STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Capitol Auditorium
Montgomery, Alabama
March 3, 2018

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
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Proceedings taken before Tracye Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter, ACCR No. 294, and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large, at the State of Alabama Capitol Auditorium, Montgomery, Alabama, on Saturday, March 3, 2018, commencing at approximately 9:00 a.m.

rivers, the great state of Alabama and all that goes on in it. We thank you for the game and the fish, for those things that we all hold dear. Help us to think in today’s meeting and to discern properly how we should handle things in the natural resources and the bounty that you’ve so richly blessed us with. Thank you for you son, Jesus, who died on the cross for our sins, and it’s in His name we pray. Amen.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Raymond.

We’re going to do something a little different, if we can. If everybody will rise, we will say the pledge. Deputy Commissioner Poolos will lead us in our pledge.

(Pledge of Allegiance recited.)

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

Welcome. I’m glad to see everybody here. It’s a crowded house. Let’s have a very productive meeting.
MR. CAGLE: That's okay.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The next item on our agenda is our Commissioner's report.

Commissioner Blankenship.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Did you want to let the board members introduce themselves?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Well, I was going to do that after you, but we can do it. Let's do it.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: That's fine.

Good morning. I'm glad to see you all here today. I am Commissioner Chris Blankenship. I'm so glad to see you here today, so glad to have so many people here with us. I'd like to welcome some of our new board members as they introduce themselves in a few minutes. We're glad to have our new members Greg Barksdale, Jessica Butler, and then Brock Jones, who was a member in the past and has been reappointed onto the Advisory Board. So glad to see him.

And I appreciate the work that Commissioner Guy has done for the six years that he was commissioner here. I had hoped he could be with us today and was unable to be, and maybe he can be with us at our next meeting where we can thank him for all of his hard work that he did.

And I'm glad to have our new chairman, Mr. Joey Dobbs, presiding over the meetings and working with the department.

And we have a lot of good things that are happening to the Department of Conservation. Just this past week we had a celebration of the 110th anniversary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. In 1907 a bill was passed that created the Department of Conservation. Prior to that there were some county laws and local laws that had some patchwork regulations that dealt with game and fish. In 1907 that came under one agency.

And so it's good to see where we've come as an agency since 1907. Some people may say we haven't come that far, but I would disagree, because we have come a long way as an agency in the way that we look at things in the state and the way that we work with the people that like to hunt and fish.

Back in 1907 there weren't very many deer or turkey, songbirds, much of anything else in the state. Today we have a thriving deer and turkey population. We have some of the best freshwater fishing anywhere in the country. Same thing with our saltwater fishing. And I think that is all attributed to the will of people like you to obey the rules and regulations and the work of the biologists and enforcement officers in the department.

As a part of that celebration of the 110th anniversary, we dedicated a memorial wall on our fifth floor of the office to the 12 officers that have lost their life -- 12 conservation officers who have lost their life protecting the resources that we find so valuable. I did not realize that we had that many people that had given their lives in the line of duty to protect what we hold so valuable.

It was a very moving tribute to those officers. Many of the family members were there. We had some -- one family from one of the officers that died in the '70s, he had -- all three of his children and most of his grandchildren and some great-grandchildren were there. So it was very special to them, special to us for them to participate. The governor
was there and gave a nice proclamation and showed the importance of those lives. So I just hope that you'll remember our employees when you say your prayers at night and ask for their protection as they're out doing what they do so that we can have such wonderful opportunities to hunt and fish here in Alabama.

I do want to recognize a couple of our new employees at the Department of Conservation since our last Advisory Board meeting. Ed Poolos is our deputy commissioner here in the department, and then Patrick Moody is our general counsel. Patrick is here on the front row. He heads our legal department. So with that, I'll turn it back over to you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much, Commissioner. Our next part will be reports from our board members, their district reports. They're going to introduce themselves, and you'll get to meet our new board members. So if we'll start at the end of the table, Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Yes, sir. I'm Jeff Martin, District 3. My district had some pretty good fishing success so far this year. As everybody knows, weather has a good part playing in that. The deer hunters I've spoken to, some had a great year. Of course, others didn't have so much. The dog deer hunting complaints were not at the level they were last year. Some of the individuals and organizations have worked to be better stewards of the resources and better neighbors to their fellow sportsmen. With that in mind, I will be reviewing and discussing some possible changes in the hunting days and time periods as well as some geographic areas that will require additional review and discussion.

The recent CWD-positive deer in Mississippi is something that everyone seems to be taking very seriously. I think we have some people speaking today on that, and I look forward to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. MR. RAYMOND JONES: My name is Raymond Jones. I represent Congressional District Number 5, which is located in north Alabama. It's been a fairly quiet year in our area of the woods. We did have a very bad EHD outbreak. A lot of deer, unfortunately, passed away during that process. I don't know why this year was particularly harder than normal, but we did have a bad outbreak of that.

I had an opportunity -- a good opportunity to go to the dedication of the new archery park. Ms. Butler and Director Sykes were with us. And it's a great thing there in north Alabama. We did -- Jessica and I hit a target. Chuck didn't. But we won't talk about that. But, anyway, that was a nice ceremony that was held there.

Received several calls on Swan Creek Wildlife Management Area and fielded those, and there's a lot of discussion in that regard.

Speaking of Swan Creek, I want to let everyone know and let the board know, in over 40 years, I don't think there's been the amount of effort that is being put into our WMAs as is being put right now. Thanks to leadership from Director Sykes, Keith Gauldin, Seth Maddox, Jud Easterwood, Drew Able, Courtenay Conring, who are all employees of the state. There's a lot of energy and a lot of emotion and stuff that's going into these WMAs to make waterfowling the best it's ever been. So there's a tremendous amount of work there.
I also recently attended a Ducks Unlimited event in the north Alabama region where over $100,000 was raised. Now, that money is not going to Canada. That money is staying in north Alabama and helping fund these projects on our WMAs so we will have more quality hunting for the general public in that region.

Obviously, the CWD scare, I know it's going to be talked about a good bit today. Mississippi is a real threat. It's something that we all need to take very, very seriously, and I look forward to the occasion of more of those discussions today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

MR. STIMPSON: I'm Ben Stimpson, District 1. I'm from Mobile. I'll be brief today. The biggest feedback item that I got this past year was on dog deer hunting, and it was primarily from people requesting permitting systems throughout the state. It was generally positive feedback. But that was the biggest thing that I heard about.

Secondly, we made a lot of changes in the Mobile Delta this past year with the duck hunting, and it was by far, from the people I talked to, very positively received. I mean, we had limited hunting hours. We had a motorless area. We had some -- we made a lot of significant changes, and the feedback that I was getting from that was that they were even requesting more changes, more motorless areas, and to continue what we've been doing, and it was generally very positive feedback on that.

Of course, same thing with CWD. A lot of questions. A lot of interest in that. We'll hear that shortly. But I'll turn it over to my eastern District 1 representative.

MR. WOLFE: Thank you, Ben.

My name is Gary Wolfe. I represent District 1 also. I live in Fairhope, Alabama.

Let me first say kudos to Scott Bannon and Kevin Anson with Marine Resources. Exempted fishing permits are well received. To put our reef fish management back in the hands of professionals in five Gulf states will be a great day. Keep up the good work, guys.

Water quality remains an issue but is part of the health department's commitment. I remember last year we had that discussion about some problems with health, bad water and stuff. So I think that really remains back in the health department's side.

I have had several boating complaints. Shrimpers, fishermen, and recreational boaters have spoken to me about tour boats, dolphin sightseeing boats making large wakes and being two abreast to board in parts of the waterways. This is an issue, and hopefully we'll be able to review it with the staff and take care of some of that.

Deer hunting was good, not great. Been hearing a lot of good and a lot of bad. So I think overall it might be a pretty decent year but not a great year.

Director Sykes has a PowerPoint I'm anxious to see. It speaks to lack of harvest reporting or reduction in the harvest. And I think that's going to be very important to us because what I'm hearing about the EHD and stuff is something that we really need to get on top of.

Dog deer hunting complaints in the southern counties have not been an issue. In other counties I understand we have some issues, and hopefully we're going to discuss that today.

Meeting with Tony Boutwell, the
president of the Baldwin County Dog Hunters Association -- I've had several discussions with Tony. And Tony thinks that the Garmin Alpha 100 dog collar has been the most effective in our region. I know his club and another club that joins them is using those collars and, talking to him, that they really kept their dogs on their property and that this seems to be working really good in our region of Baldwin County and hoping maybe some of the other clubs will pick up on that too.

I applaud what DCNR is doing in being proactive regarding CWD. That, to me, is one of the most important things to the board that we've got to address and take care of. And we would expect participation from the public as well as our stakeholders. This will continue to be our most reviewed item. Thank you very much.

MS. BUTLER: Good morning. I'm Jessica Butler. I represent District 5 up in the north part with Raymond. I'm in the Scottsboro area.

And the sportsmen and women in our district reported a good season for deer. Like Raymond mentioned, EHD was reported in part of our district, but thank you to the division for handling that very quickly and efficiently. And it will be discussed further as our meeting progresses.

Also a great duck season for our area. I had one report that it was the best duck season he's seen in 40 years.

I also had the opportunity a few weeks ago to attend one of the adult-mentored hunts. What an excellent day. I can't say enough great things about this program. Excellent job by everyone involved. Thank you to the division for their hard work on several hunts, procuring the land, plowing and planting, building blinds and stands,

helping the mentee harvest an animal and see it to its processing. Cooking also. Justin Grider makes really good rabbit stew for the record. It was a special time, a great day for everyone involved. I would like to encourage everyone to share this program with someone, also, or volunteer to be a mentor. You can sign up online, "OutdoorAlabama."

Also received information from the Alabama Dog Hunters Association, the Talladega chapter. Appreciate their efforts and work in their community.

I am familiar with several complaints about dog deer hunters in several counties close to my district as well as several letters mailed to the department and the board. We're going to review these and other items coming forward.

Have had the opportunity to discuss CWD-positive deer in Mississippi with some members of surrounding county commissions, and they are concerned about the possible economic impact it may have on small communities. But we will discuss this further also.

And it's an honor to be here and serve. If I can do anything to help, please feel free to contact me. Look forward to learning more as our meeting progresses. I will pass it to Grady.

MR. HARTZOG: Good morning. Grady Hartzog, District 2, Eufaula, Alabama.

Overall everybody was satisfied with the deer season. Barbour County has a three-point-on-the-side rule. Everybody was satisfied with that. Talking to the deer processors, they believe they processed more deer this year than they have in the previous years, so that's a good thing.

Had some concerns and talked to Chuck and the department about the rut happening earlier east of 431 and maybe looking at tweaking the seasons on that,
but we're still a ways from that. But, you know, those people in those areas really want to maybe see those changes. I want to thank Chris and his wife. Last week they came out -- Barbour County has the largest youth hunt east of the Mississippi, and it's the third largest in the country. There was over 250 kids. They came. They shot BB guns, skeet, archery. One of the newest programs they had this time, which I thought was good, was to harness and get into tree stands because of the tree-stand injuries we've had. So the overall youth hunt was a great success. One thing to keep in your prayers, Pat, the lady that puts that on, had cancer removed from her right lung Wednesday morning. In fact, she put off her surgery in order that she could get the youth hunt taken care of, which I thought was commendable. But, overall, I had fewer calls on dog deer problems, other than Chambers County I had some calls on, so -- but Coffee County where I normally have a lot of calls from, I didn't have the first call from Coffee County. So that was good. They're doing good. But, overall, everybody is pleased with the seasons, pleased with the bag limits, and pleased with everything we're doing. So just keep up the good work. And thanks to the department for all they do.

MR. BARKSDALE: Thank you, sir.

My name is Greg Barksdale. I represent District 4. I just was appointed to this board in October of '17, so I'm one of the new guys here. During that time I've been contacted by several folks primarily concerning for and against dog deer hunting and, also, some contact with folks concerning trout fishing below Smith Lake Dam.

From all the posts on social media during deer season, it appears that we had a pretty successful year. My hope is that all those deer we're seeing on social media gets Game-Checked, and from the numbers that we're hearing, that may not be the case. So please Game-Check the animal that you're taking.

Also had some conversations with some hunters that hunt out of state concerning what they can and cannot bring back in from other states and what states that is affected by. And now with the new case of CWD in Mississippi, I think you're going to see CWD being a topic of concern going forward.

I just want to take this time to thank you guys for the opportunity to serve on this board.

MR. BROCK JONES: Good morning. I'm Brock Jones from District 7. Good to be back on the board. I'm from Greene County. Of course, District 7 represents pretty much the Black Belt.

As far as my district report is concerned, the main thing that I hear from the various residents and hunters of the district is the concern over the hog damage. That seems to be far and away the number-one issue and what we can do about that.

CWD, of course, has got everybody concerned, as everybody else has been talking about. The processors basically said in the Black Belt area that it was a better year than last year. There have been minimal dog-hunting complaints.

And, lastly, we had an unfortunate incident in west Wilcox County where a hunter was killed by an alleged poacher that the Alabama Bureau of Investigation is working on right now.

That's all I've got.

DR. LEMME: Good morning. Gary Lemme, ex-officio member, director of the
Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

I wanted to give a shout-out to the department for cooperating with local sportsmen and the 4-H in Tallapoosa County and developing the archery range at the state park there. That's one of several now across the state. I think that's great because it gets kids involved and provides a safe place for adults to practice. And I've been there a couple of times. I've seen families on a Saturday all shooting with mom, dad, and the kids, and I think that's really good.

4-H now has 2,688 kids enrolled in the shooting sports program, and last year over 3,000 hours of volunteer time was provided by adult coaches. And several of you are involved in that. I just wanted to thank you. I think that's developing the sportsmen for tomorrow.

The last thing I wanted to make --

I've gotten several positive comments about changes in the State Parks system lately, and I wanted to make sure I brought that up. And then we continue to get lots of questions about feral hog control.

COMMISSIONER Mc MILLAN: John McMillan, Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries. It's good to be with y'all this morning.

We've already heard some comments about CWD, and I'm sure we're going to hear some more. But from the perspective of our department, I wanted to update you all on the testing process that we have since -- I believe it's '02, Chuck, that we've been monitoring and testing.

Several years ago the very expensive equipment that we had at our diagnostic lab in Auburn died on us, and we didn't have the money to replace it at $100,000 plus at that time. So we've been sending those tests out of state.

They're collected by officers and biologists with the Department of Conservation and some from breeders that actually bring those in when a deer dies on their premises.

But, anyway, we've been working with the Department of Conservation for several months now on getting the new testing equipment at the Auburn lab. The equipment is there. It's in place. We've trained a technician over there to operate it. And we're just waiting on the U.S. Department of Agriculture to work with us on validating our ability to operate the equipment and the equipment to do a good job.

And that's going to allow us several things as we move forward on this. It's going to allow much more timely tests. We've been having to send those tissue samples -- and only dead deer can be tested and only brain tissue. So we've been sending those to Wisconsin.

Sometimes the tissue is too decomposed to really get good tests. And it can take as much as four or five months sometimes to get reports back. So we will be able to do that very rapidly with our diagnostic lab over at Auburn and this new equipment.

And so we are certainly going to be moving forward in being an integral part of this whole process to monitor and test and do everything we can to work with the Department of Conservation on the CWD issue. It's, unfortunately, one of those things that -- heretofore Arkansas has been the closest place that we had to Alabama as a threat. Mississippi -- thank goodness it was about as far as -- it was as far west in Mississippi as it could get, in the Yazoo City area right on the river. So there's some thought it might -- that deer might have even come from Louisiana
It's a problem that all of us in the Southeast and Alabama, in particular, is concerned about working with.

So I just wanted to update you on that. And I'm sure Chuck is going to talk about it some more. And if anybody has any questions about it later on, I'll be more than happy to discuss it with you. Thank you so much.

MR. CAGLE: Good morning. I'm Patrick Cagle. I represent the 2nd Congressional District, which is the southeast corner of Alabama.

I just want to say that -- I want to thank everyone in this room that's helped us make progress. As y'all know, we've -- you know, dog hunting has been a contentious issue longer than I've been alive. It may continue. But we're making progress. I think that's evidenced by -- you know, we have open seats which we haven't had the last few years.

So I want to thank everyone that's working with us. I think different groups are working together well. And my goal is that every year we should be able to eliminate more and more problems. But we've got to have realistic expectations. We've got to keep working together. We've got to realize and know that, you know, when we're working together not everyone is going to get everything they want. But the goal is that we minimize conflict where we can. So I thank everyone that's worked towards that.

I want to say that living in Montgomery gives me an opportunity to interact with the department staff regularly, and I just want to commend the work that our new commissioner has done and his staff. And they've made some great additions. They made a strong team stronger. I think they're doing an excellent job of handling the day-to-day tasks, the challenges that we face now, as well as addressing the long-term issues that really impact our tradition and our sport.

Director Sykes has done an excellent job in helping set up mentored hunts in Special Opportunity Areas, which are -- I think that will make a huge difference in getting new hunters engaged which is so critical to continuing our tradition.

So I thank them for all the work they've done. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you all. Those were great reports. I'm Joey Dobbs. I represent the 6th District. I'm the new chairman. Bear with me. I'm learning, but I'm having fun.

I'd like to thank Betsy, Wanda, Tiff -- everybody that has put this on today. Thank you very much. Thank you to Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, thank you to Marine Resources, thank you to Parks, thank you to State Lands for being patient with me and my questions in learning and getting up to speed to better be able to serve while in this position. I'm having fun with it.

I'm so encouraged by what I'm hearing. I'll add that we've got 47 days to snapper-fish. That's not necessarily in my district, but it's important to me and others. That's very important.

I have asked Mr. Jones and Mr. Stimpson to be our waterfowl representatives in the north and south zone. They have agreed to that. So as we have questions, they're going to help represent this board. Some of us are not waterfowl hunters to the degree that they are. They're very capable.

I think that's really all I've got. The mentored programs have been absolutely fabulous. I've been able to participate as Jessica got to. My sweet
wife, Amy, cooked. We served. We just
had a ball. Thanks to the enforcement
staff that was there doing the training,
the firearms training. They also helped
with the processing of the deer. It was
really, really well received, and it's a
great program going forward. The
purchase of the lands, creating the
Special Opportunity Areas, that is a
huge plus for the department and for our
user groups.

So with that, our next order of
business would be our directors reports.
And I would ask Director Bannon, Scott
Bannon, to give his and following him
Director Sykes.

And I would say that the board, if
you would like, we can step down and
occupy these seats so that we can view
these PowerPoints.

(Brief pause in proceedings.)

MR. BANNON: Good morning, everyone. If
you're in the Chris Blankenship Fan

that we needed to do something. So
there were lots of meetings and phone
calls between the states to develop this
plan.

The commissioner was very actively
engaged at that time. I became the
director in October. So we're in a
transition period. But this was very
important to the entire Gulf Coast, but
it's vital to fishing in south -- or to
the state of Alabama.

So that gave us a 42-day season last
year under an agreement that we would
not have state fishing seasons. We
would transition and have a federal
season. And the numbers that we had are
a little bit different than what NOAA
presented at the end of the season, and
so that was a concern for going into
2018 and 2019, that we would not have a
fishing season at all.

So we're mandated under the
Magnuson-Stevens Act to make sure that
we stay within certain criteria and that we protect the fisheries, so -- and we have no problem with that. We have no goal or intention of wearing out any fishery in the state of Alabama and no Gulf state director has that intention. We don’t do that with any other management of game or of fish, that we are going to abuse it. So we hold red snapper fishing very near and dear to us as a division and to the citizens of Alabama.

Senator Shelby, he has been very actively engaged in this, and he added some language to the omnibus budget bill that said that we would create a plan for our reef fishing zones is the way he described it in the budget bill. It got a little bit strange because Alabama has one of the world's premier artificial reef fishing zones. We have over 17,000 documented items out there in that reef zone. No other state really has what we have as far as a designated reef zone.

So the other states were struggling a little bit to how do they present a plan. So in discussions with NOAA, they said why don’t you apply for an exempted fishing permit. And each state is eligible to do that, and you can describe the areas that you want to include within the permit.

So this is kind of an outline of permanent reef zones off the state of Alabama. The ones in red we've had for some time. The ones that are in black, we just got those approved recently. We have not put any reefs in those areas. There are some that were just put out there by private people over the years and some wrecks and debris along the way.

We’re going to use those little black squares and the two triangles that you see there to the west as research areas. We’re going to try and develop a plan for what is the best method for deploying reef material, what size, what shape, what spacing, so that we maximize the benefit not only for the money that we’re spending in the state but that we can provide that to people who want to put their own reefs out to say, look, here's the best bang you get for your buck. Nobody wants to waste money. We want to ensure that we have a healthy fish population. And we'll also figure out which reefs attract what species of fish.

So those are going to be available to be fished, but only the state of Alabama is going to deploy reef material in there for science purposes for the first few years. And those are within the 9-mile zone. Because now the federal government as well as the state recognizes that we claim a 9-mile fishing jurisdiction. NOAA only recognizes it right now for Gulf reef fish.

So the exempted fishing permit is what we applied for, and each of the five Gulf states have done so. So these are some of the goals, what we’re trying to do. We’re trying to increase the accountability through use of a mandatory electronic reporting system. In Alabama it's Snapper Check. We've had it for several years now. We feel that's a very accountable system that -- it's easy to access. It's available on your iPhone. It takes about 30 seconds to fill that out.

We want to increase fishing opportunities through that real-time data landing and reduce the amount of what we call buffer. When the federal government sets that federal fishing season, there is a 20-percent buffer that's allowed so that we don't -- we try and not run over, that we don't overfish whatever fishery.
With real-time reporting here in Alabama, we can make management decisions within about a week. Under our federal plan, we don't get the final numbers until months after the season has closed. So it is not an effective management tool for an in-season type change. With Snapper Check, we can make these decisions within a week's time.

We can decide are we fishing too heavy, do we need to adjust the season and make it shorter so that we can have a season the next year, or based on the effort and weather and these other factors -- and life happens when we're out there, folks, that there are days you just don't get to go fish. So we may be able to add days to the end of the season, which is the bullet there, that we can adjust the season very quickly.

Right now our goal is to make it through September, through Labor Day. If the effort is not there or we've had there on the Gulf Coast. We want to provide as much access to not only the citizens of Alabama but the people who come and visit. So it's a total potential of 47 days with the potential to add more days at the end of the season.

The size and bag limit will stay the same, 16 inches and two fish per person. We're not changing any of those because we want to stick with what change we want to make incrementally. So we'll look at these days. We'll see how the effort goes. And down the road we can always look at making some other changes if there was a permanent change in the rules.

So, then, what do we do for 2019? Well, we see what 2018 gave us. If at the end of the season the numbers just don't -- they don't get to the total and we realize, you know, we could have added more days -- adding days in a hurricane -- you know, everybody knock on wood and pray that that doesn't happen -- but we can always extend the season.

And you saw that reef zone that we had. Alabama has invested very heavily in that. With a three-day season, we are not providing you access to what you have invested in. It's our goal to give you access to what you have invested in.

So the highlights for the 2018 fishing season -- this is the proposal that we have -- that it will be weekends -- Friday, Saturday, and Sunday is how we define a weekend -- beginning June 1st, which has been the traditional opening. Florida is looking at maybe doing a Memorial Day Weekend opening. So there may be some inconsistencies. We want to run through Labor Day Monday, and we want to include the entire week of Independence Day or Fourth of July because that's a high-traffic time down October doesn't help us a whole lot because you guys are out hunting, your kids are back in school, and you play that funny little game called football. And so nobody goes fishing. So I can tell you the day when it's the Iron Bowl because there's not a soul out there except for that one guy wearing the LSU hat. He usually gets a ticket.

So we could potentially add Mondays, or we could potentially move the start date to Memorial Day Weekend and provide access on a weekend when people are historically going to the beach.

The graphic on the right there is kind of an outline of when and where we have structures out there. If you have never been fishing off the coast of Alabama, I would encourage you to do it. It's one of the jewels that we have. And there were some forward-thinking folks in our history that really planned out this artificial reef zone.
So then to monitor it, we use the red snapper -- the Snapper Check program. And it's mandatory. It's the law. You can get a ticket. That's the enforcement guy in me. The director in me says I need you to report that. I need you to give me the information, because when we put real numbers into this, we get a real answer on the other end. If we have to use the estimates based on our surveys, it's not as good a number. And I need to have confidence in the number at the end of the season to say, yes, I'm going to give you more days or, you know what, you're not giving me the information I need, so I'm going to have a tough time giving you more days because I do not want to go over. I do not want to overfish, but I do want to provide you with as much access to this fishery as I can.

So the one group that will not be completely happy in this -- I figure we did pretty good, but I think we made two out of three groups happy. The federal for-hire charter will not be included in this program. They're going to stay with their federal season, which will probably be around 50 days. And they're okay with that. We've been in very close contact with them, had great conversations. It's a business for them, and it was too new and it was a risk that they just weren't willing to take. So we polled them, and they wanted to not be included. But the state-licensed charter guides, the folks that generally take you speckled trout and red drum fishing, they're only limited to the 9 miles. They are not allowed to go into federal waters.

So under the EFP, what we will open is -- all federal waters will remain open, and Alabama will be open to the landing of red snapper. The feds said we're not going to open and close state lines out in federal waters, that they can't do that. They didn't think legally they could do that. So they said federal waters will remain open and then you choose to open your state to landings.

So if Alabama and Florida are both open, you can land in either state. If Florida is open and we are closed, we are probably not going to allow you to even transit with fish like we have in the past because we need you to land those fish in the state that is open so that they're accounted for in that state. And that will help their program and help our program. We don't want to contribute -- attribute fish to our program that were not caught during our season.

Now, Alabama is going to be open, hopefully, a lot longer than Florida. Florida is looking at about an 11-day season -- is that -- well, I mean, just down on the Gulf Coast -- I mean, just on the Panhandle. I think it's a split season.

But it's a shorter season. So we're going to have more days, but they're going to look to open Memorial Day Weekend. So if we are closed, then we're not going to allow you to land fish. We should not see Snapper Check during that time.

So that is a little bit different. We used to let you go to Florida if it was open and you had their license. You could come back into Alabama and land those fish. We probably will not allow that this year because we need people to report in the state where those management plans are occurring.

There are two states that are going to include their federal for hire, and that's Louisiana and Texas. And there were some concerns that those boats would come all the way over to Alabama...
to fish in our reef zone on their
charters. Not likely to happen.
They're in business, and that's not good
business. You burn a lot of fuel trying
to do that. So it's -- they were
talking about transferring boats. It's
probably not going to happen.

So each state has its own program.
Mississippi is likely to be open for
potentially 200 days. I don't think
that will happen because Alabama
fishermen would go to Mississippi,
follow all the rules in Mississippi, and
come back and land in Mississippi, so
we'll help them with their numbers.

Each state has designated how much
fish they're allowed to catch. We're
just under a million pounds is what
we've asked to be able to fish, and
that's how we get to the 47 days. So if
Mississippi reaches it before they get
to their --

Their is 150,000 pounds or so.

It's not a big fishery in Mississippi.
-- they'll close. Louisiana will
close. We'll close.

So we're all working together. We
have conversations sometimes weekly, but
always monthly, to have these
discussions of where we go across the
Gulf, because at the end of the day we
want to ensure that we have some fishing
season.

So here's how we kind of look at the
landings to get to the closing. It
should look like this. The red line
across the top is the harvest limit.
That's what we're trying to get to. The
little wavy line as it goes up is the
cumulative landings. We should see that
arch as we're going through the season.

And we'll monitor it. Kevin and his
staff will keep a close eye on that. He
will get tired of hearing from me during
the week, where are we, where are we,
where are we. Because that's how we're

going to make the management decisions.
Please do not withhold reporting the
fish because you think you'll get a
longer season. I bet that will work
against you. You'll get a shorter
season if you don't report.

But that's what it will look like in
theory. And I'm hoping when I come back
next year I'll show you a graph that
looks just like that, maybe a couple of
days at the end of the season.

Before I get to the oysters, there's
a couple of other things in there that
we've got going on with the artificial
reef program. We're going to put out
those reefs within that 9 miles in those
little black squares that you saw, and
then we're about to sink two ships. One
of them is a 256-foot ship and another
one is a 102-foot tugboat. The 256-foot
ship was a work boat. It was a cable
layer and has multiple decks. It's
going to be a fantastic dive site in

addition to providing an area for the
reef fish to grow. So we're very
excited about that. You will probably
hear something within the next few
weeks. We're hoping for a deployment of
those within the next month or so.

Oh, one other snapper thing we have
is we are going to have a Snapper
Conference March 22nd. It's going to be
in Mobile at the Holiday Inn in
downtown. You can register online. Go
to "OutdoorAlabama.com." And you can come and it's free. And you can see the
science behind how we make these
management decisions. It's going to
mainly be our program and the program
that we sponsor through the University
of South Alabama at the Sea Lab and how
we determine what the level of fish is
preseason and what the level is
postseason through some longline and
vertical line surveys, some submersible
video. It's a pretty amazing process
that they go through to determine that. So you're more than welcome to come. It's free to register. Just go to "OutdoorAlabama.com" and look for the Snapper Conference. And it's going to be March 22nd. It's going to be an all-day event. You can also watch it online. There's some information on there. And if you can't watch it then, we're going to record it, and you can always play it back later.

Oystering has been a big part of Alabama -- south Alabama's history. And, unfortunately, on our commercial oyster reefs, our harvest this year was about 58 sacks. That's probably less than 1,000 pounds. Wouldn't you say, Avery?

MR. BATES: Yes.

MR. BANNON: It was terrible. It's not where we want to be. We love to eat oysters. That's one thing. But we need oysters in our bay system to maintain the health of the waterway. In addition, there are lots of creatures out there that enjoy eating oysters.

There's a multitude of reasons why the oyster population is where it is. We've had a lot of climate challenges. We went through a drought period, and then we went from a drought period to a flood period. And neither one of those are helpful. There were lots of changes from here -- I use the expression from here to Canada. We're at the bottom of the river system. So everything that happens along those rivers funnels its way down to the Mobile Bay area.

So to kind of counter that, our oyster folks are pretty creative, and they have now developed what we call oyster farms or oyster aquaculture. Now, they actually cater more towards a half-shell market. For those of you guys that like to go to the oyster bars or these restaurants and consume half-shell oysters, if they're from Alabama, they're coming from one of these farms. We have about 15 permitted farms right now. They are all mostly up and running. Some of them are running very successfully.

This is a picture of how some of them are set up. They run these lines in towards the shoreline, and there's -- these have suspended bags hanging from them. And I'll show you a picture in a minute. There are some where there are floating cages.

And this is not an easy method. It is farming. It is work. They have to get out there almost every day, and they sort through these oysters and they arrange them by size. They have to make sure that the parasites aren't getting to them. They have to raise them up out of the water to help with that. But it creates a very consistent-size oyster, and they taste different depending on what part of the bay system they're in. But this is helping replace the lack of harvest on our public reefs.

We are still going to continue to do some research. We're looking at some plans for this next year or so to do some science-based studies of the oyster reef areas and what we can do to maybe elevate them. Dissolved oxygen has been a problem for us. So we have a lot of different things going.

But we had to adjust to the oyster aquaculture. Our laws and regulations were designed for traditional commercial harvest, which would have been using boats, tongs, like that -- hand tongs. If any of you guys have ever been to Dauphin Island and you looked over the bridge and you saw these guys working those rakes, it was work. It is very, very hard work. And they would get out there before daylight, and then they would work until about noon or so. They
would load the boat up with these oysters, and then they would go cull through them and then go sell them. Those days are just about gone. So now we've moved to the oyster farming.

So we had to adjust the rules. So a few of the rules that we have presented here today are to allow for what we call bulk tagging. These guys are now harvesting oysters -- you can see this machine down here. That's a sorter. They can dump these oysters in there and it rolls through that machine and it sorts them out by size. And they sell them by the individual oysters. We've been selling them by the sack. Well, in the aquaculture world they want to sell it by the oyster.

So we're trying to make a more efficient tagging system. Tagging is for health reasons. It's to make sure that we are able to account for where oysters are harvested. Because if any waste a bunch of time. The longer those oysters sit out on the dock, the more health risks there are.

There's actually a slide missing. I apologize.

We're changing the rules for those oysters farms. Right now -- you saw those guys that were out in the water. Every person that works out there had to have a license because that was the only law that we had to apply. We're making the adjustment. We want to license the farm -- and all the farms are supportive of this -- that that farm buys a license and every person that works on there just has to have harvester education training. That's 11 minutes of watching me ramble on a video that they can't ever get back. And once they're done with that, they're good for five years.

And this allows high school students to go out and work on these farms. Because a lot of them, their families have done this for years. It allows oyster catchers who now don't have that public reef to harvest on -- they can come in here when they're not doing some other form of fishery. They don't have to buy the license. We allow the farm to buy the license for them to work.

So if we could do all that, the result, then, is that you get a premium oyster. And I don't eat raw oysters. I apologize. But the commissioner will stand up and cheer that these are some of the best oysters in the country. And we get that feedback from other places.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The best.

MR. BANNON: The best.

MR. BATES: Amen.

MR. BANNON: And the value is very high on these. They go to New York, and they're getting three to $5 per oyster. This old boy from near the bayou, that would hurt my feelings. That's about a dozen worth right there.
So what we're doing there, we have a couple of things coming up. We're hosting the Gulf and South Atlantic Shellfish Conference. That will be in Mobile the last week of April, first week of May. Most of you probably don't want to go to that. They use a lot of big words and a lot of science stuff. But that is a Gulfwide meeting that we host there, and we talk about the challenges across the Gulf. We are not alone in this challenge of reduced oyster harvest. Each of the states has experienced the same thing. Commercial harvest -- public reef harvest is down in each state.

We are working with the FDA and the Alabama Department of Public Health to move a wastewater -- potentially move a wastewater treatment outfall in the Bayou La Batre area to allow more access for farmers to have more land -- or excuse me -- more water bottoms that are available for them to harvest. We're working on some programs to open an area back up that was closed due to pollution. That's a long-term trek for us. We have to determine where is the pollution coming from and how do we address that. We get the water healthy. We get it opened back up. And we allow more people to lease land. We had to move people out of there, unfortunately, when that area closed. And that's devastating. People invested a lot of money and they had to move.

Oh, the water-quality issues. There are several studies going on in the south Alabama area to address water quality through the Sea Lab and some other places. So that is very important to us -- not only for the oysters, but it's for every fishery that we have all the way from the crabs and the grasses and different things that exist down there. So if we don't have healthy water, then we're not going to have healthy anything else. So we're working diligently to address those issues.

And then we also are working with a program to do a survey of the entire shoreline of Mobile Bay, Mississippi Sound, Dauphin Island, that we take out one step in the permitting process for people putting piers in and putting oyster farms in, that we're going to help pay for a survey that identifies items of historic significance. It's a requirement, and we're going to take that on. And then when an oyster farmer wants to apply for a piece of property, we've already done that survey. It saves them a lot of money and it saves them a tremendous amount of time because we've already identified if there's any items of historical significance. And it also helps if you're building a pier or anything else on the water in south Alabama.

So with that, that completes my presentation and feel free to entertain any questions.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions from the board for Director Bannon?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Director Bannon, thank you. Thank you very much.

Director Sykes, thank you. When you conclude, would you stay up here. We'll raise the lights and the board can go back if we have any questions.

MR. SYKES: Thank you, Chairman. I'm going to try to go through this pretty quick. The chairman asked me to hit a few high points. Last year I pretty much gave the whole presentation on Game Check. We felt it was more imperative for me to hit several other things today. So Game Check is going to be pretty small. I'm going to do a couple of fisheries updates real quick.

Most of y'all, I'm sure, know what
This is a flying carp, silver carp. We started getting reports of silver carp in 2012. In 2015 we had some DNA from silver carp that was detected in Pickwick. November the 10th of last year, 75 carp were collected by Tennessee Tech and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries researchers.

Just an update. We are participating with the department in Tennessee, Mississippi, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS, Tennessee Tech, and Murray State doing research efforts up there. Basically this is the feral swine of the freshwater system. So we want to stay on top of this and try to prevent them from getting as far south as us.

Those are pictures that I took up in the Illinois River, and in three-and-a-half hours of electrofishing up there we found two native fish. They had completely destroyed the ecosystem up there. So just to let y'all know, we are monitoring this very closely.

Y'all, ever since I've been here and before, there's been conflicts between commercial fishermen and bass fishermen up around Guntersville and the Tennessee River system. Well, this year some tournament catfishermen have joined in. May 19 of 2017 -- there is a court order that prohibits us from enforcing the ban on gillnet and trammel nets in the Tennessee River basin. If y'all have questions about that, Ms. Jennifer Weber or Mr. Patrick Moody will be more than happy to talk with y'all about that. But the bottom line is we cannot enforce that regulation up there.

We have determined through our fisheries staff that these nets are not having a negative impact on the gamefish as well as the catfish industry up there. We will continue with our law-enforcement efforts to enforce the creel and size limits, but as far as -- we've gotten a lot of requests for us to start enforcing the gillnet ban up there, and I just wanted to let everybody know that it is by court order that we cannot do that. It's not for lack of effort on our part or not wanting to do our job. Our guys are doing their job by enforcing the creel and size limits.

Sipsey Fork trout. It's a put-and-take trout fishery below Lewis Smith Dam. It started in 1974. We have tons of questions about it at every board meeting. About 35,000 trout were released in 2017. Sampling by our staff showed only about 30 percent of the trout were being caught with only 15 percent of them being harvested.

We are doing an ongoing study with Auburn University examining the fate of those trout, which a lot of them -- from some of the videos I saw, they are contributing to the massive growth of a striped fishery up there, which is where the world record came from a couple of years ago. As one of the guys said, they're slick, they're pretty, they have no dorsal or pectoral fins, so they make perfect bait. As of right now, no regulation changes are warranted as far as our staff is concerned until we get the final results from that Auburn study.

Southern walleye. Most people don't know that we have walleye in the state. Due to significant declines, we have been attempting to collect specimens for broodstock for reintroductions to put in our hatchery system. During 2017 sampling, seven males were tagged with transmitters. Two of the seven were caught by anglers that year, approximately 30 percent of the population. So although not many of us know about Southern walleye, apparently...
the few that do were very effective at
catching them. So this season our
fishery staff is proposing to close the
walleye season on the Mulberry Fork
River and any of its tributaries in
those counties.

Okay. Game Check. The first year's
totals, 82,484. It's the map on the
left-hand side. This year's totals,
75,874. Y'all heard quite a few of the
board members talking about hunters had
a good season. Processors had a really
good season. It's not indicative by
those numbers.

So what our staff wanted to present
to the board and to the public is what
are we going to do about it. We have
placed ads in magazines, radio, social
media. We have traveled from one end of
the state to the other one conducting
seminars. Last year we averaged 50 to
75 people per seminar. This year it
probably wasn't 10 to 15.

We've done newspaper articles.
Rainer is tired of writing about Game
Check. So is Bolton. We've done
everything I know to do to try to
educate people on the importance of it.
Y'all heard Director Bannon talking the
same language when it comes to snapper.
If we don't have good information, how
can we make good decisions?

The first year we said we would give
no tickets. It would be a learning
process for everybody. So we didn't.
Well, last year we issued over 200
citations and about 300 warnings trying
to encourage. It didn't work. So,
board, what do we do?

We've heard processors had bumper
years. Do I tell my guys to sit at
intersections of main roads going into
processors and start checking trucks?
Do we camp outside of taxidermy shops to
see if somebody has Game-Checked a deer
coming in? Do we sit at gates in front
of hunting clubs and wait for people to
come in and out?

I don't know what else to do. I'm
looking to y'all for some suggestions.
We estimated last year that 30 to
40 percent of the people complied. What
if we're wrong? What if 70 percent are
complying?

That's pretty scary. It goes back
to what Scott said. Withholding
information from us is not going to do
you any good. It is doing the exact
opposite of what your intentions are or
the people's intentions who are not
reporting.

If 70 percent of the people are
reporting and we're only getting 75,000
deer -- the average time a hunter hunts
and what is reported is how we're basing
population estimates right now. So if
that's the case, our deer numbers are
much lower than we have been
anticipating. So, again, I'm asking for

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some suggestions, what do we need to do.
Do we need to reduce the season length
and the bag limits to protect what we
have there?

If these are true numbers and
70 percent of the people are reporting
and we're only killing a small number of
deer, maybe we're wrong. Maybe our
numbers aren't as robust as we thought
they were. Just simple questions that
I'm looking to the board to go back to
your districts and see if y'all can help
us come up with some answers because
we're running into a dead end.

The deer season for this year
basically is going to be just a change
in the calendar dates with the exception
of Zone C, the orange zone up in the top
of the state. Our biologists have
worked with DMAP cooperators, also
worked with crop depredation permit
applications, talking with the board
members, working with landowners up
there. We have greatly reduced Zone C, taken a lot of area out, put it back in with the rest of the state. And, y'all, that's what we do. We manage based on the information that we have. The more information we have, the better we can do our job. This is two years' worth of data with people telling us here's what we're seeing. Our biologists go in. We sample. We look at the areas and we make good decisions. So those people that wanted to be back into the regular zone of the state, now they're in it. Good information gives us the ability to adapt our management plan and do what's best for the resource first and then for the hunters as well. Y'all heard a couple of comments about Special Opportunity Areas. For those of you who don't know, we opened up four public hunting areas last year that offered opportunities not found on a typical WMA. Each opportunity area was managed individually, managed differently for deer, turkey, small game, waterfowl, mentored hunts, youth-only hunts. They were scattered all over the state. We had over 2,000 individuals apply last year, which was -- it was very positive for our first year rolling out a new program. What we did was nothing new. People had been applying and drawing permits out west for decades to go hunt specific units in specific states. These properties on these SOAs are not large enough to just open the gate and say have at it. So we opened up a registration process at "OutdoorAlabama.com." If you got drawn to hunt this property, you and one buddy basically had your own hunting club for the duration of the hunt. New SOAs are in the process of being established now, and we closed on one yesterday. And I want to thank Patti and State Lands for administering the Forever Wild program because without them we would not be able to purchase these properties. Forever Wild is applying the state match. Then we put our Pittman-Robertson dollars with it. So we are matching three to one with Forever Wild. So we're furthering the mission of Forever Wild while we're furthering the mission of our department in order to provide quality public hunting areas for the citizens of the state for the low cost of an $18 WMA permit. This is just one of the areas, Cedar Creek. It's about 6500 acres in Dallas County on the Alabama River. Cedar Creek is its north border. You can see that 6500 acres is broken down into 16 compartments based on roads and SMZs where we can paint definite boundaries. You'll go online, apply for a hunt. If you get drawn, you are assigned one of those units, and you and a hunting partner have that to yourself. This year we only hunted five units at a time. So there was no more than ten people hunting 6500 acres. After that hunt was over with, we closed the doors for a week or ten days and we opened up another five units. These public properties are receiving less pressure than the average hunting club in Alabama, and we're providing hunters with excellent opportunities. The one we closed on yesterday is about ten minutes down the road. It's Pine Barren Creek. It's about 4700 acres in Dallas County. Both of them are halfway between Camden and Selma off of 41. And, again, that's how you apply. We are looking to bring more online. We have one in Jackson County that supports waterfowl. We have one in Russell
County that was outstanding this year as far as deer, and it's got more turkeys on it than you can shake a stick at.

I also heard several mentions of the Alabama Mentored Hunter Program. I think this is one of the most positive things that we have done as a department in a long time. And I'm not trying to pour water on any of the kids' programs.

We need to get kids outdoors as often as we can.

But by working with our staff and trying to figure out different ways to grow hunters -- not just take somebody hunting, but to actually create a hunter -- this is what we decided to do. You can go online to "OutdoorAlabama" and you apply. We had applicants that ranged in age from 19 to 75 years old that wanted to learn how to hunt. They are paired with someone from our staff.

And our deer hunts -- y'all, this is not just take somebody hunting for an afternoon. Participants came in on Friday afternoon, went through firearms training, had several PowerPoint presentations on how we're funded, what we do, why we do it, deer management, basic habitat management. Then they were carried to the field the next day, hunted that morning, had tree stand safety demonstrations. We show them how to track deer, show them how to process deer, show them how to analyze a habitat and pick out where to hunt. This was a hunting club environment, what we were used to growing up with and what turned us into hunters. It was incredibly successful.

I want y'all to look at one thing in those pictures. Everybody is smiling. This is the only thing that I have seen in my five years of being here -- nobody complained. Nobody said thank you, but why don't you let me do that. They were happy. It was great for our staff to go somewhere and participate in something where somebody wasn't fussing all the time. Y'all don't know how refreshing that was. And this is equal opportunity, men, women, all races, from 19 to 75 participating.

We had one lady drive up from St. Cloud, Florida, which is around Orlando, who bought a nonresident license and participated in a deer hunt in January. We had a mentored one-day squirrel hunt last weekend. She drove all the way back up because she was selected again.

Y'all, there is a need for this or that lady wouldn't be driving eight hours to come up here on a one-day squirrel hunt. But we were providing something that very few are doing. We can get people started, but it's going to be up to y'all to help us carry this on and actually create hunters out of these people.

The chairman wanted me to spend quite a bit of time on CWD and the issues that we're having in Alabama. The first thing I wanted to do is explain that there is a huge difference between EHD and CWD.

When Mississippi popped hot a couple of weeks ago, we had to post on our Facebook page that the borders were now closed to Mississippi deer coming back to the state hunter-harvested. We pretty much had one employee monitoring our Facebook for about 48 hours straight trying to dispel all of the misinformation out there. I found out that we already had CWD here, why are we looking now, because this individual found four deer laying dead in a pond last year. Well, that's classic EHD.

I found out that us planting GMO crops caused CWD. I found out that us clear-cutting and herbiciding caused CWD. It was amazing the misinformation
that was out there. But one of the
biggest ones was the lack of
differentiation between EHD and CWD.
EHD we always have. You heard
Raymond talk about it. It hit north
Alabama pretty hard this year. We have
outbreaks every year. Most of them are
not severe. Epizootic hemorrhagic
disease or blue-tongue viruses, it's
transmitted by biting midges. They bite
one deer, go bite another one, and
infect it. It's endemic to Alabama and
most of the Southeast. It really hits
the northern states a lot harder than it
does us. We lose a few deer every year.
You typically see these outbreaks in
late summer and early fall. It's not
always fatal. That's a big key. A lot
of our deer recover. You can see the
hooves at the bottom there. If you kill
a deer that's got hooves that look like
that, that's a sign that that deer had
recovered from EHD. You typically find
made up. This is a real issue.
It was first found in captive mule
deer in Colorado. The CDC changed their
recommendation last year. They
recommend that hunters strongly consider
having those animals tested if they kill
them in a CWD zone before they eat it.
Mississippi's Department of Public
Health put out a notice the other day
that advised hunters of this, and now
there's processors with meat stacked to
the roof because people won't come get
their deer meat.

Preliminary findings from an ongoing
study are showing that macaque
monkeys -- I have no idea what a macaque
is, but apparently it's something
similar to us. If they're fed a diet of
CWD-tainted meat, they can develop it.
As of today, it has not been shown to
jump to humans. But it's relatively
early in the science with this, and it
is being studied. Also, some
these deer, like the buck up in the top,
laying around water.

Deer that recover from HD, they can
have antibodies and actually pass it on
to their offspring for that same type of
HD. There's a bunch of different ones
out there. But typically down here this
isn't -- it's not something to worry
about. It's not going to come in and
wipe out our deer herd.

Now, chronic-wasting disease, on the
other hand, is a prion. It's not a
virus. It's not a bacteria. It's
similar to CJD in humans, scrapie in
sheep, and BSE or mad cow in cattle.
It's infectious, communicable, and
always fatal. They do not recover.
It's not endemic to the South. It never
goes away. It can get in the
environment, and it's here forever.
There's no effective way to sanitize the
soil, the environment, or facilities.
So, y'all, this is serious. This is not
preliminary research suggests that feral
swine that's inoculated orally with CWD
could possibly serve as a reservoir.

So what are we doing as precautions
to try to keep CWD out of here?

Regulation 220-2-.25 prohibits
importation of certain deer parts from
CWD-positive areas. Only deboned meat,
hides, and antlers attached to the
cleaned skull plate can be brought into
this state. 36 other states have a
similar regulation.

We had seven arrests and five
warnings this year. I'm going to ask
the board -- we want it from every
state. Mississippi became hot during
their deer season, and we had to
immediately close the border to
Mississippi deer because they were a
CWD-positive state. We don't know when
the next one is going to pop up. And,
yes, it is an inconvenience, but it
pales in comparison to the inconvenience
that we're going to all have if CWD gets here.

This is the proper way to handle it, the last bullet. We had a gentleman go to Colorado, kill a deer. He was in a testing zone. He had his deer processed and tested. He came back to Alabama. The meat was shipped here, and a week later he was called and said don't eat it, it has CWD. Rather than him throwing it out in the back yard and not telling anybody, he called us. We arranged for pickup and disposal -- proper disposal of it.

These are the states and provinces affected by CWD. Mississippi is the most recent. Y'all, it's getting closer and closer and closer.

Some more precautions. We test approximately 500 -- hunter-harvested, road kill, herd health check, working with DMAP cooperators -- deer each year. We've partnered, as Commissioner McMillan said, with the Department of Agriculture to purchase a machine -- and they're staffing it -- where we can have our turnaround time cut in half, if not more.

We're trying to do everything we can to inform people of the dangers. We don't want you to panic, but we want you to understand that this is a serious issue. And we work closely with our neighboring states to ensure the safety of our deer herd.

Y'all, it can travel by several different methods. Some are high risk. Some are low risk. But we all know that the highest risk of it coming here is by someone moving a live deer or someone moving a hunter-killed deer into the state without properly taking care of it.

We've got about 220 licensed deer breeders with over 15,000 captive deer in the state. They're required to test every animal that dies in the facility that's about 12 months of age or older. We test about 500 a year. They probably test three to 400 a year.

We revised the regulation that will allow us to have an online database for traceability. When Texas found their CWD-positive in a captive facility, within 48 hours they had the trace-in and trace-out where they knew exactly where that deer had been, everywhere that they needed to look to try to contain it. Ours is in a three-ring binder right now. It would take forever. So this online database is going to help us greatly reduce the time it would take in the event that something happens.

The chairman wanted me to bring up a couple of notable cases to show that we are being proactive and trying to keep the state safe. We had six deer come in from Indiana that were illegally imported into Alabama. It was a violation of the Lacey Act, which is federal. A federal judge sentenced $750,000 in restitution to be paid for possible disease introduction into the native deer herd, surrender all animals, and forfeit a game breeder's license. USDA is partnering with us and will depopulate the breeding facility as well as the enclosure, and all the deer will be tested.

This one -- I swear y'all are going to think I'm making this up, but there are some things you just can't make up. So just bear with me on this.

This was a canned hunt case for a captive buck purchased from a licensed game breeder. It was advertised and sold on Facebook as a guaranteed hunt.

Again, you can't make this up. I was looking at transcripts of everything that happened, and through the process of about a month-long process, the
correspondence went from you can kill
this deer during deer season to you can
kill this deer during bow season to you
can kill this deer opening week of bow
season to we've got him eating out of
our hands, you can kill him opening day
of bow season to, finally, we know
you're busy. You don't have time to
waste climbing a tree stand. We're
going to tranquilize the deer and we'll
wake him up before you get there and we
can do a spot and stalk.

So that's what happened, except the
deer was accidentally overdosed during
that process and he was placed in a
cooler and propped up and staged for a
hunt. Three men were arrested, multiple
violations of two statutes, hunting of a
game animal for a fee -- a tame game
animal, hunting a game animal within ten
days of release, hunting a game animal
without a reasonable chance of escape.
And there was a multitude more

viations.

Y'all saw on that first case the
judge took it seriously. There was a
$750,000 fine. All of those were
misdemeanors, but upon conviction, a
first offense carried a fine of no less
than 2,000, no more than 5,000, and no
more than 30 days in jail for each
offense. Minimum of $2,000 fine. They
were fined $750.

Y'all, this gives us all a bad name.
It gives hunters a bad name. It gives
the deer industry a bad name. It's not
good for any of us. And all it's going
to take is one or two people selfishly
to mess it up for the whole state.

So I want y'all to read this, and
then I'll -- this is my closing. This
was said by John H. Wallace, Jr., a
State Game and Fish commissioner in
1908, and it holds true today. Since
the state in its sovereign capacity
occupies the attitude of guardian and

custodian of the people's welfare, it is
therefore the duty of the state by
enactment of appropriate legislation to
endeavor to extend adequate protection
to those resources in which the people
have collectively a natural right. Wise
and discreet individuals who feel no
inclination to make assaults on nature's
storehouse should have their rights
protected by the enactment of strong
laws to restrain the hands of the wanton
and reckless whose vandalism would
annihilate every visible thing of fin,
fur, or feather to gratify their savage
instincts.

1908 and it might as well be 2018.
I'm sure Mr. Wallace was dealing with a
whole different set of issues, but it's
the same. We're dealing with a handful
of people that could mess it up for
everybody.

So we want y'all to be vigilant in
watching. Let us know if you see

something that is not right. Please
help us protect the resource that we're
trying to manage for y'all.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Thank you,
Director Sykes, very much.

Board, do you have questions or
comments of Director Sykes?
(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Then I say we return and
continue with the order of the day.
(Brief pause in proceedings.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We're ready to continue. If
there are no questions, we will move on
with our public comments section.

We're going to do things different
than we did last year to accommodate
everybody to make sure that everybody
has an opportunity to prepare their
remarks. So when I call the name of the
first speaker, I'm going to ask him to
come to the microphone. I'm going to
call the second speaker. I'm going to
ask that he come to our "ready" chair or "on deck" chair so that he has a moment to prepare his remarks going forward. Once the first speaker finishes, if the second speaker or the next speaker will get up, announce or give his name, please, I will in that transition call the next speaker. In this instance it would be the third and so on. We'll try this. If we have a problem, we'll just take it slow and easy.

So Betsy is going to be our timer. She has a time clock up there that's visible to most. If you can't read it, holler at us. And if you have any questions about that, holler.

I'm going to ask again that you reserve or hold -- out of respect for our speakers and their time and everyone else's here, no applause, no catcalls. Let's let everyone make their statements.

So with that being said, any questions from the board? Any comments?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. Our first speaker today is Mr. Barry Corbman. If he will come up to the microphone.

The speaker after Mr. Corbman is Mary Carole Jackson. Both are on freshwater fishing.

MR. CORBMAN: Good morning. I'm Barry Corbman, and I serve in a couple of capacities. I'm Wetumpka High School's fishing team coach, but I also serve as president of the Alabama Student Angler Bass Fishing Association.

We're a large group that started in 2000 with high school fishing. This is truly a team event. The way that we are set up there, each high school team will take five boats to our tournaments with two anglers and a boat captain in the boat. We're currently right now on Lake Eufaula right now fishing. We travel as far south as Eufaula, but we'll be on Lake Pickwick this year as well. So we go the entire state.

We are made up between 7th and 12th-grade students. And they're, of course, male, female, all kind of different backgrounds and abilities that they have. We have several students that have some physical impairments and those type things.

But just to kind of give you an introduction about who we are and what we're doing, we have roughly about 2,000 members now. We started out with about 60 or so in 2000. So it's grown tremendously. And we see a lot of positive things coming through this.

One of the things that I just want to bring your attention to is that this is one of the most rewarding things I've ever done working with these young people. We are very, very proactive on taking good conservation measures. We have a very good record of returning the fish back to the waterways alive. So far this year we've had two tournaments. We're on our third one today. We have had approximately a thousand fish or so caught during those two tournaments and returned to the water with the exception of losing three fish in those two tournaments. So those came to us in bad shape to start with. So we have a very good record of putting them back into the waterway.

Because of some of these type things -- we have some very young anglers that are learning the process, and because of that, we want to try to give them every opportunity to be successful. So what I'm calling on you today to ask is that some means of being able to reduce the slot limits and/or size limits on lakes on these high school tournament trails that we have out there to give our anglers a better chance to be successful and have a good
day on the water, making them better
fishermen and conservation-minded during
the process.

There are a lot of advantages to
seeing what's happened with us. I think
the fishing licenses have gone up
tremendously since we're doing this.
And one -- a couple of guys have told me
that it's very difficult to get a used
boat anymore because of all the high
school folks we put on the water.

So I thank you for your time, and
we'd like for you to consider this as
either a change or an application
process that we could make this a little
easier to accommodate --

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. CORBMAN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions?

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Barry, I just want to thank you.
In fact, I talked to a bunch of kids
appearance there. But in order to
continue the effort towards improvement,
we are proposing the creation of a
quality zone which would impact only
less than a mile of the stream which is
14 miles long.

So that area that we're proposing is
from the fence below the dam to the
middle of the pump house downstream.
This does not include the Alabama Power
fishing pier, nor does it include the
ADA-compliant ramp. It also does not
include the two easy pullouts that have
access less than 20 feet from where you
park.

The other added part to the proposal
would include single hook, artificial
only, no bait, and barbless hook.

The creel study by DCNR in 2017
demonstrated use and economic impacts.
The quote, quoting from the study, the
majority of the fly and lure angling
parties were contacted while fishing

yesterday that were filling up their
boats in Eufaula. This morning when I
came to the meeting I passed the boat
landing in which they were all putting
in. And so the economy in Eufaula
appreciates these kids' tournaments, and
we appreciate the kids coming to
Eufaula.

MR. CORBMAN: Thank you. Enjoy being there.

Seen a lot of nice pictures coming out
of there of big bass too.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Thank you very
much.

MR. CORBMAN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: William Sulzby.

MS. JACKSON: I'm Mary Carole Jackson. I'm
from Walker and Cullman County.

First of all, I'd like to thank you
guys so much for all the help that
you've given us on improvements for the
Sipsey Fork over the years. It's made a
tremendous difference in the stream,
especially the added game warden

upstream of the pump house and --
88 percent and 68 percent respectively,
whereas only 50 percent of the parties
fishing with bait were upstream of the
pump house. So these figures of those
people fishing with bait also do not
include those people fishing off of the
fishing pier itself.

So this also demonstrated during the
creel survey that 63 percent of angling
effort was done by fly and lure anglers.
80 percent of the daily expenditure,
though, did come from those anglers as
well. So bait anglers also accounted
for 75 percent of the harvest.

The last part of this is that the
anglers on all sides would benefit from
this. The majority of fly fishing, lure
fishing, and bait fishing are taking
place in these opposite zones already.
The bait anglers increased catch rates,
according to the study, take place
outside of this zone as it is.
The creel study also said that 90 percent of the people surveyed were in favor -- or did not oppose a -- did not oppose the catch-and-release regulation, which we are not asking for. But it shows that they are okay with extra regulation.

So we, also, ask on top of this that the -- that you guys consider the implementation of a fishery-wide single rod so that you are reducing the number of areas that a single fisherman can have and then, finally, that the no-culling regulation also have a statement that catch-and-release --

MS. JONES: Time.

MS. JACKSON: -- immediate-release fishing is also permitted.

That was a lot of stuff in three minutes. That's all I've got. Do y'all have any questions for me?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions?

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?

MR. HARTZOG: Not to Mary Carole. But how long before Auburn finishes their study on ...

MR. NICHOLS: This is Nick Nichols. I'm chief of fisheries for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. We're about halfway through that study. There will be another field season this summer, and we would expect the final report sometime early next calendar year.

MR. HARTZOG: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Lebron Goodridge.

You're up.

MR. SULZBY: I'm William Sulzby.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I understand. But you're in the "on deck" chair, and I'm calling the next speaker.

MR. SULZBY: Oh, I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: He's going to assume your position.

MR. SULZBY: I'm William D. Sulzby, Jr. It's been my pleasure and privilege to hunt and witness an increase in the wild turkey population in Alabama since 1966. And I'm appreciative for the efforts of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to provide such opportunities for myself and others.

The concern has been expressed there may be a decrease in wild turkey population in Alabama. In spite of this concern, there's been a change in regulation which permits artificial feeding of game and hunting in close proximity of such feeding.

This change preventing artificial feeding has been made on page 34 of the publication "The Wild Turkey in Alabama." The game biologists leading the Wild Turkey Project advise:

Artificial feeding unnaturally concentrates turkeys in a small area, which is bad for several reasons. One, disease transmission. Turkeys can infect others through direct contact or they can infect through droppings that pile up around feeders, increased poaching and predators and so forth. But increased exposure to toxins, mycotoxins such as aflatoxin and fumonisin, occur in grain crops. Crops contaminated with these toxins rendering them unsuitable as human and domestic food often find their way into commercial wildlife feeds and may ultimately poison turkeys. Feed too contaminated for livestock is often sold as wildlife food. Tainted feed may contain high levels of aflatoxins that are poisonous to wild turkeys.

On bags of corn labeled as "Deer Corn" sold at but not limited to Bass Pro, Walmart, Dick's, Academy and other outdoor -- the following caution is given: Not fit for human consumption.
Not fit for consumption for domestic animals. Not fit for rabbits.

Lost my place. I'll go forward.

Why are these products and corn contaminated and sold as "Deer Corn," and why are we going against what's recommended by the state's biologists? And then comes the question what happens to us as humans if we consume the meat.

The intake of grain and other -- meat, eggs, milk, and other edible products from animals who consume aflatoxin-contaminated feed are additional sources of potential exposure and that's to us as humans.

Thank you, gentlemen. My recommendation is that we act in keeping with the recommendation of our turkey biologist --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions from the board?

MR. SULZBY: -- Mr. Barnett, and stop this practice. Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much. John Fischer.

MR. GOODRIDGE: Hi. My name is Lebron Goodridge. I'm from Flat Rock, Dekalb County, Alabama. I'm here to help win the war on wild pigs. Have you ever asked yourself why we're losing the war on pigs?

Before I continue, I want to address this poison that the state and the USDA is wanting to put out. I have two questions: If this poison is so safe to put out here in our atmosphere and in our fields and everything, why did the USDA have to develop a feeder that is so special and so safe that it takes 30 pounds of lift force to open that feeder? Because this poison is not safe.

The second thing -- question I have is, from the February print of Alabama Outdoor -- I'm sorry -- Alabama Outdoor magazine -- news magazine, the USDA representative said that this poison bait has to be made like M & Ms, you know, melts in your mouth, not in your hands.

We live in the state of Alabama. What happens when a tornado comes, opens this special safe feeder up, and takes out 100 pounds of this feed and spreads it through five counties and some little child out there walks up, sees a couple of pieces and pops it in their mouth and eats it? Are we going to be responsible for that child?

So back to the war on pigs. The deer season regulations are designed to protect deer so the herd will populate. The problem with pig hunting, we're hunting under the same regulations. You can't protect pigs and expect to eradicate them. They just keep multiplying.

So what I'm asking for the board is that they make -- that you look at more radical hunting regulations that actually look at getting rid of the pigs instead of protecting them. I'm looking for maybe a liaison officer that has -- a hunter for years who has put foot on boot -- or boots on ground -- sorry -- and has sat here and seen what these regulations restrict every one of us from doing, which is to eradicate a pig. That has to be changed. We can't have the same rules.

So there's four things that need to happen in order to win this war on pigs. And I'm only talking between May 1st to August 31st. This seems to be the special pig hunting season that has been declared.

The first thing, this board needs to start making new radical regulations that include both private and public land. This war must be fought on both sides of the property line.
The second thing, continue trapping, although trapping is time-sensitive.
The third thing, put the gun hunters back in the night hunts. Let us bait at our discretion. Let us use electronic calls. Let us back into night vision, and we’ll kill more pigs.
And the third thing is --

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. GOODRIDGE: -- give the dog hunters the same respect on private and public lands. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions, thoughts?
(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

Kevin McKinstry.

MR. FISCHER: Good morning. I'm John Fischer. I'm with the Wildlife Disease Study at the University of Georgia College of Vet Medicine. Our organization has been around since 1957, and we were founded there by 11 southeastern states -- now we number 19 states in our cooperative membership -- to investigate deer mortalities that turned out to be hemorrhagic disease. That's a disease we continue to work on.

But I'm here to talk about chronic-wasting disease today, and I would really like to reiterate what Director Sykes said as to the serious nature of this disease. I think it merits our full attention for a number of reasons, but the top two motivations are the potential impacts that this disease can have on our free-ranging cervid populations. And, also, I think it's wise to limit human exposure to this CWD disease agent based on past history with situations such as mad cow disease ultimately being responsible for variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans.

On the population implication side, we've seen population reductions in heavily infected herds of whitetail deer and mule deer in Wyoming and elk in Colorado. And there were some results recently from Wisconsin that showed in their endemic area that the animal they tested -- they captured, tested, radio-collared and released animals, the animals that tested positive for chronic-wasting disease and were released were three times more likely to die in the first year of that five-year study. We have four more years to go there.

The main thing that we need to do here is -- we're still fortunate in the Alabama situation. We have not detected the disease here. We need to do everything that we can to prevent the introduction of that disease. We need, also, to do everything we can to prevent its establishment if it has crept in here and we haven't detected it yet. We need to be doing everything we can to detect the disease because early detection and early response is the only -- offers the only possible chance of containing this disease and possibly even eradicating it.

We found the disease in 23 states in free-ranging deer or elk or moose. Mississippi was the 23rd state. But there's been one state -- and that's New York -- where the disease has not been found since its original detection in 2005 when it was found in two free-ranging deer there as well as in two captive deer.

The most important aspect of this prevention and detection is we must have the support of the public in order to have the correct policies and regulations in place. We need to justify these regulations and policies scientifically. And there's plenty of information out there; although I'm the first to admit, there are still some information gaps regarding
chronic-wasting disease.

But we need to move forward with what we do know. We need to have the support of the public as we do everything we can to prevent and detect this disease. And I’ll stop there and see if anyone has any questions.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much, Dr. Fischer. To the board...

MR. HARTZOG: It looks like I’m the only one that’s going to ask questions today.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Please do. You have the floor.

MR. HARTZOG: You said something that I didn’t understand. You said that in New York they had cases in 2005, but they haven’t had any cases since?

THE WITNESS: That’s correct. That’s the only state in which the disease has been found in wild animals in which it’s no longer found in wild animals.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions from the board?

MR. MCKINSTRY: Yes, sir. I’m Kevin McKinstry. I’m a wildlife biologist with the Westervelt Company. We’re a west Alabama family-owned company. We own about 450,000 acres of land there. We’ve been actively involved in recreational hunting since the 1950s. So that makes us a very significant stakeholder in the whitetail deer resource in Alabama. Not only do we have a passion for deer hunting and enjoy it every year since the ’50s, but we’re also -- that’s our livelihood. That’s how we employ people. That’s how we send kids to school, feed our families. And so chronic-wasting disease has been a concern of ours for a number of years. We’ve done a lot of research, talked to a lot of folks, tried to stay current on what’s going on, and we also developed our own action plans for our own property.
ourself from contaminated deer on our property. And so we have some active conversations going on today.

I'm going to challenge the board to do the same thing. Challenge yourself. Challenge your own processes and precautions that are in place now. But it certainly sounds like everybody on the board has already got that on their mind anyway.

So we appreciate what you do. You guys are the gatekeepers to protect us from this disease. And I guess I should, also, say that it might be a little dangerous to assume that it's not here already. The Mississippi -- the county the Mississippi deer was found in had been intensively sampled in the past. They were very surprised that that's where it was. So we should, also, from a precautionary standpoint -- maybe we should think about, you know, what we need to do not to facilitate the spread if it's here and we don't know that it's here now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions?

Mr. Jones.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Kevin, I guess, what are you -- what is Westervelt -- what are you all going to try -- what are some of these discussions?

MR. McKINSTRY: Well, we've had some precautionary things already put in place to kind of protect us from a risk and liability standpoint. Quite frankly, some of the other conversations we're having kind of revolve around baiting and feeding deer on our property, whether or not we should allow that to continue if it's legal in the state.

We have some concerns about the bill that's proposed here in Alabama in the House. We really don't think it's the right time and place to throw more corn on the ground that might facilitate the spread, especially if the disease is already here. I know that's not on the table for this board. That's next door. So we'll see what happens, I guess.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Brock Jones.

MR. BROCK JONES: Kevin, you said -- made one statement about precautionary throwing corn on the ground. Anything else specifically that y'all are doing from a precautionary standpoint?

MR. McKINSTRY: Yeah. Brock, we've done a lot of customer education. We've been very active in helping the agency with their monitoring program. We've engaged our hunt clubs to collect heads to be sampled, and they have been very willing and happy to do so.

Right now it's basically been education and awareness. There is -- there does seem to be a lot of apathy. If you see some chatter on the Internet about CWD, it doesn't last very long.
the lease program. It's not something we would want to do. It would probably be a last resort. But that hasn't been decided yet what the best thing to do is.

The other side of the argument is, like in Mississippi where they're trying to collect a pretty robust sample of deer to be tested, you really do need hunters' help to get those numbers. And our hunt clubs are already showing that they have interest to take action and help with the monitoring system.

But we don't have -- we don't have the answers. But, you know, again, Mississippi has kind of raised the level of concern a little higher like it has for you guys. And I'm hoping you have some conversations on the board about additional precautions, maybe even things that would facilitate the spread if it's here and we don't know it.

MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Cagle.

MR. CAGLE: I just want to thank Westervelt for being proactive. I mean, I think that's an important part of the equation. It certainly turned out to be in the relationship between landowner and leaseholder, you know, a lot of how that was identified so quickly in Mississippi. So thank you for being proactive.

MR. MCKINSTRY: Thank you. And, like I say, we've had a close relationship with the wildlife guys in the agency for quite some time, and we appreciate them working with us too.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions? (No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

MR. HARTZOG: Thank you, Kevin.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Jimmy Jimmerson.

MR. MURPHY: Good morning. My name is Brian Murphy. I'm the CEO of the Quality Deer Management Association. We are a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization with a mission to ensure the future of wild whitetail deer, wildlife habitat, and our hunting heritage. We're based in Georgia but have members across the nation with Alabama ranking in the top ten and growing rapidly in membership.

I can also say that for the last 18 years I've been involved actively in the CWD issue all over the U.S., particularly once it hit Wisconsin in 2002. So it's been something that has consumed a lot of my time and energy for the last nearly two decades.

We're here today to support the proposed introduction of the new online database for the licensed game breeders. And why is a system like this so vital today?

And if I can indulge one of the board members to open the packet and show the graphic of the movement of deer in Pennsylvania just to the crowd. If you could just show that to them. I can put one up here.

It looks like a spider web. And this is the known legal movements of whitetail deer in the state of Pennsylvania between the captive facilities. It just demonstrates very clearly why having a rapid database of this nature like Director Sykes pointed out allows trace-forwards and trace-backs very quickly in real-time so that you know where to look for this disease should it enter the state of Alabama.

But today I'd like to speak very briefly to three points, that being the cost to your state Wildlife agency should CWD be discovered, the cost to your state, and, finally, the impact on your hunters. And to calculate the cost to your state Wildlife agency, I used the data out of our Whitetail Report,
which you have copies of. It's also
available online free.

I looked at three states that have
recently discovered CWD and looked at
the cost of the sampling prior to
discovery and post. And the average
increase in the number of samples after
discovery was about 3900 additional
samples. As Director Sykes pointed out,
you're currently pulling about five to
600 a year. So it'd be an increase of
about 3800 additional samples if you
follow like these other states. And at
a cost of roughly $22 apiece, that's
about 80-some-odd thousand dollars.

It doesn't sound like a big number
until you look at the true cost of that.
Texas has estimated that the true cost
of collection and analysis is closer to
$100 per sample when you look at all the
staff time and overheads. So that would
be roughly $400,000. This does not
include the targeted surveillance,
culling, the ID efforts of your agency,
additional staff and headaches. So
you're looking at easily in the upwards
of a million-dollar impact to your
agency in costs, and that does not
include the license sale or PR-dollar
decrease should the number of hunters in
your state decline.

The cost to the state of Alabama --
I'll refer you to an economic study done
by the University of Tennessee. And
they estimate that if CWD entered
Tennessee, that would cost their state
$46.3 million in direct impacts and
$98 million in total effects. And these
are things like fuel, lodging, et
cetera, et cetera. They did not include
the cost of -- or loss of revenue to the
state agency in that.

And, finally, I refer you to a quote
that I got directly from one of our
members in Wisconsin. This is the
impact on individuals, and this comes
from someone who is living in a part of
the CWD zone in Wisconsin where they
have among the highest prevalence rates
of CWD in the nation. And this was a
quote that one of our members sent me
recently: Having hunted in Iowa County,
Wisconsin, for the last 20 years, I
wouldn't wish CWD on my worst enemy.
Every buck we've taken in the last four
years has tested positive, and we no
longer see bucks older than
four-and-a-half years. Instead we now
find beautiful and promising young bucks
lying dead. I used to be so excited to
be on the property, but now it's like
walking across the landscape of a
black-and-white photo. This disease
hurts the psyche of the outdoorsmen as
much as the animals themselves.

So for all these reasons I echo
Dr. Fischer's comments. Caution is the
best principle at this point. Do
everything you can because once CWD hits
your state it's a game changer. And
it's a game changer that is not one you
want to experience because I have lived
through it with a lot of other members
across this country. So thank you for
your time today.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.
Questions from the board?
(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.
MR. MURPHY: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Paul Jeffreys.
MR. JIMMERSON: I'm Jimmy Jimmerson, and I
live in Cleburne County. And the board
members have a manilla folder in front of
you. That's the information that I'm
going to be asking you to consider.
There's about seven or eight pages
of people that live there. 300 -- I
think over 350 people have signed that.
And what we would like to ask the board
to do is to allow gun deer hunting in
Cleburne County -- in the northern part
of Cleburne County moved up two weeks
ahead of what the regular season is now.
By doing this, it would allow us to be
able to hunt the early rutting of the
deer in this area. Choccolocco Wildlife
Management Area is within this area, and
people -- and the biologists knows the
deer that were stocked there in the '40s
and '50s -- those deer rut early, ahead
of what we're normally being able to
hunt.

Also, on the west -- on the east
side of Cleburne County is the Georgia
state line. Those hunters are being
allowed to hunt one month earlier than
we're able to hunt -- gun hunt the deer
in our area. And we don't need the two
weeks at the end of the season because
our bucks are dropping their antlers
during the month of January.

This petition that you have before
you is endorsed by the Cleburne County
Soil and Water Conservation Committee,
the Cleburne County Farmers Federation
Wildlife Committee, and the Cleburne
County TREASURE Forest Association.

We'd also like to ask the board not
to allow dog deer hunting back in
Cleburne County. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions from the board?

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Keith, have we -- what is
the reproductive data that we've taken?
Have we taken reproductive data from
this area?

MR. GAULDIN: We have. We have. And
throughout the state as well -- well,
we've identified about seven different
zones where we have different breeding
populations. Back when the state didn't
have any deer to begin with, we stocked
what deer we had from sources, and we
got deer from Michigan, North Carolina,
and various places that have different
breeding cycles like that. Our
biologists -- and we do reproductive
sampling each spring and summer, these
areas a little bit earlier, this time of
year right here. We're trying to
delineate those zones a bit more precise
to -- once we get to that time, we can
later delineate those zones and possibly
have different season structures in
those areas.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Thanks.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

MR. JIMMERSON: You also have a map of the
area outlined in your folder there for
that part of the county. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.
Johnny Johnson.

MR. JEFFREYS: Members of the board, I'm Paul
Jeffreys. I'm from Lamar County, which
is in District 4.

I come here to you today to commend
you on preserving our ban on dog deer
hunting in Lamar, Marion, and Franklin
Counties. We started our mission 18
years ago and received our ban -- total
ban 14 years ago.

In our area the deer hunting has
improved. There are no complaints, no
conflict between dog hunters and
landowners. It has been nothing but a
success story. And we just ask that in
that area y'all maintain -- we ask that
you please maintain that ban in Lamar,
Marion, and Franklin Counties in the
northwestern corner of Alabama.

And as landowners -- and I receive
calls from landowners all the time
wanting to maintain that ban. As
landowners, we appreciate having the
ability to hunt our land the way we
choose to.

Thank you very much for what you do,
and thank you for maintaining our ban
thus far.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: After Mr. Johnson
will be Gene Miller.

MR. JOHNSON: I'm Johnny Johnson. And, board,
I want you to know how much I appreciate
you people and what you do for the Conservation Department.

I live in Tuscaloosa. I have a place in Tuscaloosa, also Lamar County. I'm a former member of this board. And I know the problems that you have to deal with, and we appreciate it. I'm also the "National Conservation Educator of the Year" award. So I know some of those problems that we deal with, and I've enjoyed it throughout the years as a young person on to my present age.

In Lamar County especially we have enjoyed -- and we've had some of the problems knowing these problems that we've dealt with concerning especially dog deer hunting. As a landowner, you should be able to control and do things on your property that you like to do. We cannot do this with dog hunters coming through as we've gone through. Let me say that where the dog deer hunting has been banned, there's a reason for every bit of it out there.

Let's keep this on course. Do not allow it to be taken away.

Again, I appreciate this board. I appreciate the Conservation Department. And that's all that I have at the present time.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Mr. Jones, Brock.

MR. BROCK JONES: Mr. Johnson, I just want to thank you for your service on this board, and it was an honor to be your successor six years ago. And thank you for your help in getting me prepared for being on the board the previous time.

MR. JOHNSON: I appreciate it. Thank you. CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Mr. Jones.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: I, too, wanted to echo that. I had the privilege of serving with Mr. Johnson several years ago. And thank you for all your service through the years. And when I think of a true southern gentleman, this is who comes to mind. So thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Johnson, very much.

The next speaker is George Robinson.

MR. MILLER: Good morning. I'm Gene Miller. I'm from Clay County. I live in Delta in the north end of Clay County. I represent some landowners that border the Ivory Mountain Walk-in Turkey Hunting Area of the Talladega National Forest. And you have a packet there showing this.

We're having problems with dog deer hunters, mainly the dogs coming onto our land and keeping us from being able to use it the way we want to. In Clay County there are several dog-hunting clubs. The difference in those clubs and what we have, the clubs are being made up mostly of people from Clay County or people who have an interest in that area. Second, they own their own land and their hunting land that they have leased.

The problem that we have in the north end of the county, the people are all from outside of Clay County. They hunt no land that they own or lease. All the land that they're hunting is public hunting land or open-permit land. And as landowners, we're asking for some help so we can use the land that we own and lease the way we want to without interference from other people.

And that's short and sweet, but that's it. Does anybody have a question?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions from the board? (No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

MR. MILLER: Thank you for your time.

MR. ROBINSON: My name is George Robinson.
I'm a cattle farmer in Chambers County. And I'm not a speaker and I'm not used to getting up in front of people, but I'll do my best to tell you what's going on.

Our county is an absolute wreck on this dog hunting. I mean, it is to the point somebody is going to get killed. The game warden told us originally get all the video we could get. We get him the video. He says that's not any good, you got to start killing the deer -- excuse me -- catching the dogs.

They run these big hounds. You're not going to catch one of them big hounds unless you kill a deer. So you got to shoot a little ole doe or a little small buck like that that's running through there with its tongue hung out. So we started killing the deer.

So what do they do? They won't come get those dogs. They send their kids in down at dark. Right now I run till about six o'clock. I get on my phone answering my calls, returning my texts. It's about an hour after dark. I hear a four-wheel drive coming down the road, and I'm thinking that's sort of strange. He sure is driving fast. Just wheels into our place, a couple of hundred yards in the -- I still see him coming. I walk out in the road, and I'm standing there. And he pulls up with his lights on bright. What do you do in that instance? Knock his lights out or snatch him out of the truck?

And I go around there, and he says he's looking for somebody to build a fence. Just idiotic excuses why they're going to be on your place. I called the game warden, and I talked to him. He says you need to call the sheriff, that's a trespassing issue.

Then back on the intimidation side, we had -- you just can't imagine. Every time we call the game warden, oh, they just go through the roof. They come to the property line and shoot shotguns, pistols, and rifles and just -- I mean, for 30 minutes on. The game warden comes. He collects him a bag of bullets. But nothing is ever done. You just can't imagine. It's not right. My daddy started this in the '70s, in the '80s, and then he was hurt in 2000.

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. ROBINSON: So I had to start dealing with it. For 18 years I've dealt with it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Robinson. A question from me. How many acres do you have?

MR. ROBINSON: The portion that I struggle with the most is a 400-acre block, and they have 100 acres that joins it. They have 7500 acres to hunt, but they want to make sure that that's where they stay. Now, we cattle-farm more than
that. The timberland is what we're struggling with.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: That you lease to someone else to hunt?

MR. ROBINSON: That's correct.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. Any questions from the board?

Mr. Hartzog?

MR. HARTZOG: (Shakes head.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

The next speaker is Don Knight.

MR. BANKSTON: My name is Jonathan Bankston. I am a representative for an organization called The Fallen Outdoors. I'm not here to talk about my organization but what the Alabama dog hunters have done with my organization, the good things they've done with those guys.

Many of you guys have probably heard about the 22 veterans a day that commit suicide on a daily basis across the United States, but many of you don't know about the 28 veterans in the state of Alabama that consider committing suicide on a daily basis.

This past year I was able to get in touch with the Alabama Dog Hunters Association. They actually came to me and wanted to invite some vets to go on a hunt. A lot of my veterans were totally against dog hunting as a whole, but a lot of them were open-minded and wanted to give it a shot.

Well, many of these guys with the organization did not know that there was one veteran on my squad that was having issues with his personal demons, who was thinking about suicide, didn't know where else to turn. So I invited him on the hunt. The whole weekend we were out there with the hunt he had no idea what was going on, had never been on a dog hunt, but when the dogs were running to him, he had no -- he had no focus on what was bothering him that weekend. It probably even saved his life.

But I'm not here talking about saving the life but the things that these guys are doing -- what they could be doing with my veterans who are attempting to -- who are fighting these demons. I want you guys to think about -- I want to challenge every single one of you guys to actually think about the needs that the American -- that the Alabama Dog Hunters Association have, the concerns, their demands or whatever it may be they may be bringing forth to you today. That's my point.

That's the reason why I'm here is to stand up for the Alabama Dog Hunters Association because they saved one of my veteran's lives just this past weekend.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions from the board?

Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Excuse me. What group took y'all hunting?

MR. BANKSTON: Alabama Dog Hunters Association. We had three or four different chapters that took us out.

MR. MARTIN: I got you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

Wynnton Melton.

MR. KNIGHT: I'm Don Knight. Just wanted to let y'all know I'm back. I'm going to ask one of Chuck Sykes' questions too. I'm giving you an example.

Now, we used to drive from Anniston, Alabama, to Eufaula after dark to hunt, and we would see 50 deer, no problem, on the side of the road. You can do that today and you may see three. Now, it's either the dogs have got -- I mean -- dang dog on the brain -- either the deer have gotten smart enough to stay off the roads or they're not there. Your choice. But I'm telling you they ain't there.

Now, in my club in Barbour County
we're drastically cutting down the doe hunting, doe killing for next year to try to help our herd. It's nothing like it's been in the past. But just wanted to let you know that.

Now I'm here to ask y'all's help. I want y'all to come and help the dog hunters instead of trying to put us away and put us on the permit systems and change territories and all that kind of stuff. If you could help us educate the deer -- I can't even talk -- educate the people, the still hunters, that all the information -- it's like Chuck said.

All the information out there, most of it's wrong. There are good articles where research has been done on dog deer hunting that gives you good factual information that may change some of these people's mind, or if it don't change their mind, at least let them understand better what we like to do.

Okay. Now, y'all put out articles.

they're reasonable or not is the legislature. This is according to the Alabama Administrative Procedures Act. Okay. I just want you to know that so we don't have any problems.

We'd like to work with y'all every way we can. And the deer herd is down. I'd like for y'all to understand that we see these things a little different from you. When we get put on permit systems and all that kind of stuff --

A lot of them write magazine articles. You got a newsletter. If we could get some of those articles in that, I think it would be a big help to the dog hunters.

We need to get along. That's what the big problem is. We need to get along. Putting us on a permit system, putting -- changing areas and all that kind of stuff is not going to help. We've got to get the people problem straightened out, and you can be a big help with that. That's what you're here for, to help protect hunting, all hunting. So we're asking you to do that.

Now, after I've asked for your help, our Constitution reads -- the Alabama Constitution reads we have the right to hunt and fish by traditional methods under reasonable rules. Okay. Now, I have researched and found out that the reasonable rules check or whoever says valid. Some of them are not valid. But you see what our people see and why they get upset when they see these kind of things happening.

So we ask you to leave -- no permits new and no land changes. Leave us alone. Let us try to help things. The best way you can handle dog hunting and landowner problems is let them set down and do it. Let them figure out what is happening.

My club has set down with our landowner. We've got things worked out. We don't have any problems. Grady can tell you we don't have any problems.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Don.

MR. KNIGHT: Appreciate it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

Any questions for Mr. Knight?

MR. KNIGHT: No. They don't ever ask me questions.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Lonnie Miller is the next speaker.

If I look familiar, I think this is my 50th consecutive year being at one of these meetings. So I've been here a while as an advocate for legal and ethical dog hunting, deer hunting, coon hunting, and everything with a hound dog. We enjoy it all. And I think 50 years ago when I came here we had six counties that had no dog hunting, and now I think they have 40 that have some restrictions one way or another. We may be the most endangered species you all work with all the time.

What I'm here for is to implore you to be careful. Take your time. No knee-jerk-type action. I remember one time several years ago one of the board members had some problems up at Oakmulgee. So he mentioned it, and before he could turn around Oakmulgee was closed -- 52,000 acres, I think it was -- to dogs. Talked to Charles Kelley about two weeks later. Just ran into him. He said, Wynnton, let me tell you something. He said the board member didn't want to close Oakmulgee. He had about 2,000 acres he wanted to close. But before he could get through, 52,000 acres was lost to the dog hunters.

So, again, I just implore you to be careful. These Garmin units are great. Talking about catching a dog. My goodness. Some of these boys are so good with them that they can catch them two miles away. They can stop them just like that. It's amazing. I'm not that good yet. I've got one. I'm trying.

If you got a good friendly banker and you're a dog hunter, be sure and go borrow you several thousand dollars and get you one because they are great. They are great.

In closing, like I said, I've been here a long time, and I thought I had been my last time last year. And Commissioner McMillan is part of the problem and he don't even know it.

I was at a retired teacher's meeting, and this fellow gets up to give a speech, Representative McMillan. I'm sitting back there. Now, I met Commissioner McMillan here a few times, I think, with rotary club and other places. This guy gets up here, Commissioner -- I mean, Representative McMillan. He gets to talking. I said I got to go home and lock the door behind me. I am crazy as a bat. I talked to that guy a year ago in Geneva and he was Commissioner McMillan. I go outside, get in a conversation, and this fellow said you might --

Is it your twin brother?

MR. McMILLAN: Yes, sir.

MR. MELTON: He said you might have met my twin brother, Commissioner McMillan, John McMillan, and I said thank you,

sir.

Thank all of you. You got a hard job. You're never going to please everybody all the time. As a lifetime school administrator, I made folks mad every day. Some of them are still mad with me. But I understand in the people business we got to try to do what's fair, honest, and best for the most people for the longest period of time.

Thank you much.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Any questions for Mr. Melton?

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Melton?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Good to see you. We've been missing you. Anyway, you were the mayor down there, weren't you?

MR. MELTON: I was mayor, yeah. I've had a lot of opportunity to make folks mad, yeah.

MR. HARTZOG: One comment, though, because you and I have had some private
conversations and all. Your county is
under permit; correct?
MR. MELTON: Yes, we are.
MR. HARTZOG: And haven’t you said that has
been a blessing to y’all?
MR. MELTON: It's worked very well for us.
Now, remember, we had no open-permit
hunting land in Geneva County. So it’s
really worked fine for us. It’s been a
little bit of an aggravation. Early on
there was some that really tried to get
us put out of business, but after a
little while they started getting along
a little better. And it's worked fine
for us, now. I don’t say that about
every place, but the permit system in
Geneva County was all right. We had no
open-permit land. It was all private
land. And we just lease from a number
of farmers, and it just works fine for
our little group.
MR. HARTZOG: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

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dog-hunting complaints -- there were 118
complaints, somewhere around in there.
So I do agree with these guys that are
complaining about dog hunters. If
there's an ethical -- an unethical dog
hunter doing what he's not supposed to
do, we're not for that. And I
understand there's issues all throughout
the state. But it's like I told
Chairman Dobbs the other day, if you
continue to chip away or to take it away
and you eventually wipe it out, you're
going to have a bunch of outlaws for
sure. You're still going to have the
same problem.

You don’t have to -- you don’t have
to deer hunt to run dogs. You can
coyote hunt. You can rabbit hunt. You
can do tons of hunting. And if the sole
purpose is to -- to cut it out -- if
that is the intent, then the deer
hunter -- you may stop us from deer
hunting, and if you cut -- I will stop.
uphold his word. We did our job.

Chairman Dobbs: Any questions?

Mr. Martin: I would just like to applaud Lonnie. He's been a pleasure to work with and always takes -- if there's ever a problem, I can call Lonnie, and he jumps right on it. So I appreciate your efforts. I really do.

Chairman Dobbs: Any other questions for Mr. Miller?

(No response.)

Chairman Dobbs: Thank you very much.

Donald Nelson.

Ms. Morrow: Hi. I'm Susan Morrow. I'm glad to see you back, Mr. Jones. You was missed.

I'm here to talk to y'all about dog deer hunting. I know that you have these people that come up here and they speak and they talk about how bad it is. All of us are not that way. We have worked very hard policing ourselves, and we work harder every day to keep our dogs on our properties. Most of the clubs -- and when I say most, I'd say 85 percent of the clubs now will not let you turn a dog a'loose without a GPS collar on it. And they have people around the areas to catch the dogs.

We're doing everything that we can. This is the way we like to hunt. We don't want to be profiled or discriminated against, and it seems that that's what's happening to us. And we would like for y'all to look at all of this. When you look at the arrests, I see one, hunting without a license. If we're not being profiled or discriminated against, how come the hunting arrests shows hunting off a public road? What does that have to do with a dog? Hunting without permission, what does that have to do with a dog?

I talked with Mr. Williams, chief enforcer, and he sent me a list of the complaints and all. And y'all have it. I wrote y'all all a letter, and all of that is in there. And he said that the dog hunters association had asked for the complaints of dog hunting to be recorded and that y'all wanted it. But when I asked for a list of complaints -- for any other arrests or tickets that had been wrote or complaints, there's not one. You have to fill out a form and go to y'all's legal department to get it.

So to me that is profiling and discriminating against the dog deer hunters. We have been doing this, our fathers, our forefathers. George Washington did it. All we want to do is have our little bit of time to do our hunting the way we want to hunt. We're not trying to change the way the others want to hunt, but they're wanting to change the way we hunt. And we have worked very hard, and it seems like y'all are constantly taking from us or adding more restrictions to us. You need to come and visit some of these clubs and see how hard they are working.

And I promise you, your hunting license sales have been down. If you do away with the dog hunting, there's going to be a lot of Alabamians that's not going to hunt anymore. Y'all have no way of knowing how many dog hunters you have in this state. If you do, please let me know how you can tell the difference --

Ms. Jones: Time.

Ms. Morrow: -- to put the arrests or warnings or tickets that is wrote and put it in a dog hunting -- this is dog deer hunting arrests or warnings. Hunting on private property, if you catch somebody -- we do not like any of these rogue dog hunters doing what they do. But it doesn't matter. There's good and bad in all walks of life. And we, the majority, 90 percent of us, are doing our part.
And I thank y'all.

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

Any questions for Ms. Morrow?

Patrick, Mr. Cagle.

MR. CAGLE: Ms. Morrow, you know, I hope you'll, you know, take some time to recognize it and -- what that report is. It takes a lot of staff time to prepare that. And there's been a lot of conversations about that to help with the intent to be proactive and try to, you know, figure out where problems are occurring and what's the best way to go about it.

You know, so the idea of trying to have a list of all the other arrests to compare, it's extremely burdensome on the staff time. I mean, it took a lot of effort for the enforcement section to go figure out how to do that. And that's what that's about. It's not trying to deny you anything. It takes a ton of effort for that staff to compile that, and they've got a lot of other work that's going on. So I hope you, you know, will reconsider your --

MS. MORROW: I feel we have been profiled and discriminated against. I'm sorry.

MR. CAGLE: You're certainly entitled to your opinion.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. The next speaker is Evin Stephens.

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commissioner and board members, for allowing me to speak. I'm Don Nelson. My family is property owners in Butler County.

I am a member of the Alabama Dog Hunters Association. I'm a member of Mr. Miller's organization and Mr. Knight, and I appreciate the work they do in working with you. And what I'd like to do this morning is to encourage you to use them as a conduit to eliminate these problems that y'all get -- the district commissioners get bothered with. There is a solution.

I will give you -- I think a situation happened last year that shows the system will work if we use it here. Mr. Miller got a call from Mr. Cagle. And he said, Don, you need to call Mr. Cagle and see what the problem is down in Butler County. I said, yes, sir. And there was a problem. And I put an action plan together, and I shared that in a letter to Pat and Mr. Hartzog about what I was going to do to eliminate the problem that my club was having. One thing was there was an area of land we didn't hunt no more. I said, hey, it's not big enough to cause problems with our neighbors, so we eliminated it.

Another thing was, I said, hey, we're going to cut a mile-and-a-half road on some of our property to catch our dogs. I spent three days up there in the spring on a tractor and bush hog and bush axe working on that to make the situation better. I said we'll be 100 percent of GPSs when we leave, and we were. We eliminated about 40 percent of our dogs, the number that we had from the prior year.

We're going toward shock collars. Now, I'm going -- I'm going to tell on myself here in just a moment at the end of this. But they work.

But the point is that Mr. Cagle got calls. He talked to Mr. Miller. He contacted me. And we worked on the problem. And the gentleman that was here last year said, hey, we had a problem with them. Not a single dog on my club stepped on his property this past season. That's a success story.

And one thing -- and I'll -- we're not perfect, but we're working on it. As the gentleman said early, he's a mayor. I spent 31 years as a mayor and
a councilman defending the constitution
of this state and upholding that, 30
years as a Marine Corps Colonel Retired.

What I'm saying is, I don't allow
nobody not to do anything right. My
grandchildren come. We have wives
there. We want it to be a family event.
Y'all know that. We appreciate it. But
I am encouraging you to use those
gentlemen there. And what it does is it
eliminates things that are valid and
things that aren't valid.

Case in point. We were having
problems last year with neighbors with a
yard dog, which you don't have a problem
at all, but it upsets the local stalk
hunter. But guess what? My club kind
of got blamed for these dogs running.
And that's fine. There's no leash law
in Butler County. But we made the local
conservation people aware of that, hey,
these all aren't our dogs.

Now, we're not perfect. I'll give

all require --

MR. NELSON: Yes, sir. And we're going to
shock collars, slowly but surely. I've
invested -- my wife -- don't nobody tell
her this. I've invested over $3,000 in
collars. And I want to go to all shock
collars at this point. But it helps.

But the thing about what I was
saying, if you could utilize these two
gentlemen here -- and it's a
recommendation -- to help take the
burden off you and some of the calls --
if you call and say, Don or Lonnie, I
got a problem over here, will you please
get with the conservation man and go see
if you can resolve it, I think that
would help. Because every year you see
this and I see this. And I enjoy coming
and seeing y'all, but I know y'all have
got more important things to do.

And just to say one thing, folks. I
don't carry a shotgun when I dog hunt.
I walk through the woods with my dogs

you an example. This past season I was
hunting. While I was chasing some of my
dogs, I shocked my dogs, and they went
off my property. And they're walking
back down the road on another man's
property. I waited at the end of the
road, and I got my dogs. I took a
tongue lashing. All I could say is,
yes, sir, you're right, and be as polite
as I could. But my dog did walk down
his road to get to my truck.

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. NELSON: Any questions?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions?

MR. WOLFE: Mr. Nelson, do all of your dogs in
your club -- does your club require all	hedogs to have collars?

MR. NELSON: Yes, sir. A GPS collar, yes,
sir. They don't get turned loose
because I give them my own personal

collar.

MR. WOLFE: Okay. So your dogs in your club

because I love them. And I kill -- I
didn't kill a deer last year. The year
before I killed an eight-point buck on
my family land. And I reported it.
Shot it with a rifle. So I'm out there
for the fellowship just like you are.
Did I answer your question?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions from the
board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We know that you make a
substantial investment in the dogs and
equipment that goes with it. We
appreciate that, and we hear exactly
what you're saying. Thank you very
much.

MR. NELSON: It's a pleasure to do that, once
again, just to try to keep that
privilege y'all allow us to have. Thank
you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Next is Avery Bates.

MR. STEPHENS: Hi. My name is Evin Stephens.
I'll be speaking on behalf of the Talladega-Clay County chapter of the Alabama Dog Hunters Association. We as the dog hunters in the Talladega National Forest has done what was asked of us. We have made Jeff Martin's phone stop ringing with complaints from residents and private landowners. This has been done for the past two consecutive years. We have went above and beyond what was directly asked of us.

We have completed many hours of community service. We have -- we have -- many other groups and individuals from the area had multiple clean-up days. We have cleaned up roads in the Talladega National Forest, including the Clay County roads and public roads and State Highway 281 leading to and from both counties. Trash and debris are consistently being dumped in the forest.

We have also cleared roadways after storms, including the multiple snow and ice storms. This lends a helping hand to the fellow hunters and residents of the surrounding areas as well as helps take a load off the forestry service. We as ethical and upstanding hunters have planted nine food plots to better sustain healthy wildlife for the future generations to come. We have donated around a total of $40,000 towards this act, 25,000 worth of man-hours of clean-up and clearing roads that has been filed and another additional 305 hours towards the food plots that round off to be around $15,000 in donations of equipment, rentals, fuel costs, transportation, all combined to equal that amount.

We would also like to note the positive impression and impact we have -- that we have made during our youth hunts and "Wounded Warrior" weekends. It was also suggested by the attending soldiers and veterans that they would like to have "Wounded Warriors" weekend -- a full day to hunt on that weekend and to make it an annual event.

We've also -- we'd also like to give thanks to the forestry service for opening up Gate 637U. It has benefited all dog-hunting groups by keeping dogs contained and off the private land, in turn, helping to keep down complaints.

We would also like to give a special thanks to the Talladega County Commissioner, Jackie Swinford, for a generous donation of our trash bins for our clean-up days. It really made a positive impact. And with all that being said, we hope that we've helped you see the impact that the Talladega-Clay County chapter of the dog hunters association has made for the communities. And we would like to be able to have more time back -- time in the day and more hours -- more days back to be able to hunt --

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. STEPHENS: Thank y'all.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions from the board?

Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman.

I just want to commend you on -- I think all of us went over the book showing your clean-up actions, and I just want to thank you for helping take care of the resource.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: You said there's 20-something-thousand dollars that y'all filed. Does that go back to the forestry --

MR. STEPHENS: Yes, sir. That goes back to the forestry service for future projects, which is at their discretion.

MR. MARTIN: I mean, I just thought that was a good idea.
MR. STEPHENS: You know, it's their discretion to what they use --
MR. MARTIN: Use it for. Okay. Great job.  Y'all have done good.
MR. STEPHENS: Thank y'all.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?  
(No response.)
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.  The next speaker will be Blakeley Ellis.
MR. BATES: I'm back again. I'm vice president of the Organized Seafood Association. My name is Avery Bates.  
And next Wednesday -- we've sent out some invites, but I want to cordially invite y'all to the "Seafood Bash" that our Chamber of Commerce, City of Bayou La Batre, the seafood capital of Alabama, are putting on over at the RSA. Chris is going to miss. You're just going to have to eat twice as much as Chris. But y'all are invited. It's good to see you. It's good to see you,

with good healthy seafood, whether it's crab, fish, oysters, or shrimp. We want to keep doing that. But if they're silting over our reefs -- some of our mother reefs up the bay -- they silt them in with mud. Generally a year's worth of natural sedimentation on some of the area is about this big. An oyster can stand that and a clam, but if you silt him up with that much silt, in a few weeks he can't stand that.  
So we see many acres of bottom that has been destroyed. Fishermen come to me and they say, Avery, we can't stand it, to see death to many different species that we've always worked around. Some of the fish do not have any habitat to go back to. The Corps of Engineers pumps millions of cubic yards of dirt in open-water dispersement, and they're going to plan on building a future island up the bay which would cause

Commissioner Dobbs.  
But we do have some problems in Mobile Bay and many other areas with our seafood. In fact, Ernie's boy won the science award this year to show some of his exhibits, and that's where the president is today.  
Working on some siltation problems we see in some of the projects like Marsh Island. Some of the fishermen has come to me -- a number of them -- Chris has been in some meetings that we had. The fishermen has brought it to their attention.  
My problem is dealing with the Corps at public hearings and even at the start of it, the Corps of Engineers who digs these channels, widens these channels, and improves the navigation and they decrease our navigation. They refused us to be at some of the meetings as stakeholders of Mobile Bay and to the seafood producers that produce y'all with good healthy seafood, whether it's crab, fish, oysters, or shrimp. We want to keep doing that. But if they're silting over our reefs -- some of our mother reefs up the bay -- they silt them in with mud. Generally a year's worth of natural sedimentation on some of the area is about this big. An oyster can stand that and a clam, but if you silt him up with that much silt, in a few weeks he can't stand that.  
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MS. JONES: Time.
MR. BATES: We never had anybody beat the public reefs until recently. We've put over 300 people to work.  
In Ecclesiastes 16, you'll read in Verse 49, we must remember Solomon had a
One of the problems they had was supporting the needy, helping them. We have a need. The resource has a need. Stop these people from smothering our bottoms to death.

You talk about a problem with fish eating all the fish in freshwater. You want to know what’s eating all the crabs in saltwater? Redfish. Redfish is killing us. They’re even going into crab traps eating the crabs. Redfish -- I don’t know how they get in there. You talk about jumping carp. You ain’t seen nothing when you see millions of pounds of redfish, what happens to juvenile oysters, juvenile crabs, and even big crabs with the massive amounts of redfish we have in the state of Alabama.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Avery, very much. We appreciate you coming always. Thank you. Any questions for Avery? (No response.)

they’re working with them on the evaluation that they’re doing on the ship-channel widening and how that could affect any of our resources there.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions from the board?

MR. BATES: You already know, Chris, that these people are not lying when they’re going out there and finding dead oysters smothered to death. You’ve heard it at other meetings we’ve been in. We know that Mr. Sisk, who navigates the bay, run aground where he’s fished for 20 years in areas that crabbers can’t crab. Fishermen can’t fish. Fish will not return to dead silty bottom. Shrimp and everything else is smothered to death in some of these areas. That’s a fact.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Avery. Thank you very much. The next speaker, Blakeley Ellis. Thank you, Avery.
wanted to come and thank them for their hard work and thank y'all for supporting them in that effort to gain control of red snapper and have a state-managed fishery. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions of Mr. Ellis from the board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

This concludes our public comments section of the meeting, and we're on with the orders of the day.

Before we do, I want to roll back one moment and go back to the mentored hunts. What a great experience that was for the people that were there. There are several stories around that. But I want to remind y'all, too, that a number of the employees from the enforcement section, from the hunter ed section, Marisa and others, gave their time on those weekends. They moved vacation times around. They did everything to be there to participate, to teach the gun safety, to keep everybody who participated -- and it was a wonderful, wonderful time and a very special event for the people that were there and for the folks that gave.

So, again, thanks. We are going to keep doing those. I think we're leading the charge in the country providing these opportunities. The SOAs, again, are being met with just open arms. Everybody is very appreciative. Thank you, Patti, for participating as well.

So the next item is unfinished business. Is there any unfinished business?

MR. RAYMOND JONES: This is really not unfinished business, but if you'll allow it, I failed to mention something of importance in my report.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Okay. I wanted to also talk about another waterfowl project in north Alabama. It's actually a gadwall-banding project that's been going on.

Since sometime in the 1930s we've been banding ducks, but only 70-something gadwall bands have ever been recorded that had ties to the state of Alabama. So basically we don't know where our gadwalls are coming from.

And so through the state, through Keith's leadership and several of the other people working, they're actually banding gadwalls and they're putting GPS collars or tracking devices on these gadwalls. Every four hours that device sends a signal to the satellite. So we know where that duck is every four hours.

And so it's been quite fascinating. Obviously, it's very new in the study. We don't know where these ducks are going to go back to, in Canada or the Prairie Pothole Region. We just don't know. We're about to find out.

And, also, it's been fascinating to watch what these ducks do. We had the big -- in north Alabama we had a freeze that lasted about 12 days. I would have thought they would have gone down to Ben's place, but they stayed right there. They moved from the potholes out in the ag field to the big water. And that's -- they did not go anywhere. So it's been fascinating to watch.

But I wanted everybody to know, again, that that's going on, and it's been a neat project. And, again, we've had more focus on waterfowl-related studies, waterfowl-related efforts in the state than we have in a very long time. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. I'll add to that very quickly that there's so many things that you don't hear about that go on behind the scenes, the turkey trapping,
1. the turkey tagging, the duck trapping,  
2. the duck tagging, the deer, all -- and  
3. the fish recruitment studies. It's all  
4. so very important and vital to this  
5. state, and this department does a super  
6. job. They touch everybody's lives every  
7. day.  
8. Back to the mentored hunts again.  
9. It was -- that was a wonderful  
10. experience, the cooking, the eating. I  
11. thank Gerry and Amy again for what they  
12. did. We appreciate it.  
13. So if there's no unfinished business  
14. to be dealt with, let's move on to new  
15. business. All the items have previously  
16. been reported. We have, I think, some  
17. motions that we want to talk about, one  
18. in particular, an increase in licensing  
19. fees.  
20. Is there any new business?  
21. MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?  
22. CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Hartzog.  
23. MR. HARTZOG: Not a motion at this time but  
24. possibly a motion for the next meeting.  
25. Lonnie and Don, we've had some  
26. complaints on State Line dog hunting.  
27. You heard the gentleman talk about the  
28. harassment he received. And when they  
29. go and surround him by three sides and  
30. just unload guns for an hour and a half  
31. or however long it was and the game  
32. warden goes and collects the shells, I  
33. mean, that's pretty disrespectful.  
34. And trying to follow with Susan and  
35. all, we want to support dog hunting.  
36. But when you've got a bad apple out  
37. there that puts a black eye on all of  
38. y'all, we as a board have to address --  
39. your freedom ends where the other guy's  
40. freedom begins. And so we need to be  
41. cooperative.  
42. So I challenge you and -- Don and  
43. Lonnie to get with this particular club  
44. and get with the landowners. And I'd  
45. like a report back at the next meeting  
46. from y'all as to what resolutions have  
47. been made. And if the resolutions are  
48. not satisfactory, I will propose that we  
49. put that county under a permit system.  
50. MR. KNIGHT: What county is that, Grady?  
51. MR. HARTZOG: Chambers.  
52. And I will say this. I haven't  
53. worked that much with Lonnie, but over  
54. years past -- because Don is in Barbour  
55. County, and Don will call me up and --  
56. in fact, I helped Don a couple of years  
57. ago when he was about to lose his lease,  
58. and I called the landowner that I knew  
59. the family. And so, you know, we  
60. support dog hunting, but you got to do  
61. it right.  
62. And so, anyway, Don, if you and  
63. Lonnie will do that and report back to  
64. this committee at the next meeting, and  
65. then I'll make a decision whether to put  
66. the motion forward or not.  
67. MR. KNIGHT: Well, you got one problem, Grady.  
68. They're already under the permit system.  
69. MR. HARTZOG: Well, why is the permit system  
70. allowing them to release on 100-acre  
71. ground?  
72. CHAIRMAN DOBBS: If you would please address  
73. the questions to the chair.  
74. MR. HARTZOG: Yes, sir.  
75. CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Same to the audience, please.  
76. MR. KNIGHT: You bet you.  
77. CHAIRMAN DOBBS: You have the floor,  
78. Mr. Hartzog.  
79. MR. HARTZOG: Well, under the permit system I  
80. thought we set the sizes of the ground  
81. they could release on.  
82. MR. WEATHERS: Chambers County was one of the  
83. first two counties -- I'm Matt Weathers.  
84. I'm the chief of enforcement.  
85. Chambers was one of the first two  
86. counties put under the permit system.  
87. It has a separate permit that only  
88. applies to Chambers and Coosa. There's  
89. no minimum acreage restrictions. And  
90. private property owners in Chambers  
91. County do not have to obtain a permit.  
92. It's only leased lands.
MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, then, would also the department give us a recommendation on the size limits and all to go along with changing Chambers County, then?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I suppose they -- yes, they can accommodate you on that. We can ask them, yes.

MR. HARTZOG: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions from the board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. New business.

Any motions that we have going forward?

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Jones.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: I would like to move that the Conservation Advisory Board form a CWD subcommittee to study issues related to the prevention of CWD and examine practical ways to engage taxidermists and deer processors in the effort to prevent the spread of CWD into Alabama. The subcommittee will report its findings and recommendations for the consideration of the full Conservation Advisory Board during the board's second meeting of 2018. The Conservation Advisory Board chairman will appoint CAB members to serve on the CWD subcommittee.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. We have a motion on the floor. And I am -- if it's okay with you, I'm going to read the motion for you again, and then I'll ask that there be a second.

I move that the Conservation Advisory Board, CAB, form a CWD subcommittee to study issues related to the prevention of CWD and examine practical ways to engage taxidermists and deer processors in the effort to prevent the spread of CWD into Alabama. The subcommittee will report its findings and recommendations for the consideration of the full Advisory Board during the board's second meeting of 2018. The Conservation Advisory Board chairman will appoint CAB members to serve on the CWD committee.

Is that correct? Is there a second?

MR. CAGLE: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Second. Any questions, any discussion?

Mr. Hartzog?

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, would it not be a good idea to put some of the Auburn people and people like Kevin McKinstry, who has a major interest, also on that committee to -- I mean, just your thought.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: If you would like to make an amendment to that or at the next meeting add that to --

MR. HARTZOG: Well, just -- Chuck, why don't y'all -- excuse me -- you know, give that some thought as to whether we need additional, you know, biologists and researchers and interested parties on the committee or not.

DR. LEMME: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Dr. Lemme, yes, sir.

DR. LEMME: I think the committee can pull in resource persons that they want. So I don't think we really need that.

MR. HARTZOG: Okay.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Discussion. I would agree with that, that you can pull and they can pull in and seek the advice of anyone.

So we have a second. Any further discussion?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Let's have a vote.

All those in favor signify by saying "aye."

(All board members present respond "aye.")

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All those opposed? (No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it.

So we will form that subcommittee.

And I am prepared by the end of the
meeting to announce or ask the gentlemen here to serve on that subcommittee. I would ask Patrick Cagle, I would ask Raymond Jones, and I would ask Brock Jones to lead that committee, to lead that charge, and liaise with the Department of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.

Is that acceptable, gentlemen?

(All indicate in the affirmative.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Y'all are in agreement. Thank you very much.

Any other motions or new business today?

MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman, I have a motion.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Cagle.

MR. CAGLE: I move that the board consider modifying the existing Administrative Rule 220-2-.25 to further disallow the importation of all species Cervidae -- deer, moose, elk, caribou -- into the state of Alabama from any state or territory, not just those that have already been found to be impacted by CWD, unless the Cervidae has been processed.

This motion further requests that the definition of processing be modified to define processed for cervid to mean that the meat from any cervid be completely deboned, cleaned skull plates with antlers attached, if no visible brain or spinal tissue is present; raw capes, if no visible brain or spinal tissue is present; upper canine teeth, if no root structure or other soft tissue is present; and finished taxidermy products or tanned hides.

To clarify, this just simply means that right now we've had the existing rule that prevents the importation of deer, any species of Cervidae -- other species from states with CWD. This will close the borders to all unless that's been properly processed. With CWD being found in Mississippi, we've got to be as vigilant as possible. And, you know, the difference in Mississippi and Tennessee, it's hard for folks to tell where that deer originated when it's in the back of a truck crossing the border.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We have a motion, and I am going to reread the motion for clarity. This motion modifies Section 220-2-.25, subsection 2, and further disallows the importation of the species Cervidae -- deer, moose, elk, and caribou, et al., any of that species -- into the state of Alabama from any other state, province, territory, or country, unless said Cervidae has been processed, and processed as defined in reference to the importation of any body parts of the members of the family Cervidae as is in the Regulation 220-2-.25, subsection 3. Processed cervids: Meat from any of the cervids from Section 2 of 220-2-.25 that has been completely deboned, cleaned skull plates with antlers attached, if no visible brain or spinal tissue is present; raw capes, if no visible brain or spinal tissue is present; upper canine teeth, if no root structure or other soft tissue is present; and finished taxidermy products or tanned hides.

Is that the motion as you understand it?

MR. CAGLE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We have a motion on the floor. Is there discussion?

Yes, Mr. Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: You just need a second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I'm sorry. Is there a second?

MR. McMILLAN: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. We have a second for the motion.

Is there any discussion?

(No response.)
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Being no discussion, let's take a vote.

All those in favor of the motion as read, please signify by saying "aye."

(All board members present respond "aye.")

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All those not in favor, signify by saying "no."

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it. Thank you.

Do we have any other business before the board today? Any other motions?

MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman, I have another motion.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Very good. Thank you, Mr. Cagle.

MR. CAGLE: I move that the Conservation Advisory Board limit anglers fishing on the Sipsey Fork of the Black Warrior River to the use of only one fishing rod per person in an effort to provide equal access to this unique fishery for all resource users. This limit shall extend from the tailwaters below Smith Lake Dam to the Highway 69 bridge.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. We have a motion, and I'm going to read it again for clarity.

I move that the Conservation Advisory Board limit anglers fishing on the Sipsey Fork of the Black Warrior River to the use of only one fishing rod per person in an effort to provide equal access to this unique fishery for all resource users. This limit shall extend from the tailwaters below Smith Lake Dam to the Highway 69 bridge.

Is that the motion as you have read it?

MR. CAGLE: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Is there a second?

MR. STIMPSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Is there any discussion?

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Several years back I was asked to look at this as a possible catch-and-release zone and so on and so forth, and at that time the fisheries department really didn't know. We're presently in an Auburn study which is a year out. The limit is five trout. So if you've got two poles out and catch five trout or one pole out and catch five trout, it's a five-trout limit. If you've got two poles out, he's out of the way quicker probably.

So I think we need to table the motion until which time we get the Auburn study. The recommendation of the staff has been no changes on that. Let's wait and get the Auburn study before we look and see because the majority of those fish are not being taken anyway with the amount of trout stocked versus amount taken. And I just think that the counteraction I had with the county commissions from both of those counties when I was asked to look at it, there's an awful lot of poor families there that rely on those fish for their supper and meals. And so let's wait until the Auburn study is finished before we look at something.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Well, are you making a motion, then, to table the motion?

MR. HARTZOG: Table it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: There's a motion before the board. Is there a second?

MR. MARTIN: I'll second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Second by Mr. Martin.

Is there any discussion on that motion?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: There's no discussion. So we'll have a vote on that motion.

All those in favor of Mr. Hartzog's voiced motion, please signify their acceptance by saying "aye."

(All board members except Mr. Cagle respond "aye.")
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Those not in favor of Mr. Hartzog's voiced motion, please signify by saying no.

MR. CAGLE: No.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it. We will table the motion to another date which I will set.

Any additional motions?

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, sir.

MR. HARTZOG: Not a motion. But I know the state is working on a CWD plan in case CWD does make it. I would ask that when Chuck and the department finishes that plan that we be distributed a copy of that plan, please, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Is that acceptable?

MR. SYKES: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Acceptable, Mr. Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Sure. Most definitely.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Hartzog.

Any other motions?

MR. BARKSDALE: Yes, sir. I have one.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Barksdale.

MR. BARKSDALE: This motion is pursuant to Section 9-11-68 and 9-11-69, Code of Alabama, will allow the increase of costs for all licenses and fees associated with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for 2018 and '19 based on the incremental rise in the Consumer Price Index.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: It's a motion, and now I'm going to reread it for clarity.

This motion, pursuant to Section 9-11-68 and 9-11-69, Code of Alabama, will allow an increase of the costs for all licenses and fees associated with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for 2018 and 2019 based on the incremental rise in the Consumer Price Index.

Is what I've read how you expect the motion?

MR. BARKSDALE: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. There is a motion on the floor.

Is there a second?

MR. HARTZOG: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Hartzog, second.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: There being no discussion, we will vote.

All those in favor of Mr. Barksdale's motion as read, please signify by saying "aye."

(All board members present respond "aye.")

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Those opposed say "no."

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Motion carries. Thank you.

Any other business before us?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Being no other business, are there any announcements, any other discussion with the board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much. So it's up to us to set the date and time of the next meeting. Right now it's my understanding that we're going to be in Tuscaloosa on May the 19th at Northport High School.

MR. BROCK JONES: Northridge.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Northridge High School.

Northridge High School. May the 19th.

So watch the "OutdoorAlabama" app to be sure that that doesn't change.

That's everything before this board.

Thank you very much for being here.

Safe travels home. We're adjourned.

(Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:10 p.m.)
STATE OF ALABAMA:

MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

I, Tracye Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large, do hereby certify that I reported the foregoing proceedings of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Board Meeting on March 3, 2018.

The foregoing 204 computer-printed pages contain a true and correct transcript of the proceedings held.

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

This 18th day of April 2018.

___________________________
Tracye Sadler Blackwell
ACCR No. 294
Expiration date: 9-30-2018
Certified Court Reporter
and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large