STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
The Lodge at Gulf State Park
Gulf Shores, Alabama
May 4, 2019

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

Proceedings taken before Tracye
Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter, ACCR
No. 294, and Commissioner for the State of Alabama
at Large, at the Lodge at Gulf State Park, 21196
East Beach Boulevard, Gulf Shores, Alabama, on
Saturday, May 4, 2019, commencing at approximately
9:01 a.m.
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Joseph Dobbs, Jr., Chairman,
Commissioner Christopher M. Blankenship
Deputy Commissioner Patrick D. Moody, Department of
Agriculture & Industries
Dr. Gary Lemme
Mr. Patrick Cagle
Mr. Raymond Jones, Jr.
Mr. Grady Hartzog
Mr. Ben C. Stimpson, Jr.
Mr. Gary Wolfe
Mr. Tim Wood
Mr. Greg Barksdale
Mr. Brock Jones

* * * * * * * * * * * *

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Welcome everyone to the second Conservation Advisory Board meeting on this day, May the 4th of 2019. Glad you're all here today. Hello to the usual participants and welcome to our first-time participants.

Susan, good to see you. Avery, good to see you here.

I'd like to recognize this morning Representative Stringer from here in Mobile County and Representative Steven
McMillan as well from here in Mobile. We're glad to have you with us here today. Thank you.

Ms. Jones set us up pretty well, and this lodge is fabulous. We've got a wonderful view here. So let's have a productive meeting with good dialogue today.

I'm going to ask Avery Bates to give the invocation for us.

MR. BATES: This is an honor. It's good to be here with y'all. Let's all bow.

Dear Father, we thank you for today. We thank you for the bounty of the sea and the land, Lord. We do pray for our leaders, Lord, that each one of them will rule justly, Dear Heavenly Father, under the fear of God as it says in thy Word. We pray, Lord, that we'll be always respectful of you and our fellow man, Lord.

We thank you, Lord, for this state. Thank you, Lord, for the many blessings
that we have with the bounty of the sea
and the land. We pray, Lord, that
you'll be with us in this chronic waste
disease that's going through many
states, Lord. We pray it will stay away
from them.

We pray, Lord, for the oyster
industry that's in critical straits. We
pray for these men, each one of them,
Lord, that you'll truly use and guide
them, give them understanding, Lord, of
the fellow man and the things that
they're judging and making regulations
for. Continue to be with us every day,
Lord, in this state.

We thank you, Lord, for our
Governor. We thank you, Lord, for our
President. We pray that you'll give
them wisdom and direction, Dear Heavenly
Father, and any laws that's passed,
it'll be for the good of the whole state
and it will continue to be a blessing,
Lord, to our next generation.
Let us not be proud. Humble us.

Use us to honor in thy glory and truly,
Lord, let this next generation prosper
from the decisions we make here today
and in the future. God bless America.
God bless Alabama. And we love you,
Lord. Continue to use us. In Christ's
name we ask it. Amen.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Amen. Thank you very much,
Avery. Thank you.

Let's have our Pledge. And I'm
going to ask Brock Jones, our Board
member, to lead us in the Pledge of
Allegiance this morning.

(Pledge of Allegiance recited.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Be seated.

On our agenda as well, something
that we've been doing for the last
several years, is the Sportsmen's
Pledge. It's a pledge that rings true
to what we all believe is the purpose of
forward-minded research management. And
those of you that would like this
morning, please recite it along with us. There were some on the table as you came in. If you have it, fine. If not, we're going to as a board recite that. And Dr. Gary Lemme is going to lead us in that this morning.

Dr. Lemme.

DR. LEMME: Thank you.

The Sportsmen's Pledge was first written by John H. Wallace, Jr., State Game/Fish Commissioner in 1908. I think it is as appropriate today as it was then. Let's recite it.

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.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Dr. Lemme, very
much. That's important.
Mr. Secretary, do we have a quorum
today?
COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: We do.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.
So the first piece of business are
our minutes, the minutes of March 9th,
2019. I know our Board has read them.
Are there any corrections to be noted?
(No response.)
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Being no corrections, the
Chair approves the minutes as written.
I'm going to ask each Board member
to -- you don't have to stand to do
this, and we won't do our district
But if each of you, starting at the end with Mr. Barksdale, would give us your congressional district, please -- your name and congressional district.

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

MR. BROCK JONES: Brock Jones, District 7.

MR. WOOD: Tim Wood, District 7.

MR. STIMPSON: Ben Stimpson, District 1.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Raymond Jones, Congressional District 5.

MR. WOLFE: Gary Wolfe, District 1.

MR. HARTZOG: Grady Hartzog, District 2.

DR. LEMME: Gary Lemme, Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

MR. CAGLE: Patrick Cagle, District 2.

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

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Joey Dobbs, District 6.

To everybody here today, please get to know your congressional district.
representatives. Their districts are defined in the Digest. There are Digests on the table. Their contact information is in there as well. These are the gentlemen I hope that you contact with ideas and issues and programs as it relates to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and its divisions: Marine Resources, State Lands, State Parks, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.

The directors of those divisions I've mentioned and their adjuncts are here today. And they all work very hard and work with great people that are passionate about their jobs and are looking out for the future of our resources. Thank them every chance you get.

Commissioner Blankenship, who directs these divisions with help from Deputy Commissioner Ed Poolos, is going to provide us an update since our last
meeting and introduce our special guests.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Good morning. There are certain legislators and different individuals that are really supportive of the work that we do in the Department of Conservation and in our State Parks. Representative Steve McMillan is one of those people.

Representative McMillan has been extremely active on the Joint Legislative Committee on State Parks. He's been very instrumental in the leadership on the Gulf State Park project that helped make this whole hotel and conference center possible.

And so every year there's a group that we present Eagle Awards to different individuals that have been supportive of our State Parks. And so at this time I'd ask Representative McMillan to come up front with Greg Lein, our State Parks Director.
The Eagle Awards are just a small
token of appreciation to recognize the
work that's been done to support the
State Parks, and it is our honor to
present to Representative Steve McMillan
the Eagle Award for this year in 2019.
Thank you, sir.

MR. McMILLAN: Don't ever ask an elected
official if they'd like to say anything.
I'll be very brief.

There are probably several people
that are as deserving or perhaps even
more deserving than me of this award,
but nobody appreciates it more. I just
outlived everybody. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: As I said,
Mr. McMillan has been a great supporter,
and I'm sure he'll continue to do that
for many years.

I do have a few brief comments I'd
like to make. One, I'd like to
recognize Patrick Moody who's at the
end. Patrick Moody is the Deputy
Commissioner for the Department of Ag and Industries, and he's here sitting in for Commissioner Rick Pate who's unable to be here today. And Patrick won't be voting. He's just a proxy for Mr. Pate today.

We're glad to have you here, Patrick, way down there at the end. Good to see you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MOODY: Good to be back with y'all.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I do have a couple of updates for the Board on things that have happened in the Department.

The first thing I'd like to do is recognize Amy Hunter. I hope Ms. Hunter has made it and is not caught up in traffic somewhere. She is our Deepwater Horizon Coordinator. So a lot of the work that's being done in recovery from the oil spill is taking place, and Amy is coordinating that.

And I don't see her here this
morning. She must have gotten caught up in traffic trying to get down here today. So when she gets here, I will point her out to you all.

This hotel, the Lodge and Conference Center -- Chandra Wright, who is Director of Sustainability and Education for the hotel, is here. She can talk a whole lot more about it. But I will say that this is the only hotel in the world that meets all of the sustainability requirements that this hotel has. We have LEED Gold and SITES Platinum. If you went to the restaurant last night and you got what you thought was a piece of hay in your drink, that is a biodegradable straw.

So there are multiple things that are being done here to make this facility to have the least amount of footprint as possible and to be extremely sustainable for the environment.
I hope that while you're here today you'll have a little bit of a chance to visit the Interpretive Center, which is down next to the Pavilion. That will be the first Certified Living Building in a state facility or government facility in the country. So that means that it produces more electricity and produces more water and natural resources than it uses. It will produce at least 105-percent electricity compared to what we use down there.

So it is a model -- this whole complex is really a model of sustainability for the environment. And so it's very beautiful, but a lot of the things that you'll see around here that may be a little odd for most hotels that you're used to seeing -- a lot of that is to make it as environmentally friendly as possible. So thank you all for taking the time to be here.

And Chandra Wright -- I saw Chandra
earlier. If you want to know anything about the sustainability elements, ask her. She can tell you stuff that you did want to know and that you probably didn't want to know.

Amy Hunter is our Deepwater Horizon Coordinator for the Department. So I wanted the Board to meet Amy and see Amy.

There are a couple of things that have happened since our last meeting. Red snapper management, which we talk a lot about with the Board, we've been under an exempted fishing permit in Alabama for 2018 to 2019 that gave the State the ability to manage the red snapper fishery. That was a temporary measure. We were looking for -- through the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council to be able to extend that State management moving forward.

In April that was approved by the Gulf Council and has been transmitted to
the Secretary of Commerce. And so the
State of Alabama along with the other
Gulf states will be managing the red
snapper season for the private
recreational fishermen beginning in 2020
and going forward.

So I would like to commend Kevin
Anson and Scott Bannon on their work to
make that a permanent reality. So thank
you very much.

And while we're talking about the
Marine Resources Division and the
management in the state, the Monterey
Bay Aquarium has a watch list. It's
called Seafood Watch. And most of the
top-end restaurants around the country
and many hotel chains, big box stores
like Walmart, Target, they look at that
watch list to decide what products
they're going to carry either in their
store or serve in their restaurant. If
something -- there are three different
categories: There's avoid. There's a
good alternative. Then there's an approved. That's the green.

Because of the very good management in the state of Alabama for the crab fishery here, Alabama is going to be the only -- the update comes out on Monday. Alabama is going to be the only state in the Gulf whose blue crab fishery is going to be considered a good alternative. All the other states in the Gulf and up the Atlantic Seaboard is going to be considered avoid.

So I really would like to commend Marine Resources Division and the regulations that were put in place several years ago to help protect diamondback terrapins and some of the other nursery areas in our rivers. And so because of that, Alabama is going to have what I consider to be an advantage over those other states and open up some markets for us that maybe we would not have had without the good work that's
being done by the Department of Conservation.

So I always like to point out something that I think is of interest to the Board that sets us apart from other states. And so that should come out on Monday.

I want to give a quick legislative update. That was asked at the last meeting if we would give an update on our legislation that affects the Department. I think you have that in your packet. I'll make this very brief.

The bills are grouped -- if there's a house bill and a senate bill that are the same or companion bills, those are grouped together.

The first one, HB 190 and Senate Bill 81, those are both bills that would allow us to implement some parking regulations like at the Beach Pavilion here and in other Wildlife Management Areas, different areas in our state.
parks, for us to be able to enforce some
parking regulations there. That one has
been introduced, and we have a
substitute bill that should be ready
this week. After consultation with
several legislators and the Alabama
Administrative Office of Courts to make
that bill better, we'll have a
substitute that will be introduced
hopefully this week.

House Bill 344 and Senate Bill 209
by Senator Holley is a bill that would
establish a three-day saltwater fishing
event license. It would establish a
special reduced-fee saltwater fishing
license for disabled veterans and would
provide a check-off option when you buy
your license if you'd like to donate an
extra dollar for saltwater fisheries
management.

This matches what we already had for
freshwater. This was an oversight from
when that legislation was passed in the
late -- in 2008-2009. This brings the saltwater in line with freshwater. And that has passed both the house and the senate and has been transmitted to the Governor for her signature.

House Bill 395 and Senate Bill 167 removes antiquated statutory requirements for commercial fishing gear where it had to have people's personal identifying information -- social security number, address -- on the gear that they leave out for trapping and for commercial freshwater fishing. We didn't think as a Department that that was in the best interest of our constituents to have their personal information floating around out in a river somewhere.

So we're working with the legislature to be able to issue them some type of number that identifies them but without their personal information. And that has passed the house, and
another version has passed the senate. So now we need to get -- one of those versions that have passed the house and the senate need to pass the other house and senate.

House Bill 481 and Senate Bill 314 are companion bills. We've made several regulation changes over the years to protect our state from the introduction of CWD. One of those includes not being able to bring live cervids into our state.

Previously we also had where you couldn't bring carcasses back from states that were CWD positive. Last year or, I guess, year before last we changed that to where you just couldn't bring carcasses back from any state, which I think has proven over the last two years to be a prudent decision on behalf of you and the Department with the positives being found in Tennessee and Mississippi during the hunting
season. If we didn't have that in place, then there's a great possibility that those could have led to difficulties here.

So one thing that was missing is that zoos, circuses, pet shops, petting zoos -- there was no prohibition on them bringing cervids into the state. They could have been in Missouri or Arkansas or somewhere yesterday at a fair and then brought back into our state. And so we've asked -- we're working with the legislature to try and pass something that would further protect our state by not allowing cervids to come into our state with petting zoos or circuses or anything like that. That bill has passed committees in both of the houses but has not been taken up in either chamber.

And then House Bill 511 and Senate Bill 97, the House Bill is sponsored by Representative Stringer who is here
today. This updates our penalty section on our Wildlife Management Areas. The penalty section was set in 1939 and has not been updated since then. This brings the penalty section in WMAs into the current Class C misdemeanor regime that all of our other violations in the Department fall under. And the senate version has passed the senate and has passed the house committee and hopefully will be on the -- we can get that on the house calendar to pass sometime in the next couple of weeks. So it's just one step away from passing.

A couple of other bills that just might be of interest. I have one here, House Bill 5, that would be a check-off for the State Parks. It's been assigned to a committee but has not had any movement.

House Bill 107 by Chip Brown would authorize the Department of Public Health to issue permits for oyster
gardening, oyster aquaculture under -- or for recreational use -- it would make them have to provide an address or contact information so that they could be given information about the dangers of consuming shellfish in those areas and during the summer months. And that has been given a favorable report on the committee, and it is on the calendar for Tuesday in the house to be debated.

House Bill 335 by Representative Wadsworth would provide an exemption for licensing for a high school fishing team. We've been able to work with the representative and our Conservation Officers Association, I think, has worked with them to try and find the ability to sponsor some of those students on some of the fishing teams. But we feel like that part of the education of the fishing teams is to explain what a fishing license fee -- what that goes for. It provides the
boating access and other things. So that bill has not moved.

There's a couple of other ones on here, two by Senator Holley that he has agreed to carry over those bills. We were able to find a resolution to those issues that he had. And one of the bills was not necessary because we already have that ability for disabled hunters to have a reduced-cost license.

Senate Bill 66 authorizes the taking of whitetail deer or feral swine by means of bait. That has passed both the house and the senate and has been transmitted to the Governor for signature.

And then Senate Bill 215 by David Sessions is a bill that concerns the disposition of dredging material from ship channels, and that does have some effect on us. The Department is named in that bill as having some responsibilities. That bill was given a
favorable report in the senate committee, and it is pending being placed on the calendar for voting in the senate.

There's a lot of legislation that's going on. Charlanna Skaggs and Ed Poolos, our Deputy Commissioner and our General Counsel, are doing a very good job of coordinating the legislation that affects the Department, and we're more than halfway through the legislative session. And when the session ends, I will send the Board a synopsis -- an updated synopsis of this with what passed and what didn't and what transpired throughout the session.

Are there any questions on that?

MR. HARTZOG: Chris, I have one question.

On Holley's bill on the rattlesnakes, he decided to carry that one over?

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHP: Yes, sir.

MR. HARTZOG: Okay. I understood there was a
lot of concern by the gopher tortoise folks because of the possibility of having them assigned to a different endangered species classification because of the methods in taking those rattlesnakes might affect the gopher tortoises. Is that the Department's ...

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So there was a misunderstanding, I think, with Senator Holley and some of the people in that area on what was needed for them to continue to have the Rattlesnake Rodeo and to do that sustainably and something that doesn't unduly affect the rattlesnake population.

And so we were able to talk with the City of Opp, and then we have a meeting coming up with them for a longer-term resolution on what we need from them to be able to show the educational benefits and then what is happening -- the disposition of the snakes that are a part of the rodeo. Because it does --
the rattlesnake -- eastern diamondback rattlesnake and the gopher tortoise do use -- and indigo all use a very similar habitat. And so what happens with all of those species has a chance to impact the others.

So if there's something that's put in place -- for instance, if the rattlesnake is listed as a threatened or endangered species, that could have a big impact on forestry operations and other things that happen. So we're diligently working with the Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure healthy populations of all three of those species that you mentioned.

MR. HARTZOG: Well, like I said, the main concern I heard was from the gopher tortoise folks and the timber industry down there, because if the gopher tortoise gets reclassified, I think there's a -- isn't the division zone for that, Chuck, right there around in the
Conecuh Forest?

DIRECTOR SYKES: We're doing everything we can working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I think the Commissioner has convinced Senator Holley that everything is going to be okay on our end. One more meeting and we'll have all that put to bed. So we're in good shape.

MR. HARTZOG: All right. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And as you'll recall from several years ago, some regulations and different things were put in place on how -- some methods that were being used to catch those rattlesnakes that was not environmentally friendly was changed by the Department. And since then I don't think what you're -- that was a problem before with the gopher tortoises and the things that use those burrows that I don't think is as much of an issue now because of regulations that were put in
place to change the method of harvest.

DIRECTOR SYKES: Correct.

MR. HARTZOG: All right. Thank you, guys.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I guess that's all I've got.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Very good.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, sir. Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner.

We're very quickly going to run through with the Directors and say that Colonel Bannon's son is at a baseball playoff today. We hope that he prevails, and we wish him luck.

Standing in his stead today is Assistant Director Kevin Anson. He's going to provide us some insight into their programs and some pending activities and some of the new regulations.

Kevin.

CHIEF ANSON: Yes, sir. Thank you.
So we have some regulations that we have offered or some proposals related to -- some regulation changes related to southern flounder and spotted sea trout. So we've had some assessments that were conducted independently through some professors at University of South Alabama for both species, and both indicated that here recently both species are in decline. And the spotted sea trout is in the least amount of decline, but it has shown in the last 5 to 7 years that its breeding stock is not at a sustainable level. So we've suggested implementing a slot limit size for capture on that species. Currently there is not. But that slot limit ranges from 15 inches to 22 inches with one fish that would be allowed to be captured or kept above that size. Currently the size limit is 14 inches. The other recommendation related to
spotted sea trout or speckled trout is implementing a reduction in the bag limit from ten fish to six fish. And there is no -- this is all for recreational. There's currently no commercial capture harvest of that fish because it's a gamefish.

And then southern flounder, which is under a little bit more critical designation according to the assessment results -- but we've implemented a size limit change on that. We're suggesting one to go from 15 -- to go to 15 inches from 12 inches currently. The fish -- about 25 percent of the females will be mature at 12 inches, but just under 50 percent will be mature at around 14 inches -- 14 to 15 inches, so -- and then we've implemented a bag limit change on it as well from ten fish recreationally to five fish.

And I can't think of the last thing. We're going to suggest a daily
commercial bag limit/possession limit of 30 fish per person -- or 30 fish per vessel.

I noticed looking at the data after the assessment came out -- we looked at our licensing information and our landings information, and there was a large increase in the amount of commercial hook-and-line licenses that were sold around 2009, 2010. We associated that partly due to the BP oil spill. Some folks would have purchased those to try to claim a designation as a commercial fisherman for some reimbursement and such. But the number of commercial licenses had remained relatively high after that period, but the amount of landings that are coming in associated with that gear and those fishermen have been relatively low compared to the other traditional forms of commercial harvest, which are gillnet, trawls.
So all of the landings associated with the commercial hook-and-line license need to be reported, but looking at our commercial trip ticket information did not indicate that. So we're trying to constrain some of that harvest because we felt like a lot of folks were using that to catch those fish and use them for recreational purpose rather than commercial. So we thought that that could help curb some of that harvest with that license.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: If that's everything, are there any questions from the Board?

MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Cagle.

MR. CAGLE: I want to commend the Marine Resources Division for all the work y'all have done to -- you know, when y'all first came out at the last meeting and shared with us y'all's concerns, you let us know that you were going to have -- that you were going to put some
things in place so that you could reach out to as many of the user -- to as much of the user groups as possible, and y'all really went above and beyond.

I really commend the Department for putting so much effort into that and helping folks understand the need for change. It's not just another rule change, but here's the issue, here's some options we're considering, listen to their feedback, and really doing your best to get it out there. I commend your efforts for that.

CHIEF ANSON: Thank you. Appreciate it.

And there was one other thing,

Mr. Dobbs.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Please.

CHIEF ANSON: The other thing that we've asked for approval for is implementation of a Gulf Reef Fish Endorsement that's a cost of $10 per recreational fisherman and then $200 for -- essentially $200 for charter boats or commercial fishermen
too. And that's to do two things.

Primarily it's to give us a better accounting of who is actually going offshore and taking part of the reef fish harvest. Currently we just have a license that's sold. There's no designation as to what type of fishing that person will do with that license. So it will give us some more information as to -- to identify the universe of those anglers, and we can contact those and ask them questions and such about their fishing behavior and such.

Then the other part of that is to increase a little bit more revenue for us. We've been funding some fishery independent sampling of our offshore reef zones since 2011 utilizing a variety of sampling gears including a side-scan sonar, ROV, and then vertical-line and bottom-longline sampling. That's conducted through Dr. Sean Powers at University of South
Alabama and the Sea Lab folks. And that's all been funded through other federal sources.

Here as of late, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is distributing money back to the states from the fines that are associated with the BP oil spill. Those monies are ending as of this year essentially. And so this would be an opportunity for us to try to gain some additional funding to support that research.

Some of the benefit of that research area is to provide information directly into the federal stock assessment which is used for establishing a quota -- the Gulf-wide quota in the red snapper fishery. And we also gather other information on gray triggerfish and greater amberjack and such. And we're hoping that the amendment that was recently passed that Commissioner Blankenship mentioned will provide some
additional opportunities for the states to gain more access or at least manage the fisheries out there of their states, and this would be an integral program in that.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Two questions: First one, on the recommendation for the changes both for commercial and recreational on the flounder, do we have any estimates of the total pounds taken by commercial versus recreational?

CHIEF ANSON: We do. I would say off the top of my head that it would be approximately 20-percent commercial, 80-percent recreational.

MR. HARTZOG: Second question: Refresh my memory. Weren't we going to start a new hatchery program for the flounder?

CHIEF ANSON: So we have begun that. We started collecting broodstock of southern flounder last year, and we'll be trying to spawn those fish this
coming winter when they would normally
spawn in the December, January time
period. That species of fish, other
researchers have found it takes a long
time to acclimate and to get them to
feel comfortable in spawning in a
captive situation. So we're hoping that
we'll have successful spawning this
coming winter.

MR. HARTZOG: Weren't we shooting just for
75,000 release? Was that the figure I
remember?

CHIEF ANSON: 50 to 60 is what we would
eventually like to get to, yes. The
assessment -- one of the results of the
assessment indicated that approximately
400,000 6-inch flounder are recruited
under good conditions, good spawning
naturally. So we don't want to
introduce too many fish that would kind
of corrupt the gene pool, if you will.
So we target it around 50 to 60,000 --

MR. HARTZOG: And we think we'll be able to
achieve that?

CHIEF ANSON: We hope to, yes.

MR. HARTZOG: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions from the Board for Kevin?

MR. HARTZOG: Thank you, Kevin.

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

Ms. Patti McCurdy from State Lands, do you have anything for us today?

DIRECTOR McCURDY: Mr. Chairman, I do not. If there are any questions from the Board today, I'll be happy to address those, but I don't have anything I need to...

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Are there any questions of Director McCurdy from the Board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Fair enough. Scot-free.

DIRECTOR McCURDY: So far.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Director Lein. The lodge -- thank you. This has been wonderful. What a great experience for all of us. It's
just top shelf. The food was wonderful. The staff was great. We just had a wonderful time. Anything that you'd like to add today?

DIRECTOR LEIN: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would just like to say that things are really good in the Parks system right now. There's a lot of work that we've wanted to do to take care of our facilities, undertake the maintenance that we lacked the resources to undertake years ago. That's happening. There's a lot of progress happening.

It was 14 -- 15 years ago was the last time this Board was able to meet at the Lodge at Gulf State Park. And having this facility now, we feel whole again. And there's a lot of progress going on. Things are very positive.

And I would just say to the public, you know, if you want to help the State Parks system, get out and use your State
Parks system. That's how you help the Parks system. Use it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. You've been smiling at every meeting we've been at together in the last few months, so congratulations. I'm glad all is well. Very good.

DIRECTOR LEIN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Director Sykes, do you have anything to add besides what's in our packets?

DIRECTOR SYKES: No, sir, I do not.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Are there any questions for Director Sykes from the Board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: No questions from the Board. All right.

I would like to remind everybody to please download the latest Outdoor Alabama app for Game Check and participate not only for deer and turkey but also for snapper. Realize that what's happened with exempted fishing
permits is because of that, because of us controlling and understanding and knowing how many fish we catch. It's very important.

The same thing goes with deer and turkey. Please participate. It's the law, and it makes a huge difference.

And also buy a license. Please buy a license whether you're fishing, hunting, trapping, commercially or recreationally. Please buy your license. That helps. That's how the Department is funded.

The next part of our meeting is the -- the next agenda item is the public commentary. This is a very important part of our program. We've got eight speakers today. We'll move through that.

I'm going to ask everyone that comes to the podium today -- I want you to please -- and everyone in the auditorium -- please be respectful.
Reserve your comments for outside of the hall. No applause. No outbursts during the question-and-answer period.

I'm going to ask each Board member to refer to the Chair for the floor. And I'm going to ask the speakers to not engage directly or, as Ms. Tracye says, overspeak. And the reason I ask is because she's got a small button and it sends an electric charge to me and I then have to stop everything and regroup so that she gets a permanent record for our minutes. So help me. Don't let me get zapped.

Ms. Jones is going to hold time on the speakers. Everyone has three minutes. I reserve the right to give you a few more moments to make a specific point. Please don't ramble, but let's make a specific point. And, again, let's be courteous and considerate of the folks that are speaking.
And we're not going to use the ready chair since we only have eight speakers. Is that okay?

Our first speaker today is Mr. Jimmy Jimmerson.

MR. JIMMERSON: Good morning. I think that most of you have seen me before. I think this is about the third year that I've been here to present to you.

We're still -- I'm from Cleburne County in northeast Alabama. We're still asking the Board to approve that we can move the 10 days from the end of the season to the beginning of the deer season. We've worked very diligently with the Department of Conservation biologists, have shot many does, and we've tested and all the facts are in.

And the main thing that I've kind of been -- I hear is that there's other areas in the state that they're having the same problem. And I think they're wanting to wait until all those areas
can be done at the same time. But if we
go ahead and do what we've been asked to
do and show that the facts are showing
that the deer do rut early, why not go
ahead and allow Cleburne County because
of the facts that we've got and then
when these other areas of the state come
to you, all you got to do is say, well,
we've got a list of things that's got to be done, Cleburne County has done those
things, it's all factual and ...

Just let us go ahead and start the
program. And that's all I've got unless
somebody has got any questions.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Jimmerson.

Are there any questions for
Mr. Jimmerson?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you for coming to us.

We always enjoy you being here. Thank
you.

MR. JIMMERSON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Our next speaker --
MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I'm sorry. Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Not a question for
Mr. Jimmerson, but a question for Chuck.

I think at the last meeting
because -- I mean, I know some states
that's got 30 different zones in it.
And, remember, I think I threw out a
suggestion. Since we've got a
three-buck limit anyway, would it be
easier for the State to do a statewide
and just move the 10 days earlier, still
leave the February the 10th? Has the
State looked at that possibility of
doing that and that way we don't have to
worry about gerrymandering this part of
the county?

Because my county is one of the
counties that was affected. As you
know, we've got three different distinct
DNAs, you know, in Barbour County. Have
we -- I think I brought it up at the
last meeting for us to possibly look at
the -- just go ahead and giving, like
Mr. Jimmerson, his 10 days up front and
still have the February the 10th and
hunt your rut when you got your rut.
Have we looked at that, or would that
be ...

DIRECTOR SYKES: Yes. Anything is possible.
We've looked at it. As Mr. Jimmerson
said, the data is there. We've got it
in your county too. It's just whether
you want to add 10 more days to the
front. That's up to y'all.

We've got the data. You can hunt
from October 15th to February the 10th.
So however we need to do it, all we just
need is direction on what needs to
happen.

MR. HARTZOG: What would --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Hartzog, we've been
through this several times, and I'm
tickled to go through it again, but
let's do this. Let's form a -- if you
want to, let's form some sort of
guidelines. Let the Board talk about that or send that to the Board and then to staff for their review, and then we'll vote on it at the next meeting. We'll hash it out then.

MR. HARTZOG: That's fine.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Is that acceptable?

MR. HARTZOG: Yes, sir.

DIRECTOR SYKES: Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Jimmerson.

Our next speaker today is Mr. Corey Baxter.

MR. BAXTER: Appreciate it. I want to first say that I'm for dog hunting and I support all types of dog hunting, whether it be deer or squirrel or rabbit. I appreciate all you guys, and I know that we may not necessarily agree on everything. But we're all Americans and we're all here in this country and we enjoy different types of wildlife or whatever it may be. And I respect you
for that and I appreciate you taking the
time to listen to us and respect our
method of hunting as well.

And I noticed as we started this
meeting today we started with the Pledge
of Allegiance, you know. And there's
one word towards the end of the Pledge
of Allegiance that's "liberty". And I
just was thinking over there. So what
is liberty?

The state of being free within
society from oppressive restrictions
imposed by authority on one's way of
life.

You know, and as somebody that deer
hunts with dogs, I do everything in my
power that I can possibly do to control
those dogs at every part of my hunting,
even to the point that I've invested
$4,000 in the Garmin GPS tracking
system. My goal is to never have one of
my dogs on somebody else's property. I
don't know of anybody that I hunt with
that wants their dog on somebody else's property. I don't know of anybody that
I hunt with that wouldn't do anything in their power to keep that dog from
getting on someone else's property.

And as we move forward -- dog hunting has progressed over the last 10
years dramatically. Me as a dog hunter and the people that I hunt with, we have
taken great lengths to improve the way that we hunt, to respect stalk hunters
and landowners that are all around us, and for the most part I think we do a
really good job.

And as we work hard to improve, it is something that I would like to see
that the restrictions not increase upon the way that we hunt. As we are
invested into this, I ask you to not impose more restrictions on us. They
don't help.

The restrictions -- if somebody is going to break the law, they're going to
break the law. And I'm going to tell you, if you're breaking the law, if you're hunting on somebody else's land, if you're turning dogs loose on somebody else's land, I'll turn them in. I don't want to be categorized in the same sentence as somebody that is an outlaw dog hunter.

Just as I drove over here, I noticed I'm doing 55 miles an hour. I'm obeying the speed limit. Somebody comes flying past me doing 70. Thank God they don't shut down the highways, you know, and regulate driving.

And you may say, well, he's overreacting. Well, I'm not really overreacting because there's counties in our state of Alabama that's already been --

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. BAXTER: Just give me 30 seconds maybe?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: 30 seconds.

MR. BAXTER: -- that have been closed. I
don't want to see my counties closed in the future.

I'm for regulations as far as putting penalties on people who break the law, but even with a $4,000 tracking system they fail. You lose service. A collar breaks. There is room for error.

So as you make your regulations, I ask you to think about that, and let's work together to try to make it better for everybody, not just one or two. Appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Hold on, Mr. Baxter.

Are there any questions for Mr. Baxter from the Board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Wolfe.

MR. WOLFE: What's your feelings on the permit system?

MR. BAXTER: The permit system in itself does a better job of -- instead of shutting
down a whole county because of a few, it shuts down that particular area, which still affects a lot of people.

So as far as a permit system is concerned, it will never affect me because the people that I hunt with obey the law. So I would rather -- if it came down to losing my right in that county to hunt or being on a permit system, then I would have to say that I would be for the permit system in general.

But the dog encroachment law is -- and I know Mr. Chuck Sykes says it's not double jeopardy. And in his -- I've read his report where it says that it -- willfully and knowingly turning a dog loose on somebody else's property, well, that's against the law in the first place. And I'm not going to willfully and knowingly turn a dog loose on someone else's property.

So if it's comes to the encroachment
and a permit system, unlike the permit system that affects, just say, the county that we hunt in, it will only affect that small portion instead of the whole county, which is fair. I mean, and I -- if that's what we got to do to keep from losing the whole county, well, then, let's penalize the ones that are doing wrong.

And the more that we can do that -- just like somebody -- which I know -- for trespassing. Let's not shut down the county because three people were trespassing illegally in that county. Let's penalize the people who were trespassing, not shut the whole county down.

Appreciate the question.

MR. WOLFE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Baxter, I think that we all share your sentiment, and that's what the dog encroachment rule is intended for. It's not for the people
that obey the law. It's for the people that don't. Just please remember that. There's no double jeopardy in that. Thank you.

The next speaker is Mr. Wade Buckner.

MR. BUCKNER: He almost hit on what I was talking about, but the only problem I see with it is -- between the permit law and the encroachment law is that if you're running a Garmin and a GPS that dog is considered on a leash. Why isn't the leash law of, say, our county good enough for that?

That's my main question.

Or in the permit system you're taking a group of people, but there's no other law that we have that takes a group of people and fines a group of people. It only fines the person that does wrong. And that's where -- that's where I'm getting confused on this, because you're stacking up laws here.
You got a leash law that was made who knows when, then you have a permit law, and now you got an encroachment law.

And I'm surrounded by dog hunters. I have private land that is not dog-hunted. And so far the only people that have been encroaching on it have been still hunters. And I've caught them, got them on camera, and, you know, told them not to do it again.

And that's where I'm -- that's what I'm trying to get people to look at and think about it is we're stacking up laws here, but we're not accomplishing anything. You know, why can't we come to a solution where there's only one law that handles this instead of trying this law, trying that law, trying this law, but not getting rid of a law that is void anymore. That's all I have to say about it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Are there any questions for
Mr. Buckner?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Buckner.

At this point if we can maybe clear up some of this -- we only have a few more speakers.

Chief Weathers, if you don't mind speaking to the issue of the dog encroachment rule, the leash laws, and the lack of overlap.

CHIEF WEATHERS: So to address the Board and clear up some questions for everybody in the audience, the last speaker brought up the State's dog leash law.

The State of Alabama adopted a dog leash law 50 or 60 years ago. It's a State criminal law. It has to be ratified by the county commission in each -- it's a State law, but it does not become law in a county until the county commission adopts it, so to speak.

In my mind it is the absolute --
well, not the absolute worst way, but it is a terrible way to deal with the dog hunting issues. I worked about 15 years in a county that had adopted the State leash law, and though it was not routine, it did occur where dog hunters would allow a dog to get on private property. The landowner would call the sheriff's department. And the way this issue was handled was typically the landowner would catch the dog. The sheriff's department would come out. They would take the dog to the pound. They would issue a warrant for the hunter. He would be arrested and jailed.

It is different groups of people who do not understand hunting and they do not certainly understand dog hunting using a State criminal law to address a hunting issue, and it's a bad, bad way to deal with it. I would not like -- I think there are about 11 counties in the
state that have ratified/adopted that particular State leash law. It's bad news for all involved. It's using a sledgehammer to kill a gnat. It's not the right way.

The permit system is good. It has worked for several decades in this state. It doesn't address every issue. It is not perfect. No solution is going to be perfect. The permit system is another example of a broad, you know, sort of a shotgun approach at fixing problems where the absolute vast majority of dog hunters -- the absolute vast majority of areas in the state where dog hunting occurs are not problems. We hear nothing about them. It is particularly certain areas or certain groups that it's a repetitive thing. It shifts around a little bit here and there, but generally speaking, when you look back, it's certain areas and certain people.
The dog encroachment addition to the dog hunting law, I think, is a common-sense way to deal with it. We don't have to restrict those dog hunting clubs anymore. We don't have to take their land away from them. We can be specific to a member.

Under the current guidelines when a club's member allows a dog to get on a neighboring landowner or whatever the violation is, it's the entire club that is punished, not that member. The dog encroachment regulation allows us to ticket that specific member and stay away from the club, not take land away from the club. It's the least intrusive. It truly is holding that individual responsible for their actions and not punishing the larger club.

Even the club that we get complaints on, the vast majority of the club causes no problems. It will be a few people in that club that repetitively just want
to -- they just don't take -- they're not going to spend $4,000 on collars like our previous speaker is spending, if that makes sense.

I think in my mind it's less intrusive than putting more counties on the permit system, absolutely less intrusive than shutting down entire counties, and a much better solution than arresting -- physically arresting and jailing people who lose control of a dog.

And the encroachment subset to the existing regulation allows for a warning. It's not a first offense and you get a ticket. So the people who are doing it right, who are using a tracking collar -- like the previous speaker said, yeah, service gets interrupted. Collars get damaged. They fall off, batteries go out, that sort of thing. It provides for that.

An officer comes out and it's only a
Conservation officer. It keeps your police officers and your deputies who don't understand these issues -- it keeps them out of it. It's literally a game warden that walks up and addresses this issue. And we know collars get broken. We know there are issues. We use GPS ourselves. At different places they work better than others.

So if that all makes sense, that's sort of it in a nutshell.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: It makes perfect sense to me, and I think it's very viable.

Are there any questions for Chief Weathers about these two issues, specifically the dog encroachment issue?

MR. CAGLE: In your mind with the dog encroachment rule, what is -- you get a warning the first time if someone catches a dog on their property that's escaped. The second time how is that handled?
CHIEF WEATHERS: Well, could the person receive a ticket on the second offense? They certainly could. Is it mandated that they will? Absolutely not.

If it is a reception -- if that individual hunter has GPS collars, if they are making every effort to contain those dogs -- our officers use good discretion. We give warnings a lot of times. It is not our intent to write a bunch of tickets. Our funding isn't generated by that. It just gives us the ability.

We have places where officers are called out day after day after day. The counties aren't on the permit system. There is no ratification of the State's leash law. There is no -- currently there is no dog encroachment. The landowners who are calling our officers out, they just have to -- they have to endure it, and it leads to -- it leads to some bad things, like what occurred
in Clay County this past year.

I'm happy to say -- to report to the Board that the individual who killed the dog has been indicted in Clay County. The district attorney chose to indict. And I think he goes to trial in late May or June, I think.

So dog encroachment should give some options to that, but it's not mandatory that on the second call that the individual will get a ticket.

MR. CAGLE: And you and I discussed it some, but the way you've expressed it to me, would you agree, that this gives your officers a tool to address these problems rather than just leaving it -- you know, that third time you're going to write a ticket obviously. At that point I think you've identified someone that -- you've identified a problem.

CHIEF WEATHERS: Sure.

MR. CAGLE: And then it gives your officers a tool to try to address it rather than
just saying, you know, there's nothing else we can do.

CHIEF WEATHERS: It gives us, like you say, a tool that can put out these fires and we don't have these festering, smoldering issues like what happened in Clay County where someone takes a firearm and kills another man's dog. That should not have happened, should never happen. There should be a tool in place to mitigate the problem long before it gets to that. And that wasn't the first interaction there. You know, we arrested that man before snaring dogs.

So it would be a good tool. And I think it would lead to having to put fewer counties on the permit system in the future and fewer instances where we take away land from those permitted clubs. We can go after those individuals.

And to address the first speaker who gave the analogy of speeding and not
shutting down the highway, it would be
that analogy if there was no way to
write that person doing 70 miles an hour
a ticket. But we can. We can choose
not to write the person doing 55 miles
an hour, and that person who flies by
can be written a ticket. We don't have
that tool right now to go after that
individual. It's just not there.

MR. CAGLE: And one more thing. What would be
the overlap or the -- on a county that's
on a permit, how would -- if the dog
encroachment rule is approved, how would
that interaction be as far as -- you
know, there's concerns that you would be
penalized twice for the same offense.

CHIEF WEATHERS: Right. The way we look at it
is that it gives the club a tool that
they really don't currently have, or at
least they can stand on regulation if
they choose to use the tool. If you're
a club member and you get a ticket for
violating this dog encroachment rule,
you put the -- conceivably put the whole club at risk of having their dog hunting, you know, taken away for that particular block of land. They can in their bylaws write in if you're convicted of this, you cannot apply for club membership the next year. It gives them that tool.

On our end, if we can go after the individual and stop that problem, we're going to be much less likely to take land away from a dog hunting club, which to be dead honest is an exceptionally rare occurrence in its current state. We usually give warning letters for years, multiple years, before we actually start sort of carving out portions of the club that are causing problems.

So, you know, we're not taking away a lot of land to begin it, and we certainly would not take away more. We would take away less, so to speak.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. Thank you.

MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Wolfe.

MR. WOLFE: When you talk to someone -- when you walk in that first time and you confront him and then the second time and then the third time, at any point do you contact that -- do you have contact with the club?

What I'm getting at is if you go out and catch somebody and you get on them but they don't say anything to the club --

MR. WEATHERS: We can. It's pretty common when the counties that are on permit system -- when they send in their applications for the previous year that our local officers communicate with them. They send in maps. They send in club membership listings, that sort of thing. That would be the time to say, okay -- and we do already -- okay, we arrested two or three members last year
for whatever it happens to be. That's typically when the warning letter would be generated. In the future, really no change there. Those club presidents, whoever is the administrator of the club, would know that this person has received a ticket.

MR. WOLFE: So the main thing, they're notified and they understand what that club member is doing --

CHIEF WEATHERS: Not a surprise.

MR. WOLFE: -- and not blindsiding them?

CHIEF WEATHERS: Right. And that's already going on too. You know, it's going on right now. So that would not be a change.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions from the Board for Chief Weathers?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Very well spoken. We appreciate that. I hope that cleared up for some of the attendees that there's not double jeopardy.
All right. Our next speaker is Brady Hovater.

Brady Hovater?

Brady is not here.

Next speaker is Susan Morrow.

MS. MORROW: Good morning. I think everybody knows who I am. I'm Susan Morrow, and you know I stand for dog hunting. I stalk hunt also. But my problem with this encroachment thing is if you can't catch the bad dog hunters now, how are you going to catch them with encroachment? How is that going to work?

I don't see how it's going to work if you can't catch them now. If you could catch one or two of the bad dog hunters and -- they would set an example. The other ones would start toning down. But it seems to me the dog hunters keep being discriminated against because y'all keep putting more and more on us.
The good dog hunters, just like Corey Baxter -- me and him has hunted together forever, and he knows what it takes. I know what it takes. And the majority of your dog hunters here knows what it takes. But we're the ones that will be penalized because, believe it or not, there's people out there that will get our dogs and they will hold them. And they're going to call the game warden because they have told us they will do this. This is what they want. But keep in mind, they're landowners, but dog hunters are landowners too.

And I think that if you could have a couple of these dog hunters that's turning loose on other people's property or not doing it the right way -- if you could catch them -- and I don't see how the encroachment is going to help you there. It's going to help the landowner because they're going to have our dog if they can get it. Believe it or not,
they will pick our dog up from anywhere because they want dog hunting stopped.

And I know it's a problem. It's always an issue. But I promise you, if you put the encroachment in place and we start -- don't get any of the bad dog hunters caught, the good dog hunters, they're going to quit. Your license sales is already down, and there's a lot of dog hunters that that's all they do. And it's not so much about the harvest. It's about working with the dogs. And it's great for the kids.

So I would ask you to really look at this. Is it going to help the good dog hunters or is it going to help the bad dog hunters? Because if they're going to break the law, they're going to break the law anyway. And I haven't even seen one that has been caught. That I would like to see. We hear about complaints. Complaints can be a phone call.

The last meeting we had one
landowner --

MS. JONES: Time.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Go ahead. Make a point.

MS. MORROW: -- one landowner, and when that meeting was over, that landowner come outside and told us he had us right where he wanted us. And that's not fair.

So I would ask y'all to please look at it. If you don't know how the good dog hunters are working, I invite you to come and go with one and see how hard we work. Everybody tries to catch the dogs. And you know it has went way down. So I would ask y'all to please look at that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Susan. Thank you for always being here.

Any questions for Ms. Morrow from the Board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Mr. Bobby Pack.
MR. PACK: Good morning, committee. My name is Bobby Pack. I'm the Alabama Dog Hunters Association Mobile Chapter President.

I've been dog hunting my whole life. I've had any kind of dog you could think of from a squirrel dog to a rabbit dog or to a deer dog. I've hunted all over Alabama. Hunted in California and South Carolina. I've lived several places in my life.

I've had short-running dogs like they're talking about that stay on the property. I've had long-running dogs that you'd run all day long. I've had them all. Like Corey Baxter -- he's a friend of mine. I've hunted with Corey for years. We've invested all the money we can on a dog. There's nothing else we can do besides what we're doing now to stop a dog. We have them tone-broke. We have them whistle-broke. You call or
whatever.

We've hunted all over this country. We -- and lower Alabama counties like Mobile and Washington is the thickest part of the state, if anybody knows that. We -- dog hunting is our -- to me it's the capital of dog hunting in the lower part. People down here dog-hunt not just deer. They hunt with everything.

The shooting the man was talking about a minute ago about the guy up in north Alabama, that was a coon dog. Had nothing to do with deer dogs.

We've had deer dogs killed in Mobile County this year. I spoke with House of Representative Springer. We're going to get together this off-season and try to come up with a bill to protect the dog from being shot, make it a felony crime to be shot while -- with a tracking collar on them.

Getting back to what the other guy
was talking about, the encroachment law is not double whatever. Why do we need a permit system if you enhance the encroachment law?

I was on the permit in Choctaw County with Hebron Hunting Club. We got 13,000 acres. We never had a complaint in three years. They told us after three years we'd get off of it. We couldn't get off of it.

I'm at a club in Baldwin County with Cooper Matthews, a big landowner. We been on that thing for three years. We never have a complaint, never. We're still on the permit system.

So, you know, you was talking about -- like the dog encroachment, if we get on it, how you ever going to get off of it? It's going to make a law where we have it from now on.

Oh, another thing about the dogs. If a stalk hunter shoots a deer, the first person he wants to call is a dog
hunter. Well, to me, if you pursue a
deer, chase a deer or anything with a
dog, you're considered a dog hunter.
Well, these stalk hunters are calling
people over there to bring dogs on their
property that they don't want them no
other time on their property, but they
want you to come find a deer for them,
which is fine. But that guy
automatically ought to become a deer
hunter -- he's a dog hunter.

One more thing.

I lost my train of thought. But,
anyway, to me he becomes a dog hunter.
And 85 percent of the stalk hunters will
call a dog hunter before it's over it.

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. PACK: One more second, please.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Pack, make a point,

please.

MR. PACK: All right. My point is, is that
they're doing it in these counties that
are closed. They're doing it in these
counties that are permitted and not getting permitted. A stalk club don't have to have a permit, but as soon as stalk season goes -- or dog season goes out and they shoot a deer, they want a dog hunter to come with their dog in a closed county or a permitted county that don't even have a permit. Well, how do they get a permit to be able to bring a dog in there?

That's all. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

Any questions?

Mr. Wolfe.

MR. WOLFE: You referred to getting some legislation, but isn't there legislation on the books already that if you kill a dog that that's already --

MR. PACK: Got the Gucci Law and something else, I believe.

CHIEF WEATHERS: No. You've got cruelty to animals.

(Simultaneous crosstalk.)
MR. PACK: Like Mississippi has got one.
Florida has got one. Tennessee --

MR. WOLFE: But in Alabama right now if I kill
a dog and I'm caught --

CHIEF WEATHERS: Well, that's what happened in
Clay County.

MR. WOLFE: I'm referring to Clay County.

CHIEF WEATHERS: Yes. And that was a dog deer
hunter. You're talking -- there were
two incidences. One was a coon dog
killed. The one we're talking about was
a dog deer --

MR. WOLFE: Right. Deer.

CHIEF WEATHERS: -- hunting dog. And he was
charged with felony cruelty to animals.

MR. WOLFE: That's felony. That's already on
the books.

MR. PACK: What we're talking about is like a
hunting dog or --

MR. WOLFE: It doesn't make a difference what
kind of dog it is. If you kill a dog in
Alabama, that's a felony.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions from the
Board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Pack, thank you very much.

MR. PACK: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Our next speaker is Mr. Ed Thomas.

MR. THOMAS: Good morning. I'd like to thank the Board for listening because we've driven five hours to speak for three minutes.

I represent a group of about 30 men from the Piney Woods/Ivory Mountain area. We'd like to -- basically we would like to have our hunting ground back. It was pulled from us without notice, without permit, without warning, the ground we've hunted for 50 years. We feel it's been unfairly taken from us.

We're mostly a disabled group of men who cannot hunt in the mountain land of Cheaha. We've had no tickets or no
problems with the game warden, no
violations. The only complaints are
from wealthy landowners that our dogs
come through their property. And this
has not been a problem until recently.

A man by the name of Mr. Richard
Sprayberry, who owns Mountain View
Plantation, a game preserve, started big
game hunts with Alabama deer. We found
some of his stands on national forest
land. National forests are set aside
for the recreation of the people -- for
the American people. And we feel that
we've been discriminated against and
railroaded out of the interest of a few
individuals who profit off the game of
the state of Alabama.

Mr. Tony Shears is with me today.
He started the camp in Piney Woods in
1970 when you had to go get permits from
the national forest to even camp there.
Since then it's been designated a
camping area. And it's been a tradition
for the first 9 days of every deer season that we would all get together, these 30 men -- us and our families get together and go over there and camp, cook, eat, socialize, and hunt a little. But we didn't get to enjoy that last year. And we kindly ask this Board to reconsider taking our land from us.

We discussed this matter with a federal attorney, and his advice to us was to first try to talk to the Board as we are doing today. Please do not deny us the privilege for dog hunting in Ivory Mountain and Piney Woods any longer. And we thank y'all for your time and listening to us today.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Are there any questions from the Board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Thomas, very much for coming down here. Appreciate you making the trip.
Our last speaker today is Mr. Avery Bates.

MR. BATES: Listening at them laughing. I don't blame them.

I'm Avery Bates, Vice President of Organized Seafood Association, long-time commercial fisherman, and fed thousands of people and my family fed millions of people really over the years.

Some of these bills and regulations is going to devastate your restaurants. I've talked to Pumpkin Simms, Lighthouse people. They're kin to me. All the restaurants I'd say. And Pumpkin said that's one of my main fish, the flounder. Couldn't say speckled trout because that's a gamefish.

And when you put these people on 30 fish a day, you're putting them out of business, that flounder fisherman. And then you've taken other fish away from them. Like you've already took speckled trout and redfish. When a business
can't sell the product and they want them, then they have to go to other countries. Therefore, they lose the market here. Then they have to go to Mexico. Canada ships them in from all over, free trade agreement thing.

These people is hard-working Alabamians that's getting good fresh flounder -- wonderful thing that stuffed flounder. Have you ever had a stuffed flounder?

But some of these 30-fish limits, when recreational fishermen are catching 80 percent of them and they're just slipped down to five when we don't have actually but ten true gillnet commercial flounder fishermen and the other few that's gigging -- and I say few because a couple of hundred is nothing when you consider hundreds of thousands of recreational fishermen taking five fish. You could bring that down to two fish and give the commercial fishermen three
times, four times that much per day or
even five times that much per day, who
is feeding the people of this state.
And not only the people of the state,
they are a business.

Let me tell you, Solomon was pretty
wise. I sure wish the agricultural man
was here. You know what Solomon said in
Proverbs 11:26?

He that withholdeth corn, the people
shall curse him, but he -- but blessings
shall be upon the head of him that sell
it. That goes for fish too. If nobody
has any fish to eat, you better watch
out. You're going to get a lashing of
the tongue from the people that can't
enjoy it. So let's make these odds just
and fair. If you're taking 80 percent
of them, let's give the people of
Alabama the chance to enjoy that fish.

Some of the other things that's come
up, too, that still worries me about
some of these bills, especially on
Bill 107 -- this is the oyster farming. This bill here still worries me about the National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

MS. JONES: Time.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Go ahead.

MR. BATES: This bill here, when you have to adhere to water temperature of getting oysters out of the water in one hour from taking it, if you put anybody up there in brackish and saltwater, the enforcement of that -- if you have an oyster that's not controlled temperature-wise, the Vibrio that we have in the summertime magnifies. And this fellow that has a pier that brings up oysters and gives them to his neighbor, when it hits the paper, it'll say oysters in the state of Alabama have Vibrio in them. What happens to the honest, good hard-working people like down in Grand Bay like the Zerlins and so many more.
This is people that work hard. And we have many every day that will lose their business over one bad individual dying from Vibrio. It will go through the public. And that will ruin Rose's business. It'll ruin Troy Cornelius' business. It will ruin everybody's business because of the publicity about bad oysters.

So this bill needs to have some enforcement behind it. The Board of Health is supposed to be on board, but it says nothing in that bill that will truly, truly protect the people with just some Tom, Dick, and Harry out there catching oysters and not having to adhere to the same stringent regulations and procedures that each and every other one that sells to the public. Be careful with what you do.

Thank y'all very much.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Avery.

Any questions for Mr. Bates?
Mr. Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, Avery.

I did want to let you know that I -- that after you were here at the meeting in March we have talked with Representative Brown about this bill, have made suggestions to him on how we think we could alleviate some of these concerns. He agreed to make those changes.

Now, it was in committee last week, and I have not seen the bill that came out of committee. It's on the calendar for this week. But I assure you that I will look and review that bill before Tuesday to make sure that those concerns that you have are addressed in the legislation.

MR. BATES: It's just not my concerns alone. It's my concern, don't get me wrong. But all these legitimate fishermen that's held to stringent, stringent laws that's handed down through the FDA,
they're trying to keep the public with a good healthy product.

    Now, if Mr. Whoever down the --
that's in a brackish and salty area, if he's not held to that standard, just
that he wants to have that own product,
I'm worried about what bad publicity or people dying that don't handle their product -- and it's their product. But that will hit the fan if something is not done to manage -- and I mean enforcement-wise -- to manage that oyster from killing somebody.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir. And I understand your concerns and the concerns of the industry, and we are working to address that with the sponsor.

MR. BATES: All right. Well, think about this flounder. The people that's catching 80 percent, the recreational, the people that's feeding the restaurants or selling to the restaurants -- let's
consider Alabamians enjoying good healthy-caught fish, not 30 fish per fisherman. That's such -- that's like giving a dog one bone a month.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Avery.

Any more questions?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: That's the last of our speakers, and that ends the public commentary portion of our meeting. Thank you all for being here.

Our next agenda item is unfinished business. One thing that I'll strike off the list is the synopsis of the effective legislations that we've been updated on and you've got in your package.

Is there any other unfinished business? Are there any questions to staff that we don't have an answer to?

Mr. Jones.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Where are we on the semen
importation that we discussed at the
last meeting? Do we have an update on
that from the staff on CWD?

DIRECTOR SYKES: Yeah. Our staff has looked
at it. We've looked at it for the past
couple of years. There's just nothing
in the literature right now. It's
assumed it's a bodily fluid. It's like
urine, saliva, feces, semen. But as far
as going to a scientific paper and
saying there's a direct correlation
between CWD and semen being transferred
from one deer to another, it's just not
there right now.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: All right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: No further unfinished
business -- I have one question.

The turkey study program, that's
going to be with us in September, about
then?

Thank you.
So we come to the next portion of our meeting, which will be any new business for this meeting.

Is there any new business or announcements?

Mr. Cagle.

MR. CAGLE: I have a motion to approve -- I want to make a motion to approve all the requests for regulation changes, seasons and bag limits proposed by the Marine Resources Division and, if it's okay, to take it all as one motion.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I don't have a problem with that. Is that okay with you Kevin, Mr. Commissioner, Charlanna?

Okay. So we have a motion on the floor. I won't read it again. We all know what it is.

Is there a second?

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Excuse me. Clarification. Is this just the Marine Resources?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: This is Marine Resources.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Okay. Second.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I'm sorry. Let's hit it again.

It's Marine Resources' seasons and bag limits and the changes thereto which affect what Kevin spoke to us about earlier.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We have a second.

Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: There's no discussion. We'll take a vote on this. This will by "ayes" and "nays."

So all those in favor of accepting Patrick Cagle's motion, please say "aye."

(All board members present respond "aye" with Department of Agriculture & Industries Deputy Commissioner Patrick Moody not voting.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Those opposed?

(No response.)
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: None opposed. Motion carries.

Any other new business or motions?

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Jones.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: I'd like to make a motion to approve the season and bag limits and all changes for the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: So noted. And I have that here and you have it in your packets. We had that discussed at last meeting -- or reviewed at last meeting individually.

We have a motion before the floor. Is there a second?

MR. CAGLE: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Second by Mr. Cagle.

Is there any discussion?

MR. HARTZOG: Just one question.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: As to Fisheries, where on our checklist here it says remove the black
bass limit on the Demopolis Reservoir,
remove the limit totally?

CHIEF NICHOLS: The length limit.

DIRECTOR SYKES: It's a length limit.

MR. HARTZOG: Okay. Well, the way it's --
ookay. The way it read, it just said
remove the black bass limit. It didn't
say length limit, so that's -- okay.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Are you okay with that,
Mr. Hartzog?

MR. HARTZOG: Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. We have a second.
We've had discussion.
Any further discussion?
(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Let's vote on this one again,
please, the same way.
All those in favor of accepting the
seasons and changes in bag limits for
Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries,
please signify it by saying "aye."
(All board members present respond
"aye" with Department of
Agriculture & Industries Deputy Commissioner Patrick Moody not voting.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any opposed?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it.

Any additional motions or business today?

MR. STIMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a motion.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Stimpson.

MR. STIMPSON: I'd like to make a motion to add the dog deer hunting encroachment rule as stated in the attached regulation beginning with the 2019-2020 hunting season.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Very good. We have that motion for the dog encroachment --

MR. HARTZOG: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We have a second from Mr. Hartzog.

Is there any discussion?

(No response.)
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: If there's no discussion had, let's bring that for a vote.

All those in favor of enacting the dog encroachment regulation as will be attached -- and we'll give it to Ms. Blackwell for the record -- please signify that by saying "aye."

(All board members present respond "aye" with Department of Agriculture & Industries Deputy Commissioner Patrick Moody not voting.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All those opposed?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it.

Any other motions?

MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Cagle.

MR. CAGLE: I want to make a motion that we approve the Gulf Reef Fish Endorsement proposed by Marine Resources Division.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. There's a motion on the floor to propose the Gulf Reef
Fish Endorsement, the fee which helps fund continued research and will keep getting us our exempted fishing permits.

Is there a second?

MR. WOLFE: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Wolfe. Thank you.

Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: There being no discussion, let's vote on that.

All of those in favor of the endorsement, please signify by saying "aye."

(All board members present respond "aye" with Department of Agriculture & Industries Deputy Commissioner Patrick Moody not voting.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any opposed?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: No opposition. The "ayes" have it. The motion carries.

Mr. Wolfe.
MR. WOLFE: Mr. Chairman, I make a motion to the Board to place Talladega and Clay Counties on the dog deer hunting permit system effective the hunting season of 2019-2020.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

There's a motion on the floor. Is there a second?

DR. LEMME: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Second. Dr. Lemme.

Is there any discussion regarding the motion?

DR. LEMME: Mr. Chairman, would the permit system apply to public lands such as a national forest and the private lands of the county?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: It applies to everything that you cannot permit in public lands -- permits issued on public lands.

DR. LEMME: So it deals with private lands, then?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, sir.

DR. LEMME: Okay.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any further discussion?

There's a motion before the Board to place Talladega and Clay Counties on the dog deer hunting permit system beginning with the 2019-2020 season. We'll vote on this, please.

All those in favor, let it be known by saying "aye."

(All board members present respond "aye" with Department of Agriculture & Industries Deputy Commissioner Patrick Moody not voting.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All those opposed, let it be known by saying "nay."

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it. The motion carries.

Is there any other business before us today? Any other motions?

MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman, I have one more motion I want to make.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Cagle.
MR. CAGLE: And I want to make this motion and explain it some. I'll ask for a second, and then I'm going to invite a motion to table this so that we can review this one more year.

This motion I want to make is to establish a limited catch-and-release artificial bait trout fishing zone on the more difficult portions to access of the Sipsey River beginning October 1 and ending February 28th of each year.

So limited to just the less popular fishing times, to make an artificial catch-and-release zone in the three-quarter-mile area that's the hardest to reach. In the motion I've got some more specifics as far as GPS, but since we're not going to vote on it, I won't go through all that.

What I seek to do is -- you know, the Department has been really good at doing the research. It's clear it's a put-and-take fishery. I still think
there is a way to make each user group
get a little of what they want. No one
is ever going to get everything of what
they want without affecting the rights
of the others.

You know, it's a 12-mile-long
fishery. There are some areas that are
a little harder to access. And I want
us to just keep doing that hard work.
It's probably the hardest part of this
job, I believe, is to find a way to
accomplish as many user group goals at
once without impeding on the other.

Again, I put some specifics out
there. I want to work with the
Department if there's any
counterproposals, any modifications. So
at this time I would ask for a second
and then invite a motion to table so
that we could address this at the first
meeting next near.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. There's a motion.
Is there a second?
MR. WOLFE: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We have a second.

DR. LEMME: Mr. Chairman, I would move that we table this motion until the first meeting of 2020 allowing the Department to come back with their assessment and any further recommendations.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Is there a second?

MR. CAGLE: I'll offer the second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We have a second.

Shall we vote on the motion or just call it up or down?

Let's vote.

DR. LEMME: We need to vote on the tabling.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: That's what we're going to vote on is to table -- the motion to table the motion; okay?

All right. So that's what our vote is. This is the vote on the motion to table the motion until next meeting; correct?

So all of those in favor of what I just said, please signify by saying
"aye."

(All board members present respond "aye" with Department of Agriculture & Industries Deputy Commissioner Patrick Moody not voting.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Are there any opposed?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it. The motion carries. It will be tabled until the next meeting, which is specific.

Okay. Thank you.

Is there any other business or announcements from anyone?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. Very good. I'll end it now, or do you want to just -- you want to gable the meeting closed?

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Well, I'd like to -- first I'd like to thank Ms. Betsy Jones and Wanda and Beau for all their work getting this set up down there. Having a meeting this far outside of
Montgomery is a little bit of a logistical challenge. Thank you very much for the work to get that done and to have everybody here.

David Rainer wrote an article last week in his column that was about the use of dogs in the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Particularly last week it was with the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and how those dogs are used in enforcement.

Today we do have -- the Marine Resources Division has the dog here, Gaines, and Officer Cox. So at this time if I could get you to walk up here with Gaines.

This is a program that was started several years ago and has been very effective at deterring violations, finding violations, deterring future violations, and also as a public relations tool for the Department. And
he has been -- he's extremely popular.
We have two, one in Mobile County and
one in Baldwin County. And so as many
of you read David's article every week
and since we had one of the dogs here, I
wanted you to be able to see that. And
thank you very much.

And then our next Forever Wild Board
Meeting is this Thursday in Greenville
at 10 a.m. if there's anyone that's
interested in attending the next
quarterly Forever Wild Board Meeting.

Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Let me add my thanks to Betsy and
Wanda, Tracye, Beau, everybody that
comes and helps to put this together.
It's very time-consuming.

If there are no additional
announcements, the date and the time of
our next -- I'm sorry. Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Well, I want to be called out of
order. Mr. Gary Wolfe offered me $20 so
that if she would push the "shock"
button --

(Crowd response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. All of you please
have safe travels home, certainly to the
gentleman who came from five hours.
This Department, as I said before,
touches our lives in a lot of ways.

Thank you very much for being here.
The date and time of our next meeting
will be announced next year. Thank you
very much.

(Meeting adjourned at
approximately 10:37 a.m.)
REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF ALABAMA:

MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

I, Tracye Sadler Blackwell, Certified Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large, do hereby certify that I reported the foregoing proceedings of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Board Meeting on May 4, 2019.

The foregoing 108 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 15th day of June 2019.

/s/ TRACYE SADLER BLACKWELL

ACCR No. 294
Expiration date: 9-30-2019
Certified Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large