives law
9 enforcement an opportunity to deal with
10 situations where there might be illegal
11 hunters attempting to deer hunt.

12 So I would appreciate it if you
13 would take a look at those proposals
14 that I have before you.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Borden.

16 Chuck, do you want to comment at
17 all?

18 MR. SYKES: Dr. Strickland, we just saw the
19 proposal this morning just like y'all
20 did. So if you'll please let us take a
21 look at it, we'll have you something for
22 the next meeting.

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you. Any

1 questions from the board members?

2 (No response.)

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. The next speaker
4 is Caroline Graves and on deck is Joe
5 Thomas.

6 MS. GRAVES: I'm here to ask the advisory
7 committee to get the Department of
8 Conservation to stop the Corps of
9 Engineers' destruction of Dauphin
10 Islands' beaches. The federal
11 government and the U.S. Army Corps of
12 Engineers are responsible for all
13 aspects of the federally authorized deep
14 draft channel -- navigational channels
15 in the county. This includes the
16 protection of the erosion of the
17 adjacent beaches during the dredging of
18 these channels.

19 The Department of Conservation and
20 Natural Resources was created to protect
21 the natural resources in this state. In
22 2000 the State of Alabama gave
23 \$100 million to the Alabama Port

1 Authority for the expansion of the
2 Mobile Harbor Entrance Channel without
3 any requirement to protect adjacent
4 beaches of Dauphin Island. Dauphin
5 Island is literally being eroded away
6 using income from the gas and oil rigs
7 and the pipelines that go under the
8 island.

9 The Corps intentionally left out all
10 impacts to Dauphin Island in its
11 original 1980 environmental impact
12 statement with the expansion of Mobile
13 Harbor. We have now just discovered
14 that the Corps will be doing a
15 supplement to the 1980 EIS which will
16 only study at the current depth of the
17 channel of 47 feet to the new depth of
18 57 feet instead of disclosing all
19 impacts to Dauphin Island from 1980 to
20 2016.

21 The State Lands Division is using
22 tens of thousands of dollars of BP money
23 to do three studies about Dauphin

1 Island. The Corps will manage the three
2 studies, and according to the
3 documentation, the Corps will be using
4 the past Corps studies about Dauphin
5 Island which include corrupted data from
6 the Corps' sand sediment surveys. How
7 can the Corps be trusted to manage these
8 three studies when the Corps
9 intentionally left out all impacts to
10 Dauphin Island in the 1980 EIS and the
11 past studies by the Corps have corrupted
12 data in them?

13 Now the State Lands Division
14 proposes to sell \$50 million worth of
15 sand off of Dauphin Island that is
16 within the town of Dauphin Island's
17 corporate limits to the Corps for the
18 Mississippi Barrier Island Restoration.
19 Under state law not one drop of that
20 money will be used for the prevention of
21 erosion to Dauphin Island caused by the
22 Corps' dredging of the federal
23 navigational channel. I'm requesting

1 that all the information supplied to
2 y'all will be --

3 MS. JONES: Time.

4 MS. GRAVES: -- entered into the minutes.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Ms. Graves,
7 for addressing the board.

8 The next speaker, Joe Thomas. And
9 after Joe Thomas, on deck is Walter
10 Tutt.

11 MR. THOMAS: How are y'all doing?

12 My problem is dog hunting. On my
13 land I can't -- I can't hunt it because
14 of the dog hunters. They let their dogs
15 run across on my property. And I've
16 talked with them, you know, just to try
17 to -- I don't care what they do on their
18 property. I'm just worried about mine.
19 Because it affects my hunting. I can't
20 hunt.

21 And I can take you up there. They
22 talk about data on everything. I've
23 watched. During the week I got plenty

1 of deer. On the weekends when dogs come
2 through that pine thicket, either the
3 deer go off the land or they lay up.

4 And, I mean, you know, a dog's got
5 more rights on everybody's property than
6 you do. In the 1940s they had the --
7 you know, livestock was free to roam,
8 and then they come up with the fence
9 laws. And Mississippi come up in 1957
10 because, you know, one fellow would have
11 a good pasture of cattle and his
12 neighbor's cattle would come over and
13 eat and they had to do something.

14 And times just change, you know.
15 There's -- there's landowners -- I mean,
16 if a fellow wants to dog hunt, that's
17 fine if he can find a way to keep his
18 dog on his property. And I wish the
19 board would come up with a way -- I
20 mean, I'm not the only one complaining.
21 I mean, I just want to be able to hunt
22 my land like they're hunting theirs, you
23 know. And I'd appreciate the help.

1 I've called y'all, spoke to y'all
2 individually, each one of y'all. I've
3 called the governor, everybody I know.
4 I mean, I pay a note on my land and the
5 taxes, but that dog's got more rights to
6 my land than me. That ain't right to
7 nobody in the whole state of Alabama.

8 And we had the same problem in the
9 '40s. It was livestock. A lot of
10 people didn't want to put up fences, you
11 know. They wanted to bring their cattle
12 and let them go because they wanted them
13 to eat their neighbors' pastures and
14 everything and didn't want to have to
15 take care of them. Well, they come up
16 with the fence laws.

17 Anyway, that's just, you know --

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Thomas, do you have
19 private clubs around you or is it public
20 hunting, public land?

21 MR. THOMAS: No. It's private clubs.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: How many acres are those
23 clubs? Do you know?

1 MR. THOMAS: I don't know. I don't bother
2 them. I don't -- you know, I've talked
3 with them. But, I mean, they told me
4 they've been hunting that way forever.
5 I shouldn't have bought the land because
6 they don't.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: How many acres do you
8 have?

9 MR. THOMAS: 160.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: 160.

11 MR. THOMAS: It's a quarter-mile by a mile,
12 four 40s.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And you have addressed
14 this with the dog hunters, the clubs?

15 MR. THOMAS: I've called everybody from the
16 governor down.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. And what about
18 the officers that -- the conservation
19 officers? Have you talked with them
20 about your problem?

21 MR. THOMAS: Yeah. I've talked to Mr. Rhodes
22 and Mr. Blalock constantly.

23 I caught a dog on my property. The

1 last four weekends of hunting season I
2 couldn't hunt. You could go up there
3 and sit, but you wouldn't see nothing.
4 Caught a dog --

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: How long have you owned
6 this property? How many years have you
7 had it?

8 MR. THOMAS: Two years.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Two years. And you've
10 had problems for about two years?

11 MR. THOMAS: Had problems for two years.

12 I was told last year it was going to
13 be -- something was going to be done by
14 Mr. Hatley. Then he was approached by
15 somebody at the meeting, which is next,
16 and was told not to bring it up, and he
17 told me that his self before he
18 resigned. And, you know, I mean, I
19 talked to him on the phone.

20 But I caught a dog this year, one
21 here on my property in Baldwin County
22 which backs up to Escambia County. The
23 numbers were no good on the dog. I

1 called the game warden to come get the
2 dog. He said he couldn't, the state
3 didn't pay him to come get dogs. So I
4 had to haul the dog off and put him off
5 the side of the road to get him off my
6 property. Well, I shouldn't have to
7 deal with another fellow's dog.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All right, Mr. Thomas.
9 We appreciate you for addressing the
10 board.

11 Any questions from any of the board
12 members?

13 We have one question.

14 MR. DOBBS: Where is your property?

15 MR. THOMAS: I'm above Perdido, a place called
16 Lottie in between -- the back of my line
17 is Escambia County, and I'm on the
18 Baldwin County side.

19 MR. DOBBS: On Highway 61?

20 MR. THOMAS: Yes, sir.

21 MR. DOBBS: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Next, Walter Tutt and on
23 deck Henry Reynolds.

1 MR. TUTT: Hello. I'm Walter Tutt, and I'm
2 from Marengo County. I thank you guys
3 for letting me come up here today and
4 thank Chuck and all of you for what you
5 do. And just wanted to echo what Hale
6 Smith said about our decline in our
7 turkey numbers.

8 I am very encouraged that we got a
9 great study going on that Auburn is
10 doing. And I met with Keith and Barry.
11 And hopefully we'll get some good data
12 in the next couple of years to see
13 what's causing this decline. We've
14 dealt with -- and we deal with
15 landowners all over the state, and we're
16 hearing more and more concern about this
17 issue. And we just really would support
18 Auburn's recommendation to lower the
19 limit and certainly, T.J., would like to
20 meet with you, Hale and I. We'll meet
21 anytime to discuss potential options.

22 You know, the gentleman that was
23 discussing the decoy, certainly our

1 hunter success rate is up because of the
2 new technology we have and the forms of
3 hunting. And he made a comment
4 earlier -- well, as I was growing up --
5 Ben, you know this. There's more and
6 more turkey hunters now than we've ever
7 had. And the gentleman made a comment.
8 He said, you know, after you've killed
9 the ones that you can call up and you've
10 killed the ones that's are decoy, you
11 know, you always have one or two out
12 there that you may need another little
13 trick for. And I said, you know, it's
14 really okay if one or two of them make
15 it till the next year. That's my
16 opinion.

17 So, you know, I just really
18 appreciate you guys considering what
19 Auburn has to say and Chuck's
20 recommendation. He's a turkey hunter as
21 well. And just thank y'all guys for
22 hearing me. See you.

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Tutt.

1 Next we have Henry Reynolds.

2 MR. TUTT: My three minutes is not up. One
3 more.

4 I do support a permit system for dog
5 hunting in Marengo County. We need that
6 badly. Several of the landowners have
7 experienced the same issues. I'm not
8 opposed to dog hunting, but the permit
9 system seems a good way to get started
10 to try to keep everybody doing a good
11 job. Thank you.

12 MR. BUNN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask, I
13 guess, more to Chuck.

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Go ahead, T.J.

15 MR. BUNN: And this might be -- this is
16 probably going to be a hard question to
17 answer considering, you know, our lack
18 of participation in Game Check.

19 Do you have any idea or, I guess, an
20 educated guess of the percentage of
21 gobblers killed fall and spring, how
22 many of them are jakes?

23 MR. SYKES: You want me to throw my chicken

1 bones and see if I can tell you?

2 T.J., I'm sorry. I just -- I don't
3 know. I wish I did. But we haven't got
4 a clue. It's just a guess.

5 MR. TUTT: T.J., I interact with quite a bit
6 of turkey hunters, and most of the
7 hunters that I know and interact with,
8 nobody shoots jakes unless it's a
9 juvenile hunter.

10 MR. BUNN: Chuck, do you think looking at
11 maybe making a "no jake" law -- do you
12 think that's something that could be
13 beneficial?

14 MR. SYKES: Personally, no. I agree with
15 Walter. And I would hate to --
16 somebody's private property, I don't
17 want to tell Walter he can't -- his kid
18 can't shoot a jake if he wants to shoot
19 a jake. I -- honestly I don't think
20 that's the issue. I think the issue is
21 a habitat issue and a recruitment issue.
22 I don't -- personally I wouldn't want to
23 recommend that. I think you're going to

1 make a lot of landowners mad if their
2 kid couldn't kill one -- or not even a
3 kid. Just a first-time hunter.

4 MR. TUTT: I personally think that a mandatory
5 Game Check is going to help us more than
6 anything.

7 MR. BUNN: I agree with that. I do.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Jones and then
9 Mr. Dobbs.

10 MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 In agreement with what Chuck said
12 about a recruitment issue and a habitat
13 issue, we see other states that are
14 having turkey declines as well and they
15 have lower limits than we do. But, you
16 know, lowering the bag limit on adult
17 gobblers really has nothing to do with
18 addressing the recruitment and/or the
19 habitat issues that seem to be the core
20 root of the problem.

21 MR. SYKES: I agree. And I've had several
22 board members come to me and ask me my
23 opinion on data. The only data I can

1 give you is as of today Alabama is the
2 only state that has a limit of five
3 birds. Do we think we've got that many
4 more than everybody else?

5 That's the only data that I can give
6 you. South Carolina was five. They
7 went to three. I think Tennessee is
8 four. Georgia is three. Florida is
9 two. Mississippi is two. Those are
10 numbers that I'm 100-percent confident I
11 can tell you. And, you know, whether
12 we've got that many more turkeys than
13 them, I kind of doubt it, but I just
14 don't know.

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Has Tennessee altered
16 their bag limit?

17 MR. TUTT: They went up to four. They were at
18 three. And they're probably going to
19 come back down because they're
20 experiencing some similar declines.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Dobbs.

22 MR. DOBBS: (Inaudible) and thank you for
23 coming and talking to us.

1 MR. TUTT: Yes, sir.

2 MR. DOBBS: (Inaudible) one of the
3 recommendations that we've seen is
4 moving the season forward. I say
5 forward. But moving the season forward.
6 Tennessee's season starts in mid to late
7 March.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: It's the first Saturday
9 in April.

10 MR. DOBBS: April and runs through the middle
11 of May and some other states are like
12 that. Do you think that would have an
13 impact on the recruitment?

14 MR. TUTT: Well, I would have to defer to
15 Chuck and the biologists for that
16 answer. I certainly think it would
17 probably limit the number of turkeys
18 harvested, but, you know, whether that
19 would help with recruitment, I'd have to
20 defer to Keith and Chuck.

21 MR. DOBBS: From a breeding standpoint from
22 the time --

23 MR. SYKES: There are studies going on

1 throughout the Southeast, and that's one
2 thing that the SEAWFA, which is an
3 association of the southeast agencies
4 just like us -- their Wild Turkey
5 Working Group, that's one of the things
6 that they're focusing on. It's their
7 opinion that initiating the season
8 before the hens go on nest is a limiting
9 factor in turkey production. You're
10 killing gobblers before the hens are
11 fertilized, so they're either laying
12 infertile eggs or they're not laying at
13 all. So it's the Wild Turkey Working
14 Group at SEAWFA -- that's their
15 recommendation is to move the dates
16 forward to allow the turkeys to start
17 breeding unmolested and then harvest
18 them later in the season.

19 I know it wasn't that long ago it
20 was March the 20th when we had -- when
21 our season started. Again, I don't know
22 how or when it got moved forward. But,
23 again, that's data that I can give you.

1 That's what the SEAWFA Wild Turkey
2 Working Group has -- that's their
3 recommendation.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Both Kentucky as well as
5 Missouri have mid-April opening dates,
6 and that was one of the reasons they
7 moved the opening date forward.

8 MR. BUNN: I will say in my opinion -- if
9 we're trying to accomplish less turkeys
10 being killed, I'm of the opinion you'll
11 be more effective by moving the season
12 dates, whether that is taking dates off
13 the front end or back end or whatever we
14 think is best, than lowering the bag
15 limit.

16 I don't know how many -- honestly
17 how many turkey hunters -- your average
18 turkey hunter I don't believe is killing
19 five to begin with.

20 MR. TUTT: No. In my group, a landowner that
21 we sell property to that's buying it for
22 hunting purposes, really if he kills one
23 or two turkeys he's satisfied. But,

1 now, you have a group of hunters that
2 they don't stop at five.

3 MR. BUNN: Right. Right. We have a lot of
4 groups of hunters who don't stop at
5 five. And that's the problem. They're
6 not going to stop whether the limit --
7 and I hate to say it. And it's hard for
8 these guys to enforce it. It don't
9 matter if the limit is two, three, five
10 or whatever. You know, they're going to
11 continue to kill as many turkeys as they
12 can possibly kill.

13 I believe the only way to really, I
14 guess, lower the amount of turkeys being
15 killed by hunters is to lower the amount
16 of days you can turkey hunt. I just
17 think lowering the bag limit, honestly,
18 you're not going to accomplish that.
19 But, like I said, because I don't think
20 the average turkey hunter -- your guy
21 that -- you know, 80 percent of your
22 turkey hunters are killing five to begin
23 with. And the guys that are capable of

1 killing five and beyond, they're going
2 to continue to do so. So give them less
3 days to hunt.

4 MR. TUTT: I would support that recommendation
5 by all means.

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

8 MR. DOBBS: Just one more time.

9 MR. TUTT: Yes, sir.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Mr. Dobbs. You
11 have the floor.

12 MR. DOBBS: One more thing.

13 You feel that the information
14 gleaned from some sort of a harvest or
15 Game Check system is going to be
16 instrumental in helping you manage the
17 turkeys and people that you help manage
18 their land manage the turkeys and
19 certainly going to help our biologists?

20 MR. TUTT: I think it's going to help the
21 state more so than me, deer and turkey.
22 Very crucial that we know how many
23 animals we're harvesting. It's just

1 almost impossible for Chuck and you guys
2 to do your job unless we have the data
3 to support your recommendations, and how
4 do we know how many deer we have and how
5 many we're killing if we don't have
6 that.

7 MR. DOBBS: Thank you.

8 MR. TUTT: Yes, sir. Thank y'all.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Tutt.

10 Next speaker, Henry Reynolds. On
11 deck, Jimmy Bradley.

12 Henry, you want to come down to the
13 mic.

14 Is Mr. Reynolds present?

15 Okay. I guess we'll go to Jimmy
16 Bradley, then, Marengo County.

17 MR. BRADLEY: My name is Jim Bradley. I'm a
18 landowner in Marengo County. And I
19 would like the panel to look at a permit
20 system on the dog hunting over there.

21 I'm not against dog hunters. I have
22 a squirrel dog. I like to do it. But I
23 keep my dog on my property. And my dog

1 wears an electronic collar. With the
2 technology today, if a person wants to
3 put in the time with their animals,
4 there's no reason they should not be
5 able to control them, know where they
6 are, and make sure that they stay where
7 they need to be. I would appreciate it
8 if y'all could consider that.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Bradley.

10 Next speaker, David Clapp. On deck
11 is Calvin Crowder.

12 MR. CLAPP: Hey, good morning. I'm Dave
13 Clapp. I'm a property owner in Clay
14 County. And I bought my property eight
15 years ago, 200 acres. We border the
16 Talladega National Forest on three
17 sides. So I'm in Jeff's -- Jeff's
18 district. We've spoken on the phone.

19 So I border the Talladega National
20 Forest on three sides, a road called
21 Horns Valley Road on one side. And when
22 I bought the property, I did so to
23 manage it for deer and turkey and to

1 hunt with my family, and I never
2 imagined eight years ago I'd have to
3 come and deal with kind of a macro issue
4 here.

5 But we're really struggling with the
6 dog hunting. And so I don't know if the
7 permit system works. I know that
8 there's a macro issue you guys are
9 having to wrestle with here. I don't
10 envy you on that.

11 I've got a micro issue in that
12 County Road -- or Forest Road 662, which
13 comes into the national forest, ends
14 about a couple of hundred yards from my
15 property line. And the dogs are
16 released there, and then it's almost
17 impossible, I think, for them not to
18 just travel across my property out onto
19 Horns Valley Road where they're picked
20 up.

21 So I have this issue repeatedly.
22 I've had it year after year after year.
23 Some years I just have almost just given

1 up and not hunted anymore because it's
2 almost every single time that we go out
3 to hunt.

4 I don't think it's a club. And so
5 that's why -- I don't know a lot about
6 the permit system. I'm not sure that
7 that would address the issue. I've
8 talked to the hunters -- the dog
9 hunters, you know, and the answer I
10 typically get is, well, the dogs can't
11 read the property signs. And so I've
12 made it a point not to, you know, argue.

13 But, you know, I'll have many
14 afternoons where they'll release the
15 dogs. They'll run across my property.
16 They'll pick them up on the public road,
17 release them, and it'll happen three or
18 four times in the same afternoon and the
19 same groups. I've never heard a gun go
20 off in the national forest. I have
21 heard them go off on the road there.

22 And so I -- I'm not sure exactly
23 what the resolution is. I'm just asking

1 for your guys' help. It's County
2 Road -- Forest Road 662 is where my
3 property is.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, David.

5 Any questions from the board?

6 (No response.)

7 Next speaker, Calvin Crowder.

8 Excuse me. Mr. Martin.

9 MR. MARTIN: I'd like to ask Chuck about this.

10 MR. SYKES: Since it is a national forest, we
11 do work with them. It's not
12 specifically under our control. But
13 Chief Gauldin and I met with Carl
14 Petrick who is over all the national
15 forests. We met with him this week. We
16 do have some ideas that we're working on
17 that we'll have for you before the next
18 board meeting to try to address some of
19 these issues in your area.

20 MR. CLAPP: Okay. Thanks.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Chuck.

22 Our next speaker, Calvin Crowder.

23 On deck, Christine Hale.

1 MR. CROWDER: Good morning, gentlemen,
2 Mr. Chairman. My name is Calvin Crowder
3 from Talladega, Alabama, Talladega
4 County. I attended the meeting in
5 Guntersville.

6 And, Jeff, you weren't there, but
7 I'm glad to see you're here today.

8 At this time last year I had a
9 extremely bad problem with dog
10 hunting -- dog deer hunters, and that's
11 why I attended the meeting. And I own
12 private land and a hunting club next to
13 the national forest. And I repeatedly
14 told or asked, however you'd like to put
15 that, for them not to do it, and it just
16 was ongoing, relentless.

17 And the unusual thing that happened
18 this past year after I spoke at that
19 meeting -- I don't know if word got
20 around or what, but this year I did not
21 have a problem with this group out of
22 Pell City. And I applaud them for doing
23 the right thing.

1 I only had two instances this year
2 with dogs on my property, one of which
3 was an individual who I'd had problems
4 with before out of that group. And he
5 did the right thing though. He called
6 the dog back. They weren't hunting.
7 And so I applaud that.

8 But I still support the permitting
9 system because I think as private
10 landowners we don't have any recourse if
11 the dogs come on our property. There's
12 no way -- everyone tells me -- what I've
13 learned over the years is get the dog
14 back and give it back to the hunter.
15 Well, that's not recourse or any type of
16 penalty to the hunters that repeatedly
17 run their dogs on your private property.
18 And so if we have a permit system, it
19 would allow us to say, hey, look, you're
20 doing this, we're going to penalize you
21 for it.

22 And I will admit to everyone in this
23 room today -- and I told myself this --

1 in the case of this past year because
2 of -- I only had two instances. Even if
3 we were under the permitting system, I
4 don't think I would have reported them.
5 Because they did the right thing. They
6 got the dog back.

7 But I want the opportunity if I do
8 have a problem, if someone continually
9 runs dogs on my property, to have a
10 recourse, and the only thing that I've
11 heard so far is a permitting system.
12 And so I would support that.

13 And I've talked with a lot of other
14 people. I don't know if they're going
15 to -- there are some other owners that
16 we've talked with in the area that had
17 the same problem. I don't know if
18 they're here today or if they're going
19 to speak, but I support them as well.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Mr. Martin, you
21 have the floor.

22 MR. MARTIN: Chuck, could I ask you to
23 explain -- because you and I have talked

1 about this a pretty good bit. Could you
2 explain to the other board -- they might
3 know. But if we had a permit system,
4 how does that affect -- because all of
5 their problems are coming off the
6 national forest.

7 MR. SYKES: It's kind of complicated. In some
8 of the areas where the permit is in
9 place now the national forest decided
10 they did not want any dog hunting on the
11 property at all. So there's some
12 national forests that have no dog
13 hunting like Tuskegee, for example.

14 Carl does not want to see that
15 happen. He wants to work to an amicable
16 solution where the dog hunters can have
17 an area that they can hunt where it's
18 not going to interfere with private
19 landowners. And so that's what we're
20 trying to work on right now rather
21 than -- because just like this
22 gentleman, nobody is against dog
23 hunting. They just want the dogs off

1 their property. So we're trying to work
2 with Carl to try to figure out some
3 boundaries where it will -- I'm not
4 going to say it's going to eliminate the
5 problem, but it will lessen the impact.

6 MR. CROWDER: Yeah. If I may interject real
7 quick. Like I say, I don't know what
8 their reasoning was behind why they
9 stopped coming over. I've got a long
10 forest road that parallels my property.
11 They quit coming over there. And when
12 I -- the one time that I caught them
13 with dogs on my property I went out and
14 confronted them. And he said, I don't
15 want any problems, I'm trying to get the
16 dog back.

17 And I don't know what their
18 reasoning was, but they're staying over
19 in an area that does not have private
20 property that's south of me. And more
21 north of me is where the private
22 property owners that are closer to me
23 that are having the problem. So I think

1 if they can do what they should do and
2 stay in areas where there's not private
3 property, I think we may have a
4 resolution. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Crowder.

6 Next, Christine Hale. On deck is
7 Wayne Kilborn.

8 MS. HALE: Good morning, Commissioner,
9 Chairman, Board. I'm Christine Hale.
10 My address is Selma, Alabama, but I live
11 in east Perry County. The problem I'm
12 coming to you today -- and some of my
13 neighbors are here also addressing the
14 same issue -- is deer hunting with dogs.

15 I don't own any dogs that hunt any
16 kind of animal, but every season -- and
17 I've been battling this for over 30
18 years. All the game wardens in Dallas
19 and Perry County know me by my first
20 name or by "Mawmaw" because I have
21 complained and repeatedly. There was a
22 period of time where I know Perry County
23 brought revenue into this department

1 because they would write tickets till
2 they got hand cramps.

3 Talking to them -- I've heard
4 several say talk to them, talk to them.
5 Talking's over with, people. Down there
6 in east Perry there is five clubs --
7 hunting clubs. We have one club that
8 hunts with dogs. And you've got a
9 little map -- homemade map that I made
10 you with my packet addressing County
11 Road 10, 30, 58, and 6, which runs down
12 Highway 14 West, 219 North. They all
13 intersect.

14 This group that hunts with dogs,
15 they lease from MacMillan Bloedel that
16 joins our property. They have
17 2500 acres about a half a mile from my
18 house.

19 Yes, for 30 years I've heard dogs
20 can't read. Evidently I don't think the
21 hunters can read because they spend half
22 the day running them over everybody's
23 property. Then they spend the rest of

1 the day hunting the dogs.

2 All right. My thing is I don't own
3 dogs. I have literally caught them at
4 my stand, and I have put them in my dog
5 pen. I didn't realize I could charge
6 them boarding while I had them. And I
7 fed them. I'm going to implement that
8 if y'all choose not to help us.

9 There's three dog clubs down there
10 now. All of these members are from
11 Birmingham, Cullman, everywhere but
12 there in Perry County except for two
13 groups. And these are 20, 30, and
14 40-year-old -- I'm going to call it like
15 it is -- rednecks. They're not old like
16 me.

17 This year we tried to go to this
18 club and talk to them. We walked away
19 being cursed out. These men are not
20 going to take that. A lot -- matter of
21 fact, my neighbor has got a petition
22 that a lot of the hunters signed.

23 MS. JONES: Time.

1 MS. HALE: Somebody ask me a question where I
2 have three more minutes.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Dobbs, would you
4 like to address Ms. Hale.

5 MR. DOBBS: Ms. Hale, where is your hunting
6 land?

7 MS. HALE: It's on County Road 30 in east
8 Perry County. We own 25 acres. We have
9 hunting rights on an additional 25
10 acres. And then we are overseers and
11 have a hunting permit on 164 acres
12 adjoining that in that area.

13 And, like I said, this problem
14 didn't just start, but it's the same
15 group that's been there ever since we
16 moved out there in the '70s. And we're
17 a joke to them. But with these younger
18 hunters coming in that's paying 2,000,
19 \$3,000 a year to lease property to hunt,
20 the laughing time's over. And a lot of
21 them wouldn't sign the petition. They
22 said, no, we're going to take care of
23 the problem ourself. And that's not

1 going to be pretty because I know the
2 dog can't talk. But you are the ones
3 that can legally put a stop to this.

4 Now, I don't care what the rest of
5 Alabama does with dog hunting deer. I
6 want them off my property. And when you
7 get where you can't communicate with
8 them, these gadgets around their neck, I
9 don't know how that's supposed to tell
10 the dog, no, you're getting off of your
11 property, but if it does, good.

12 But these men and these other four
13 clubs and us personally -- and now I've
14 got grown grandsons that hunt -- we're
15 begging you to step up to the plate and
16 if for no other place than the little
17 map that you got that I made you. My
18 daughter keeps telling me it's ban it.
19 I say outlaw it. That sounds more
20 forceful --

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Ms. Hale?

22 MS. HALE: -- because the permit I don't think
23 is going to get it. Not with this group

1 it's not.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Joey, do you want to
3 address -- do you have any further
4 questions?

5 MR. DOBBS: No. Thank you, Ms. Hale.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Ms. Hale, thank you so
7 much.

8 Do you hunt, Ms. Hale?

9 MS. HALE: Yes, I do.

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: All right.

11 MR. KILBORN: How y'all doing. My name is
12 Wayne Kilborn. I'm a landowner in
13 Marengo County, and I'm here to ask that
14 y'all consider putting the permit system
15 for dog hunting in place.

16 I've owned -- it's roughly, between
17 land and lease, around 240 acres in
18 Marengo County. It's my second year to
19 have the place. I'm a member of the
20 Quality Deer Management Association.
21 I've spent a tremendous amount of money
22 and invested time and resources in
23 Marengo County as a new landowner up

1 there. And every weekend we have had
2 issues with dog hunters running dogs all
3 over not only my property but the
4 neighbors' property.

5 I've personally talked to the game
6 warden. Curt Porter has been out there.
7 Officer Porter and the Wildlife and
8 Fisheries folks have been out there.
9 They've done an outstanding job. It's
10 every weekend calling them, every
11 Saturday. We don't even call it "the
12 hunt" anymore. We call it the
13 "roundup."

14 So I have dogs that are run on
15 property with muzzles. I've addressed
16 this with the dog hunters. They
17 acknowledge that the dog bites. I've
18 got children -- seven and eight-year-old
19 children on the property. It's a safety
20 issue. We have taken every measure
21 talking with the dog owners.

22 I'm not against dog hunting. I echo
23 what these other folks said. You do

1 what you want to do on your property,
2 but complete and utter disregard for the
3 neighbors. And its a safety issue as
4 well as -- you know, the value of my
5 property that I bought for hunting and
6 fishing and trying to create a better
7 quality wildlife on my property is
8 worthless. I've got dogs running
9 everywhere. I've got people running
10 everywhere.

11 So, you know, I really would like
12 y'all to consider this permit system and
13 like to echo these other folks. They
14 talk about, you know, accountability.
15 Look, I'm a duck hunter. I have Labs.
16 You can make a dog do what you want it
17 to do. Squirrel hunters do it. Rabbit
18 hunters do it. Coon hunters do it.
19 Duck hunters do it. Dove hunters do it.
20 This lady I'm sitting next to says my
21 dogs run GPS. They don't ever cross the
22 border. You've got shock collars. We
23 sent a man to the moon, but you can't

1 deal with this dog issue.

2 Okay. So I respectfully request
3 that y'all help the law enforcement.
4 The warden has been out there. I've
5 given the dog to Curt Porter. He's
6 taken the dog up there to speak with the
7 man, and he's at the boiling point
8 because there's total disregard for his
9 authority to do anything from an
10 enforcement standpoint.

11 I know the State of South Carolina
12 has penalties in place with the permit
13 system that if your dogs are
14 repetitively caught, there's a fine
15 associated with that. And there's a lot
16 of ways for you guys to deliberate how
17 to address this. But I certainly
18 respectfully request that y'all consider
19 a permit system in Marengo County.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Wayne.

21 MR. KILBORN: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: The next speaker is
23 Dennis McDaniel. On deck is Steve

1 Pierce.

2 MR. McDANIEL: Thank you, Board. I appreciate
3 y'all letting us come.

4 My name is Dennis McDaniel. I have
5 a farm in Perry County. I have a Selma
6 address. My neighbor is Ms. Christine
7 Hale. So y'all know what kind of
8 neighbor -- she shot a bull about 25
9 years ago because it wouldn't keep them
10 up.

11 But, anyhow, I've owned this farm
12 for 17 years, and I've had problems with
13 dogs for 17 years. I have a grandson
14 and a stepson that can't even hunt the
15 property because of the dogs. And it's
16 gotten to be bad. I've called the game
17 warden. Ken Daniel has been to the
18 house several times. The last time he
19 came, the dogs bayed a deer on my creek,
20 and I had to put the deer down. And the
21 dog tried to eat me up. He got out
22 there right after it happened. He went
23 and talked to them. I've talked to them

1 on my own property. Found out that the
2 president of the club is who I talked
3 to. And he let me know that he had been
4 hunting there all his life. And he
5 wasn't -- he didn't give me no apology
6 or anything. He just let me know like
7 it was his land instead of my land.

8 Their land is about three miles from
9 my farm. Their camp adjoins my land.
10 But their land actually they have leased
11 is about three miles from my farm. But
12 how can a dog get down to my farm right
13 at daybreak running deer through my
14 place is -- you know, I know they're not
15 Greyhounds, but they must be fast if
16 they're turning loose on their property.

17 We've got a big problem. I've got a
18 petition that y'all all have got. And
19 they asked me to speak for them. These
20 are landowners around me. So I'd
21 appreciate whatever y'all can do.

22 A permit, I think, is a joke, but
23 that's just my opinion. Thank y'all.

1 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. McDaniel.

2 Next we have Steve Pierce. And

3 Eddie Summers is on deck.

4 Mr. Pierce.

5 MR. PIERCE: Hello. Good morning, good
6 evening, whatever. Steve Pierce from
7 Covington County, Andalusia, Alabama.

8 Yes, I'm opposed to the dog hunting,
9 but I'm not against all dog hunters.
10 It's the way that the certain few idiots
11 do it. You cannot hunt your private
12 land. You can't stalk hunt your private
13 land on account of a certain few idiots.

14 And I've been up here many a time.
15 It's the same problem. They're not
16 permitted south of 84. I'm not saying a
17 permit is the answer, but it sure cut
18 down on the problems north of 84.

19 But even more important, this year
20 I'm extremely ill with why is it not
21 illegal to drink and hunt. Alcohol and
22 firearms don't mix. You got a bunch
23 running around out there running up and

1 down the highway with their GPS and
2 their tracking systems drinking,
3 shooting deer in the damn highway.

4 What's it going to take to be enough?

5 There are going to have to be some
6 fatalities on account of a bunch of
7 drunks to get y'all's attention. I
8 mean, you didn't have to graduate Auburn
9 to realize that you don't need to be out
10 there with alcohol and firearms.

11 I mean, that's all I know to say.
12 But enough is enough when a private
13 landowner cannot hunt private land on
14 account of -- and it's not all of them,
15 no. But you got certain idiots -- and
16 that's what they are -- out there and
17 enough is enough.

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Pierce.

19 Commissioner, did you want to
20 address Mr. Pierce's concerns?

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman, I just want
22 to say this. Mr. Pierce has been here
23 before. We certainly hear what he has

1 to say on the issue about the beer and
2 the recklessness of that. You know, you
3 heard Mr. Sykes earlier. We badly are
4 in need of law enforcement. We're badly
5 in need of getting some help from the
6 legislature and others helping us get
7 our law enforcement back.

8 MR. PIERCE: Give me a legislator and I'll
9 shake him.

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: But do contact them about
11 that. Because, I mean, we can't enforce
12 laws -- and, you know, Mr. Dodd and all
13 his folks are doing the best they can
14 with what we have. And I'm not using it
15 as an excuse. I'm just letting you know
16 that it takes us catching them and -- it
17 doesn't have to be when it's drinking
18 and that kind of thing necessarily. You
19 know, it doesn't have to be just us. It
20 could be sheriff's deputies and state
21 troopers if they're available.

22 But all I'm saying is I heard what
23 you say. I just want to take up for my

1 folks. As much as we're spread out, we
2 try to answer every complaint, I think,
3 as quickly as possibly as we can to get
4 to the core of the matter. So I
5 appreciate exactly what you're saying.
6 Just help us and, you know, we'll do
7 everything we can on that kind of
8 recklessness for sure.

9 MR. PIERCE: Well, you wouldn't want your
10 young'uns or grand-young'uns out there
11 with a bunch with alcohol involved.

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: I don't. We can all agree
13 on that, yes, sir.

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Pierce, we hear you
15 loud and clear. Thank you.

16 Next is Eddie Summers and on deck is
17 Lonnie A. Miller.

18 Mr. Summers.

19 MR. SUMMERS: My name is Eddie Summers, and I
20 have property in Marengo County. And
21 I'm having the same trouble that Wayne
22 was talking about.

23 We have dogs on our property every

1 Saturday. We have to chase the dogs
2 down. Then we see people on our
3 property. We don't know what to do
4 about it, but it's been going on for
5 about three years now. And I'm along
6 with everybody that says a permit. What
7 do we seem -- is this a never-ending
8 thing, or is there something we can do
9 about it?

10 I don't know. Is there some type of
11 voting -- can we do some kind of vote to
12 vote out -- or vote in the permit
13 system?

14 I don't know. But I just wish you
15 would look at the permit system in
16 Marengo County because every Saturday
17 our hunts are messed up. And we still
18 hunt and stalk hunt. I just wish y'all
19 would think about it. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Summers.

21 T.J., you have the floor.

22 MR. BUNN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to
23 make a comment.

1 I have gotten an exorbitant amount
2 of phone calls this year from landowners
3 in Marengo County on the dog-hunting
4 issue. I've talked to some
5 representatives from Westervelt, talked
6 to representatives with Walter Tutt's
7 company and private landowners as well.
8 So just to let y'all know, we are aware
9 of the continued problems in Marengo
10 County with dog hunting.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Lonnie A. Miller.

12 Is this Mr. Miller?

13 MR. MILLER: Yes, sir.

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: On deck is Tommy
15 Boatwright.

16 MR. MILLER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
17 Mr. Guy. I'm the newly elected
18 president of the Alabama Dog Hunters
19 Association. I'm from the Samson,
20 Alabama, area.

21 We would like to introduce -- we
22 have all new officers. Rick Baxter is
23 the vice-president. He's not here

1 today. He's actually -- he's working.
2 We -- he's from the Fruitdale area.
3 Dewey Phillips is our treasurer. He's
4 from the Semmes area. And Jennifer
5 Lamont is from the Turnerville area.
6 She's helping out with secretarial
7 duties. We basically do some form of
8 hunting in Washington County, Geneva
9 County, Covington, Mobile, Wilcox,
10 Clarke, and Baldwin. We were elected by
11 a majority of the people at a meeting
12 two weeks ago in Montgomery.

13 First of all, we would like to
14 apologize for the negative things that
15 have happened in the past few years
16 between the dog hunters association, the
17 DCNR, and the CAB. I personally have
18 heard the word "fight" more than I care
19 to remember in the past two years, and
20 it's time we basically work along with
21 you guys and the landowners. And the
22 things that I've heard today I've heard
23 loud and clear.

1 What I want to say is that, you
2 know, with most things in life, we
3 always have a difference of opinion
4 which at times has caused tension or
5 stress. With our new leadership the
6 word "fight" is over because it's time
7 that we worked together with the
8 landowners, the DCNR, and the CAB to
9 resolve the issues that arise with dog
10 hunters.

11 This in no way should be taken as a
12 sign of weakness because our passion for
13 dog hunting is as deep in our culture as
14 it's ever been. We just understand that
15 the times have changed and with change
16 we may need to alter the way we dog
17 hunt. I can't speak for everybody, but
18 I can speak for myself and the
19 association as long as I am in charge of
20 it.

21 We sent an e-mail out to Chuck on
22 2-11-16 basically -- and you guys got a
23 copy of the e-mail. And it basically,

1 you know, is a few ideas that we as the
2 association want to -- I guess we're
3 showing you guys that we want to try to
4 work along with you to establish ways
5 that we can solve some of these
6 problems. We're not going to solve
7 every problem. We're not going to do
8 it. But we're going to try to help.
9 And that's what I want to do. And
10 that's what the whole deal was about the
11 new leadership that we wanted to
12 implement. And we got a good team and
13 we hope that we can try to work with you
14 guys to do that.

15 Pretty much, you know, we as dog
16 hunters -- we need to police ourselves.
17 And that's what it's about, policing
18 ourselves with the club -- whether it's
19 a club, an individual, whatever. We
20 need to police -- each club member needs
21 to be responsible for their own dogs.

22 MS. JONES: Time.

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Miller, thank you

1 for addressing the board. And without a
2 doubt, this is a monumental step in the
3 right direction, you know, if we're
4 going to make some progress, which there
5 has been a lot of bickering. I mean, in
6 the last seven or eight years that I've
7 been here it's basically been
8 confrontational.

9 I don't know. Chuck, do we have a
10 steering committee or something that we
11 have in place to work with the dog
12 hunters to try to resolve some of the
13 issues that we've heard this morning?

14 And, Commissioner, I'll let you have
15 the floor.

16 MR. SYKES: I can say that we've had several
17 meetings with Lonnie and Rick. For the
18 first time since I've been here I am
19 actually encouraged that we can sit down
20 and come to some reasonable solutions.
21 They're not going to be happy with
22 everything we want. We're not going to
23 be happy with everything they want. But

1 at least we're all sitting at the table
2 trying to work to some solutions.

3 Y'all got the letter that they sent.
4 I think between now and the next board
5 meeting we'll get back together and we
6 will have some options for y'all to look
7 at as far as satisfying some of the
8 landowners with the permit issues and
9 working with them. This is the first
10 time that I can say that we will sit
11 down and we are working with them to
12 come up with a reasonable solution for
13 y'all to vote on.

14 MR. MILLER: You know, what I'd like to say
15 about this permit system, I don't think
16 it's necessarily a bad thing, but I can
17 say this. That it may not be a club
18 that is the issue. It may be the
19 individual. And so you can permit
20 anything you want to permit, but the
21 individual, the guy that's not here
22 today or the guy that's not a member of
23 our organization, how do we control that

1 guy?

2 However, I will control -- we will
3 control ourselves in a professional
4 manner. And I apologize for all the
5 things in the past few years that have
6 happened because we need to be
7 professional in what we do. As long as
8 I'm in charge, we will be. And if not,
9 whoever is not professional will not be
10 part of this organization, and I truly
11 mean that, or I won't be.

12 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

13 Mr. Dobbs.

14 MR. DOBBS: Mr. Chairman.

15 Would you repeat those counties
16 again that you said you operate in.

17 MR. MILLER: Well, this is the counties that
18 the officers of the dog hunters
19 association are members of that we hunt
20 in. And so it was Washington County,
21 Geneva County, Covington County, Mobile
22 County, Wilcox, Clarke, and Baldwin.
23 And, you know, whether it's dog hunting

1 or still hunting, we're in those areas.

2 And, you know, I'm a still hunter,
3 dog hunter. You know, I've got kids,
4 grandkids, and I fully understand the
5 comments today. But what we want to do
6 is ask that you guys give us time to
7 work with Chuck and Chief Dodd and Keith
8 and Chris. I really enjoyed the meeting
9 that we had, and I think we can move
10 forward. We got -- we have a ton of
11 ideas. And that's what I told these
12 guys two weeks ago.

13 When I was in the Air Force, we used
14 to brainstorm. And that's what you
15 called it. We have to come up with
16 ideas to fix the problem. Don't put
17 your blinders on and stay tunnel-vision.
18 We have to open our mind up and we have
19 to come up with solutions to keep our
20 dogs off of these people's property. Is
21 it going to be perfect? It's not.

22 I mean, I think that, you know,
23 anytime we turn a dog out -- we can come

1 up with a permit system. We can come up
2 with any kind of GPS. And I've got all
3 that. I don't have a problem with my
4 dogs. But I can tell you that it's
5 going to happen. We're going to have
6 our problems. And I've talked with
7 Chuck, and I won't get into the details
8 about this. But there's some ideas that
9 we have that really are going to help us
10 out as a whole, and we need to get on
11 the bus or get off. That's where I'm
12 at.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Miller, Commissioner
14 would like to address you.

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Miller, first of all, I
16 just want to tell you thanks for being
17 here. I want to applaud you, you know,
18 for taking some initiative to do
19 something different. Change is tough.
20 Believe me, I've been in this job for
21 five years. I know change is tough.
22 But you have to convince people -- and
23 it seems like you're trying to do

1 that -- that change can actually help
2 out when you look at it and just look at
3 some other things.

4 I just want to say to you and your
5 organization that -- and it's kind of
6 just one of these to remind you -- we
7 need to be looking at this quickly
8 between now and the next meeting. We
9 don't have a lot of time between now and
10 the next meeting. So just want to put
11 that in your ear because I think we're
12 going to try to probably meet by the end
13 of March. And so I anticipate, you
14 know, there might be some -- you know,
15 obviously some more discussion about
16 what you're proposing here. So just
17 please bear with us. Because I think
18 the quicker we can get to it, work with
19 Chuck and enforcement -- and we'll
20 certainly keep the board informed -- it
21 would just be very helpful. But I want
22 to thank you for being here and doing
23 what you're doing.

1 MR. MILLER: Yes, sir. We've had several
2 meetings in the past two weeks
3 throughout the state, phone calls, and
4 we are trying to get participation from
5 the areas -- from the different
6 counties. It's a -- it's a big problem
7 that we're dealing with because some
8 people have 40 acres and some have
9 40,000 acres. And, you know, if you
10 say, well, a club that's got 200
11 acres -- or just say specifically in
12 Geneva County they've got, you know,
13 several thousand acres, but it's all in
14 smaller tracts. But they don't
15 necessarily have a problem to my
16 knowledge. I know on the report there
17 was two supposedly, you know, issues or
18 whatever.

19 But the point being, if we put a big
20 envelope on them, why should we penalize
21 a group that hasn't had a problem. And,
22 therefore, there's a lot of the issues
23 and logistics that we need to work out,

1 and we're willing to do that. Chuck has
2 got my number. And I'll tell you right
3 now. I'm available. My job allows me
4 to do pretty much what I need to do.
5 That's why I took this position. And
6 Rick Baxter is the same way. And we
7 will make ourselves available.

8 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

9 Tommy Boatwright. On deck, Glen
10 Coffee.

11 MR. BOATWRIGHT: Hello. My name is Tommy
12 Boatwright, and I'm speaking on behalf
13 of Sugar Hill Hunting Club. And we do
14 dog hunt in Baldwin and Escambia County.

15 And our club consists of 26 members,
16 and over half of the members usually
17 bring their children or grandchildren
18 every time we hunt. Many of the kids
19 hunt because it keeps them interested
20 and keeps them occupied.

21 Dog hunting to us is a
22 four-generation family tradition, and we
23 respect the neighboring landowners and

1 their property. We've taken measures to
2 prove this in the past. We limit the
3 number of dogs that we turn out each
4 time, and we make smaller drives. We
5 surround our property the best we can to
6 prevent dogs from crossing over on other
7 landowners' property.

8 We now have certain areas in which
9 we shoot does in order to prevent dogs
10 from crossing onto someone else's land.
11 And all of our dogs do have tracking
12 collars and GPS collars on them, so we
13 know where they are at all times. And
14 in the instance our dogs do cross over
15 on somebody else's property, we make
16 every effort to remove them as soon as
17 possible.

18 As I stated earlier, we've been
19 doing dog hunting in this area for four
20 generations. We have not had any
21 neighboring landowners express concerns
22 except for the past few years. As
23 indicated, we have implemented

1 procedures to prevent our dogs from
2 crossing onto other property as much as
3 possible. We understand times have
4 changed, and our club has adapted to the
5 change and will continue to respect our
6 neighboring landowners.

7 Once again, our club is a
8 family-oriented club, and we have
9 several young hunters, including my son
10 and grandsons, that share our love for
11 dog hunting. Thanks for letting me
12 speak to you today, and I hope that we
13 are allowed to continue doing what we
14 love and letting the younger generation
15 enjoy and experience dog hunting as we
16 have our entire life. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you,

18 Mr. Boatwright.

19 Our next speaker is Glen Coffee and
20 Joey Flowers will be on deck.

21 MR. COFFEE: My name is Glen Coffee. I'm from
22 Coden in south Mobile County. I'm a
23 retired biologist with the Corps of

1 Engineers, and I'm here to talk a little
2 bit about my agency and some concerns I
3 have that deal with habitat issues in
4 the coastal area of Alabama that I hope
5 this board will take an interest in and
6 become active and try to learn a little
7 bit about what's going on.

8 I want to talk about two.
9 One deals with the dredge material
10 disposal island that Avery Bates
11 mentioned earlier. You have a packet of
12 colored PowerPoint slides that I gave to
13 you, and either the third one in there
14 or -- shows the location of that
15 proposed island.

16 This is more than a proposal. It's
17 actually a plan that the Corps is
18 actively designing, and they plan to
19 have that design completed in about a
20 year and a half or less and then to go
21 to construction. This island when it's
22 completed will -- it's supposed to be
23 1200 acres. That's two square miles or

1 almost two sections of land. It's a
2 significant-size island in a shallow
3 portion of the bay that is heavily used
4 by commercial fishermen.

5 By the way, I'm a sports fisherman.
6 It's very popular in the fall of the
7 year for speckled trout, redfish, and
8 flounder and heavily utilized by
9 crabbers. It's a very productive area,
10 and I think the island is in the wrong
11 place.

12 One of the biggest concerns I have
13 is the public has not even been allowed
14 to express any concerns in the five
15 years it's been in the planning stage.
16 We found out about the island actually
17 by accident over the Internet. And
18 Mobile Bay is a public resource, a
19 valuable public resource, and no entity
20 should have the right to use that
21 resource without the public having some
22 say about that in terms of either a vote
23 or expression of concerns at a public

1 meeting or have a board like this
2 represent us.

3 I'm extremely concerned about the
4 way this has been done so far, and I
5 hope this board, particularly Mr. Wolfe
6 since you're from Fairhope and
7 Mr. Stimpson since you're from the south
8 portion of the state -- will -- and I
9 will be glad to share more information
10 with y'all at another time.

11 But this is a potentially disastrous
12 area for that portion of the bay, I
13 think, because they want to build a
14 marsh on this site. But if you're
15 familiar with the bay and you get 30
16 miles of fetch -- and it's going to be
17 hard to do that without expending lots
18 of money and bringing a lot of rock on
19 top of the dirt and sand they plan to
20 put there. So I think this is a mistake
21 if we allow it to happen.

22 The second area I want you to think
23 about deals with the erosion of Dauphin

1 Island.

2 MS. JONES: Time.

3 MR. COFFEE: Oh, okay.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Mr. Coffee, your time
5 has expired.

6 MR. COFFEE: I understand. I'll talk to y'all
7 about that another time, then. Thank
8 you.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay. Thank you.

10 Next speaker, Joey Flowers. On
11 deck, Lamar Giles.

12 Mr. Flowers, would you approach the
13 mic, please.

14 MR. FLOWERS: Good morning. My name is Joey
15 Flowers. I'm from Baldwin County,
16 Alabama. I'm the president of Alabama
17 Hog Dog Hunters Association. I'm here
18 today to talk a little bit about our
19 association and discuss the issues.

20 Our association would like to work
21 with everyone. The HDHA is a nonprofit
22 organization and was formed by a senior
23 group of hog hunters out of Baldwin and

1 Clarke County to help reserve our
2 heritage and the privilege to use dogs
3 to hunt hogs with. We felt two years
4 ago that our sport was under scrutiny
5 due to unethical hunters and the
6 misconception by the public and also the
7 DCNR.

8 I feel that we have grown
9 tremendously the past two years and have
10 made a lot of leeway working with the
11 DCNR, with Chuck -- he's helped out a
12 lot -- Keith, Chief Dodd. They've all
13 helped out a lot. Our association is
14 here to work with everybody and the
15 board members and also to try to help
16 ourselves and work with the state as
17 well.

18 One of the first things I'd like to
19 mention, hunting hogs at nighttime. I
20 know we got the depredation permit
21 situation, but a lot of hunters aren't
22 aware of it. And when they get called
23 out there at night they're not aware

1 because of other issues in the past with
2 it. So we have never been denied, that
3 I know of, by any enforcement officer by
4 getting a depredation permit to hunt at
5 night. Chief Dodd has helped out
6 tremendously when I called him to make
7 sure that that was possible for these
8 guys, but I guess it's just the -- the
9 complications and the frustration with
10 these hunters trying to get it at
11 nighttime. We're going to get it
12 anyway, so why not let's just do away
13 with it.

14 And hopefully if House Bill 152
15 passes that will give the board and the
16 DCNR a little bit more leeway to try to
17 help that, you know, pass so we can do
18 away with the depredation permit and
19 just allow our hog dog hunters to hunt
20 more at nighttime. It's cooler and the
21 hogs are moving more at night.

22 One of the other things I mention is
23 possibly opening up more wildlife

1 management area. I know March 1st
2 through the 8th we have our first
3 Mobile-Tensaw Delta Wildlife Management
4 Area hog dog hunt. Our association is
5 donating our own time to do a survey.
6 We've got the USDA coming down to do
7 some disease samples, blood samples and
8 stuff like that, and we're going to turn
9 over that data that we collect to the
10 DCNR just to show how positive the hog
11 dogs can be on the wildlife management
12 areas. And I hope if this does show up
13 positive we can open up more and not
14 only help our wildlife management areas
15 but our farmers and anybody else that
16 might need that extra help and maybe
17 even give us a little bit more leeway
18 when we have a Wild Hog Roundup at the
19 beginning of May. We can open up those
20 two days so out-of-state hunters can
21 come in and participate and hunt and
22 help with the reduction of our wild hog
23 population as well.

1 MS. JONES: Time.

2 MR. FLOWERS: Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you so much,
4 Mr. Flowers.

5 Our next speaker, Lamar Giles. On
6 deck, Donald Nelson.

7 MR. GILES: Good morning, gentleman,
8 Mr. Chairman, Board Members. My name is
9 Lamar Giles. I'm from Chilton County.
10 I'm the president -- I'm the
11 secretary/treasurer of Old Union Point
12 Hunting Club in Chilton County.

13 My purpose for being here today is
14 to ask this board to return Chilton
15 County to a permit county and give our
16 club, Old Union Point, a second chance.
17 And I hope that by the material I've
18 sent you and what I'm going to say here
19 today you might see that we deserve a
20 second chance.

21 Now, the vote by the board took us
22 completely by surprise. We didn't have
23 any complaints to us during the

1 2014-2015 season from anybody. We knew
2 about no complaints. As soon as I found
3 out about the vote, I called Captain
4 Dennis Sanford, who is the chief
5 conservation enforcement officer in our
6 district, and asked him if he had any
7 reports of any complaints against Old
8 Union Point Hunting Club in the 2014 and
9 2015 hunting season. And he said, no,
10 he didn't.

11 So the vote basically ignored the
12 fact that we were a permit club and
13 ignored the rules that we were given
14 when we were put on a permit system. So
15 I began to write letters to you
16 fellows -- even sent one to the
17 governor -- to try to get to the bottom
18 of this, how could this be done.

19 Mr. Moultrie -- Mr. Dan Moultrie
20 called me and talked. And we set up a
21 meeting and I met with Mr. Moultrie.
22 And he brought with him a memorandum
23 from -- I think it was J. Kevin Dodd's

1 office. And in this memorandum there
2 was one sentence that was highlighted in
3 bold letters. And let me see if I can
4 find it right here.

5 There is no specific number of
6 violations that trigger corrective
7 actions. He said that was the reason
8 that they could do what they did.

9 Well, the sentence just above
10 that -- in another sentence it says
11 examples of corrective actions include
12 warnings, probation, closure of certain
13 tracts of land, establishment of buffer
14 zones, and ejection of problem members.
15 What it does not say is to close a
16 permitted county or to shut down a
17 permitted club.

18 And there are written rules and
19 regulations regarding the handling of
20 complaints against a permitted club.
21 First there's investigation by the
22 conservation enforcement officers. Then
23 there's verification of the complaint.

1 If there's verification, then the
2 officer --

3 MS. JONES: Time.

4 MR. GILES: -- is to contact -- well, anyway,
5 I didn't get through, folks. But I'd
6 ask you to look at the situation. And
7 we're not a bad group. Give us your
8 consideration.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Giles.

10 Next we'll have -- next speaker,
11 Donald Nelson. On deck, Keith Sikes.

12 MR. NELSON: Chairman, Commissioner, Board,
13 thank you for allowing me the
14 opportunity to speak this morning. My
15 name -- I am Mayor Don Nelson from
16 Creola, Alabama.

17 I want to thank Mr. Sykes for his
18 comments about working with Mr. Miller,
19 and I applaud his comments also. That's
20 the only way we're going to take the
21 heat off of everybody and let everybody
22 cooperate. And I have a few thoughts
23 and ideas and recommendations I would

1 like to make to share with them possibly
2 that may help them here.

3 But, first of all, I represent a
4 club 4,000 acres. Plus I have 200 acres
5 of family land in Butler County. Been
6 there over 50 years hunting in the same
7 area. We've done everything you've
8 talked about here today. Electronic
9 collars, I've invested over \$5,000. No
10 dogs get turned loose on our club
11 without collars or shock collars. It
12 works. It helps. It's not the total
13 solution.

14 Communication is another part of the
15 problem here. This past season I talked
16 to the five major stalk clubs around our
17 land. They had no problems or issues.
18 I talked to Mr. Cagle and Mr. Hartzog
19 about if they had any problems. They
20 said no. And that's good. But you
21 never know if you're going to have
22 problems out there.

23 Lieutenant Reid is in our area.

1 Didn't get a chance to see him this year
2 probably due to the shortage and him
3 breaking in a new warden -- a new
4 officer. No problems on that end.

5 I talked to Captain -- oh, Mike --
6 it'll come to me. But I talked to him
7 at Subway one night. He said, hey, no
8 problem. But that's not to mean there's
9 not problems out there. We got to
10 communicate.

11 And what I would ask that Mr. Sykes
12 and Mr. Miller consider is some type of
13 protocol prior to a permit system. A
14 permit system will work. It puts you on
15 notice and it gets your attention. It's
16 kind of like a last resort. But I feel
17 like if there's a protocol where board
18 members or a committee, Mr. Sykes,
19 Mr. Miller, or whomever, would meet
20 prior that might eliminate a few of
21 these problems here and make everybody a
22 little happier. You're not going to
23 eliminate all the problems, but I think

1 it will go a long ways toward making
2 your life a little easier. But y'all do
3 a great job, but you got a thankless
4 job.

5 Now, I brought my old hat here.
6 And, like I said, it's hard for a mayor
7 to talk for three minutes. But I'm a
8 retired Marine colonel. I'm trying to
9 tell you about my character and the
10 people I hang with. 30 years, called to
11 active duty, two wars. I am a graduate
12 of South Alabama. I'm trying to say I'm
13 not a redneck. I represent my people in
14 my club, good people and a lot of these
15 people out here. We want to do right.
16 We want to work with you. And that's
17 the whole thing we can do right there.

18 I think I've about said it all.
19 And, once again, I hope I communicated
20 to my reps if there's ever a problem,
21 call me. I'll come. I'm retired now.
22 37 years, power company. Worked with
23 Pat's dad ten years in security. My

1 people do things right. We don't drink.
2 We don't do any -- and the majority of
3 these people -- you're going to have a
4 few exceptions to the rules. So if I
5 could do anything to help, please don't
6 hesitate. But please consider a
7 protocol to work these problems out.
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Nelson.

10 Our final public speaker is Keith
11 Sikes.

12 MR. SIKES: Thank y'all for giving us a place
13 to tell our word and tell our side of
14 the story and everything. I am a dog
15 hunter. I'm for dog hunting. I've done
16 it ever since I was a little kid.
17 That's what I love to do.

18 I represent Bearhead Hunting Club in
19 Choctaw County. We've got about eight
20 or 9,000 acres in one little -- one
21 block. And I think we have two or three
22 different leases inside of ours, about
23 200 acres on one and maybe 150 on the

1 other that's right there inside of our
2 hunting club.

3 What we try to do is all of our guys
4 run GPS on all of our dogs to try to
5 keep them off the other landowners'
6 property. Personally I went to a
7 shocking system. And if my dogs get
8 close to another property or close to a
9 highway, I can tone my dog and they will
10 quit running and come to me. So there's
11 ways that we can work with you guys and
12 with the landowners to try to keep our
13 dogs off of other people's property.

14 The biggest thing that I've seen is
15 that there is a small group that don't
16 have enough land that is causing most of
17 these problems, and I would -- I would
18 recommend that maybe you need to have a
19 certain amount of acreage before you can
20 dog hunt on property. I mean, I think
21 that's something that might could help
22 out.

23 Like I said, I just -- I love dog

1 hunting. I mean, to me it gives the
2 deer a sporting chance. If you can hit
3 a deer running at a hundred yards with a
4 rifle, I think you did something good
5 versus him putting his head down and you
6 shooting him standing still. I think it
7 gives him a fighting chance. But with
8 that, I'm going to end on dog hunting.

9 Another thing I wanted to bring up
10 was the turkeys. We was talking about
11 lowering the bag limit on turkeys, and I
12 think that's a good idea. My biggest
13 thing as far as our turkey population is
14 the predators. Last year I had an
15 encounter where I was calling a turkey
16 and I had a bobcat try to attack me. I
17 mean, I think that's our biggest problem
18 on the turkeys is the predators. If
19 there's something else we can do to try
20 to get the predator population down, I
21 mean, that would be something that I
22 would like to try to work on as far as
23 the turkeys.

1 Thank y'all for y'all's time.

2 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Sikes.

3 Commissioner.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Do y'all trap on your
5 properties?

6 MR. SIKES: No, sir, we do not trap on there.

7 I don't know --

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: Not for predators or --

9 MR. SIKES: No, for predators. I mean, that's
10 something that -- I don't know if you
11 have like a state program that we may
12 could get started to try to help these
13 people out because the coyotes and the
14 bobcats are taking over us. I mean, you
15 can set there in the afternoon in your
16 stand and you can hear numerous coyotes.
17 I mean, we try to kill as many as we
18 can. I think we killed ten or twelve
19 this year while we was making dog
20 drives. You know, we're trying to help
21 out with it, but it's just unreal in our
22 area.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: I just suggest if you can

1 it helps a little bit. And it's
2 beginning to be more trendy and there's
3 more people outside that are interested
4 in that. So just think about that some
5 especially when it comes to the
6 predators.

7 MR. SIKES: Thank you, sir. Thank you for
8 your time.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Sikes.

10 This concludes our public hearing.
11 And the next order of business is old
12 business. Is there any -- I think there
13 may be a couple of issues that are out
14 there that we may need to address.

15 Chuck? Commissioner?

16 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Chairman, I'm not aware
17 of any old business. I think most
18 people have looked through the minutes,
19 unless there was something in the
20 minutes that people saw. But I know I
21 looked back through it. Of course,
22 there may be others that have old
23 business, but --

1 (Brief interruption by the court
2 reporter.)

3 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Board members, any old
4 business?

5 (No response.)

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: If not, the next order
7 of business is new business. Is there
8 any new business that needs to be
9 discussed at this time?

10 COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: I think I can be
11 heard, Mr. Chairman.

12 In light of this hunting situation
13 and my awareness of hunting license and
14 fees and so forth in surrounding states,
15 I would like to ask Chuck and his crowd
16 to give us a report at the next meeting
17 on how we stack up with the price of
18 licenses and -- especially nonresidence
19 compared to the surrounding states.

20 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Okay, Chuck.

21 MR. SYKES: Okay.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: You want to address that
23 the next meeting. Okay. Very good.

1 Any other new business?

2 Patrick.

3 MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman, I would like for the
4 board to consider changes to Game Check.
5 As we've heard from Director Sykes, the
6 numbers for voluntary reporting are
7 extremely low, and voluntary reporting
8 is just not going to get us to where we
9 need to be.

10 However, I think the board must
11 consider that just making the program
12 mandatory is not going to be enough to
13 make it successful. I think it's
14 imperative for all of us to try to
15 educate the public and address some of
16 their concerns about it.

17 One of the concerns we've got to
18 address is people that are concerned
19 that it's just another heavy-handed
20 government program. It's a -- that's a
21 reasonable concern. The federal
22 government is, you know, increasing
23 regulations and mandates at an alarming

1 rate, and people have become wary of
2 mandatory problems.

3 I think we address that by
4 explaining, you know, we're a citizen
5 oversight board. We're here to assure
6 that, you know, programs like Game Check
7 are put in place, that they're
8 necessary.

9 You know, we're avid hunters. We're
10 not government bureaucrats. You know,
11 we don't support more government just
12 for the sake of it. And I think that's
13 a process that we're going to have to
14 try to educate the public on. You know,
15 we've got to share why we need it and
16 address their concerns so that it will
17 be successful. Because, you know,
18 making it mandatory is the first step,
19 but engaging the public and trying to
20 make sure everyone understands why we
21 need, you know, the data that we're
22 getting, you know, assure them that
23 we're not -- you know, we're not

1 interested in, you know, a bunch of
2 evasive data gathering. We just need to
3 know a few things, you know, the sex of
4 the deer they're harvesting, where,
5 whether it's on private land or public
6 land. And, you know, for the most -- I
7 believe that's all the data requested.

8 So I think the public -- you know,
9 based on the comments we've had, by and
10 large the public is -- supports the --
11 what the board is doing. The public
12 supports the department. And I think if
13 we educate them they'll support us with
14 Game Check and it will produce the data
15 we need and hopefully we can have a
16 success rate that's, you know, close to
17 what Director Blankenship is seeing with
18 the Snapper Check program.

19 So, Mr. Chairman, with that I move
20 that the board can -- that this issue be
21 considered at the next board meeting.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Patrick.

23 I think that's one of the things

1 that definitely we've heard loud and
2 clear from this meeting, the importance
3 of having data. Without data, really
4 there's no knowledge of what we're
5 doing.

6 I feel the Game Check is going to be
7 mandatory. And I certainly support
8 making Game Check a critical part of
9 managing turkeys and wildlife in the
10 state of Alabama. I think the public, I
11 think the hunters, and I think our
12 conservation department support that as
13 well, Patrick. But we will bring that
14 up and we will bring it up at the next
15 meeting.

16 Chuck, do you want to say anything
17 else about that? Commissioner?

18 MR. SYKES: One thing that I do want to say is
19 I agree the education component is going
20 to be huge. I have -- I spoke to Alfa's
21 wildlife committee earlier this month,
22 and they have agreed not only in action
23 but also monetarily that if the board

1 chooses to pass this they're going to
2 help us with an educational campaign to
3 help the hunters understand why we're
4 doing this.

5 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Chuck.

6 Yes, Grady, you have the floor.

7 MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman.

8 Two items of new business. And it's
9 basically some of the stuff that Chuck
10 presented in his PowerPoint, but I think
11 to comply with our rules about bringing
12 it up to vote -- one item was the
13 waterfowl situation. We want to thank
14 Raymond.

15 Where's Raymond?

16 Raymond last year hosted an event at
17 his farm in which Jody Pagan, a wildlife
18 biologist -- nationally recognized
19 waterfowl biologist, came down and
20 reviewed all our WMAs and reviewed all
21 our practices on our WMAs. And Jody's
22 recommendation -- and Jody is a personal
23 friend of mine. I've known Jody for

1 years -- was that we look at shutting
2 down the waterfowl WMAs in the
3 afternoons. So I want us to look at
4 that.

5 In reading a letter that we got in
6 our packet from a Mr. Pope, he was
7 saying that the department didn't hold
8 up their end as interviewing at the boat
9 ramps and all. And I think Keith wrote
10 a letter back to him stating that during
11 this next month there will be some
12 meetings in Mobile and Baldwin County.

13 David, I would like to ask if you
14 would also maybe run an article in the
15 press so that the waterfowl hunters in
16 the Mobile area knows that meeting is
17 going on once Keith sets it. And that
18 at the next meeting we look at
19 suspending waterfowl hunting in the
20 afternoons on all the WMAs as a
21 recommendation of the waterfowl
22 biologist that came and did the survey
23 for us. And that we also look at the

1 little section or the strip of land on
2 the -- between the Causeway and the
3 Interstate as a closed area to give
4 these birds a place to rest.

5 The next item of new business -- I'd
6 like to make sure we just got the I's
7 dotted and T's crossed -- is at, I
8 think, the next meeting I will
9 propose -- and I'm going to wait till
10 Chuck and the new board members of the
11 dog hunters association come up with
12 some ideas. But I think we need to go
13 to a statewide permit system. I think
14 we need to have minimum acreage. I've
15 seen the letter that the dog hunter's
16 association wrote as to what they felt
17 like the minimum acreage is. I don't
18 think that's enough. But I think with
19 Chuck and when they get back together,
20 they can come up with an acreage amount
21 that's acceptable.

22 I think in order to be fair with the
23 dog hunters -- and I've talked to Chuck

1 about this -- is since next year will be
2 the first year the statewide -- if it's
3 passed, the statewide permit will be put
4 in place, I think that some of these
5 smaller clubs that have less than those
6 minimum acreage be granted a permit for
7 that first year in which time to get
8 them in compliance the next year to have
9 the minimum acreage of what we come up
10 with.

11 So those were the two items on
12 the -- and several of the board members
13 have talked about the turkey seasons.
14 And if you remember in Chuck's
15 representation, he had option one and
16 option two on the deer where everybody
17 in the state had the same seasons. You
18 know, we might want to look at talking
19 about making the turkey seasons the
20 same. And there's several ideas about
21 moving the seasons back so that some of
22 these hens have already been bred. I
23 think we need to look at those dates and

1 talk about those dates where we can look
2 at those.

3 So those are the three items, the
4 turkeys, the waterfowl, and the permit
5 system.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Grady.

7 Chuck, you and I had talked earlier
8 in regards to some discrepancies in the
9 opening of turkey season in northern
10 Alabama, particularly in regards to
11 Jackson, Madison, and Marshall Counties.
12 Is that something that you all can look
13 into and maybe present us a little
14 information maybe on the next board
15 meeting?

16 Raymond, you may want to --

17 MR. SYKES: Yes, sir. I mean, we will --

18 Keith and Fred are writing furiously
19 right now with me keeping notes on what
20 all that we're going to do. Within the
21 next couple of weeks, as far as the
22 turkey and deer and Game Check and
23 whatever, comparing with the other

1 states, Fred has probably got all that
2 in his head right now. But we'll have
3 all that that I can send out to the
4 board. I'll have Betsy send that out to
5 the board in the next couple of weeks.
6 We'll get with Lonnie and meet with them
7 to try to come up with some suggestions
8 that we can get to y'all prior. I don't
9 want to give it to you five minutes
10 before the board meeting. So we're
11 going to work on that. That will be our
12 charge for the next board meeting.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And, Chuck, specifically
14 Marshall County and Jackson County opens
15 April 1st, and Madison County -- no.
16 I'm sorry -- open March 15th and there's
17 an April 1st opening in Madison County.
18 Those are the issues that I'd like to
19 address. Thank you.

20 Grady, thank you.

21 Raymond.

22 MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 In addition to -- and we've

1 already -- you've already addressed the
2 north Alabama turkey issues from that
3 standpoint, but I did want to echo that.

4 Also I wanted to -- and I'm working
5 with Chuck Sykes and I've just handed
6 the other board members a memorandum
7 that I would like to bring --
8 potentially bring forth at our next
9 meeting to alter the youth waterfowl --
10 proposed youth waterfowl hunting days.
11 You know, these are migratory waterfowl
12 that we're hunting, and in November that
13 is not the best opportunity as most of
14 the ducks have not migrated south at
15 that point. And that's to move them
16 into the first two Saturdays in
17 February.

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thanks, Raymond.

19 Who was involved in the youth --
20 which one of the conservation officers
21 was involved in the youth duck hunt in
22 the southern part of the state?

23 Could you give us a little

1 information on turnout, participation?

2 Were there any birds there?

3 MR. GAULDIN: (Inaudible portion.)

4 (Brief interruption by the court
5 reporter.)

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Keith, could you come to
7 the mic, please?

8 MR. GAULDIN: The data that we have so far
9 from our youth waterfowl season -- well,
10 previously the federal framework
11 wouldn't allow us to have a day before
12 and a day after. This is the first year
13 that the federal framework actually
14 allowed us to do so.

15 On the Jackson County waterfowl area
16 in Mud Creek, which is in -- near
17 Stevenson, on 11-21 --

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yeah. Actually south
19 Alabama.

20 MR. GAULDIN: Okay. We don't have anything on
21 south Alabama. These are the only --
22 this is the only data that we have for
23 waterfowl areas.

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: Do you have some general
2 information about the turnout in south
3 Alabama with the youth duck hunt?

4 MR. GAULDIN: Not datawise. Just folks
5 enjoyed it because the ducks hadn't been
6 shot at yet.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Were there any ducks?
8 Did they have ducks, I guess?

9 MR. GAULDIN: That's a little early for south
10 Alabama during that time. Typically
11 they don't come in till later in the
12 season.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: What about north
14 Alabama? Can you present that data?

15 MR. GAULDIN: On the Jackson County waterfowl
16 area at Mud Creek, on 11-21, that was
17 the Saturday before the regular duck
18 season. They had 52 participants/youth
19 participants and harvested 69 ducks.
20 The Saturday after the regular duck
21 season they had 20 participants/youth
22 participants and harvested 18 ducks.

23 At Swan Creek in Limestone County

1 the Saturday before they had 33 youth
2 participants harvesting 98 ducks, and
3 the Saturday following the regular duck
4 season they had 35 participants/youth
5 participants and harvested 33 ducks.

6 So the public areas, you know, it
7 seems more beneficial to be prior than
8 afterwards.

9 MR. JONES: Mr. Chairman?

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Yes, Raymond.

11 MR. JONES: I would like to speak a little bit
12 to the data that is being presented.

13 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Sure.

14 MR. JONES: You know, first of all, we only
15 have one year's data on the WMAs, and it
16 did show higher participation in
17 November. However, I would like to
18 point out that a WMA is an already
19 impounded waterway. Those are more than
20 likely localized ducks that are here
21 year around and they -- sure, they
22 haven't been shot at, and you will have
23 that situation.

1 I'd also like to remind you that
2 94 -- approximately 94 percent of the
3 state of Alabama is privately held. And
4 waterways and impoundments on privately
5 held duck-hunting areas are not -- the
6 water table is not up. The rains have
7 not come yet. Basically ponds are dry
8 when that season comes in.

9 If you look at it and you had this
10 same data -- which currently we don't
11 have an ability to be able to have
12 similar data like we do off our WMAs.
13 If you were to, though, ask a lot of, as
14 I have done, duck hunters, you will find
15 that it's almost a hundred percent would
16 pick February when the ducks have
17 actually migrated over November in a
18 localized duck shoot.

19 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Jones.

20 MR. GAULDIN: Yeah. A lot of areas on private
21 land like that typically probably don't
22 have water on their management areas --
23 their waterfowl areas probably till,

1 what, mid December. So that is
2 something to take into consideration as
3 well.

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thanks, Keith.

5 Appreciate it. And we will address this
6 at the next meeting.

7 Mr. Jones, thank you.

8 Any more new business?

9 Ben, you have the floor. Be sure to
10 use your mic, Ben.

11 MR. STIMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I would like to
12 propose a resolution for consideration
13 by the board. If you'd like me to, I'll
14 read it as fast as I can.

15 The Conservation Advisory -- this is
16 a resolution that the Conservation
17 Advisory Board of the Alabama Department
18 of Conservation and Natural Resources
19 hereby declares:

20 Whereas, the Marine Resources
21 Division of the Alabama Department of
22 Conservation and Natural Resources has
23 established Alabama as a leader in the

1 management and advancement of the Gulf
2 Coast's marine fisheries resources,
3 including the economically significant
4 red snapper, through sound scientific
5 assessment and monitoring, applied
6 research, and enforcement programs.

7 And, whereas, the Marine Resources
8 Division has worked diligently to
9 improve marine fisheries habitat through
10 the creation of the largest artificial
11 reef network in the United States.

12 And, whereas, these efforts by the
13 Marine Resources Division have directly
14 contributed to establishing Alabama's
15 Gulf Coast as a preeminent destination
16 for recreational anglers seeking the
17 opportunity to land trophy red snapper
18 and other abundant reef fish.

19 And, whereas, the Marine Resources
20 Division's innovative and unprecedented
21 harvest data collection program known as
22 "Snapper Check" has proven the federal
23 government is overestimating the

1 recreational harvest of red snapper in
2 our state by over 250 percent.

3 And, whereas, federal management of
4 the red snapper fishery, which relies on
5 inflated harvest estimates, has resulted
6 in unnecessarily short recreational
7 seasons that unfairly limit Alabama
8 anglers access to this highly valued
9 fishery.

10 And, whereas, the Marine Resources
11 Division has demonstrated the ability to
12 effectively manage, protect, and promote
13 the sustainability of the red snapper
14 fishery that is substantially superior
15 to the current federal management
16 regime.

17 Now therefore be it resolved, the
18 Conservation Advisory Board of the
19 Alabama Department of Conservation and
20 Natural Resources, in a duly constituted
21 and assembled meeting, supports all
22 efforts of the Marine Resources Division
23 to assume authority over scientific data

1 collection, harvest assessments, and
2 management of the red snapper fishery in
3 state and federal waters off Alabama's
4 Gulf Coast to promote the sustainability
5 of the fishery and ensure that Alabama's
6 anglers and coastal economy enjoy the
7 benefits of this abundant natural
8 resource.

9 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Thank you.

10 Is this an actionable item? Does it
11 require vote, or do we just accept the
12 resolution?

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: I think we probably need to
14 vote on this.

15 MR. CAGLE: Commissioner, I'll second
16 Mr. Stimpson's motion to introduce this
17 resolution for consideration.

18 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: A second. We have a
19 second.

20 Okay. All in favor?

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

23 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Opposed?

1 (No response.)

2 (Brief interruption by the court
3 reporter.)

4 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Motion carries. The
5 resolution is accepted.

6 Thank you, Mr. Stimpson.

7 Any more new business before this
8 board?

9 Grady.

10 MR. HARTZOG: Just one thing. I think we need
11 to -- if we can't put it in the official
12 resolution, we need to put, P.S., kudos
13 to Chris.

14 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Job well done, Chris.

15 MR. BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, sir.

16 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Joey.

17 MR. DOBBS: New business. And I will speak
18 slowly. This is very important.

19 There are some issues regarding the
20 harvest -- the commercial harvest and
21 recreational overharvest of bullfrogs
22 and pig frogs in and around the lower
23 Mobile-Tensaw Delta as well as other

1 areas in the state. That is something
2 that we will deal with -- hail the frog.
3 That is something that we need to deal
4 with by out-of-state licensees to put
5 together some limits.

6 Another opportunity, some things
7 that we've talked about in the past to
8 resurrect, we issue -- or the Department
9 issues depredation permits for deer, and
10 during the process of -- or there will
11 be some process of managing these
12 depredation permits going forward to
13 understand how many animals are
14 harvested and how the crops then might
15 or might not be affected.

16 One other piece of new business or
17 old business that we'll resurrect again
18 is the possibility of a vanity tag or a
19 tag for the Department of Conservation
20 and Natural Resources in an effort to
21 raise funds. It would, I think, be
22 unearmarked to be used for studies and
23 sharings with some of the universities

1 or however the department decided to use
2 those funds. That would -- that's
3 something that we can talk about as time
4 goes on.

5 The last part is just being clear on
6 what Grady said about aligning the
7 seasons for the turkey seasons and
8 making them consecutive throughout the
9 state. Is that what I'm understanding,
10 that now there are three counties or two
11 counties that are outside -- that start
12 earlier and those are all going to be
13 now in line and consecutive? Is that
14 correct?

15 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: I think we're going
16 to -- he's going to take a look at that.
17 That's going to be investigated. Thanks
18 for bringing that up.

19 MR. DOBBS: And that's all I have. Thank you,
20 Tracye. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Any other new business
22 that needs to be brought before this
23 board?

1 Chuck.

2 MR. SYKES: Just on a personal note, I've only
3 been here three years, but I just want
4 y'all to know that I do strive to be
5 like Chris. I promise. We're working
6 on it.

7 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Chris has set the bar
8 very high. Keep jumping, Chuck.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: I join in with that. I'm
10 glad to be working with Chris.

11 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: And next we certainly
12 would like to recognize, you know, the
13 outstanding job that our law enforcers
14 have provided in conservation and
15 management across the state. We all
16 know that they have been overworked.
17 And we need to get out and buy a license
18 so we can get more of those guys in the
19 field.

20 But we appreciate you all coming out
21 today. You do an outstanding job for
22 the state of Alabama. We appreciate it.
23 The board wants to make sure ...

1 Moving right along here, the next
2 item -- I think that concludes the new
3 business -- is the selection of date and
4 location of the next advisory board
5 meeting.

6 We have tentatively picked a date of
7 March 26th. I don't know if we have a
8 location yet.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: May I, Mr. Chairman.

10 So, yeah, March 26th. That's what I
11 was saying earlier about talking with
12 the dog deer hunter association. We
13 don't have a very big window here.

14 And we'll be talking to our board
15 members, and then internally,
16 Mr. Chairman, we'll try to come up with
17 an appropriate place to meet like we
18 usually do. Like to try to get out of
19 Montgomery and go to another part of the
20 state where we can have some other
21 people's input.

22 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: Raymond.

23 MR. JONES: Mr. Chairman, can I make that

1 meeting start at 11 o'clock since that's
2 turkey season?

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: I thought we were trying to
4 help out the turkeys not get killed,
5 Raymond. Let's keep it at nine.

6 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: That will be taken into
7 consideration, Mr. Jones.

8 Is there any further business?

9 (No response.)

10 CHAIRMAN STRICKLAND: If there is no further
11 business that's brought in front of this
12 board, I make a motion to adjourn. We
13 conclude the February 20th, 2016, board
14 meeting.

15 (Meeting adjourned at
16 approximately 12:36 p.m.)

17 * * * * *

18 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

19 * * * * *

20 STATE OF ALABAMA:

21 MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

22 I, Tracye Sadler Blackwell, Certified
23 Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of

1 Alabama at Large, do hereby certify that I reported
2 the foregoing proceedings of the Alabama Department
3 of Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory
4 Board Meeting on February 20, 2016.

5 The foregoing 231 computer-printed pages
6 contain a true and correct transcript of the
7 proceedings held.

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

11 This 10th day of June 2016.

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Tracye Sadler Blackwell
ACCR No. 294
Expiration date: 9-30-2016
Certified Court Reporter
and Commissioner for the State
of Alabama at Large