STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Jasper High School

Jasper, Alabama

May 8, 2021

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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, in Jasper High School, 1501 Viking Drive, Jasper, Alabama, Saturday, May 8, 2021, commencing at 9:02 a.m.

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BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Joseph Dobbs, Jr., Chairman

Commissioner Christopher M. Blankenship, Ex-Officio Secretary

Commissioner Rick Pate, Ex-Officio, Department of Agriculture and Industries

Director J. Mike Phillips, Ex-Officio, Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Mr. Kevin Savoy

Mr. Grady Hartzog

Mr. Greg Barksdale

Mr. Brock Jones

Mr. Tim Wood

Mr. Gary Wolfe

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CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Let's bring this, the second Conservation Advisory Board meeting, May the 8th of 2021, let's bring this -- open this meeting.

I'm glad everybody's here today. We have a thin crowd. It is a beautiful day. There is a fishing tournament going on, a large portion of the Army Reserves are here exercising, I understand, so we'll attribute that to our low turnout today.

These are still unusual times. Of course, we're pretty well self-distanced, but let's do everything we're supposed to do, wear your masks where it's practical, and consider others, and -- so we'll go from there.

I want to -- at this time, I'd like to give a special thanks to our superintendent for schools for
the Jasper schools, Ms. Ann Jackson, and to Principal Jonathan Allen for Jasper High School and their staffs for allowing us to use this venue. Thank you all very, very much for providing this.

Today with us is a special guest who would like to speak to you, Mayor David O'Mary. And I'd ask Mayor O'Mary to come up and say a few words, please.

MAYOR O'MARY: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And let me say good morning to all and a special welcome to the Conservation Advisory Board and to our visitors to our city. We're so pleased to have you here. We keep the red carpet rolled out for events like this. I just told the Chairman the only reason we wouldn't do this again is if he doesn't ask, so please know you're always welcome in Jasper.
Let me first thank the Board for their work. I appreciate the work you do. I appreciate the work that's been done by your predecessors.

I've been an outdoor enthusiast all my life. My fondest memories as a child on my granddaddy's farm following a high-grade black and tan hunting squirrels. Hunting and fishing has brought tremendous joy to my life, and it -- every year and late fall, I normally travel to northern Kansas or South Dakota to pheasant hunt, and there's not a time that I go there that I don't find myself comparing South Dakota and Kansas to Alabama. And what you see is those folks have nowhere near the opportunities that we have in Alabama. You know, you can pheasant hunt, you can deer hunt for a season about this long. And
those things have not happened by
chance in Alabama. You know, to have
the lengthy seasons that we have, the
liberal bag limits, creel limits that
we have, are just tremendous. And if
you're an outdoor enthusiast, I don't
believe that there is a better place
a person could be than in Alabama.
Those things didn't happen by chance,
and without question, much of the
credit for those things trace back to
the Conservation Advisory Board so
thank you for your work.

A word about Ed Poolos and
what he has meant as a friend to this
city. I came out of a long tenure in
commercial banking and people talked
me into running for mayor, and
luckily or unluckily, I won. I still
scratch my head about that often.

But shortly after taking
office and not long after Ed had
moved to Jasper, I come to know Ed,
and we started talking about the Walker County Lake and about the possibilities of annexing that property into the city of Jasper, not for the purpose of telling folks that we have a place to fish in the city of Jasper but rather to extend to that recreational outlet some things that we could do in the city. And we've been able to do those things. You go there today and there have been many enhancements made by the City of Jasper, walking trails. Our Rotary Club recently built an observatory there, and it's just a grand facility. And with it not being in the city, it made it a little bit difficult to do some of the things that we wanted to do.

The process of annexing that property, my predecessor told me it took -- he worked on it for ten years. From the time that I come
to know Ed Poolos -- and I'm not
taking credit for this -- you had
three players to make that work. You
had the Department of Conservation,
you had the Walker County Commission,
and you had the Jasper City Council.
I felt like I had the Walker County
Commission and the City Council where
they needed to be to make this
happen, and Ed made it happen in
Montgomery. From the time we
started, we probably did the
annexation inside of a month.

Aside from making
enhancements to that facility, there
was a selfish motive, and that is, by
annexing that property, it positioned
the City to annex eastward if the
opportunity were to arise, and I
think it will arise. So that's been
a great partnership, and, Ed, I thank
you for the friendship that you've
shown this city and the way you've
helped us.

So, again, we're pleased that you're here. The door is always welcome -- open. I hope your day is productive. And, again, as I said, the only reason we won't do this again is you don't ask us. So thank you. And please, Mr. Chairman, happy to have the opportunity to be with you.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. We appreciate that very, very much, and thank you for being here.

So today, like I said, the Lord's blessed us with a pretty day. And to all of you, if I don't remind you at the end of the meeting, safe travels home.

We have some special attendees today that I'm going to
Mr. Rick Pate, Commissioner of our Agriculture -- Department of Agriculture. His office has a lot of responsibilities, and I won't detail you with those but it's very important.

I made a mistake in our last meeting, and I wrongly called Dr. Steve -- Dr. Mike Phillips Steve, and I didn't include doctor. So I am reintroducing Dr. Phillips. Welcome to the Board, Dr. Phillips. Thank you for being here. We're glad to have you, very glad to have. This is his second meeting by the way.

Please also welcome to the Board our new Board member, Mr. Kevin Savoy. This is his first Board meeting.

Kevin, would you stand up quickly and just tell us what district you're from.

MR. SAVOY: Hi, Kevin Savoy,
Dothan, Alabama, representing District 2.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Kevin. We're glad to have you on the Board. Welcome and welcome to the fire.

Let me take just a quick moment. Again, we've got such a few people, let's have some fun. I thank -- let me thank Wanda McCullers again who puts this on with a very limited staff. And thank you again, Wanda. I saw you come in. And thank you, thank you, thank you.

Ms. Betsy Jones, who manages all of these meetings from beginning to end for the Commissioner and helps me a little bit too -- she throws me in the mix -- thank you very much. And to the balance of your staff that aren't here, always thanks to them. As well, Betsy's going to manage the clock today, and I'll explain that
later.

So I'll say hello to you that are previous attendees and welcome to the new attendees. Let's have a productive meeting.

I'm going to ask Gary Wolfe today to do our invocation. And, Gary, if you will, please, lead us in that.

MR. WOLFE: Let us pray.

Our most gracious Heavenly Father, thank you for this beautiful day, thank you for the opportunity for all of us to be here together and do business with your animals and what you give us an opportunity to do in the state of Alabama, give us the knowledge and help us make the right decisions and make the decisions to take care of those animals. Watch over each and every one of us when we leave here and go home and protect us and watch over this meeting.
In Jesus name I pray, amen.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Well, he --

MR. POOLOS: If you'll give us one second, the flag's coming.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

MR. POOLOS: I apologize.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. I was --

MR. POOLOS: Yes, I knew I forgot something, and that's what I forgot.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Well, Ed, you've done a great job from your dark corner with a dim light bulb. We appreciate everything.

With the unusual circumstances, I will lead us in the pledge.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The flag's behind you there.

(Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance led by Chairman Dobbs.)
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Also today, we have on our agenda, the Sportsmen's Pledge, something that we started two years ago. We don't do it at every meeting, but I think this meeting, being this is our first time in Jasper, it's important that we do it. And I'd like Mr. Brock Jones to lead us in the Sportsmen's Pledge. Many of you may not have a copy of it in front of you. The Board does, and we'll recite it for you.

MR. BROCK JONES: Will everybody please join me that has a copy. I'm sure a lot of you out there have it memorized.

(Recitation of the Sportsmen's Pledge led by Mr. Brock Jones.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And this was written by a previous Commissioner, Mr. John Wallace, in 1908, and it holds true or rings true even today,
I believe.

Mr. Secretary, do we have a quorum today?

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir, we do.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

With regard to the minutes of our previous meeting, are there any corrections from the Board?

MR. HARTZOG: I make a motion we accept them as presented.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The minutes -- the final minutes have not gone out to the Board. We just have the draft minutes, so we'll be able to peruse those before the next meeting and trying to approve those at the meeting is fine.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I'm sorry. I had gotten a copy that was a draft, and I'm sorry that everybody else didn't and I apologize. We will table that and postpone it for a
vote, and we'll get it at our next meeting, which would be at this point next year.

I will ask each Board member, if I can, starting at the far end to stand up and introduce themselves and give their district, if that's okay.

MR. PATE: I'm Rick Pate with the Department of Agriculture and Industries, and I'm an ex-officio member of the Board.

MR. WOLFE: Gary Wolfe representing District 1.

MR. WOOD: I'm Tim Wood. I represent District 7. It's basically the Black Belt, Montgomery to Mississippi.

DR. PHILLIPS: My name is Mike Phillips. I'm the Director of the Cooperative Extension System, and I'm also an ex-officio member.

MR. BROCK JONES: I'm Brock
Jones, District 6.

MR. BARKSDALE: Greg Barksdale, District 4.

MR. HARTZOG: Grady Hartzog, District 2.

MR. SAVOY: Kevin Savoy, District 2.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And I'm Chris Blankenship, the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you very much.

Folks, these are -- we're missing two of our Board members, Mr. Raymond Jones and Mr. Ben Stimpson and -- oh, and Jeff. Jeff Martin's not here. Okay. So Jeff -- we're missing three. They represent District 1, District 7, and -- or District 5 and District 4. I think that's correct.

Know that these are the
fellows in your districts. Y'all contact them with any issues or ideas. Please stay in touch with them. They're tickled to hear from you. We all are. So they represent all the divisions of Conservation and Natural Resources, Marine Resources, State Lands, State Parks, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. It's very far reaching.

So on with that, I'm going to mention our directors of those. Mr. Scott Bannon with Marine Resources, Mr. Greg Lein with State Parks, Ms. Patti McCurdy with State Lands, Mr. Chuck Sykes with Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. They work with great people and do wonderful things, and they are the future of our resources. Thank them every time that you get a chance.

Now I would like to ask Commissioner Blankenship would he
come and please update on the Department's goings on.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And I'll just do that from here, if that's okay with you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, sir.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Welcome Kevin Savoy to the Board.

MR. SAVOY: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And I'm glad to have the other -- some of the other Board members that were reappointed recently to the Board. I'm looking forward to continuing to serve with you.

I thank the mayor for allowing us to use this -- well, the mayor for all that he's done here in Jasper. I would echo what he said about the Walker County Lake. While you're in town, if you have a chance to go by there, it is a good example of great outdoor recreational
opportunities of different types at
the same location. We have a great
fishing lake over there with a little
boat ramp, have the archery park and
trails, and more plans to do other
things at the lake to continue to
provide outdoor recreational
opportunities for the citizens of
Jasper and Walker County and you
while you're here, so just --

Mr. Chairman, I'll just give
you an update on a few things that's
happened since our last meeting.
Many of you know the tornado outbreak
that we had in our state on March the
25th. One of those tornadoes went
through Oak Mountain State Park and
we had extensive damage at the day
use area. There's one lone pine tree
standing. I guess we lost several
hundred pine trees there. That
was -- that one tough old tree made
it. But the staff from the state
parks and Shelby County have done a very good job of cleaning that up and getting it back into shape, so there will be a lot of work to do there to bring that back up to a good standard for use. But thankfully, there were no injuries, and it just missed the -- we had a few trees down in the campground but nothing substantial. So thankfully, the tornado wasn't a quarter of a mile further south. Then it would have went right through the campground.

Speaking of Oak Mountain, Oak Mountain will be the venue for three events in the upcoming World Games in 2022. I don't know that I appreciate how big of a deal that is for Alabama to host the World Games in 2022, but I do appreciate the fact that they're going to host three of those events at our state park. And part of the
area that was damaged in the tornado was where one of those events was going to take place, and so we're -- have a real incentive to get that back to first class before it's opened to the people of the world to come to Alabama.

Red snapper season has been set since our last meeting. It will open on May 28th -- that's the Friday before Memorial Day -- and it will be open four-day weekends Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday until the quota's met. We have about a million pounds of the quota. We -- instead of projecting an ending date like we've done in the past, this year we're using a new system where we're just going to -- we're going to monitor that quota every weekend and provide an update to the public of where we stand. That way, it makes it -- instead of having to either
extend the season or cut it short if there's different weather conditions or different things to take place so that -- but that opens May 28th.

We're partnering with ADEM, building a new overnight mooring and fishing tournament pier at Roland Cooper State Park. This is the first project that I know of that we've been able to do with ADEM to provide good boating infrastructure and boating access, and it's going to be a big improvement for tournament fishing down at the -- at Roland Cooper State Park in the Wilcox County area. Hope to continue more of these projects with ADEM in the future.

We're cutting a ribbon this afternoon at the Smith Lake Dam Boat Ramp as a partnership that the Department did with Union Sportsmen Alliance, Alabama Power, and BASS.
I'm excited to fit that in along with the meeting today to do some good -- good things here in this part of the state. Those tournament boat ramps are very important for the economic impact to the communities and just getting people out on the water to be able to enjoy those facilities. Our Fisheries staff does a very good job managing about a hundred and -- a little bit less than 150 boat ramps between the saltwater and freshwater around the state and glad to see an opportunity to expand this boat ramp in a really good way.

Looking at the turkey numbers for the season, we had about -- a little bit less than 15,000 turkeys reported. That's about 2,000 less turkeys than reported last season. Those are preliminary, unaudited numbers. The season just ended, but that -- just
to kind of give you a gauge on where we were for the season.

I want to give a legislative update. The Department had a very good year this year in the Alabama Legislature. Primarily want to recognize Ed Poolos and Charlanna Skaggs, our general counsel. They did a lot of work over in the Legislature making sure the bills -- that we were up on the legislation working with the legislators to get the attention of those that was needed to make some changes that were necessary, we felt like, for -- to make those better pieces of legislation and -- so thank y'all for your efforts, along with Greg Lein and Chuck primarily from the division directors that had legislation affect their divisions that were also integral in working with the Legislature this year.
Of the legislation that was passed, there's a lifetime disabled veterans hunting and fishing license. That keeps those veterans that are disabled and have their DD 214 or their information of their permanent disability from having to come back every year and get a license. They can just buy this license and -- for the lifetime.

There's a new legislation that passed that created a nighttime hunting for feral swine and coyotes that passed this year. That's a $15 license for residents, $51 for nonresidents, and then we'll have a season. We'll talk about that a little bit later. But the way the legislation passed, it's effective three months from the first day of the third month from the date of passage, which will be July 1st. So we're planning to have the season set
and the license sale system up and ready to go to be able to sell those the day that that legislation becomes effective.

 Probably one of the biggest pieces of legislation that we've had in the last couple of years working with the Senate Pro Tem Greg Reed, who's -- this is actually his district here, and Senate majority leader Clay Scofield and the House majority leader Nathaniel Ledbetter and the Speaker of the House, we were able to attach a constitutional amendment for an 80-million-dollar-bond issue for the state parks. That will be on the ballot in 2022 for the people to vote to approve that, but that will provide 80 million dollars to the parks to do renovations on the campgrounds, build cabins, you know, really turn those parks into the first-class facilities that we really
want and to bring us into the 21st century on those campgrounds.

When a lot of those campgrounds were built, camping was a tent and a pop-up camper. Now camping is half-a-million-dollar motorhomes with three air conditioners that pull 50 or 70 amps, you know, so we're -- in order for us to continue to do business and to be effective, we need to upgrade our facilities to keep up with the times and so this bond issue will allow us to do that.

We also received an additional two million dollars a year for maintenance on the parks with a CPI increase annually, which will pay dividends for the future moving forward, keep that money at today's dollars with the CPI increase.

There's also a bill late in the session that set up a state
reservoir management program. That was not a DCNR bill, but it -- but in that bill, it adds $5 to every -- to the boat registrations and then that money is going to come to -- into a program that we'll administer through the Department of Conservation. It could be used for aquatic nuisance, like the invasive carp or grasses on the lakes and reservoirs, also include marine debris removal, which is a problem in the coastal areas with their boats that sink or -- you know, from hurricanes, you know, having moved debris or houses or docks. There's not a program -- a funding to allow removal of those things, so this -- what this will do is set up a fund that we will administer to be able to take care of our -- better take care of our waterways in the state. Even though it wasn't one of our pieces of
legislation, I'm excited about the Department's role in keeping our waterways safe and clean.

Bills were introduced that didn't move in this session partly due to our opposition or our working with the -- with the sponsors. Those include bills on paddlefish season, a bill to remove the catfish size limit, a bill to allow transport of feral swine, and some dog deer hunting legislation. Those were not successful during this session.

As a follow-up from our last meeting, we had a few -- a few items that I wrote down that we said we would follow up with the Board and provide information either before the next meeting or at this meeting. One of those issues was the Sipsey tailrace and the limit of the number of rods. You'll see in your changes that were sent to you before this
meeting that we're proposing to change -- we cannot use more than two rods on the Sipsey tailrace.

You received a report from our Fisheries section related to the catfish maximum size and to reestablishing the paddlefish season. The recommendation of the Fisheries staff and the analysis was that we make no change there, that we leave the size limit in place and not establish a paddlefish season. And then the turkey season was changed to the Board's recommended start date of March 25th in most of the state and no decoys for the first ten days was -- we have regulations that will do that that are proposed.

And then because of the legislation as I mentioned earlier about the feral swine and coyote nighttime season, we were adding a season for that that will run -- in
2022, it will begin the day after gun
deer season, February 11th, and run
through November 1st. That way,
we'll have that nighttime season most
every -- most all the year except
during the majority of the gun deer
season.

And then last in my report,
Mr. Chairman, I represent the
Governor on the Federal RESTORE
Council. It's money that was set up
after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill
in 2011, which -- 2010. The fund was
set up after that.

This past week, we approved
a slate of projects of more than
450 million dollars in projects
gulf-wide. Of those projects
approved by -- 81 million dollars in
those projects are going to be here
in Alabama. So when you add that
81 million dollars to the other
Deepwater Horizon projects that have
been either approved or underway or
have been completed, that brings our
total to over 900 million dollars of
projects that have been funded by
Deepwater Horizon funds or GOMESA
funds that are being managed by the
Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources. So I -- we don't
talk a lot about that side of our
work with the Board, but I just want
you to know that that 900 million
dollars is a huge investment in
coastal Alabama and is really going
to make a difference in what happens
down there and the resiliency of our
coast. I'll be glad to answer any
questions on that either here or
afterwards, but I wanted to point
that out because I think that's a
really high point for our staff and
the work that they've done to
continue to manage those funds and
manage it in these projects very
appropriately.

So with that, that's all.

That's my report, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Commissioner, very much.

I'm going to ask for a directors report, the directors that are in attendance today, and I think I see -- I think I see -- I think I see everybody. I'm just going to go -- I don't see -- Scott is not here, but I'll ask -- anyway, I'll ask the directors in attendance if they've got any updates or division reports that they want to share. So I'll start with Scott Bannon from Marine Resources. Are you going to carry that for him, or is there any?

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: He's not -- he was excused for today. They didn't have any real business.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Greg Lein, State Parks, anything to share?
MR. LEIN: No reports that the Commissioner didn't touch on.

    Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: But you're getting broadband?

MR. LEIN: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Ms. Patti McCurdy from State Lands.

MS. MCCURDY: Nothing unless the Board has any questions. I have nothing pressing. I'm more than happy to take any questions.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Anything that's -- okay. Very good. Any questions for Ms. McCurdy?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Mr. Chuck Sykes, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.

MR. SYKES: No, sir, no report.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Nothing, nothing. Very good.

Okay. Thank you and thank
you for all of your staff, adjuncts, and everybody that does what they do. You do a great job protecting our resources, and we all appreciate it certainly.

We don't have any special guests that I'm aware of. Is there a special guest that I need to recognize that might want to say a few words? I don't see anybody and don't know anybody.

So that moves us on to our public commentary. Public commentary is a very important part of this process. We have eight speakers today. We're going to move a microphone down there. Ms. Stacey is going to be taking this down as she does -- or as is done at every meeting. She's new with us today. Be slow, be concise as you can so she understands. And as I name the speakers, they'll come to the podium,
and I'm going to ask you to please be respectful. We don't have a big crowd. Reserve your comments and no applause or outbursts.

I'm going to ask each member of the Board, as I always do, to please refer to the Chair for questions of the speakers, and also, the speakers don't engage directly with the Board members or the staff members. Refer your questions to the Chair for direction thereon. It's not because I want to do all the talking. It's because if I don't do it right, she doesn't get it right, and I get an earful for days. So that's proper procedure.

So Ms. Jones is going to hold time. You have three minutes. I'm going to reserve the right to give you a few extra moments to make a point. And let's be courteous, give everybody the right to speak
like you would want to have.

All right. Our first speaker today is Mr. Paul Kennedy from Walker County, from Jasper.

Mr. Kennedy.

MR. KENNEDY: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner. And I'd like to tell all of you thanks for coming to Jasper and Walker County to listen to some of the outdoor enthusiasts from northern Alabama.

I am Paul Kennedy. I'm from Jasper here in Walker County. I'm with the Walker Area Community Foundation and the Walker County Health Action Partnership. We have been your partner in successfully developing the Walker County Lake from a sleepy fishing pond into an outdoor tourism destination, so I want to tell you thank you for that. I think it's been a huge success. Public usage even before the pandemic
was way up. And if you have not seen
the archery park or the human scale
bird nest birding platform out there,
please do so before you leave Jasper.
It's that very partnership that
brings me here today.

A few years ago, a group of
more than a dozen local agencies and
nonprofits started working on the
creation of an outdoor
recreation-based economy based on our
abundant natural resources. Today
I'm asking you to join with us to
aggressively plan for that same
development of the Sipsey Fork of the
Black Warrior River as a world-class
tourism fishing destination as a
logical next step.

Two years ago -- moments
ago, Jonathan Allen changed the mic.
Two years ago, we petitioned the U.S.
EPA to be one of the communities that
it would adopt to help us develop a
recreational-based economy. We were one of only ten such communities selected in the United States. That is our RERC plan, the Recreational Economy for Rural Communities. I will encourage you to replicate this planning process in the other 66 counties in Alabama. We have created a 31-mile blueway. We're working now on mountain bike trails, one of which surrounds this very school.

One of the key opportunities identified in that planning process was that trout fishery that I've mentioned. We have the opportunity to turn the Sipsey Fork trout fishery into the crown jewel of our local outdoor economy. I am a registered Alabama forester. I'm very aware of the potential this fishery has for us and for the state of Alabama, and I'm asking you to work with us to make
this a better fishery and a magnet for wildlife tourism, not just for Walker County but for the state of Alabama. This will not take any exceptional extra resources or significant staff time, but the benefits to Alabama are enormous. What does that look like? I'm not sure.

I am a new fly fisherman, so I'm not an expert in any way, shape, or form. But what are they doing in those states that are known as a fly-fishing mecca -- Tennessee, Arkansas, Georgia -- what do we need to do here and how can we turn this well-kept secret into the most popular trout fishery in the South. I've got seconds left. We're National Champions in football and First-Class Pre-K, so why not trout fishing as well.

Thank you for your time. I
look forward to working with you on this, and I'll be more than happy to submit these comments in writing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Hold, please.

Any questions from the Board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you so much for coming here.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I just want to say good to see you again, Mr. Kennedy. When we got to town yesterday, the first thing I did was pull into Walker County Lake, park, and walk down there to the eagle's nest and sat there and watched a few birds yesterday afternoon late. So it is a very nice place at Walker County Lake. Thank you for y'all's work there.

MR. KENNEDY: Well, thank you for your partnership. You've been
great to work with. Thank you, Chris. And your guys have been excellent.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Kennedy.

Our next speaker is Mr. Brandon Jackson.

MR. JACKSON: I've enjoyed going throughout the state to meet with you and appear before the Board, but I've -- I'm really proud that we were chosen to host you today and it's good to have you in our hometown.

We really appreciate the consideration and the conversation concerning this single-rod use regulation. I think that that is a great step in the right direction. I think it will eliminate some of the conflict. I don't think it's a perfect solution. I think there's still work that can be done, but I think that that is -- we will take
any step in the right direction that we can get. And I think that that's moving in the right direction.

I did look through other state regulations. Those that surround us use a single-rod regulation, and they attach a phrase to it that I don't know if the Board is considering but it is that it must be maintained. And so that keeps someone from leaving a rod at one location, moving downstream, fishing as a separate rod at a different location, so I'd like to propose that that's part of the consideration in that regulation. But thank you for the work on getting that there. Appreciate the Department looking at that, considering it, and working toward it.

I did want to share with you one -- a story that shows why these regulations are so important and some
of the effects that they have generally speaking.

In Oxford, Mississippi, there is a quail preserve called Little "q". It's run by a guy named Josh Quong. He started teaching his clients how to fly-fish as well. He's got -- these guys are interested in outdoors and wanted to branch out a little bit, and he began showing them how to fly-fish. He is sending some of them to us because we're only -- less than two hours away, an hour and 45 minutes or so. And we were -- we have a good relationship. I've taken my dogs there to hunt. He's come here to fish. But when he started getting requests to take guided tours to take his clients fishing, he's driving an extra two hours to go to the Little Red in Arkansas. And I asked him why, you know, why are you driving an extra
two hours to a fishery in Arkansas, and he said it's because they have the regulations that will allow my fishermen to pursue the sport the way they want. And so in his mind and for his clients who are paying out-of-state licenses, lodging, gas, tackle, all of those expenses, we're losing those guys, and I would like to see them here. I would like to see them in our state, in this county, spending their money here, and I hope that we can work together to establish some of those opportunities here.

I'd like to invite the Board -- I hope you can go to the pavilion. The Department's done a great job with that. If you do, you're going to have to come right near the shop. And so we're going to purchase some pizzas, Coke, and water, and so if you want some
refreshments before you go up there for the ribbon cutting, we'd invite you to come by, get something to eat, and sit down on the porch and pass a little bit of time before the ribbon cutting. And I wish that we hadn't had six inches of rain this week. They wouldn't be generating, and you'd be able to see the river full of people enjoying the opportunities and see what it's all about.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Hold. Any questions for Brandon?

Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Brandon, where do you stand on your looking at the brook trout stockings versus the rainbow trout stockings?

MR. JACKSON: So it wouldn't be adverse but it would be in addition to.

MR. HARTZOG: Yeah, I knew it would be in addition to, but you
have --

MR. JACKSON: We haven't had the --

MR. HARTZOG: You had talked about y'all were looking into the feasibility of trying to find a source for the brook trout stocking.

MR. JACKSON: I haven't yet had a chance to talk with the Department about what size fish to be looking for and what regulations so that we know kind of how many fish to look for. The money's there. I have talked to a hatchery that says that they can get us fish, and so the fish are there now. It's just a -- what kind of regulations are we going to use for that specific breed of trout and then how many and what size would be best to stock in Sipsey Fork.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Barksdale.

MR. BARKSDALE: You mentioned earlier that the guide had folks
going somewhere else because they weren't allowed to fish as they would like. What specifically are you talking about when you say they're not allowed to fish as they like?

MR. JACKSON: So it just doesn't -- I don't think it's an allowing. It's more of providing.

MR. BARKSDALE: Which would be providing what?

MR. JACKSON: Regulations that separate different user groups. I know it's -- we all like to pursue our outdoor exposures in ways that we enjoy. Fly fishermen are not going to enjoy a river where they're practicing casting and they're enjoying the river and it's about the sport of fishing and having two guys with bait come in on either side of them and take out their limits using two or four or six rods.

It -- there is a natural rub
or conflict between those two user
groups, and every state around us
provides opportunities specifically
for those user groups the way the
State does for archery deer hunters
versus gun deer hunters. The way
that they pursue the sport
necessitates some differentiation
between user groups. We don't want
to stop any user from using the
river, we don't want to stop anyone
from enjoying it, but certain user
groups need -- prefer to be able to
pursue it the way that they want
separated from those user groups. It
just -- it creates conflict, and as a
retail person, any conflict, any --
any kind of rub, is -- is limiting
access.

MR. BARKSDALE: So it would be a
different season or a different
location?

MR. JACKSON: Different
regulations for different areas of the stream.

So we've got three areas that are easily accessed for wading opportunities. We have approached the Board before about creating one section of artificial lures for guys who just are more interested in sport fishing, and then a two-mile section that's open more for people to utilize the river with bait who are more interested in their harvest.

MR. BARKSDALE: The meat?

MR. JACKSON: Yes, sir. Just creating different user group areas.

MR. BARKSDALE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any more questions from the Board?

MR. BARKSDALE: No, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Brandon, thank you. That's -- this -- we've all considered this --

MR. JACKSON: Yes, sir.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: -- for some time and are working in baby steps. It seems that we're getting some things that help your user group that may entice more economics to this part of the world.

MR. JACKSON: We appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: So we're working on it. It's a slow process. We don't want to leave anybody out.

MR. JACKSON: Right.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. Thank you, Brandon.

MR. JACKSON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Our next speaker is Lee Getter.

MR. GETTER: Good morning. My name is Lee Getter. I'm from here in Jasper, Alabama. I've lived here my entire life. Sixteen years ago, I came home from my military service and I've hunted and fished in this state my entire life, and I wanted a
new challenge. I went and did what
every novice does, go to the Bass Pro
Shop and buy me a fly rod and the
whole kit, you know, and went down to
the stream and didn't catch anything.
I was introduced to Brandon Jackson
down here, and he taught me the
basics of fly-fishing. It changed my
life.

Now, in that 16 years, I've
been to Colorado -- from Colorado to
West Virginia fly-fishing in
different streams. I'm trying to
teach my children how to fly-fish.
It is a unique sport, and it is a
sport. It is a technical sport.

I have four biological
children and I have three adopted
children. I agree with what they're
asking for here on the regulations on
separate areas. There is a type of
rub that you deal with with regular
fishermen who I am and fly fisherman,
and it makes it hard for me to take my children down there to teach them this sport when there is I don't want to say aggression or anything like that, but, you know, there's tension. You don't want to take them into a tension area to teach these.

For a few years, I stopped going down to the Sipsey Fork because of this because people would come down there with five or six rods. There would be two adults and three children, and they'd pull out 25 fish. And the only people that were fishing were the adults. And while that's perfectly legal with the regulations that are in place right now, that is still taking fish away from this fishery and the things that I want to enjoy with my family.

So anything that has been proposed today and has been put in place, I thank you for already. But
in 16 years, that fishery is night
and day different when I started
going down through there. I don't
have to worry about scaling those
banks to get down to the water. The
access points are wonderful that
y'all have put in. The regulations
that have been added to it are
wonderful, and I thank you for that.
But I would like to see -- like they
said, this is a hidden gem in
Alabama. People can't believe we
have a year-round trout stream in the
state of Alabama. I work with a lot
of people in other states, and when
they take me trout fishing and
fly-fishing, I bring them -- when
they come to town, that's where I
take them, and they can't believe it
and they love it. But, again, I feel
like we need to step up our
regulations for this type of fishery
so that we can bring in more income
for everyone. Again, you've got people coming out of town for it that are going to stay in hotels, spend money in Jasper, spend money in Cullman. The whole state would benefit for out-of-state people to come in here and help our economy out.

Thank you for your time and listening to me.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Hold on.

Any questions from the Board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much for coming. Appreciate you.

Our next speaker is Shane Perrilloux.

MR. PERRILLOUX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Commission, for having me here today.

I'm actually a native of
Louisiana. My wife is from Birmingham. We're making a transition up to Oakman in the next several years, and we have about a 50-acre spread that she's really angry at the deer. She likes to put them down. So we've run into a little bit of an issue over the last five years up here. It's unregulated release of hunting dogs through our property.

And I managed a dog club, 6500-acre club with 80 members, down in Louisiana for years, and we always -- we never had a conflict with our neighbors because we always ran our dogs correctly. We had enough staffing for the hunt to be able to collect the dogs after the hunt to make sure it didn't infringe upon the surrounding properties. Here it's a little bit different because the only regulation about
enforcement involves a landowner actually capturing the dog, reading the name off the collar, and submitting it to our officers at Fish and Game. The problem I have with that being in the medical field is I don't know if that dog's been vaccinated for rabies. I don't know if the dog's been vaccinated for distemper. I don't know if the dog's aggressive. I don't know if I want to be grabbing someone else's dog on my property. It creates an unsafe environment.

So I submitted electronically to Ms. Betsy a PDF file that you may have seen. I'm not asking for restrictions on dogs. What I'm asking for is an easy way to identify dogs on my property so that I can turn that information over to enforcement. And I feel that that small step is enough to take the bad
actors out of play, because right now, they have to be caught three times in order to be enforced. And if I can take a picture with my game cameras in order to provide law enforcement the opportunity to get these people to fall in line, then it's safer for me, it's better for the dogs because they're better maintained, they've vaccinated; if they have electronic RFID chips implanted in them that matches the owner of the dog, they can be tracked back to the vaccination site; a vest, a high-visibility vest with a Velcro removable patch that can be employed when the dogs are actively engaging in the field. And all of this enforcement comes back to whoever's transporting the animal, so that person needs to have proof of vaccination in their vehicle. That person needs to have the owner's
information of the dogs in the vehicle, a map of where they propose to release those dogs to make sure that they understand the property boundaries in order to protect the surrounding landowners. There's also tracking collars. There's all kinds of other gizmos and gadgets. The problem is in the back woods near Oakman, Alabama, they don't engage that technology and there is no enforcement. So what I'm asking you is not to restrict dog hunting because everyone has the right to pursue gaming the way that they see best, but what I'm asking is for you to help the private landowners to have the opportunity to hunt the way that we choose to hunt as well.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Any questions from the Board?

(No response.)
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Perrilloux,
I have seen your PDF, I have read your report, and thank you very much for taking the trouble and the time to do that. It's an issue that we deal with quite frequently, and somewhere down the line, we're going to -- we're going to come together and solve the problem to help out.

You have a hundred acres, you said?

MR. PERRILLOUX: We have 53.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. All right. Thank you very much.

MR. PERRILLOUX: Thank, y'all.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The next speaker is Mr. Don Knight.

MR. KNIGHT: I'm Don Knight. I live in Anniston, Alabama. You'll have to excuse my throat. But I'm glad to see all you gentlemen here today and Grady too. Grady and I go back a long way. He's always been a
gentleman.

But what I'd like to speak to you about today is the way the dog hunting has been doing much better. Now, I got to admit that we're doing a lot better, and I'd like to approach you gentlemen with the idea of taking some of the counties off the permit system that have been doing well. I'm not saying take any of them off that are causing problems, but there's a lot of counties out there that are doing well. I sent y'all a letter on this. And we would very much like to see you help us a little bit. We're very helpful to y'all. Our whole sport's getting better and better.

I've spent a lot of money on collars and all lately. Our collars all have our name, address, phone number on them. All of our collars nowadays are electronic, most of
them. Everybody don't have an
electronic collar, but I guarantee
you probably 80 percent of the people
out there do have some sort of an
electronic collar on there and I
think it makes a big difference in
being able to stop our dogs before
they get to boundary lines.
Sometimes they going to go over
anyway, but most of the time, we can
stop them now and it makes a big
difference. We've been working real
hard on this.

    I've been putting -- dealing
with it for, what, Grady, 35,
40 years, and it's getting better and
better every year. Yes, we still
have some problems, but believe me,
we're working with the people that I
talk to and we're doing everything we
can to stop them, to get the problems
out, stop them. And that's we want
to do. It's getting better. And I
ask for y'all to help us just a little bit and open up some of those counties that are on the permit system.

I was on the committee that made the permit system that come up with it, and it was set up so in two or three years if they did good, they could get off that permit system. That's in the minutes. You can read them. That's the way it was set up. And so I'd like to see that put in place. So far no county that's been put on the permit system for probably 15 years has ever got off. And I --

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. KNIGHT: Thank you, ma'am.

And I'd like to -- y'all to consider that very much. I think it will make a big help and lets the dog hunters see if they get a little progress, they get a reward.

Thank you.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Hold on, Don.

Any questions for Don?

MR. KNIGHT: Grady will.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Pate.

MR. HARTZOG: I'm going to ask him what size shock collar he needs.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Pate.

MR. PATE: I mean, to me, that seems like a good faith effort. Is there anybody looking into that to see if there's counties that have done really well for the last four or five years that could be taken off? Who would look into that?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: That is something that the Department has reviewed. And I'd like to in regard to that ask Don, Don, how would it help. What would it do for the dog hunting clubs that are on permit system or the areas that are on the permit system, how would being off the permit system change things for
them if, in fact, they're doing so
good and everything is working as it
should be?

MR. KNIGHT: I think it would
just be a reward. It's like your
dog, when they do something good, you
give them a treat or something.
These people have been doing real
good on that. I think they should
get the opportunity to be off of that
permit system. It's got some pretty
good regulations on it, I know, but,
you know, we can always go back. If
they don't do right, they start going
the wrong way, you could either put
them back on it or whatever you want
to do with it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: It's just such
an onerous process to go back and do
it again and --

MR. KNIGHT: We're not going to.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: My thought is
that it's working wonderfully well.
We have not testimony, but folks that have come up and spoken. It's been a wonderful thing for them. It's gotten rid of a culture or group that weren't so good that made them look bad and now they're doing very, very well. I think it's worth some study, but that would be a position that as long as it's good, as my grandfather said, it's running, Son, don't mess with it.

MR. KNIGHT: Well, I agree with you on that.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay.

MR. KNIGHT: But there's also -- when it was set up and all, these people thought if they did real good in two to three years, they'd get off of it, and quite honestly, I think the people that you would take off of it would continue to hunt basically like they were on it. They've got used to it, they're ready for it, and
they know it helps so they try to do it right. And that was the whole point of it, try to get people to do right. But if you do right and then don't get any reward for it, like getting back off of it, what do you want to do that for?

MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Wolfe.

MR. WOLFE: Just touch on what you're saying, I guess I'm missing the point. I don't understand what the difference would be if a county's on the permit system and everybody's doing right but maybe one person's not doing right, but if we decide to then take that county off the permit system, what changes except the feel good? I hear what -- I hear what you're saying and I hear the feel good, but what is the advantage to anybody, the Board, the hunters, or anybody, if we take that county off
the permit system, what changes?

MR. KNIGHT: Well, it changes the restrictions on them. I mean, they're not breaking any laws because the permit system is not a law, but it changes their situation of how they feel about it and what you said, the feel good, but it also takes a few regulations off of them like the loaded guns -- not loaded but having to keep the shells separated and everything. I like to keep my shells in my pocket. But if there's things like that in there that was changed, I think the people would pretty well still do it. But it's just the fact that it was set up to where they could get off. I think they should be allowed to get off. I think we should honor that in the way it was set up.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Savoy.

MR. SAVOY: I'm new to the
Board, so I'm trying to find my way around too. But coming from the Wiregrass where we have -- Henry County where our land is we've been involved before it was permitted and after, and I will tell you what the permit system has created for us is a -- is the landowners and dog hunters working together.

MR. KNIGHT: Absolutely.

MR. SAVOY: And so there's a genuine respect for each other. We tend to catch dogs on our property from time to time. We caught -- we know everybody. Henry County is a small county. We're blessed in that. And so -- but the system has -- in my opinion, is working. And I understand your point that there's an element to it that makes the dog hunters feel good, but I go back to what our Chairman has said, if it ain't broke, you know, it don't need
fixing so --

MR. KNIGHT: Well, it is broke, though. See, that's the whole point of it. When it was set up, they had to -- said in there in the plans it's set up to where in two to three years if they did good, they could get off of it. Now, if they come back and cause more problems, they go on it and they stay on it to where it will straighten it back out. But I don't think it will. I mean, I don't think -- the dog hunters have come so far.

Look, I've been in this thing for about 35 years, and when we first started, we had straightly a bunch of outlaws. Okay. We had them. And I've been working and some of the other people have been working, some of the other associations have been working, and we've been trying to get these people
out of it to where we can hunt in a respectable way, respect our landowners, respect the landowners next to us and all the way around, and it's made large improvements. I think all of you have to admit that it's made large improvements.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We would never agree -- disagree with you that the permit system has been fabulous. It's worked well.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah, it's worked.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The one thing that I don't want to see happen, Don, to all of the good hunters is that a county or a club come off the permit system, somebody then comes in and creates a world of problems that we worked on for a year or two, and once that's done and at the end of that progress we have to put the whole county or the club -- do away with dog deer hunting. It's working as it
is. And I hate to take that chance.

I hate for that opportunity to show up.

And I'll promise you this as always -- and we've been honest --
that give us some time to study on
this about how it can -- if it can work, and at the next meeting or sometime in between. I'm happy to
talk to you. You've got all my conversation -- my contact information. So please call. And thank you for being here.

MR. KNIGHT: Like I said, I sent a letter to all of them about it, and I just think it would be a good opportunity to show our willingness to work with y'all and your willingness to work with us. That's what we'd like to have.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And that's what we want too.

MR. KNIGHT: We're very happy
what's been going on this year.
Everything looks good. Our collars
are working. Give us a chance.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Let's -- let's
keep it working.

MR. KNIGHT: That's right.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Don.

Thank you very much.

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Grady.

MR. HARTZOG: Can we have
Enforcement basically tell us what
additional restriction --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Let's do
that -- let's ask -- you ask that
question of Enforcement after the
meeting and let them work that for
you. How about that?

MR. HARTZOG: Okay. Why don't I
ask Enforcement to send the whole --
all of us a list of the additional
requirements that's on the permit
versus the nonpermit, please, sir.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Mr. Pate.

MR. PATE: Mr. Chairman, I'm just not familiar as a point of information how many counties are on the restricted list and maybe they could provide that to us also and when the last time we've added a county that we're having a problem in.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: You may not -- you may not get the packets all the time, but in your packet, there is a detailed map with every county and the areas that are on the permit system and the counties that are closed so you have that. If you don't, Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries and/or Enforcement can get that for you PDQ as they say.

MR. PATE: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And it's also in the Hunting and Fishing
Digest that goes out. We've got about 75,000 copies, I guess, or a hundred thousand of those that go out around the state. It's in there as well.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: It sure is.

All right. Okay. The next -- and thank you for the diatribe. That was very good, very informative.

Norman Parks is our next speaker.

MR. PARKS: Sir, I spoke to -- spoke to the Board in Montgomery a month or so ago, and some might consider it redundant, because at least temporarily, we have some influence and accomplished what we wanted to.

But I'm Norman Parks from Cecil, Alabama, in Montgomery County. I represent the Nose to the Ground and the Alabama Blood Trailing
Network Facebook groups, and what we do is we provide a service that puts hunters who cannot find deer that they've shot in touch with people who track deer with dogs. And through our group, we reported this past season over a thousand recoveries of deer through this service that would have otherwise gone unrecovered, and like many things, we don't think that represents but a fraction of the deer that are actually recovered. And we don't do this just because we think it's a public service. We enjoy it. It's our activity. And many of us have always hunted all our lives and almost given up hunting because we like to pursue this.

In the last year, a bill was presented to the state Legislature which would impose additional regulations and restrictions and also expand dog hunting throughout the
state. We as a group don't really have a strong opinion one way or another on the provisions of that bill as it applies to dog hunting with deer. Our objection to the bill has been that it includes blood trailing dogs, and in our opinion blood trailing dogs, that activity, is just as different from dog hunting as service dogs or bird dogs or one thing or another. If there's ever a time when there needs to be regulations on trailing dogs, it ought to be in separate legislation.

Now, this bill, in our understanding, was presented to and not read by either the Senate or the House of Representatives, and we appreciate all of the efforts by anyone who has had some effect on that. But we do want to go on record that we feel like this is an issue that's likely to come forward in the
future, and we will continue to
oppose it in every way we can as long
as blood trailing dogs are included
in the legislation.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Understood. I
might make a recommendation that you
call for sure your local
representative, your legislator, your
state senator. I'm not sure who the
sponsor of that bill is.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I
think it would be -- and you may have
already done that -- but Senator
Larry Stutts --

MR. PARKS: We have.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: --
was handling that in the senate, and
then Representative Harry Shiver in
the House of Representatives I think
would be two people that would be
most advantageous for you to talk to
about that before the next session.

MR. PARKS: Okay. Appreciate
it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Hold on one moment.

Any questions?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right.

Good luck.

The next speaker is Mr. Lane Stephens. You were hiding back there. I didn't see you.

MR. STEPHENS: I have a big roadblock I brought with me.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I gotcha.

MR. STEPHENS: Lane Stephens, I am here with the SCG Governmental Affairs, and I am here representing the Alabama Dog Hunters Association. I feel like everybody's been talking about us today.

First, we wanted to publicly thank Member Raymond Jones who is not here today. We've had some members of the association working with him
on some issues, trying to address that in his district. And -- he's not here today, so we do want to thank him for allowing us to work with him.

A Commissioner mentioned earlier our great legislation that we had filed in the House and Senate. Again, for those who are new to the Board, the Association is asked by legislators to come forward with legislation that we try to bring forth some commonsense regulations for responsible hunting in the state of Alabama. That bill was filed by Senator Stutts in the House. It passed out of his committee. He is the Chair of the committee, so -- people said, well, that's no big deal, but it's a pretty big deal to me to have an association who's never really been involved in legislation have legislators ask them for a bill
and that bill filed in both the House and the Senate and moved out of -- out of the Senate. We know who some of our detractors are now. We know who some of the -- what some of those issues are that people have problems with, but -- you know, I've been involved in the legislative process since 1989, and you don't find that out until you get your bill out there.

And so we look forward. We'll be back next year with that legislation. It may not look the same. There may be some things that are not in there today that will be and there may be some things taken out. But we're going to continue to work with the Legislature and the Commissioner and his great staff moving forward to provide for responsible hunting opportunities, provide --
You know, the thing that you're missing is your dog trespass legislation. You know, we tried that in the Legislature. The Commissioner tried it for the rule. You know, that's the issue that is missing, and until we get that, you know, you're going to continue to have people who will let their dogs run where they want to run because it's not against the law for that dog to be on that property. The law says that hunter can't be on that property, but it's not against the law for that dog to go on that property and we don't think that's right. We think that the private property rights of everyone ought to be respected. This gentleman with the 53 acres ought not to have to put up with that, and he ought not have to catch them dogs. Even if he does, what's it going to lead to? All it's going to lead to
is a permit because it's not illegal for that dog to be on the property. And we're trying to help y'all with that.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Hold on, Lane.

Any questions for Mr. Stephens?

And for those of you --

Dr. Phillips and Kevin, Mr. Stephens is a representative of/a lobbyist for the -- tell me which group.


CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And there are two -- for edification, there are two groups in the state; is that correct?

MR. STEPHENS: There may be more than that. I only know the one I represent.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. I'm sorry. I don't mean to put you on
the spot with that. But there's several groups of dog deer hunters in the state, so he represents one.

Okay. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, Lane.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The last speaker today is Mr. Avery Bates.

MR. BATES: I come before you by and on behalf of some of the commercial fishermen that did get turned down for paddlefish. There was a number of trial tests that showed quite an increase in catching paddlefish. And, by the way, Chris knows this fellow I'm going to talk about. Blackie Strange has proved some of these scientists wrong. Blackie Strange caught paddle nose on a hook and line. He's caught four on some of your set nets, like jug fishing. Now, they say you ain't supposed to do that because they're
planktonic fish, but you can believe
the side --

Well, there's two sides to
any question, especially when you
talk about fishing. You've got the
recreational side and you've got the
commercial side. We feed the people
fish. In fact, I think one of our
legislators said the last he sold on
paddle fish eggs was $130 a pound. I
think I heard from one of the persons
on the Board that he paid $55 for a
little helping of caviar from the
paddle fish. That mounts up to
money, commerce. We want to see a
small number of fishermen produce
food, whether it's caviar or meat
fish. I'll tell you that fish is
even better than the channel cat.
Now, I like a channel cat. Most of
the people in Alabama do. But we
would like to see a small amount of
time out of a year for them people to
feed some people in restaurants and
people in the Alabama a good eating
fish.

In the past, there's been
some stark, divisive thing that's
happened from the Board and from the
State. Now, what do you mean. Take
me the commercial fishermen, five
generations -- and I'm vice president
of the Organized Seafood Association.
Been there for years. Before that, I
was vice president of South Alabama
Seafood Association. But to let you
know, I was out oystering one day in
the gullies. Most of you don't know
what the gullies are. But we was
oystering, and I'd been oystering
there for about 30 years. Here come
a boat behind me, says you got to
leave. I said, I got to leave. I'm
feeding my family and I'm putting the
oysters on the market. He says, no,
you got to leave. And then I got to
looking, and around 1994, I saw a law, 9-11-270. What happens? He says, I can have you arrested.

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. BATES: Now, that time that you just said has cost us time on the water, and I want y'all to know there's several laws that it's in our right. Our property belongs to this state. We want y'all to eat seafood, whether it's out of the rivers, the bays, or the gulf. And some of the laws that's been so discriminatory has made what we call a monopoly out of some of our fish. A monopoly only lets one user group. That's against federal regulation, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act. If you take away 100 percent of that fish from the commercial fishermen, you take away 100 percent of that fish.

And by the way, thank you
for not allowing them to take
sheepshead away from us. Before
that, it was mackerel they wanted to
take away, Spanish mackerel. And
before -- it's always want to take
away. When you take it away, you
take it away from everybody in the
state of Alabama and anywhere else we
ship it. We want you to eat good
crab's that's being eat up by Redfish.
Billions of tons of crabs get eat
every year by Redfish, and, you know
what, restaurants can get good wild
Redfish right today. So keep in
mind, when we ask for something, it's
for the benefit of the state of
Alabama to have more business, more
fish on the table, and more consumers
enjoying it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Thank you, Avery.

MR. BATES: If you have any
questions, you're welcome to ask me.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS:  All right. Any questions from the Board?

Yes, Brock.

MR. BROCK JONES:  Mr. Chairman, can I suggest that Mr. Bates send us an email every time prior to the meeting where he doesn't go over every time?

MR. BATES:  I'm sorry I got long, but this time I got -- I continued on because we don't have anybody here today.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS:  Well, I give you license because you come every meeting and your message is a good one, but be mindful when we are crowded, when there are people --

MR. BATES:  I just -- I try to abide.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS:  And I know you try to go last, but by that time, everybody needs a health break.

MR. BATES:  We all need to go to
the restroom, especially when you get
older.

  God bless y'all and God
bless the state of Alabama.

  CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you,
Mr. Jones.

  Thank you, Mr. Bates, very
much.

  COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:
Mr. Chairman, can I --

  CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Of course,
Mr. Commissioner.

  COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Just
as information since we have a new
Board member -- several new Board
members, I do want to just point out
that there's not been a request by
the Department to make any species a
game fish in over a decade so
that's -- or take that away from any
of the commercial fishermen in the
saltwater areas in more than a decade
so just for information.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions on that? Any comments? Nothing?
(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right.
Well, the next portion of our business here today is unfinished business. Unless there is something out there that was put on the table, suspended, left alone, I don't think we have any unfinished business at this time, so we're moving on to our new business.

We did the consumer price index last meeting. Today I think that there are a couple of motions. I know one would be to approve seasons and bag limits.

Is there a motion for that?

MR. HARTZOG: So moved.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Well, let me get the motion, Mr. Hartzog, and we will.

Now, is there a motion to
approve seasons and bag limits? Is there -- would somebody read the motion.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I think just a motion --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I think the Chair will state that there's a motion afoot to approve all of the seasons and bag limits as written in the packets that were provided to you previously, and I'll be looking for a second for that.

MR. BROCK JONES: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We have a second, Mr. Brock Jones. We'll vote on those. This will be a show of hands. All those in favor?

It's unanimous. That passes. Thank you.

Is there another motion?

MR. BARKSDALE: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Barksdale.

MR. BARKSDALE: I think this was
brought up at our last meeting by Mr. Raymond Jones. He is not here today, so I agreed to make this motion on his behalf. This is talking about the permit system I think you mentioned or somebody mentioned earlier. But I'd like to make the motion to place everything west of Highway 43 in Colbert County under the permit system as it pertains to dog deer hunting beginning with '21-'22 deer season.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. There's a motion. I'm going to ask you to read it one more time, please.

MR. BARKSDALE: I'd like to make the motion to place everything west of Highway 43 in Colbert County under the permit system as it pertains to dog deer hunting beginning with the '21-'22 deer season.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right.

Thank you.
The motion has been read and heard. Do I have a second?

MR. WOOD: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Second by Mr. Tim Wood. The vote again will be a vote -- or is there any discussion?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Being no discussion, we'll vote. The vote will be by a show of hands. All those in favor, please show by raising your hand.

(All Board members present raised hand.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The vote's unanimous.

Are there any other motions today?

Resolutions?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: There being nothing, Mr. Commissioner, do you have a resolution or do you have
another announcement?

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: No, sir. I just appreciate the Board members for their work during the -- between the last meeting and this meeting. And any questions that you have throughout the year, always feel free to give me a call or any of the division directors or Deputy Commissioner Poolos and we can try and get you any answers or information that we can. And as we've been doing, I'll try to provide the information to you throughout the year as things come up that I think might be of interest to you. If you get tired of getting emails from me, let me know, but I feel like the more information I can provide to the Board to keep you updated the better it is to make sure everybody knows what's happening in other parts of the state that may not be in your
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Anything --

MR. BARKSDALE: I do --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Barksdale.

MR. BARKSDALE: -- have a question or clear something up. I saw this on social media. There is a Help Stock Lake Guntersville group that has set up a 501(c)(3) trying to raise money to put some F-1 tiger bass in Guntersville. I just wanted to make sure are we good with it, do we know about it. I don't know who would be able to answer that.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Sure. I can take that.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Please.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So we have talked with Major League Fishing. We're working with them on a couple of different fronts.
They're helping us with some adult mentor fishing opportunities. They have a passion to do some work in Lake Guntersville. One of the things that they would like to do is stock these bass.

Our Fisheries section, you know, with Lake Guntersville being such a huge reservoir and what they're stocking, it's not going to -- we don't feel like it's going to make a huge difference in the -- either the genetics or the population of bass, but it is a good opportunity to highlight the fishing that we have on Lake Guntersville and all of Alabama and to be able to provide some positive news releases and news stories about our fishing here.

So we are aware of the 501(c)(3) and have talked with them. We're not actively involved with them, but we do -- I do see as
Commissioner opportunities. And any
time you're doing something to
improve fishing in the state, it
gives us an opportunity to put that
out to the rest of the world and get
more people to come to Alabama and
enjoy the great fisheries we have
here, buying out-of-state fishing
licenses, and spend some money in our
state.

MR. BARKSDALE: I would agree
with that a hundred percent, and
Guntersville is known across the
United States as really big bass
fishing. I just wanted to --

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Sure.

MR. BARKSDALE: -- make sure
that it was something we were aware
of that was going on and they weren't
putting something in there we
don't --

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:
Well -- and our Fisheries section has
been open and out front that stocking
in those large reservoirs is not
going to make -- as long as it has
that Florida stream bass in there
already, it's not going to make a
huge difference in the genetics or in
the population, but it is something
that we're -- that I have permitted
to be able to do that so that -- some
of the other ancillary benefits for
our state.

MR. BARKSDALE: Great. Thank
you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: With no other
questions or comments, I'll call the
meeting adjourned. The time and date
of the next meeting will be
determined. It will -- Betsy will
put that -- advertise that, but I'm
sure it will be sometime in the fall
prior to deer season; is that
correct?

MS. JONES: No, no.
COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Our next meeting will probably be next February.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Next February. All right. Next February after deer season.

Okay. This meeting is adjourned. Thank y'all all for being here. Safe travels home.

(Meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.)
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF ALABAMA

AUTAUGA COUNTY

I, Stacey L. Johnson, Certified Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large, hereby certify that on May 8, 2021, I reported the meeting of the State of Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Board, and that pages 3 through 102 contain a true and accurate transcription of said meeting.

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

This the 11th day of August, 2021.

/s/Stacey L. Johnson
STACEY L. JOHNSON, CCR
Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large
CCR 386, Expires 9/30/2021
COMMISSION EXPIRES: 6/22/2023