

STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thurber Arts Center

Randolph School

4915 Garth Road, SE

Huntsville, Alabama

May 20, 2023

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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Proceedings taken before Stacey L.  
Johnson, Certified Court Reporter and  
Commissioner for the State of Alabama at  
Large, at Thurber Arts Center, Randolph  
School, 4915 Garth Road, SE, Huntsville,  
Alabama, Saturday, May 20, 2023,  
commencing at 9:00 a.m.

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**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**Mr. Joseph Dobbs, Jr., Chairman**

**Commissioner Christopher M. Blankenship,  
Ex-Officio Secretary**

**Mr. Kevin Savoy**

**Mr. Grady Hartzog**

**Mr. Greg Barksdale**

**Mr. Tim Wood**

**Mr. Raymond Jones, Jr.**

**Mr. Ben Stimpson**

**Mr. Gary Wolfe**

**Mr. Brock Jones**

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1           CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Welcome to you all.  
2 Welcome to our second Conservation  
3 Advisory Board meeting in 2023 for today,  
4 May the 20th. I'm glad you're all here.

5           We don't have a whole lot on the  
6 agenda, so this is going to be a  
7 reasonably short meeting. I'm going to  
8 dispense with admonitions and just say  
9 let's be diligent and responsible to  
10 everybody and let's have a good meeting.

11           Let me thank -- this is a  
12 wonderful venue. It's beautiful. It's so  
13 nice to be here. Let me give some special  
14 thanks to Adam Bernick, who is the  
15 assistant head of the School for  
16 Advancement and Strategy, for having us  
17 here. Meade Davis, she's here this  
18 morning and has been helping out and thank  
19 you. She's the Director of Development.  
20 David Hope, he's the Technical Director.  
21 He's managing our microphones and the  
22 lights, which is pretty cool. Matt  
23 Strobe, safety and security manager; Mark

1       Saucer our facility director; and last,  
2       but certainly not least, Mr. James Cooper,  
3       the chief financial officer. So thank you  
4       to all of those folks. And thanks again  
5       to all of the -- the staffs from all the  
6       divisions and the directors that are here  
7       today. Thank y'all so much for taking  
8       your time and coming. Betsy, Wanda, thank  
9       you and your folks. And Deputy Director  
10      Poolos for being here and supporting us.  
11      We appreciate this very much. And the  
12      legal staff that's here, we thank you.  
13      Juliana, thank you so much.

14                This morning I'm going to ask  
15      Mr. Kevin Savoy, our Board member, to give  
16      our invocation.

17                MR. SAVOY: Will you bow your heads.

18                                (Invocation given by

19                                        Mr. Kevin Savoy.)

20                CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Kevin,  
21      very much.

22                I'll lead us in the pledge this  
23      morning. The flag is here to my right.

1 (Recitation of the Pledge  
2 of Allegiance led by  
3 Chairman Joseph Dobbs,  
4 Jr.)

5 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Secretary, do we  
6 have a quorum today?

7 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir,  
8 we do.

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

10 The minutes of the May 11 meeting  
11 have been distributed and read. Are there  
12 any corrections to those minutes?

13 As there are no corrections to  
14 those minutes, we'll sign them and move  
15 them forward and put them in the minutes.  
16 Thank you.

17 Just briefly we'll take a moment  
18 for each Board member -- you don't have to  
19 stand -- if you will just give your name  
20 and your congressional district. At the  
21 earlier meeting, of course, we do a  
22 district report. If you'll state your  
23 name and your congressional district

1 starting at the far end.

2 MR. BARKSDALE: My name is Greg  
3 Barksdale. I'm District 4.

4 MR. WOOD: Tim Wood. I'm District 7.

5 MR. HARTZOG: Grady Hartzog, District  
6 2.

7 MR. SAVOY: Kevin Savoy, District 2.

8 MR. STIMPSON: Ben Stimpson, District  
9 1.

10 MR. R. JONES: Raymond Jones, District  
11 5.

12 MR. B. JONES: Brock Jones, District  
13 6.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Chris  
15 Blankenship, Commissioner of the  
16 Department of Conservation.

17 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And I'm Joey Dobbs,  
18 Chairman today. And I'm going to remind  
19 you -- I'd like to remind you again --  
20 these folks -- if you've got questions in  
21 your district or if you're out of your  
22 district, these are the fellows -- give  
23 them a call, ask them -- let them be your

1 go-between to work with you and the  
2 Department of Conservation and Natural  
3 Resources in helping solve your problems  
4 or just the issues. And if you have a  
5 positive comment, please share that with  
6 them so that they can share it with the  
7 Department as well.

8 We're going to move quickly here.  
9 Download the Outdoor Alabama app. It's  
10 got some great things on it. I encourage  
11 you to do that every time.

12 I'm going to ask now that the  
13 Commissioner give us his updates as well  
14 as a PowerPoint report.

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
16 Mr. Dobbs.

17 I'm going to give a quick update  
18 on some things that have happened since  
19 our March meeting, a legislative update  
20 and couple of other things, and then I  
21 want to run through some information about  
22 the Deepwater Horizon funding that we're  
23 handling through the departments and

1 GOMESA and then the outdoor recreation  
2 initiative that I thought might be of  
3 interest to the Board.

4 But first, let me talk about  
5 legislation that could impact the  
6 Department. There was some legislation  
7 that dealt with dams and dam inspections  
8 that was introduced. Of interest, I  
9 think, to the Board maybe, is that we have  
10 over 35 dams in the Department of  
11 Conservation that we're responsible for  
12 either in our state lakes, in our state  
13 parks. So the legislation did have a real  
14 chance to impact us and what we're going  
15 to be required to do. We have worked with  
16 the legislator, Senator Chambliss, on that  
17 and with a substitute that we can live  
18 with on that, and hopefully that will be  
19 introduced this next week, the substitute,  
20 if it makes it to the Senate floor. It  
21 really created a voluntary dam safety  
22 program so that entities that would like  
23 to participate in that and have access to



1       some BIL money from the federal government  
2       for dam safety would be able to access  
3       that. So we're supportive with the  
4       substitute.

5               And there's a bill that has to do  
6       with stocking, stocking fish, and what  
7       would be allowed on the Coosa River. It's  
8       passed. We substituted that bill with  
9       some language that takes away most of the  
10      things that were adverse to us in the  
11      Department. The substitute bill has  
12      passed the House, passed the Senate  
13      Committee, and it's still in need to pass  
14      the Senate if it makes it on the calendar  
15      the last few days.

16              Then there was a fish consumption  
17      advisory bill called the Shore Act that  
18      was put forward by most of several river  
19      keeper organizations. It would create a  
20      statutory requirement for ADEM to do  
21      certain things on signage, for the Alabama  
22      Department of Public Health to do certain  
23      things with the fish consumption, and then

1 the portion that impacted the Department  
2 of Conservation is that we would just need  
3 to make available when we sell the license  
4 electronically the websites so people can  
5 go see where the fish consumption  
6 advisories are. Like I say, we worked on  
7 this bill as well with ADEM and several of  
8 the business interests to have something  
9 that we could live with. It is in the --  
10 same thing, it has passed the House,  
11 passed Senate Committee, and is waiting  
12 for the chance to get on the calendar in  
13 the Senate for final passage.

14 Then there's a living shorelines  
15 bill that would impact our State Lands  
16 Division down in Mobile and  
17 Baldwin Counties. Again, we worked with  
18 the sponsor, wrote a substitute for them  
19 to get that bill to something that we  
20 could live with and thought that it met  
21 his objectives without overly adversely  
22 affecting the Department and the work that  
23 we do on the coast. That bill has passed

1 out of Committee and House but has not had  
2 any other movement, and I don't see it  
3 having much of a chance with just a few  
4 days left in the session.

5 We do have some funding in the  
6 Education Trust Fund supplemental that  
7 could be of use for the Department. I'll  
8 talk a little bit more about that in the  
9 PowerPoint. But it's 15 million dollars  
10 that would go to Innovate Alabama that  
11 would be spent for outdoor recreation and  
12 consultation with the Department of  
13 Conservation and Natural Resources. And  
14 then the general fund supplemental, there  
15 was eight million dollars in there for the  
16 Department. Three million dollars of that  
17 would be for an economic development  
18 project at Rickwood State Park in  
19 Blount County, and five million of that  
20 would go to ADCNR for some work for  
21 shooting ranges, state lakes, and some  
22 other opportunities. We're working to try  
23 and get both of those increased in the

1 final budget that passes.

2 But in putting this together  
3 yesterday, I did come across what I  
4 thought was some interesting information.  
5 Our budget for '24 if passed as we  
6 proposed, it will be 407 million dollars  
7 for the Department of Conservation. If  
8 you add the 16 million dollars for Forever  
9 Wild, that's 423 million dollars for our  
10 budget next year. Just as for information  
11 to show how things have grown over the  
12 last five or six years, in 2017 our budget  
13 was 140 million dollars. The next year  
14 was 188 million dollars. So from 2017 to  
15 now our budget is 190 percent higher than  
16 it was back in 2017. A lot of that has to  
17 do with the oil spill work that I'll  
18 mention. Of the 407 million dollars this  
19 year, 165 million of that is for oil spill  
20 projects on the coast and 70 million  
21 dollars of that is GOMESA. But that's  
22 still a testament to the good work of our  
23 staff in finding grants and finding

1 opportunities for us to do good work  
2 around the state, turning over every rock  
3 that we can to find money under there. So  
4 I would like to commend staff from all  
5 four of our divisions for the good work  
6 that they've done in securing funds to do  
7 good work for recreation in our state.  
8 I've said it forever that ideas just stay  
9 ideas without money, and so our staff has  
10 done a really good job of finding money to  
11 make those ideas into reality. And the  
12 people in the state of Alabama are the  
13 ones that are benefiting from that.

14 Just to put it in perspective, if,  
15 Mr. Chairman, you don't mind just a couple  
16 extra minutes, I'm just going to give you  
17 the funding amount for a few other  
18 departments in the state just to see how  
19 that 407 million compares. Ag and  
20 Industries, their budget is 79 million,  
21 ADEM is 323 million, ABC is 134 million,  
22 ADECA is 471 million, Forestry is  
23 33 million, ALEA, the Alabama Law

1 Enforcement Agency, is 208 million. Then  
2 the bigger ones -- some of the bigger ones  
3 in the state, Corrections is 776 million,  
4 DOT is two billion, and then Medicaid  
5 9.2 billion, and then Human Resources is  
6 in the 4, 5 billion dollar range as well.  
7 So those are the larger ones, but just to  
8 kind of give you an idea of where we rank  
9 budget-wise with some of the other  
10 agencies in the state that you hear a lot  
11 about.

12 Just giving an update on things  
13 from March until now, we did receive our  
14 deposit for GOMESA funding -- around a  
15 little over 39 million dollars that we  
16 received -- at the end of April. There  
17 was a lease sale for offshore oil and gas  
18 that will help with our GOMESA  
19 distribution in 2024. That money will go  
20 towards that distribution.

21 Our State Lands Division received  
22 two infrastructure grants recently. One  
23 is about 1.2 million dollars for 449 acres

1 in Mobile County, and then another grant  
2 to acquire another parcel within the Weeks  
3 Bay Reserve Management Area. Then we'll  
4 have beach renourishment projects  
5 beginning this late summer for Dauphin  
6 Island, Gulf Shores, Orange Beach, and  
7 Gulf State Park, we'll be adding sand in  
8 all of those locations late summer and  
9 through the winter.

10 From the Wildlife and Freshwater  
11 Fisheries side, I do want to recognize  
12 that Chuck Sykes was elected president of  
13 the Association of Fish and Wildlife  
14 Agencies, AFWA. I don't know. It may be  
15 the first time we've had someone from  
16 Alabama be the president of AFWA. It's  
17 been a long time. That's a big thing.  
18 With all the things that are going on  
19 around the country with -- especially on  
20 the national wildlife refuges and some of  
21 the federal lands and things that are  
22 going on to try and take away people's  
23 opportunity to access those federal lands

1 and then other legislation that will limit  
2 what we can do in our state, it's very  
3 important I think to have Chuck in that  
4 leadership role for this next year trying  
5 to help push access and protect all that  
6 we hold dear when it comes to outdoor  
7 recreation and hunting and fishing.

8 We did have a lot of turkeys  
9 harvested this year. When you look at the  
10 reports, it was a successful season for  
11 a lot of folks on turkeys.

12 For the MRD, the Red Snapper  
13 season for the charter boats, that season  
14 was set on Monday of this week. It will  
15 be June 1st through August 25th, which is  
16 a longer season than they've had in recent  
17 years.

18 And then at the Gulf Council  
19 meeting June 5th through the 8th in  
20 Mobile, there's a proposal that would  
21 increase the quota for the recreational  
22 Red Snapper fishermen, and if that's  
23 approved, it will be about a 110,000 pound



1       increase before the end of the year, which  
2       is a little over 20 percent in our quota.  
3       As you may recall, our quota was reduced  
4       about 50 percent this year compared to the  
5       previous two years because of some  
6       calibration that NOAA Fisheries did. This  
7       will help us get some of that quota back  
8       and should give us a really long,  
9       successful season for Red Snapper this  
10      year.

11               For Parks, with the bond money and  
12      some other things, we have construction  
13      going on in parks all over the state. So  
14      hopefully, you'll see parks in your  
15      district with construction signs going up  
16      in some of those areas. As with any  
17      construction, we'll have to close certain  
18      areas of the park. You may get some  
19      complaints from park goers, but I tell all  
20      of them that call, pardon our progress.  
21      Once we get this done, you're going to be  
22      really pleased with the finished product.

23               We had our managers meeting this

1 week at Lakepoint State Park where all the  
2 managers from all of the parks all over  
3 the state get together and do some  
4 training and some good times of fellowship  
5 and working on some initiatives. I'd like  
6 to thank Grady for taking the time out of  
7 his schedule to come by for dinner with  
8 the park managers Tuesday night. I know  
9 that meant a lot to them and a lot to me  
10 that you took the time to come by there,  
11 Grady. Thank you so much.

12 As part of the renovations of the  
13 parks, we hosted a public meeting in  
14 Northport for Lake Lurleen State Park just  
15 to kind of get input from the public on  
16 what they wanted to see when we do the  
17 renovations at that park. It is in need  
18 of almost a total rebuild, and so we  
19 wanted to involve the public. I thought  
20 we might have 20 or 30 people show up.  
21 Well, we had over a hundred people that  
22 came to the community center to voice  
23 their opinions on what they would like to

1 see out of the park. As a matter of fact,  
2 they canceled the church service on  
3 Wednesday night at the Baptist church near  
4 the park so that all the members could  
5 come and share their thoughts. So it was  
6 great to have that type of interest in the  
7 work that we're going to do at Lake  
8 Lurleen State Park.

9 So with that, except for an update  
10 on the PowerPoint, Mr. Chairman, that's  
11 it. Do you want people to move down so  
12 they can see the screen?

13 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The Board, if you'd  
14 like to move down, there's some seats  
15 reserved down front so that we can all  
16 enjoy the PowerPoint.

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I'll do my  
18 best not to kill you all by PowerPoint. I  
19 promise this will be quick and hopefully  
20 painless.

21 We talked a lot of hunting and  
22 fishing, about our parks, about a lot of  
23 the other stuff that we have going on in

1 the Department of Conservation, and those  
2 rightfully so take up a lot of time at  
3 these Conservation Advisory Board  
4 meetings. But looking at the schedule for  
5 this meeting, I didn't think that it would  
6 be super full, so I wanted to take about  
7 ten minutes and just share some of the  
8 information about the work that's taking  
9 place around the state when it comes to  
10 the Deepwater Horizon work that our  
11 section headed by Amy Hunter and her staff  
12 are doing on the coast, along with an  
13 update on GOMESA because those two things  
14 kind of work together.

15 All right. The big takeaway from  
16 this slide is that we have a billion and  
17 29 million dollars in projects underway in  
18 Mobile and Baldwin Counties that we're  
19 managing through our Deepwater Horizon  
20 section, 176 individual projects. That is  
21 pretty substantial. I mean, that's a lot  
22 of lot of money, a lot of work that goes  
23 on. We have six people in that section

1 that are managing that, so we keep --  
2 that's a pretty lean section and they're  
3 doing a very good job. It's making  
4 generational changes on the Gulf Coast.  
5 We would never want to go through another  
6 Deepwater Horizon oil spill for sure.  
7 Eleven lives were lost and it was a  
8 terrible, terrible thing for our coast.  
9 However, we're trying to do good work with  
10 the money that came from that and make  
11 sure that we are taking this seriously and  
12 making good work with it. So hopefully we  
13 would surpass that billion dollars in  
14 projects this year. I thought that was  
15 kind of a pretty big milestone.

16 These are the different funding  
17 sources. There are five different funding  
18 sources that we manage. It's through the  
19 Federal Restore Council. It's a direct  
20 component. I'm the Governor's designee on  
21 that council. For bucket 2, I'm the  
22 Governor's designee. Bucket 1 and bucket  
23 3 are managed by the Alabama Restore

1 Council. That's made up of six mayors --  
2 the mayors of Orange Beach, Gulf Shores,  
3 Fairhope, Dauphin Island, Bayou La Batre,  
4 Mobile, the County Commission Chairman  
5 from Mobile, County Commission Chairman  
6 from Baldwin County, the Governor, and the  
7 state docks director make up the ten  
8 members of that group. And that is for  
9 bucket 1 and bucket 3. However, the  
10 Department of Conservation is the  
11 administrator for that group, so we manage  
12 all of those projects after that group  
13 selects them. The Natural Resource Damage  
14 Assessment -- the Commissioner of  
15 Conservation, and the GSA director are the  
16 trustees for Alabama for the NRDA  
17 projects. And then the National Fish and  
18 Wildlife Foundation Gulf Environmental  
19 Benefit Fund -- the conservation agencies  
20 in those states are the consulting agency  
21 for those. So it's different sources of  
22 funds that make up that billion dollars in  
23 projects.

1           I just want to run through some of  
2 the different types of projects. I'll do  
3 this pretty quick. So the first one is  
4 replenish and protect living coastal  
5 resources. That includes restoration of  
6 oysters and oyster reefs projects. We've  
7 built about 30 million dollars in  
8 artificial reefs, increasing funding for  
9 research, response for marine mammals and  
10 sea turtles, conservation of bird nesting  
11 and foraging habitat, as well as  
12 constructing a wildlife rehabilitation  
13 center and sea turtle triage facility in  
14 Orange Beach.

15           To support enhanced community  
16 resilience, this is important for all of  
17 our state, but particularly our coastal  
18 areas that try and do some things that  
19 make us more resilient for storms and  
20 drought and economic downturns, just  
21 things that make our communities stronger  
22 where they can be resilient when negative  
23 things happen in our state.

1           As an aside, the Governor, by  
2           executive order, just created a resilience  
3           council for the state about two weeks ago,  
4           and the Commissioner of the Department of  
5           Conservation is one of the members of that  
6           resilience council as we look at ways to  
7           make our state more resilient.

8           But we're funding projects for  
9           resilience on the coast that includes  
10          construction of Auburn University's Gulf  
11          Coast Engineering and Research Center in  
12          Orange Beach to improve engineering  
13          practices in the coastal environment. We  
14          replaced -- or are building a new office  
15          for ADEM in coastal Alabama. We have done  
16          a lot of work supporting the promotion and  
17          marketing of the seafood industry through  
18          the Alabama Seafood Marketing Commission  
19          that has been funded through here. And  
20          then supporting the city of Fairhope's  
21          working waterfronts and green space  
22          initiative along the coastline in  
23          Fairhope, and then provide economic



1        development and infrastructure. This is  
2        179 million dollars, 11 projects. These  
3        are some of the larger projects that have  
4        been funded. It includes the construction  
5        of the Africatown Welcome Center, which  
6        will include either the Clotilda or pieces  
7        of the Clotilda as part of the Welcome  
8        Center. And if you recall, the Clotilda  
9        was discovered a couple of years ago. Our  
10       State Lands Division working with the  
11       Alabama Historical Commission has done a  
12       good job of trying to protect that  
13       shipwreck that was found in the  
14       Mobile-Tensaw Delta. That was the last  
15       slave ship to bring slaves from Africa to  
16       the United States, and so that Clotilda  
17       will be part of that Africatown museum.  
18       Africatown was the part of the city of  
19       Mobile just north of Mobile where the  
20       people that came from that ship settled  
21       and built this community there just north  
22       of the Cochran Bridge in Mobile.

23                    One of the larger projects in this

1 section was to create -- working with the  
2 port of Mobile to build a roll on/roll off  
3 facility in our bulk handling part of the  
4 State Port Authority. That project is  
5 very instrumental with all of the  
6 automobile manufacturers in our state.  
7 The roll on/roll off facility is a place  
8 where you can import and export things  
9 that roll on and roll off ships, primarily  
10 cars -- cars and trucks. So for Hyundai,  
11 Honda, Toyota, even the Kia plant just  
12 across the state line in Georgia, the  
13 Mercedes plant in Vance, they can all  
14 utilize this facility now to export  
15 vehicles out of Alabama through the port  
16 of Mobile without having to go to Savannah  
17 or Jacksonville or other places. So this  
18 is really a good asset not only for the  
19 port but for all those automobile  
20 manufacturers throughout the state. So  
21 we're very proud to have partnered with  
22 the port on the funding for this.

23 And we've funded significant road

1 improvements in Baldwin County on  
2 Highway 181, Highway 31, Canal Road.  
3 We've worked with the Department of  
4 Transportation on those projects.

5 Helping to conserve habitat, this  
6 is primarily land acquisition. You'll see  
7 about 150 million dollars listed for land  
8 acquisition at the time these slides were  
9 produced. So far we've acquired more than  
10 13,000 acres of land in coastal Alabama to  
11 protect and provide recreational access.  
12 That includes acquisitions at the west end  
13 of Dauphin Island and the Grand Bay  
14 Savanna, Pilot Town in Fort Morgan, Gulf  
15 Highlands property in Fort Morgan, which  
16 is really one of the last undeveloped  
17 portions of the beach that was not part of  
18 either Fort Morgan or the Bon Secour  
19 National Wildlife Refuge. The Perdido  
20 River, we have multiple parcels. I'll  
21 come back to that. In Weeks Bay, multiple  
22 parcels. Dauphin Island Inner Island and  
23 beach front parcels, Oyster Bay, a large

1 acquisition there, and then the Bon Secour  
2 Refuge. We've purchased three different  
3 large pieces of property on the Three  
4 Rivers Area that we have transferred to  
5 the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge.  
6 So all that together is really protecting  
7 a lot of property.

8 I did give you a map that I keep  
9 in my folder as we're trying to do some of  
10 these acquisitions. Just wanted to show  
11 how the Department is working together.  
12 So when you get back to your seats,  
13 you'll see this little map there. We have  
14 the Perdido Wildlife Management Area  
15 already established in the north part of  
16 Baldwin County that goes really south of  
17 I65 down close to I10. And then we have  
18 the Lillian Swamp Forever Wild property  
19 that was at the mouth of the Perdido River  
20 right there in Perdido Bay. So we have  
21 been working over the last six years to  
22 connect both of those Wildlife Management  
23 Areas so that we would have a real

1 distinct wildlife corridor that goes about  
2 50 miles or so of river frontage from one  
3 end to the other down Perdido Bay, which  
4 at the time seemed like a pretty  
5 monumental task, but with all of the  
6 divisions of the Department working  
7 together -- Parks has some land that  
8 started the acquisition there that was a  
9 conversion. State Lands has property  
10 there. Forever Wild, Chuck and his group  
11 have use of PR dollars for part of that.  
12 And then we've gotten a coastal wetlands  
13 grant and used some GOMESA funds to piece  
14 together almost that whole entire  
15 corridor. We have a couple of parcels  
16 between I10 and the bottom of the Wildlife  
17 Management Area that we need to close up.  
18 And now we have another initiative with  
19 about 15,000 acres adjacent to part of the  
20 Perdido Wildlife Management Area that  
21 we're working with landowners to try and  
22 secure that for the future. So hopefully,  
23 when we're done in the next couple of

1 years putting all of that together, we'll  
2 have well over 30,000 acres along the  
3 Perdido River corridor, about 50 miles of  
4 canoe trail and river frontage all the way  
5 down through Perdido Bay that will be  
6 public-held ownership. So just wanted to  
7 share that map with you. It just kind of  
8 shows where we started with the idea and  
9 how, working together across the divisions  
10 and with the Deepwater Horizon section,  
11 we've been able to really be successful in  
12 putting all that together for the people  
13 of Alabama for perpetuity. And this one  
14 acquisition that was made through the  
15 Federal Restore Council along the Perdido  
16 River -- this is a 2,644 acre parcel that  
17 we purchased last year.

18 And then restoring water quality,  
19 we created a water quality program for  
20 Mobile and Baldwin Counties to help  
21 improve all the septic and sewer  
22 operations and many other things, but  
23 primarily that's what it is on these

1 utilities to help them so they don't have  
2 as many sanitary sewer overflows or that  
3 the effluent that's being treated that  
4 goes into our waterways is at the level  
5 that it should be so that it improves  
6 water quality. And a lot of projects  
7 there. These are projects funded through  
8 the Deepwater Horizon but also as part of  
9 our GOMESA funding over the last few  
10 years. We have done several septic to  
11 sewer conversions in some of our coastal  
12 areas down around Fowl River and in  
13 Grand Bay and Bayou La Batre that were  
14 really close to the water where we thought  
15 it was prudent to try and get those septic  
16 systems onto a city sewer to keep from  
17 having impacts on our fisheries. And so  
18 these are just a quick list of -- when it  
19 says multiple -- we've done multiple  
20 projects on Dauphin Island, the city of  
21 Orange Beach, and Bayou La Batre. So  
22 those are all the communities that have  
23 been positively impacted by our water

1       quality program and the things that we  
2       funded there.

3               And then going back to these.  
4       Most of these we have required a match  
5       from the utilities, so we didn't do -- a  
6       lot of these we're not doing them at a  
7       hundred percent funding as the utilities  
8       provide somewhere between 10 and  
9       25 percent match for these so that we can  
10      stretch those funds as far as possible and  
11      so that the rate payers and the utilities  
12      have some skin in the game. And it's  
13      helped them really prioritize the projects  
14      and do the things that they think will  
15      have the most positive benefit.

16             And then enhance recreation, this  
17      includes -- you know, during the oil  
18      spill, it wasn't just the environment that  
19      struggled or had problems or was impacted,  
20      it was also the people. You know, we had  
21      lost recreational access to the beaches,  
22      to fishing, to a lot of other things, and  
23      so as part of the natural resource damage



1        assessment, there is a big portion of that  
2        that is for recovery of loss of  
3        recreational use. So those include  
4        projects that -- at our state parks, we're  
5        doing the Lodge at Gulf State Park and the  
6        28 miles of trails there. That's probably  
7        the most obvious example of that. We're  
8        also expanding the campground at Meaher  
9        State Park. We have a trail that's going  
10       to go all the way from where it stops now  
11       on Fort Morgan Road close to the Peninsula  
12       Golf Club all the way to the end of Fort  
13       Morgan and other improvements and blueway  
14       and greenway development in the city of  
15       Mobile and then Conservation acquisitions.  
16       And then we've also made improvements to  
17       the Gulf State Park Pier even though that  
18       was impacted by Hurricane Sally the day  
19       after we finished the improvements to the  
20       pier, and then we've rebuilt the Fort  
21       Morgan pier. Scott Bannon, Marine  
22       Resources Division, managed that project.  
23       So we're very proud of those recreational

1 improvements for access.

2 But that includes some GOMESA  
3 projects. We have 54 GOMESA projects that  
4 we have underway or completed, 120 million  
5 dollars on the coast. Like I said, we  
6 just got the deposit for this year, so the  
7 Governor will be announcing the 2023  
8 awards late spring or early summer,  
9 probably early summer. But those projects  
10 include multiple boating access  
11 improvements, some land acquisition, other  
12 public access for parks in Mobile, Spanish  
13 Fort, Daphne, you know, for parks on the  
14 water so that the public has access to the  
15 water, water quality improvements,  
16 scientific research and fieldwork, help  
17 with the University of South Alabama and  
18 others, and then some economic  
19 development-type projects.

20 This is -- I've hit on this  
21 briefly with the Board, but the Innovate  
22 Alabama Commission was set up by the  
23 Governor and the legislature to look at

1 opportunities for us in Alabama and the  
2 things that we can do to differentiate us  
3 from other states to either attract  
4 workers or retain workers and continue to  
5 improve the quality of life in Alabama.  
6 One of the things that came out of that  
7 was that outdoor recreation because of the  
8 beauty that we have in the state -- and we  
9 were talking about that briefly right  
10 before this meeting started, you know,  
11 what is the prettiest part of our state.  
12 I think if you start at the top and go all  
13 the way down to the bottom, there's not a  
14 prettiest part. They're all just  
15 different. They're all pretty. We've got  
16 a lot of woods, we've got a lot of water  
17 in our state, and so that gives us great  
18 opportunities for recreational access, and  
19 it is a way to differentiate us from other  
20 states and to bring workers here, to  
21 retain the workers that we have that are  
22 leaving colleges and universities. And so  
23 Innovate Alabama created this council on

1 outdoor recreation. It's me, Bill Poole,  
2 the finance director, and then Peter Inge  
3 from Birmingham and Darrell Ezell who is  
4 here at HudsonAlpha in Huntsville that are  
5 the four members of this outdoor  
6 recreational council to look at ways that  
7 we can enhance our recreation, how we can  
8 take full advantage of it. And so the  
9 four of us had a certain amount of  
10 knowledge and we were -- but we thought it  
11 best to try and put together a group, a  
12 roundtable, of people from all over the  
13 state so that we had input from people  
14 from all different geographic areas and  
15 from all the different sectors of outdoor  
16 recreation. So we wanted to make sure we  
17 had canoeing, kayakers, hikers, bikers,  
18 somebody that -- the horseback riding  
19 trail interests, hunting and fishing, bird  
20 watching. You know, anything that could  
21 be outdoor recreation related, we wanted  
22 to make sure that somebody from this group  
23 had a voice to share. And Tim Wood was

1 gracious enough to accept the invitation  
2 to represent you all in the hunting and  
3 fishing side on this outdoor advisory  
4 roundtable.

5 We had 19 members of the  
6 roundtable, which I thought was going to  
7 be unmanageable. We wanted to keep this  
8 to eight or ten people, but once we  
9 started looking at the different  
10 geographic areas and the recreation types,  
11 we really kept expanding that to make sure  
12 nobody was left out. And I will say with  
13 those 19 members everybody worked  
14 diligently, provided great input, and so  
15 we had a list of 13 recommendations that  
16 we're going to take back to Innovate  
17 Alabama at their June meeting on things  
18 that can be done to take advantage of our  
19 assets in Alabama.

20 One of those things I think you'll  
21 probably all agree is that there's not a  
22 good inventory of outdoor recreational  
23 assets in the state. We have our own

1 website. Outdoor Alabama has a lot of  
2 information, the Forever Wild website,  
3 a lot of communities have trails, but  
4 there's no single inventory of all those  
5 assets in the state so we think we need  
6 that inventory. What the inventory will  
7 show, I think, are several things, one,  
8 what great assets we do have. When you  
9 aggregate all that together, it's going to  
10 be a lot. It's going to be a lot of miles  
11 of trails, a lot of access sites, a lot of  
12 boat ramps, a lot of, you know, different  
13 ways that people can enjoy the outdoors,  
14 but also identify the gaps, where in the  
15 state we don't have boat ramps or we don't  
16 have trails or we don't have things that  
17 the public can get out and utilize. And  
18 then we'll create a one-stop shop website  
19 and mobile access for people to be able to  
20 find this information. I think that's  
21 going to be the top two recommendations  
22 that come out of it that we'll hit the  
23 ground running for those.

1                   And that's it. It took more than  
2 ten minutes. I apologize. But I do like  
3 talking about this stuff because I think  
4 it's important for the Board and for the  
5 public to see some of the work that goes  
6 on out of the main public eye of things  
7 that are happening in the Department. So  
8 with that, I will invite you back up and  
9 I'll take any questions that you might  
10 have so that you can use the microphone so  
11 the public can hear.

12                   Thank you.

13                   CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you,  
14 Commissioner. Very good. That was  
15 enlightening. That's a lot of information  
16 and it certainly begs the questions. And  
17 thank you for putting that together and  
18 spearheading this effort. And this money  
19 has been great for the state.

20                   Thanks so much.

21                   Any questions from the Board for  
22 the Commissioner?

23                   All right. Well, we'll move on.

1       And our next part of the meeting is public  
2       commentary, which is very important to the  
3       Board. It's very important obviously to  
4       the people that are here to speak. It's  
5       important to them. Before I do that, I  
6       will let you know that I have polled all  
7       the directors of all of the departments,  
8       Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, Marine  
9       Resources, State Parks, State Lands, they  
10      don't have any reports for us today. So  
11      thank you and thank you for being here.

12                So with the public commentary  
13      today, we only have five speakers. I'll  
14      ask the speakers to come to the podium.  
15      I'll begin with the first one. For the  
16      folks in the audience, I ask you to be  
17      respectful today and let's let them make  
18      their presentation for us. And I would  
19      ask the speakers that come do not engage  
20      the Board directly or the staff. Refer  
21      your questions to the Chair, me, so that  
22      Ms. Johnson, who is keeping the record, is  
23      able to get every detail. So that just



1 makes it work so much better, and she  
2 doesn't step on my foot later.

3 Today our first speaker is  
4 Mr. Dallas Allen.

5 MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Today, I want to just bring up  
7 some things that I saw the past couple of  
8 seasons in the spring turkey season in  
9 Alabama.

10 Currently, the way that the State  
11 has it set up with the date push back, an  
12 April 1st date, it's kind of allowing  
13 non-residents to jump around from state to  
14 state, and we're seeing an increase in  
15 overcrowdedness throughout our state  
16 public lands. Today, I just want to bring  
17 up some recommendations that I've reached  
18 out to some groups. I've created a couple  
19 of polls on some Facebook groups that have  
20 shown an overwhelming majority that  
21 Alabama resident turkey hunters would love  
22 to see some changes.

23 Some of the those changes kind of

1       mimic Mississippi. Mississippi went to a  
2       draw system I believe this past season  
3       allowing somewhere around about 1100  
4       non-resident state licenses to be  
5       purchased, and I think there was about  
6       1500 applications. I would like to see  
7       the state of Alabama do something similar  
8       and maybe create a system that would allow  
9       non-residents -- not to take away their  
10      rights to come to our state and enjoy our  
11      lands, but just spread out the crowd.

12               For reference, I hunt Choccolocco  
13      Wildlife Management Area, the Hollins  
14      Wildlife Management Area, and the land  
15      between. The opening week was very  
16      frustrating for residents. We put a lot  
17      of work in finding turkeys, not to claim  
18      that they're ours, but we would just like  
19      to see something -- maybe a draw system --  
20      that would allow a non-resident to -- like  
21      our SOA system where they can choose the  
22      dates they want to come to our state, they  
23      can choose the lands they would like to

1 visit and like to hunt, and they would be  
2 chosen in a random lottery. Everybody  
3 would get chosen. It doesn't have to be a  
4 restriction but -- so we wouldn't take  
5 revenue away from the state per se. But  
6 that would allow overcrowdedness to be  
7 spread out through our lands.

8 Also, there's been some  
9 recommendations for bag limits to be  
10 changed. It's pretty noticeable that  
11 there's been a decline in our turkey  
12 population in recent years. We have had a  
13 successful season the past few years, but  
14 we would like to see some changes there.

15 Out of the Facebook poll, 213  
16 hunters, only 14 suggested not changing  
17 anything. So that tells you about  
18 95 percent of the state residents would  
19 like to see a change.

20 MS. JONES: Time.

21 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And I failed to  
22 mention and because of my failure, I'm  
23 going to let you continue for a minute or

1 so to make your point. But we have three  
2 minutes to speak. For the speakers who  
3 are here, we're allowed three minutes, and  
4 I failed to mention that so please  
5 continue.

6 MR. ALLEN: Thank you, Chairman. I'll  
7 wrap it up. So if anything would be under  
8 consideration, a draw system I would like  
9 to see in place. That seemed to be the  
10 overwhelming response. Basically as a  
11 resident turkey hunter in Alabama, I just  
12 see that this state sees the opportunities  
13 shared to non-residents as it does  
14 residents. And for me, a privilege for  
15 living in the state, you should be showing  
16 at least some type of privilege and us to  
17 be able to choose whichever way we'd like  
18 to be able to and maybe leaving a  
19 non-resident where they have options but  
20 they can't all attack one specific area.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.  
23 And just for the record, he has provided

1       copies of all his recommendations and his  
2       Facebook survey to the Board; is that  
3       correct?

4               MR. ALLEN:   Yes, sir.

5               CHAIRMAN DOBBS:   Any questions?

6                       Thank you very much, Mr. Allen.

7                       Our next speaker is Thomas  
8       McMeans.   And let me remind you again it's  
9       three minutes.   The Chair and the Board  
10      reserve the right to add or allow some  
11      additional moments to make a point.   So  
12      Mr. Thomas McMeans.

13              MR. MCMEANS:   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14                      My name is Tom McMeans.   I'm a  
15      resident of Decatur, Alabama.   The reason  
16      I'm here to address the Board is the  
17      impact of a new planned Tennessee River  
18      bridge in Decatur across the river, which  
19      will, I think, negatively impact Swan  
20      Creek Management Area.

21                      I am 73 years old.   I have been  
22      hunting on Swan Creek since I was a  
23      teenager in the 1960s.   To go duck hunting

1       there was a great adventure to make the  
2       trip over from Lauderdale County where I  
3       live.

4               I currently shoot at the firing  
5       range on Swan Creek weekly. The firing  
6       range has been upgraded. It is now under  
7       the leadership of Captain Wendell Fulks  
8       and Jud Easterwood and Drew Able. It is a  
9       pristine facility. It is safe. It is  
10      comfortable. It has not always been that  
11      way. Years later without the supervision  
12      and the improvements I've seen very  
13      dangerous behavior and discourteous  
14      behavior, and it is comfortable and safe  
15      and I commend these men for the work  
16      they've done.

17             A new river bridge is needed in  
18      Decatur for economic development and for  
19      traffic congestion. There is a study  
20      underway by the City of Decatur, a  
21      two-million-dollar feasibility study, to  
22      build a bridge between the existing river  
23      bridges and the ten miles downstream

1        around the Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. A  
2        bridge cannot be built upstream because it  
3        would cross federal property, which is  
4        Wheeler Wildlife Refuge. It cannot get  
5        too close to Browns Ferry because there's  
6        a five-mile exclusion radius around the  
7        nuclear plant. I retired there. All  
8        spent nuclear rods that's ever used there  
9        are there. They are in ground in casks.  
10       They cannot be transported. So the area  
11       between the bridges -- the existing  
12       bridges and Browns Ferry is the prime area  
13       where they want to build the bridge. If  
14       they come across there, they will come  
15       across the dewater area, and that will  
16       eliminate the 30 blinds, the duck hunting  
17       will be gone. If they get too close to  
18       the range, it will have to be shut down  
19       because of the safety concerns because you  
20       cannot have a major highway next to an  
21       area where people are firing high-power  
22       rifles, and so that would impact that.

23                    On May the 2nd, there was a

1 meeting in Decatur by the TTL Corporation,  
2 which is the advisors. They're trying to  
3 route the new bridge. I went there and  
4 indicated that maybe they could thread the  
5 needle from the west end of Swan Creek and  
6 Mallard Fox, cross the river to the north,  
7 turn east, impact I65 and US 31 and at the  
8 new 565 extension that comes around from  
9 565 to I-65, and that was my suggestion.  
10 It would preserve our hunting and  
11 shooting. It would not deny a new bridge.

12 MS. JONES: Time.

13 MR. MCMEANS: Okay. I've had  
14 conversations with local officials. I  
15 will not identify them. They were private  
16 conversations. I was told once we don't  
17 care about the management area, the second  
18 comment was wildlife doesn't enter in, and  
19 the third comment I just received a few  
20 days ago, well, you'll just have to find  
21 another place to hunt and shoot. The  
22 threat is here. The threat is real. We  
23 are in danger of losing it, and I just



1 want to know can we do anything.

2 Thank you for letting me make my  
3 comments.

4 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you,  
5 Mr. McMeans.

6 Commissioner?

7 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:  
8 Mr. Chairman. Mr. McMeans, thank you for  
9 sending that information. I think you  
10 gave it to Captain Fulks, and he sent me a  
11 couple of different things from Decatur  
12 concerning the bridge.

13 MR. MCMEANS: Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I have met  
15 with the government relations person that  
16 represents the city of Decatur to express  
17 our concerns. They've assured me -- he  
18 assured me that our concerns were being --  
19 that your concerns were being taken into  
20 account to either try and thread that  
21 needle or to move that bridge further west  
22 to get the trucks off of the road and then  
23 come up that way and turn back east to get

1       into I65. And so thank you for bringing  
2       that to our attention through Captain  
3       Fulks and I'll just let you know that I  
4       appreciate you sending that. Continue to  
5       provide information so we can make sure we  
6       stay on top of it to make sure our  
7       interests and your interests are protected  
8       there.

9               Thank you.

10       MR. MCMEANS: Thank you, sir.

11       CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

12               No other questions from the Board?

13       MR. HARTZOG: Chris, have we looked at  
14       the bridge does go across -- I'm sure  
15       there'll be mitigation and where those  
16       mitigation funds might extend to and any  
17       additional grounds that would be close by  
18       that would add to the waterfowl unit?

19       COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I think  
20       that would be a part of their feasibility  
21       study that they're undertaking right now.  
22       They've just begun that feasibility study  
23       earlier this year, and I think the public

1 meeting that they had was one of their  
2 first public outreach portions of the  
3 feasibility study. So I don't think  
4 they've gotten very far. It's a long  
5 answer to your question.

6 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

7 All right. Thank you. Thank you,  
8 Mr. McMeans, very much.

9 Our next speaker is Mr. Norman  
10 Alexander.

11 MR. ALEXANDER: Good morning,  
12 Mr. Chairman. I'm here this morning on  
13 behalf of farmers and people that's had  
14 accidents hitting deer.

15 I'm from Blount County. I'm in  
16 zone C and we only get 25 days of doe  
17 season, and I'm not really an avid hunter.  
18 I'm mostly a farmer, cattle farmer, dirt  
19 farmer. And we're just overrun with deer.  
20 We try to do what we can putting fences  
21 around our crops and this, that, and the  
22 other, and putting perfume, all kind of  
23 stuff to try to keep the deer out of our

1 fields. It works for a couple of days,  
2 and then they come in there about the time  
3 you're getting ready to pick and they wipe  
4 it out. So very simple, we would just  
5 like to get it changed.

6 Zone A nearly encompasses zone C,  
7 and they have doe season from the start of  
8 hunting season to the end of hunting  
9 season. And that's all. I just wanted to  
10 get that changed.

11 I don't see that it will help on  
12 the accidents because there's being so  
13 many subdivisions and stuff being built  
14 that's pushing the deer in different  
15 places, but we're having a lot of  
16 accidents. And I've got names here of  
17 people that's hit deer, farmers. We just  
18 need some help.

19 I started -- when I first started,  
20 I talked to David Standridge, and I told  
21 him, I said, what can I do. We need some  
22 help. And he kindly guided me in this  
23 direction to this Board here, so that's

1        why I'm here today to just get everybody,  
2        if y'all would, to look at it and see if  
3        we can get some changes to try to get a  
4        hold on this deer population. But that's  
5        all I've got to say. Just plain and  
6        simple, we'd just like to get that  
7        changed.

8                CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you,  
9        Mr. Alexander. Hold your position for  
10       just one moment.

11                Are there any questions from the  
12       Board?

13                The Department of Wildlife and  
14       Freshwater Fisheries has heard you, and,  
15       as I understand it, you're asking for more  
16       doe days, a longer doe season in zone C?

17                MR. ALEXANDER: Right.

18                CHAIRMAN DOBBS: They heard that and  
19       they will react, and we'll have an answer  
20       for you at some point here in the very  
21       near future.

22                Yes?

23                MR. WOOD: Mr. Alexander, I'm in

1       agriculture also, so I feel your pain.  
2       But I've had lots of conversations with  
3       farmers in our area who can kill a doe a  
4       day, and they're trying to -- want to  
5       increase it to two a day back like it used  
6       to be. And so I asked them, I said, well,  
7       if we go to two, are you going to go out  
8       and kill them, or are you going to get  
9       depredation permits. And I even went to  
10      lodges who were farmers and also run  
11      lodges, and they cannot get their hunters  
12      to kill the doe. We can raise the limits,  
13      but nobody is killing these does because  
14      we're watching on TV everybody's killing  
15      the big buck. Everybody wants to kill a  
16      big deer. So we can increase it, but the  
17      problem's going to be are they going to  
18      participate in killing does. That's going  
19      to be the cure. We've got the depredation  
20      permits that's available to a hunter. I'm  
21      assuming -- I don't know if it's -- is it  
22      legal in those areas?

23               MR. SYKES:   (Nods head.)

1           MR. WOOD:   So that's going to be -- to  
2 me, I think that's going to be the only  
3 way that you're going to be able to get  
4 any action.   Nobody wants to kill a doe.

5           MR. ALEXANDER:   I looked into that  
6 about three years ago and had the warden  
7 come out to my property, and he looked it  
8 over and said, yes, you've got a problem.  
9 We will give you a permit.   And he said,  
10 I'll go back and get all the paperwork  
11 done, and then when you get -- your crop  
12 starts coming in, I'll call the Blount  
13 County Sheriff's Department for when you  
14 go to shooting at night when they get a  
15 call they'll know it's you.   He said,  
16 leave the deer laying.   I don't like to  
17 waste nothing.   I hate to see anything go  
18 to waste.   So I feel like that's very  
19 wasteful.   And if these hunters would  
20 shoot these does -- and I'm guilty when  
21 the days end, but I don't get to go that  
22 much like I used to.   But they just -- you  
23 know, like, you're exactly right.   They

1 just won't shoot them. But we're going to  
2 have to do something to try to get a hold  
3 on them.

4 MR. WOOD: So I recommend you get with  
5 the Department and work with them, because  
6 they'll -- that's not been difficult to  
7 get and just follow through and go ahead  
8 and start the depredation. That's my  
9 recommendation.

10 MR. ALEXANDER: Us farmers, we're  
11 going to keep complaining to see what we  
12 can do.

13 MR. WOOD: I'm in the agriculture  
14 business, so I understand fully.

15 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you,  
16 Mr. Alexander, very much.

17 Thank you, Tim.

18 Our next speaker is Ms. Paige  
19 Camp.

20 MS. CAMP: Hey, everybody. I'm Paige  
21 Camp. I'm from Clay County originally and  
22 recently I was elected to a state position  
23 within the Alabama Dog Hunters



1 Association. I'm not here to complain to  
2 you guys today. I'm just trying to update  
3 you on a situation that had previously  
4 been brought up at the last CAB meeting.

5 My very first day on the job was  
6 meeting with a private landowner in Horns  
7 Valley, Alabama. And for those of you who  
8 are not familiar with that area, it's the  
9 Clay County-Talladega County line. After  
10 he brought the problem to us, I was a  
11 little ashamed because, as I said, I'm  
12 from there, and I decided that we had to  
13 do something amongst ourselves or we were  
14 going to lose the hunt as we knew it.

15 I want all of you to know that  
16 from that day I have developed a team and  
17 I've had boots on the ground attempting to  
18 rectify this situation. He brought us  
19 game camera pictures from a group of dogs  
20 continuously encroaching on his property.  
21 I called everyone that I knew. I started  
22 with citizens that were there, and then I  
23 went to people who just maybe had ties to

1 there. As of right now, they have heard  
2 from me every single week, and they're  
3 going to continue to hear from me every  
4 single week until we have this situation  
5 rectified. I have made it extremely clear  
6 to all of them and I want to make it clear  
7 to everyone here, not just the Board but  
8 everybody in this room, this is not an  
9 accurate representation of this  
10 organization and it's destroying the  
11 reputations of our hunters who have worked  
12 tirelessly to build themselves some form  
13 of rapport in the community. The plan is  
14 to have this diplomatically and  
15 efficiently handled in a way that will  
16 satisfy both sides. What our current plan  
17 is is to not only request a heavier  
18 presence of game wardens if it's possible,  
19 but to continue to reach out to everybody  
20 in the counties and even if they're not  
21 from the area anybody who hunts in that  
22 area. When I tell you that we talk to  
23 people every week, we've done it every

1 week. I want all of you to know that we  
2 don't give up very easily, which I'm sure  
3 you already knew, and our goal is to make  
4 sure that we do not lose our hunt there.  
5 We want everybody to feel that we respect  
6 them just as we want to be respected by  
7 them.

8 I appreciate your time.

9 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. We  
10 appreciate that very much. I don't think  
11 there are questions from the Board.

12 Thank you very much.

13 Our last speaker is Mr. Don  
14 Knight.

15 MR. KNIGHT: I'm Don Knight, and I'm  
16 sure all of you have seen me here before.  
17 But I'm here today just to let you know  
18 that our dog hunters and the organization  
19 that I'm involved in are very happy with  
20 what's going on right now. We've been  
21 doing real good. We think the complaints  
22 are way down. We haven't been having any  
23 problems. I don't get too much complaints

1 right now, but I'm here if they want to  
2 let us know and we'll try to help them.

3 The problem's up in the national  
4 forest. I've been working with the Board  
5 mainly over in Talladega County and  
6 Calhoun County, and I'm getting the  
7 hunters together to have meetings and  
8 we're working on that to get it done.  
9 Quite frankly, we want to know what  
10 problems we've got and try to get them  
11 straightened out among the hunters before  
12 we meet with the people that are  
13 complaining, and that seems to be a  
14 problem, getting them to meet. Okay. But  
15 we will get there. We will give them  
16 every opportunity to meet with our  
17 hunters, but I've got to know how the  
18 hunters feel before I meet with people  
19 that's got the complaints. Okay.

20 I want to thank each and every one  
21 of you for what you've been doing. Our  
22 game wardens, we appreciate them more than  
23 ever. They're doing a great job for us in

1 the counties where we don't have problems  
2 and the places where we do have problems,  
3 we want them to work and get those people  
4 that are causing the problems. We want to  
5 do that every way we can. Grady I've  
6 worked with so many years now, we're both  
7 gray headed. When we started this job, we  
8 was black headed. But it works that way,  
9 doesn't it, Grady? We want to thank you  
10 for what you're doing.

11 We would still like to have some  
12 opportunities to work on the dog hunter  
13 situation as far as the permit system. If  
14 we get a chance to get a club that wants  
15 to get off of it, maybe listen to them and  
16 let them have an opportunity to get off of  
17 it. We'd like to have counties opened  
18 back up or have the opportunity to open  
19 back up if there's any opportunities. If  
20 the people in the county don't want it,  
21 then we're not going to have it because it  
22 won't do anything but cause us trouble.  
23 But for the ones that would like to have

1       it open, we'd like to have that  
2       opportunity to meet and talk and see what  
3       we can do about that. Like I said, the  
4       dog hunting situation, it's been so much  
5       more peaceful. I've enjoyed hunting for a  
6       few years and that makes a lot of  
7       difference. It really does.

8               And so we also want to make sure  
9       that the Board understands that we are not  
10       agreeing with the bill that's being put in  
11       by the Alabama Dog Hunters Association on  
12       the dog trespass and everything like that.  
13       We do not agree with that and we don't  
14       want it. So we just have to handle it the  
15       way we can.

16               Thank y'all for letting us talk.

17               CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you always for  
18       coming here, Don.

19               Any questions for Mr. Knight  
20       today?

21               Thank you so much for coming. We  
22       appreciate you being here and your time,  
23       the number of years that you've been

1       involved with us.

2               That is all of our speakers.  
3       That's all I have listed, so that's the  
4       end of our public comments.

5               Our next agenda item will be  
6       unfinished business. I think that all of  
7       the requests from the previous meeting  
8       have been identified and answered by all  
9       divisions or the directors of their  
10      groups, so we will move on. There is no  
11      unfinished business before this Board at  
12      this time.

13              The next agenda item after that is  
14      the new business that faces this Board.  
15      And I think that with regard to  
16      announcements, I don't have any as relates  
17      to visitors here today. So is there any  
18      new business before this Board today?

19              Are there any motions before this  
20      Board today?

21              Mr. Jones?

22              MR. R. JONES: I move for the  
23      approval of the seasons, their dates and

1 times, all bag limits, creel limits, and  
2 restrictions and all other items set forth  
3 in the current proposed regulations and  
4 season recommendations as it relates to  
5 all sections and divisions of the  
6 Department of Conservation and Natural  
7 Resources.

8 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: There's a motion on  
9 the floor to approve -- and I'll shorten  
10 it -- to approve the seasons and bag  
11 limits. And I would ask you to read that  
12 motion one more time, please.

13 MR. R. JONES: I move for approval of  
14 the seasons, their dates and times, all  
15 bag limits, creel limits and restrictions,  
16 and all other items set forth in the  
17 current proposed regulations and seasons  
18 recommendations as it relates to all  
19 sections and divisions of the Department  
20 of Conservation and Natural Resources.

21 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. There's a  
22 motion on the floor. Is there a second?

23 MR. B. JONES: Second.



1           CHAIRMAN DOBBS:  It's seconded -- the  
2 motion is seconded by Mr. Brock Jones.

3                   Is there any discussion?

4                   There being no discussion, I would  
5 ask that we take a vote to approve or  
6 disapprove those, and we will vote by a  
7 show of hands.

8                   All those in favor?

9                   The motion carries unanimously.

10                  Is there any other new business  
11 before the Board today?

12                  All right.  There being no  
13 additional business, no announcements, I'm  
14 going to adjourn the meeting.

15                  Thank you for you all being here.  
16 We got it done pretty quick.

17           MR. R. JONES:  Mr. Chairman?

18           CHAIRMAN DOBBS:  Yes.

19           MR. R. JONES:  Since this is my  
20 district, I just wanted to welcome  
21 everybody to Huntsville and thank y'all  
22 for being here and enjoyed having you.  I  
23 hate the weather's not cooperating, but

1 hopefully you'll spend some time here in  
2 our town.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Well, that's -- I  
5 didn't thank Mr. Jones for his helping get  
6 this beautiful venue, but he did in  
7 securing this. And what a pleasure it's  
8 been to be here. So, again, we'd like to  
9 come back.

10 That's all we have. The date and  
11 time of the next meeting is to be  
12 determined. It will be put out on the  
13 secretary of state's website at the  
14 appropriate time.

15 So with that, we're done. Thank  
16 you very much for being here. Safe  
17 travels home. I hear it raining out  
18 there, so be careful.

19 (Proceedings concluded at  
20 10:04 a.m.)  
21  
22  
23

