STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
ALABAMA FIRE COLLEGE AUDITORIUM
Tuscaloosa, Alabama
May 19, 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 Alabama Fire College Auditorium, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, on Saturday, May 19, 2018, commencing at approximately 8:58 a.m.

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BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
Mr. Joseph Dobbs, Jr., Chairman
Commissioner Christopher M. Blankenship
Commissioner John McMillan
Dr. Gary Lemme
Mr. Jeff Martin
Mr. Raymond Jones, Jr.
Mr. Grady Hartzog
Mr. Patrick Cagle
Mr. Ben C. Stimpson, Jr.
Mr. Gary Wolfe
Ms. Jessica Butler
Mr. Greg Barksdale
Mr. Brock Jones

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CHAIRMAN DOBBS: It's about time, and everybody is here and settled in. So let's bring this meeting of the Conservation Advisory Board for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, May the 19th, 2018, to order. First this morning, to all of our sportsmen and sportspeople here, welcome to the Fire College. We appreciate this venue. It's very nice. We've been talking about that. And I'd like to
thank David Thornburg and his staff -- he's the director -- for the use of the auditorium and these facilities.

    Thank you very much, David. Thank you very, very much. We appreciate it. It's wonderful.

    To everybody that's attending today, thank you. We've got a lot to get done. We only have seven speakers. Our last meeting in Montgomery went well thanks to everybody that was there and was considerate of our speakers, of the attendees, and our board. So let's have a great meeting today.

    Let me take a moment to thank Tim Gothard and the Alabama Wildlife Federation for his and the Federation's help. They have provided venues and meals and meeting locations and all kinds of support for activities and programs, and we appreciate that.

    Also, today Commissioner John McMillan, our commissioner of
Agriculture -- this is his last meeting with us. He's been here since he was elected. We're going to miss his counsel and his wisdom. And would you like to come up here and say something?

COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Thanks a lot. It is good to be with y'all. I thought -- it looks like our crowd might be off a little bit. I guess that royal wedding has interfered with the hunters and fishermen today. My wife has been sitting on the end of the bed since about 5:30 watching all that stuff. The horses are sure pretty. I can tell you that. I love watching pretty horses. I just want to take a minute, and I'm not going to say anything that probably everybody here doesn't know. But we are fortunate and we're blessed in Alabama with our resources, but we also are blessed with the professionals that we have managing our resources --
attempting to manage our resources. And that's one of the things -- there were a couple of things I walked away from being conservation commissioner with. I firmly felt after being there a few years that we've got the professionals that know how to manage fish and wildlife. It's when you throw the human beings in there that you start having such a problem. And that's a real challenge to this board as well.

We also are blessed to have a great Conservation Advisory Board. But that's the thing that, I think, most impressed me is the ability that our scientists and our biologists and our professionals have to do these things if we can just all pull together behind them and help them to do it.

One of the things I was thinking about last night from my tenure as commissioner, we had a heck of a dog problem. Dogs were a problem, good
gracious. But you know what it was?
And, I mean, dog hunting with deer
wasn't even -- that never even came up.
It was dogs and trapping that we
struggled with back then. Big deal.
Trapping was a big deal. And there
wasn't a single meeting that we didn't
have a lot of trappers there and usually
at odds with the dog hunters. So that's
a problem.

It just shows you the challenges.
And that's one of the things that these
professionals are having to deal with --
and we all have to deal with it one way
or another -- is the changes in
technology. It's just absolutely
unbelievable what's happening with
technology. And in my opinion we're
just on the very fringes of that. What
if somebody had told us back in that day
that -- and it hadn't been that many
years ago -- that we'd be able to put
collars on dogs and GPS technology would
be there to just -- just that part of the deal.

And we hadn't seen anything yet. We're just starting to scratch the surface with artificial technology and things like that that are going to be changing everything we all do from our jobs to our businesses to whatever.

But the only thing -- thought that I would really like to leave with y'all is for everybody here. It is so important that we try to be fair and balanced not only with what our personal passion might be but also in working and letting our staff and our professionals at the Department do their job and supporting them. And there's one overriding reason we all better remember how important that is, and that is that there's not a one of us here that can't get singled out for whatever our interests might be. And if we ever start isolating ourselves in different sectors, then we're going
to see the end of all of it. Because we are -- I think all of you would agree with me that we're in a real minority with the interests that we have. And if we're going to be able to manage our natural resources of all kinds, it's going to take all of us pulling together.

Thank you-all so much. I can't tell you how much I've really enjoyed the opportunity to get back and be involved with the Department and the affairs of the Department and game and fish in all of its forms and everything to do with it. And the only commitment I make to you is that I'll be around one way or another in the future and look forward to having some sort of continuing relationship. Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Commissioner.

Good luck going forward.

If I can now, I would like to ask Mr. Tim Gothard to please give the
invocation for us. If everybody would bow their heads.

MR. GOTHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Lord, first I want to just thank you for the wildlife, the forests, the fish and waters and soils that you've blessed us with here in Alabama. Lord, we have a great responsibility to be great stewards of those gifts and the pursuits that go along with us enjoying our outdoor passions. Lord, I thank you for everybody here that is passionate about all of those things, this group that sits before us that weighs and makes decisions on how we strike that balance between use and management and protection of those resources that you've given us. I just ask you to be with us and guide us to make good decisions. In Thy Son's name, Amen.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. And, Commissioner McMillan, will you lead us in the Pledge, please.
COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Yes, sir. Let's all stand and face the flag.

(Pledge of Allegiance recited.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Something that we've read that's been on the big board is the Sportsmen's Pledge. There's one in your seat. Please take those home with you. It's something that we're going to refer to at every meeting. Today I've asked Mr. Raymond Jones, our board member, to read the Sportmen's Pledge. In the future, for all of us, we'll try to read it together, and let's adopt it as a promise to our resource. It's as good today as it was in 1908.

Mr. Jones.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Thank you.

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 the reckless whose vandalism would annihilate every visible thing of fin, fur, or feather to gratify their savage instincts.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very, very much. Thank you very much. That was wonderful.

I have one other person I would like to introduce. There's a gentleman here today that interacts with the Department from time to time, Mr. Eddie Maxwell.

Mr. Maxwell, this is our board. That's Mr. Maxwell there second behind Nick and Fred just so y'all will know Eddie in the future.
So, Mr. Secretary, do we have a quorum today?

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHP: We do.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Very good.

The minutes -- I assume that everybody has read the minutes. Are there any changes or additions to our minutes?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: No changes and no additions. With that, we'll approve the minutes, and those stand approved. And you and I both have signed them.

So next will be the introduction of our board members. I think we'll start with Mr. Martin at the far end. If he will just tell us his name and his district, please.

MR. MARTIN: Jeff Martin, District 3.

MR. WOLFE: Gary Wolfe, District 1.

MR. STIMPSON: Ben Stimpson, District 1.

DR. LEMME: Gary Lemme, Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.
Thanks, everybody. And now we've got the Commissioner's report.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Good to see everybody here this morning. I don't have much to report between the last meeting and this meeting.

The legislature has finished their legislative session since we met last. There were not very many bills that dealt with the Department of...
Conservation. We did have one bill that repealed deputy game wardens that passed that related to the Department.

And there was also a bill passed at the request of the oyster aquaculture industry in south Alabama to establish an oyster aquaculture permit and change some of the tagging laws to make it easier for them in the business and make them more efficient and be able to operate better to help that industry grow. I'm thankful to say that that passed with the support of Representative David Sessions from south Alabama really helping to shepherd that through the House to get that done.

We've had a lot of events that have taken place over the last few months. One of the most encouraging from the Department's standpoint is that we have finished a revision to our plan for chronic-wasting disease and our surveillance and response plan for what
we would do -- what we're doing now to
detect CWD if it was to come into our
state and what we would do in response
to it if it is discovered here.

There's a lot of great work by Keith
and other people in the Wildlife section
along with our Enforcement section and
our Legal staff and Chuck to do all the
research and look at what's happening
around the country and for us to put a
plan together that takes the best and
most relevant science to ensure that we
as a state are ready, one, to keep it
out of our state and, two, that we are
ready to respond in the unfortunate case
that CWD is discovered here.

So we have that on our website if
you would like to go see that response
plan. It's available on the site to see
those things that would take place in
the unfortunate event.

But we had a great meeting with
various stakeholders. I've only
received positive feedback from all of
the different stakeholder groups that
participated in our meeting where we
made that public. And so I think that
that's a good sign.

They have CWD in Wisconsin. And
there's a lot of things that we have in
our plan that we're going to do strictly
if we do have that that in Wisconsin
they're just doing now several years
after CWD was discovered there. And,
really, I think their lack of attention
has caused that to spread further in
their state than it would have had they
taken the action that we have included
in our plan that we're ready to do if we
need to do that.

So, Mr. Chairman, with that, that's
my report.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much. Well
done.

COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: Joey?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, sir.
COMMISSIONER Mc MILLAN:  Excuse me.  While we're on that, our lab equipment and technician have been certified by USDA. So the Auburn Diagnostic Lab is testing.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS:  And Commissioner McMillan is referring to a machine that can test up to 90 samples a day --

Is that correct?

COMMISSIONER Mc MILLAN:  I believe that's right.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS:  -- of tissue from deer.  It's housed at Auburn.  As he said, now it's certified.  So we're going to use it quite a bit.  We're very proud to have that machine.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:  In the past we've been dependent upon some other states. As we've taken samples, we'd send those off to Iowa or Ohio or some of the other places that have a lab.  There's a little bit of a delay in getting those samples back, and we're dependent on other people.
Partnered with the Department of Agriculture, Commissioner McMillan, we helped purchase some equipment to place into their lab so that now we are totally self-contained in Alabama. We don't have to wait on anybody or depend on anybody else. We take our samples. We can have those tested at the Department of Agriculture lab in Auburn and get those results back, and that will really ensure that we're able to respond as quickly as possible.

And I appreciate the partnership with the Department of Agriculture. And through this process we really have partnered with the Alabama Department of Public Health and Alabama Department of Environmental Management to make sure that we're all coordinating with each other so that we have a very robust plan and that it takes into account all of those agencies and what they all do to help the public. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Very good. Thank you, Commissioner.

Our next item of business on the agenda, sticking to the agenda -- we have no special orders that I'm aware of. So we move to the public comments section of our meeting. Today we have seven speakers.

We have a "ready" chair. We have all that set up, but I -- I just say let's roll. So I'm going to call the first speaker, and that's who will come up and begin; and when he's finished, I will call the second speaker.

I'd ask you today, please, as we have in the past, respect the speaker, respect the board, hold your applause if you have any, and let these folks finish because there may be comments or questions that come from the board.

And to the speakers, please direct your comments or asks to the Chair. That's me. And I will direct you to the
right person or to the board member. And the same thing to the board. Direct your comments to the Chair.

So with that, our first speaker today is Brandon Jackson from Cullman, Alabama.

MR. JACKSON: Good morning. I appreciate the Department. I agree with Mr. McMillan that we have a lot of wonderful resources, and I think that we have a lot of people who care about them and want to use them to the best of our ability. And I appreciate your care for those things.

I'm here to talk about the trout fishing below Smith Lake Dam on the Sipsey Fork of the Black Warrior River. You should have a copy of a letter from the Walker County Commission about this resource and their acknowledgement of how important it is to the county. It also says that the commission recognizes this unique fishery is beneficial to the
attraction for our county.

It is -- in order to promote this opportunity further, we would request that DCNR utilize all avenues to meet the desires of the various angler groups as well as helping to increase the potential of attracting tourism to the stream.

There are a couple of things that I would ask that you consider. One is a single-rod use regulation for the trout stream, especially from the 69 bridge up to the dam, in order to help alleviate any limitation to access from other anglers. It's a regulation that's similar to those used by Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, and other states on their trout fisheries.

Also to consider the establishment of a quality zone for conventional and fly anglers to increase their confidence in the opportunity to catch a trout in Alabama, which is significant since
there's one year-round trout stream, and to help alleviate the conflict between user groups that the Department recognized in their creel survey results in order to help with those issues.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Are there any questions from the board?

MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Cagle.

MR. CAGLE: My question is for Mr. Nichols.

Mr. Nichols, do we expect to have the results from the study that Auburn is currently conducting on the Sipsey River fishery in the near --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: You have to get closer.

There you go.

(Brief interruption.)

MR. CAGLE: Do we expect to have the results from that study by our next board meeting early next spring?

MR. NICHOLS: We would expect to have the report around the first of the calendar
year. We did have some discussions with the principal investigator, Dr. Steve Sammons, about a week or so ago. We may extend the study for a few months to get us more data, but what we can do is ask for a preliminary report to provide a synopsis of the data for the first two years of the study and provide it to the board at that time.

MR. CAGLE: Yeah, that would be great. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The next speaker is Michael Key from Walker County.

MR. KEY: Hello, everyone. My name is Michael Key. I'm a lifelong resident of Alabama. I am owner of Sipsey Fork Outfitters, LLC. And it is a fish and wildlife management, habitat stabilization and enhancement company. I happen to be lucky, blessed by God, to be an inventor of a patented H2O animal-tracking device. And I'm a veteran and acting ADC trapper.
Now, concerning the trout on our Sipsey Tailrace, it is established and developed as a put-and-take recreational fishery. And as far as problems with people using more than one fishing rod, it's really ludicrous because -- especially that it takes two to three times more area to fly-fish with one fly rod than it does to spin-cast with multiple rods.

Now, I'm a fly fisherman. I love to fly-fish, but some people don't. And let's just use this for example. As far as it taking up too much shoreline for people using multiple rods, when a commercial guide or guides, when they send more than one guide -- doesn't matter -- comes up with multiple clients -- and, like I said, y'all, if you've ever fly-fished, you know it takes a lot of room, a lot of area to be clear and to successfully fly-fish. So it's really not reasonable to limit
anyone in the way that they would like
to fish for these trout it being the
put-and-take fishery that it is designed
and developed to be.

Now, our quality zone has been
established for decades. I remember
when Smith Dam was built. I'll be 70 --
people tell me I don't look it, but I
tell them the reason I don't look it is
because I was born at a very early age.

So our quality zone isn't new. And
if these people don't want to come in --
and they can fish like they want to. We
don't try to limit them on how they
fish, but we have an obligation -- and I
won't get into it because Chief Nichols
and the study will verify most of it
when we get it.

But a lot of these fish are being --
we're not getting them back. And
they're just either being preyed on by
predator fish, they're dying or whatever
reason. We're fixing to find out, thank
And we feel like that Alabama anglers are sharing people and will help others --

MS. JONES: Time.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Please finish.

MR. KEY: Yes. Thank you.

I'm just saying that this conflict is brought in by commercial interests. This conflict was never there. And these different user groups, I don't know who these other user groups are. I would like to know. And it appears that we need to stop commercial fishing on the Sipsey Fork where it is a recreational area.

And don't believe everything that I say or someone else says. You'll find it to be very, very beneficial to fact-check on some of these half-truths and things that are just outright not true.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. Thank you. We
appreciate you coming and taking your
time.

MR. KEY: Thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any questions from the board?

Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, I just have one
question of Mr. Michael.

How many commercial guides are there
on the river?

MR. KEY: I don't know. Honestly, I don't
know. But I do know that me and my
son -- I don't want to brag on him.
We're pretty good guides. We don't
guide anymore. But we were -- we're ADC
trapers, animal damage control. And I
know that some of the entities had
thought about contacting my son because
they were so loaded up that they had run
out of guides. So that's the only
reason I know that.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other questions?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.
MR. KEY: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you for your time.

Our next speaker will be speaking on trapping and trapping seasons, Mr. Steve Phillips from Tuscaloosa.

MR. STEVE PHILLIPS: I'm Steve Phillips out of Tuscaloosa. I own West Alabama Wildlife Removal. I'm also a board member of the Alabama Trappers & Predator Control Association. I've been handling wildlife, trapping for 47 years.

My issue on this one today is I'd like to see the non-resident fur buyer's license maybe come down. It's now running $500 to purchase $15,000 worth of fur. We're not getting no buyers coming into this state. One of the largest companies in North America is swinging through the Carolinas into Georgia and then crossing over into Mississippi buying furs. They're avoiding us.

We now have trappers that are trying
to fight coyotes and beavers and coons. They're throwing these animals in the ditches because they have no way to market them. We don't have no fur buyers in the state of Alabama. Every now and then somebody will pop up, but they don't stay in business long.

This is probably -- this is really an old outdated law. It was basically wrote years ago to kind of slow trappers down, and now we're throwing millions of dollars' worth of fur in the ditches over the years. Because these guys now, they're coming here and they don't know what to do with this stuff. They call me constantly wanting to know what can I do with the animals I'm trapping, because they're doing predator control or beaver control.

You got to go to Kosciusko, Mississippi, that's got a state fur sale. New Pittsburgh and two or three other places in Tennessee got fur sales.
These big companies are coming in the
South now looking for beaver pelts for
the hatter market to make cowboy hats.
Like I say, they're avoiding Alabama
like the plague.

This here where Alabama thought they
would benefit by a $500 license, we're
literally losing money. We're throwing
it in the ditches. When I move fur and
I -- in the winter I like to -- I do
this year-round, coyote and beaver
control, but in winter I will skin. A
lot of times I have to haul it to
Illinois. I have to haul it to
Mississippi, to Tennessee. I get a
hotel room. I eat there. That's
revenue they're getting.

The same thing is happening to other
trappers in this state when they're
going out of state. What few are
keeping pelts are generating revenue for
the states they're having to go to if it
ain't nothing but McDonald's. Still,
we're losing all the way around. $500 to buy $15,000 worth of fur, we haven't gained one penny on this. They're avoiding us. They're not going to come in the state.

We would like to see it get down to $125 or so for the fur buyers to come into this state and buy fur. Actually, I would love to see it compete against Mississippi, Tennessee, and Georgia and --

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. STEVE PHILLIPS: -- encourage people to come into our state and sell fur to these out-of-state buyers, meeting in this state and let them spend the night in Alabama, let them buy at Hardee's in Alabama. You know what I'm saying.

We're losing money on this, and it's really -- I don't see where it would be that hard of an issue to change just to try to get these buyers. Because I've talked to them. They're willing to come
here. They're not going to pay that.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Phillips.

MR. STEVE PHILLIPS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Stay up there. There are some questions. Hold on. Questions from the board.

Mr. Jones.

MR. BROCK JONES: Steve, obviously it's going to help y'all out being able to sell these furs. How would you -- would that change your cost to your clients?

In other words, you're going to benefit by selling the furs. Are you going to share the benefit with the people you trap for financially?

MR. STEVE PHILLIPS: When you could get $200 for an otter pelt, hell, I don't mind coming on your land and trapping me a $200 otter.

MR. BROCK JONES: But, I mean, what I'm saying is --

(Multiple speakers.)

MR. STEVE PHILLIPS: And right now -- the
markets are like stock markets. They're up and down, up and down. Right now they're dirt cheap. And they're so cheap that a lot of these trappers are -- hobby trappers are not going to -- they can't afford to ship, you know, at the high cost of shipping furs. A lot of them don't how to put furs up, dry them, tan them, you know, dry them and get them ready to sell and ship to the auction houses in Canada. They can't do it. All they know how to do is skin it and sell it green.

MR. BROCK JONES: That's good. That's all I needed to know.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Hold on. Just one thing. To recap that, what you're saying, then, is that because of the $500 fee that the fur buyers have to buy that license, they're not coming to the state of Alabama and you don't have an outlet for your furs unless you ship them processed to Canada generally?
MR. STEVE PHILLIPS: Yes, sir. Right now I have to manage to meet up with North American Fur Auctions. They got shipping agents in the lower 48 out of Canada.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I understand. I just wanted to make sure that we all understand what you're asking. Thank you.

I'm sorry. Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman. Not a question of Mr. Steve. But how many $500 licenses do we actually issue in a year's time? Do we know?

MR. GAULDIN: Not sure on that. I mean, we could pull it up and look, Grady, but --

(Multiple speakers.)

MR. HARTZOG: I mean, if it's not a major income producer and it would help them, I would like the Department to look at the possibility of lowering that license fee because nuisance-trapping beavers, whatever, is a benefit to everybody trapping-wise, you know. And so if it's
not a major revenue producer for the
Department, I would like to see maybe
looking at lowering that license fee so
we can maybe get some increased trapping
to improve the quality -- you know, get
rid of coons and coyotes and beavers
that cause detriment to our other
wildlife species.

MR. STEVE PHILLIPS: As far as I know one
outfit probably gets an out-of-state
license, and that's North American Fur
Auctions out of Canada will travel down
and pick up -- they got shipping agents
in the -- over in Mississippi is the
closest ones -- may come into -- you
know, they do come into Alabama, I
think, and pick up furs. At one time we
were driving to central Illinois just to
get rid of ours.

But, like I say, these younger guys,
these hobby trappers -- we can't
courage young people to get into this
hobby because they have no outlet. You
know, a 15-, 16-year-old kid is not
going to haul butt to Illinois with 12
coon hides, you know. It's just a loss
all the way around for the state of
Alabama.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Phillips.

Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Could we have the Department
give us a report on comparable prices
with other states at the next meeting
and the possibility of lowering that
price for the ... 

MR. STEVE PHILLIPS: Like I say, I would smoke
them other states and make them trappers
come over here. I would. I go to their
state. I spend money in their state.

MR. HARTZOG: Economies of scale. Sell it for
less.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Our next speaker is Shawn Phillips
from Tuscaloosa.

MR. SHAWN PHILLIPS: Yeah. And I'm his boy.

So I ain't going to spend long on
describing myself. But it's Shawn Phillips. I own Down South Trappers and West Alabama Wildlife Services, both. I'm going to go over three topics to the board real quick. I'm going to cover it real quick, and I'm going to leave it up to the board to come back at me and ask questions.

The first one on the packet that I gave you is permit to pen fur-bearing animals for collection of urine. Presently we're having -- urine is the number-one resource that we use outside of the trap in trapping. What we're running into now -- because in the '80s and the '90s the market dropped down so low that the producers -- the people that's been producing this for years are now retired. There was not people my age to pick up the slack.

We are having a very difficult time gaining quality urine in the state of Alabama. I'm having to get it out of
South Dakota. Half of what we're getting is diluted. It's got feces in it. It's got food in it. It smells like sewage. That's a turnoff to an animal rather than an attractant to an animal.

What I'm proposing is to get a permit to where Alabama ADC men like myself have the ability to pen up fur-bearing animals; coyotes, bobcats, foxes, and things of that nature.

I've laid out -- I've got in the back of the pamphlet I gave you -- I gave out the very -- the set of rules that South Dakota uses, their guidelines. They actually have to import and quarantine animals from outside of the state. My recommendation would let us -- the animals that are in the state, let us pen them up. As far as diseases, if the animal is already in the state, we're not importing diseases into the state.
I've dispatched tens of thousands of predators between me and my dad. I wake up killing coyotes. I go to bed skinning coyotes. It's -- I'm not worried about that aspect. I'm worried about being able to catch that animal.

I also have a bait and lure company. I provide for a lot of the Southeast. I provide the baits and lures for other people to do the same thing that we're doing. The only thing that I cannot provide them people is urine.

I've got the pen requirements and all the regulations that some of the other states -- Mississippi -- there's not even a permit in Mississippi to pen these animals up, but in Alabama it's illegal for us to do it. That's number one.

Skip number two. Number two was what Dad just told you just then.

We'll go to three. I know I'm going to hit some resistance on three, but I
do agree with Mr. McMillan.

Technology has come a long way. Dog hunters and trappers have a bad past. I realize that. I'm a dog guy and a trapper. But what I'm proposing is that in the summertime -- we hit a lot of issues during the summertime. A lot of the states surrounding us, cables, snares, they're legal. I'm not asking to legalize lethal snares. What we would like to see only on private land -- fences, livestock, whatever -- to protect the landowner's private investment is to have a nonlethal cable restraint legalized in the state of Alabama.

I've got how to go about doing it laid out in the writing. Basically have a deer stop that doesn't catch non-target animals. Cable restraints are used by most -- in the majority of states they're legal, and a lot of the state officials, like the wardens that
are relocating animals --

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. SHAWN PHILLIPS: -- they use them.

There's nothing wrong with them.

Last, real quick -- and this is off the wall a little bit. But the ability to purchase a GPS -- a permit to put a GPS collar on fur-bearing species. Why you ask? I can catch a coyote in the state of Alabama right now and I can kill it. Well, the male will continue to raise that litter of pups and regurgitate and you did nothing but kill one coyote.

I can get a GPS collar, click it on that female and let her go for two days, find the den, kill the alpha male, kill the female, kill the whole litter of pups and get my GPS collar back. Right now the only people able to put a collar on is college kids. I'm more qualified than a college kid to put a GPS collar on a coyote and take care of it. That's
it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Any questions or comments from the board?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much,

Mr. Phillips. Very informative.

Our next speaker speaking about dog

deer hunting in support of same is

Mr. Don Knight from Calhoun County,

Alabama.

MR. KNIGHT: Good morning, all. I'm Don

Knight from Anniston, Alabama. I'm a
director in the Alabama Hunting Dog

Alliance.

Last time -- well, first off, let me
tell you, Ms. Susan is not here today.

I know you all know her. Her husband

had a serious heart attack, and she's at

the hospital with him. This happened

about a week ago, and he's still in bad

shape. But he's getting better. So I

just wanted you to know why she wasn't
here. She'll be back.

But I spoke to you last time about the Constitution and the right to hunt by traditional method. I also want you to understand the first commercial -- I guess you'd call it -- that Kay Ivey put out was how she wanted to protect the Constitution of Alabama. And I agree with her wholeheartedly on that, and that's what we want to do.

I spoke to you on the Constitution saying we had the right to hunt by traditional methods and under reasonable rules and those rules will be satisfied by the legislature due to the Alabama Administrative Procedures Act.

All right. If you go another step or two down another line or two, it says the preferred method of maintaining the populations of deer, fish, whatever -- game and fish should be the people -- the people of the state. They're supposed to be the first line, the way I
read it, to take care of these
population problems in Alabama.

And I find when it comes to hog
hunting -- you know, I understand we've
been doing some trapping in the state --
well, some of the management areas. I
would like to say that it seems to me
like since the people are the preferred
method, they should have first
opportunity in these management areas to
go in and hog hunt and get these hogs
out.

There's no reason -- and don't
misunderstand me. Trapping is a great
way to get rid of these hogs, and I
think it very much needs to be used.
But there's no reason the hog hunters
and the trappers can't work together.
If you've got one management area that
you need to run dogs in to kill those
hogs and you have another one open that
they would be trapping in, then reverse
them. When you reverse them, those dogs
get the remainder of the hogs where they
were trapping.

I think it's a super good way to
work together with people, get our dog
hunting going, and it's a lot cheaper
for the state, I assure you, to run the
dogs in there and get the hogs out than
it is to trap. Because trapping is very
expensive. It's very good but very
expensive for the state.

I think y'all have done a little of
that, haven't you, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: We have.

MR. KNIGHT: Okay. And we just want to touch
base with y'all and let you know that
we're willing to work with you. But we
are at a very strong disadvantage right
now because people that are against dog
hunting know all they got to do -- they
don't have to get along with us. They
don't have to work with us.

MS. JONES: Time.

MR. KNIGHT: They don't have to work with us.
They know they can come to you and probably get us done away with.

Now, that's a bad situation. It needs to be where they're under some kind of limitation, also, to where we can work with them. I've had people at one meeting -- and I'm sorry -- at one meeting told me we ain't got to do nothing. We don't want to work with them. We know you're going to get done away with. You're going to be put on a permit system.

Mr. Jones, that's in your area.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Don.

MR. KNIGHT: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We appreciate that. Thank you.

Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Don, if you would send Susan our prayers and wishes that her husband recovers quickly from the board, please, sir.

MR. KNIGHT: Sure will. And prayers will be
accepted and really good. We'd like to
have them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Don.

Our next speaker is Lonnie Miller
who has -- are you going to speak?

MR. MILLER: No, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: He's declined. All right.

Lonnie Miller has declined and is not
speaking.

Our last speaker, he's not here
today, so -- I'm just kidding. He is
here.

COMMISSIONER McMILLAN: I thought he was
watching that wedding.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Our friend Avery Bates.

Thank you, Avery.

MR. BATES: My name is Avery Bates. I'm vice
president of Organized Seafood
Association, a long-time commercial
fisherman. My body quit on me, so I had
to quit commercial fishing. I like to
cook the commercial fish, though, and I
like to cook it for conservation people
all around the country and citizens of the state of Alabama. We want to keep doing that.

But I want y'all to know we've had some vicious attacks on the commercial fishing over the industry. I heard someone today wanting to do away with commercial fishing. According to Alabama State Law -- and y'all know this -- under 9-12-125 the only access that they have is through the licensed -- properly licensed commercial fishermen. And I like to feed commercial fish, shrimp, oysters, and crab to everybody in this state who wants to eat it, whether it's pond or -- I say pond.

Aboveground oyster raising, Mr. Lemme's group has had a lot to do with that, the University of Auburn. And I want to tell you, we've got a real good industry coming along now with our off-bottom oystering.
But I want to tell you something.
Nature can be vicious against nature.
Nature in ourselves, if we do not manage
it properly, have a proper balance, you
can see things happen like it's happened
in the crab industry when you let one
side of nature dominate, even whether
it's in the shark industry or when the
red drum come in and eat all the crabs
up -- the majority of the crabs and you
see the crabbers crying.

We are the managers. God put us in
control. Let's do it right. Let's not
run our commercial fishermen out of
business that wants to feed all
Alabamians with proper wild-caught
seafood and shrimp. We have some of the
best shrimp and oysters and crabs in the
world right here at our fingertips.
Don't stop us.

Include us in some of these what we
call advisory boards. We have many
advisory boards or planning boards. Had
a meeting in Bayou la Batre. Told Chris about it. Had over 300 people. Got real upset about what the mayor was doing. Bayou la Batre is a unique community. What I mean by unique, we have businessmen, whether it's a one-man business or a three to 500-man business. It makes no difference.

We want to stay in business, see the resources that God blessed us with, everybody to enjoy it and to protect it and to use it, not take it away from one segment of the population and only give it to one segment of the population.

Recreation has taken some parts of our resources and only given it to one user group. That is a violation against the Magnuson-Stevens Act, part of the ten National Standards. Read that number four of that Magnuson-Stevens Act. 301 if you want to look.

This is important --

MS. JONES: Time.
MR. BATES: -- to get all of Alabama to reap the bounty of the sea and let our businesses have a voice at these boards and let us talk to the people, whether it's the Corps of Engineers or whether it's to any other group that wants to take your right to that access away from you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Avery. Thank you so much. We enjoy you being here. Thank you for coming. Don't stop.

That concludes the public comment section of our meeting today. Does anybody need a relief break before we move on?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: No. Okay.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make one comment.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Just for information on the fur dealer's license, the man who spoke to it, that's in the
Code of Alabama. That's not a fee that's set by the Department. That's set by the legislature. So any change in that fee would have to be done through legislation.

And I think the fee is $300 instead of $500. I just wanted to clarify that and provide y'all that information.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. Moving on in the agenda, our next item is unfinished business. Do we have any unfinished business?

Mr. Cagle.

MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman, I want to give an update on the CWD subcommittee that the board voted to create at the last meeting.

We've met -- or spoken by conference call on at least one occasion and spoken individually about the issue. And we've been working with the Department and feel like we need a little more time to
look at all the options. We're looking at ways that the deer processors and taxidermists can help us ensure that the deer that they're handling are from Alabama as a way to prevent CWD from coming across the line.

We don't want to make a recommendation, you know, without considering all sides of it. Because we want it to be effective at meeting the goal, but we also don't want to place an undue burden on any of -- on any user group there.

So, you know, with your approval, I would like for us to continue that until the next board meeting so that we can continue to look at all options and then come up with a well-thought-through recommendation.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The Chair approves. The subcommittee will remain Mr. Cagle, Mr. R. Jones, and Mr. B. Jones, and they will continue to meet and will report
back to us at our first meeting or at a
time when they find it necessary.

MR. CAGLE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Very good.

Any other unfinished business?

Dr. Lemme.

DR. LEMME: Mr. Chairman, I'd like Chuck to
give us an update on the public
information sessions that he's been
having on CWD.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Director Sykes, would you
like to come to the mic?

MR. SYKES: Anyway, as Dr. Lemme said, we are
working with Alfa and the TREASURE
Forest Association. They are hosting
seminars around the state that I am the
guest speaker informing the public about
the issues with CWD. Mr. Jimmerson was
at one last week up in Oxford. We had
one at AWF on Thursday. I'm sorry. It
was this week, Tuesday and Thursday.
We've got four more scheduled. One will
be here in Tuscaloosa on June the 7th.
And I see William back there now. William Green with Alfa and the TREASURE Forest Association is the one who's hosting those events.

So far it's been outstanding. Comments have been good. It's just getting people to come. The people that come are getting a lot out of it, but as you well know, if William can't provide a good meal and get more than 20 or 30 people to come listen, I don't know what else we can do. It's being advertised on radio, TV, through our social media, web pages, the whole nine yards. So if y'all are interested in it, I think it's something that everybody needs to know.

We're not trying to scare people to death. We want them to be informed. This is a serious issue. I'm sorry. I don't want to pour water on anybody's issue that's here now, but dog hunting, baiting, night hunting, poaching, all of that pales in comparison to the problems
that we're going to have if CWD ever
gets into the state.

And as Commissioner McMillan said,
this is something that we all need to
band together. This isn't a dog issue
or a private landowner issue. This is a
hunter issue. So I encourage all of
y'all to convince your friends and
family and all of your hunting partners
to come to one of these seminars and
listen and ask questions.

Misinformation is running rampant out
there right now, and we need the right
information out there.

Thank you, Dr. Lemme.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: To backstop that, our
subcommittee is working, too, with a
private-public alliance with our
resource stakeholders, all the large
landowners in the state, timber
producers. Everybody has become an
integral part of looking for and working
to keep CWD out of the state of Alabama,
out of our white-tailed deer herd. It's devastating.

So we'll move on. Any other unfinished business?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. No more unfinished business.

Our next order for the day is going to be new business. I know that there are some motions because I asked for those to be submitted to me for content. And at this time I will ask our board if there are any new motions or motions to be brought.

Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: I noticed during the Pledge that -- this has nothing to do with motions, but I noticed during the Pledge when we turned around that Mr. Fred has a seat back here. And I think Mr. Fred needs to be recognized and come sit in his seat.

MR. HARDERS: I looked at the chair, and when
I saw a cord going into the wall --

(Applause.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Hartzog.

Any motions?

MR. STIMPSON: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Stimpson.

MR. STIMPSON: I'd like to make a motion to modify the Waterfowl Regulation 220-2-.77 for the area known as Bay Grass that may only being accessed using paddle power, poling, or electric trolling motors during the period of the second Saturday in November through the second Saturday in February. This regulation will become effective with the 2018-19 waterfowl season.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. For clarity again, I'm going to reread the motion -- that's what we're doing -- so that everybody understands what we're voting on and what the motion is before us. This is a motion.

This motion services to modify
Waterfowl Regulation 220-2-.77(1)(d).

They are known as -- the area known as Bay Grass may only be accessed using paddle power, poling, or electric trolling motors during the period of the second Saturday in November through the second Saturday in February. This regulation becomes effective with the 2018-2019 waterfowl season.

Is that the motion that you understand?

MR. STIMPSON:  (Nods head.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS:  Very good. Is there a second?

MR. CAGLE:  Second.

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

We'll ask for a vote on this motion, and it's going to be a show of hands. Let's have a show-of-hands-motion period today, please.

So I will ask for all of those in favor of this motion to please hold your
hand up.

(All board members present raised their hand in favor of the motion.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any opposed?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it.

Are there any other motions before the board today?

Jeff, Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: This motion is for the Talladega National Forest to eliminate dog deer hunting on the Piney Woods/Ivory Mountain area. I'll define those borders in a minute.

No dog deer hunting on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday of each week unless a holiday falls on those days.

Dogs must be boxed at or before 2 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays.

Dog deer hunting allowed on weekends during legal shooting hours during the 2018-2019 dog deer season.
This motion has a sunshine provision. A review and recommendation regarding the continuation of this change will be made by law enforcement prior to the first Conservation Advisory Board meeting of 2019.

The area referred to as Piney Woods and Ivory Mountain is bounded by the Cleburne County line north running east and west and then to the west by County Road 3 running south to State Route 49. The south border is County Road 66 running east and west from State Route 49 to Highway 9. The eastern border is Highway 9 running north from County Road 66 to the Cleburne County line.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Jeff. I'm going to reread it again for clarity and so that we all understand what we're voting on.

This is a motion. It's to eliminate dog deer hunting on Piney Woods/Ivory
Mountain area of Talladega National Forest, and the borders are defined on the back.

There's no dog deer hunting on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday of each week unless a holiday falls on those days.

The dogs must be boxed at or before 2 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays.

Dog hunting is allowed on weekends during legal shooting hours during the 2018-2019 deer season.

There's a sunshine provision attached to this motion. A review and a recommendation regarding the continuation of this change will be made by law enforcement prior to the first Conservation Advisory Board meeting of 2019.

And I will dispense with the definition. It will be in the regulation.

Is that the motion?
MR. MARTIN: Yes.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Do we have a second?
MR. KNIGHT: Mr. Chairman, point of order.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I can't take it.
MR. RAYMOND JONES: Second.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Second.
MR. KNIGHT: Why?
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any discussion?
MR. KNIGHT: (Inaudible to court reporter.)
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We're conducting business following Robert's Rules of Order. And thank you, Don. Please.

We have a second. Is there any discussion?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: With no discussion, we'll vote. This again will be a show-of-hands vote.

So all of those in favor of the motion as described, please signify their being in favor by raising your hand.

(All board members except Mr. Gary
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Those opposed?

(Mr. Gary Wolfe raised his hand in opposition of the motion.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it. The motion carries. There was one opposed.

MR. KNIGHT: Please make a note of my point of order (inaudible to the court reporter).

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: You're not a member of the board.

MR. KNIGHT: (Inaudible to the court reporter.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any other motions from -- Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman. I'd like -- you know, the one thing that we really need to promote is fair-chase hunting in the state of Alabama. And so the motion that I'm fixing to make is to try to promote fair-chase hunting and to try to make the perception of canned hunting where it won't bite us in the
butt later on.

So, anyway, my motion is a motion that would require all deer transported ten days before and during hunting season to have its antlers removed between the G-3 and the pedicle as described by the Boone and Crockett Club of America. This motion is to begin on January the 1st, 2019.

This would basically keep -- and there are unethical hunters where they basically drug the deer the night before and move him to a closed-in pen, charge somebody $5,000 to shoot them the next day, and that's in my opinion unethical hunting. And so by enacting this rule -- Texas has enacted this rule.

So, again, the motion is to require all deer transported ten days before and during the hunting season to have its antlers removed between the G-3 and the pedicle as described by the Boone and Crockett Club of America. This motion
to begin January 1st, 2019.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: That's usually my job to read it the second time.

MR. HARTZOG: Oh, I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: That's okay. We'll accept your reading.

Is there a second?

MR. STIMPSON: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: There is a second.

We're going to do this again. We're going to do a hand vote.

All of those in favor of this motion, please raise your hand.

(All board members raised their hand in favor of the motion.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All those opposed, please raise your hand.

(No board members raised their hand in opposition of the motion.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it. It's carried. No "no" votes.

Any additional motions today?

Mr. Barksdale.
MR. BARKSDALE: I have a motion that will disallow the use of any deer urine products in the state of Alabama beginning March 1st, 2019, in an effort to prevent CWD from entering the state. And as discussed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the use of deer-urine-based products should be discontinued. The use of synthetic urine-based products is recommended. I would like to bring this motion before the board.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Barksdale. I will read it again.

It is a motion that will disallow the use of any deer urine products in the state of Alabama beginning March 1 of 2019.

Is that -- that's the motion?

MR. BARKSDALE: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Do I have a second?

MR. HARTZOG: Second.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Second is had. We'll have a vote. Again, we're going to do -- we're going to raise our hands.

So all of those in favor of this motion, please let it be shown by raising your hands.

(All board members raised their hand in favor of the motion.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All of those opposed?

(No board members raised their hand in opposition of the motion.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it. There's no opposition.

Any additional motions?

MS. BUTLER: Mr. Chairman, I have three.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: You have a motion.

MS. BUTLER: First is I move to change the beginning date of spring turkey season statewide from March 15th to the third Saturday of March going forward beginning in the 2018-2019 season.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. I'm going to repeat it for you because I didn't hear
that well, but I have it.

Your motion is to change -- I move to change the beginning date of spring turkey season statewide from March 15th to the third Saturday of March going forward beginning with the 2018-2019 season -- spring season.

That's your motion?

MS. BUTLER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Is there a second?

MR. WOLFE: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We have a second. We're going to vote again. We're going to raise our hands again.

So all of those in favor of the motion that I have just read, please let it be known by raising your hands.

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?

Before we take a vote, could we have -- there have been several letters that have been written --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Are you asking for discussion and debate?
MR. HARTZOG: Well, just basically discussion.

-- that the perception -- I actually contacted the three directors of the Wild Turkey Federation that are in my district and talked to them, and then later Craig Harris sent an email. And everybody has got a copy of that email in front of you. And if you'll read his remarks where all the directors of the Turkey Federation that they talked to say in pushing back the opening date to the third weekend of March annually would result in an opening date falling somewhere between March 15th and 21st, depending on the year. The purported purpose of this is to allow gobblers to breed before they start getting harvested.

This is -- apparently the data indicates that most turkeys are killed during that season, and so I think that would be a good motion for us to try to protect the resource.
MR. STIMPSON: Can I make just one comment?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Mr. Stimpson.

MR. STIMPSON: Just since it's public record and all, the gentleman that I talked to -- and it's in this email, too -- asked the NWTF -- that this was not an official recommendation from them. They wanted that to be clear. This was their personal opinions.

MR. BROCK JONES: Can you get closer to the mic?

MR. STIMPSON: I was saying that they requested -- the NWTF wants it to be known that this is not their official recommendation. These were personal opinions of some of their -- most of their directors. And I just wanted to clarify that.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. Thank you.

That concludes the debate. Let's have a vote, please. We're going to raise our hands again. We'll do it one more time.
All of those in favor of the change as stated in the motion, please raise your hands if you're in favor.

(All board members except Mr. Jeff Martin raised their hand in favor of the motion.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All of those opposed to the change in this motion, please raise your hands.

(Mr. Jeff Martin raised his hand in opposition of the motion.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: One. Let it be known that one opposes and that motion carries.

Is there another motion before the board here?

MS. BUTLER: The second one is I move to reduce the bag limit from five gobblers to four during the combined spring and fall seasons statewide beginning the 2018-2019 season.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. I heard that. Your motion is to reduce the bag limit from -- the current bag limit of five
gobblers to four during the combined
spring and fall turkey seasons statewide
beginning with the 2018-2019 season.

Is that your motion?

MS. BUTLER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Very good. Do I have a
second?

MR. WOLFE: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: We have a second.

Is there any discussion?

Mr. Jones.

MR. RAYMOND JONES: Mr. Chairman, I've had the
privilege of being around this board for
a very long time. My father was on this
board in the late '70s and early 1980s.
He actually served in your position. So
I grew up going to those meetings. I
had a stint on the board in the '90s.
I've had two stints in the 2000s. So
I've been around almost as long as
Mr. Avery Bates has and almost as many
meetings.

But this board has always prided
itself on transparency. This board has always prided itself on having sound biological data with which to make decisions. This motion in reduction has not been discussed. And in all of those years of going to meetings I can count on one hand with fingers left over how many times turkey populations have come up where they're in steep decline.

Simply reducing the bag limit is going to do nothing to help with turkey populations. Game Check data, as good as what we have, there's 7.3 percent of the hunters in the state of Alabama that are killing four or more turkeys. 7.3 percent. So why penalize a very few that are doing -- that are able to have better opportunities and more land to hunt on for that reason? What would you be saying?

In the state of Alabama, if you extrapolate that out, that's -- and let's just say we don't believe Game
Check numbers. They're too low. Let's say we up it. You would save 1400 turkeys throughout the entire state, 1400 gobblers. That's one turkey for every 24,285 acres. That's like going to the Gulf of Mexico with a 5-gallon bucket and saying I'm going to -- I'm going to drain the swamp. It can't -- that's not going to be done.

This also asks why now, why the rush, why the push to the 2018-2019 season. We have not had the opportunity to have any input or feedback. And in reference to Mr. Hartzog's letter that he put before us, this is based on the hypothesis that the population is declining is correct. That's all it is, is an hypothesis.

I can tell you firsthand in some areas of the state, my area in particular, we have turkeys running out of our ears. The limits in this state have been five or six my entire life.
We have -- based on biological data, the data that's turned in by our own state, we have somewhere in the neighborhood of 400,000 turkeys and have had for 50 years during that time when we had limits of five or six.

So I want to question the validity of this, and I also want to question the fact that we should not be pushing forward with a motion based on knee-jerk reactions. We should not be pushing forth on a motion that the public has had zero input, zero warning that this is even going to be discussed. And I may have another comment in a minute, but I'll reserve that for the time being.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I'm going to limit debate, and I'm going to ask the maker of the motion -- the bringer of the motion has the right to the next debate -- to the next comment.

Please lean into the mic.
MS. BUTLER: This is coming from the 2014 committee that was formed. I don't think it's a new thing. It was -- the turkey committee was formed because neighboring states have reported a decline in their turkey populations, and our statewide surveys have indicated a downward trend in our reproductive success. Alabama has the highest turkey limit in the nation at five. So it's -- I mean, I've received several comments, emails, calls. I don't think it has not been discussed in the public.

But, also, with the increase in turkey hunters and technology, the improved chokes, ammunition, decoys, there are so many additional ways, and we should look at being more conservative --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Please lean into the microphone, please, so that we all can hear.

MS. BUTLER: I also included from South
Carolina for a comparison -- they were the last with a bag limit of five, and in 2016 they reduced it to three. That's in your packet if you want to look over the reasons, too, for that.

And then, also, I've spoken with Steve Barnett, the Turkey Project Leader for the state, and based on their recommendation right now, in four years out of the five they would with their model suggest that it would be reduced to three. So I feel that four is just a step in the right direction and we're being proactive rather than reactive to go ahead and ... 

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Mr. Wolfe.

MR. WOLFE: My concern is the same thing with the CWD. I want to get ahead of this. I don't want to wait until it's too late. The people in my area are not killing the turkeys that they've killed in the last three years. The landowners
that have 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 80,000 acres, they have plenty of turkeys, but
I'm representing the entire -- my district in the state of Alabama. And
the people that I'm talking to is the people that have 500 acres, 200 acres,
1,000 acres and on down the road.

There are -- the last three years we have not killed the turkeys that we've been killing -- which I don't think we're getting the true number when we get them with Game Check, but hopefully that will get better.

But, to me, I want to address the dates. I think that's in a positive direction. I think this is in a positive direction. I think this board has to be stewards of the animals in this state, and I think the turkeys is one of the best we have. Everybody loves to turkey hunt. But we've got to be real. The people that are large landowners are having a great year.
They can burn their land every two years. They can plant food, fields for them because they've got a large acreage, but the younger small guys that's got a small club, I think they're hurting. And I think this board needs to help them.

And I think that's the situation we're in. I think we being the large number of -- and I think that's right for Alabama -- number of five and all the other states have one, two, three -- and I think that's just the direction we need to go, and I agree with Jessica that we've got to address this. And I want to address CWD before it gets here, and I want to address the turkey population before we have to address it.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Mr. Wolfe.

Mr. Stimpson.

MR. STIMPSON: I'd like to just say that this -- I agree with Mr. Jones that changing the bag limit on this will do
nothing. And if we truly think that we have a decline in population, we need to look at really effectively saving our resource. I mean, shortening the season -- every day that you don't hunt saves a lot of turkeys. I mean, if we want to get serious, instead of talking about reducing the bag limit by one, let's talk about decoys. Let's put limits on how many decoys or ban them altogether. Let's talk about shutting down hunting at noon like we do with duck hunting at certain places. You know, look at your season dates. Look at baiting with corn that's out there now that's got aflatoxins in it that will absolutely wipe out certain turkey habitat or turkeys themselves.

But the point being is that we could do some things that make a real change and not just penalizing the smallest percentage of the people that are out there killing turkeys.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I'm inclined to let's close debate and -- Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN: Yeah. I kind of agree with Raymond. In my district we don't have an issue with the turkey population. And, you know, when we were going to extend this deer season, we just didn't do it initially statewide. We saw that there was a need to have that extended season in the south, and then they did a great study and they kept doing it and kept increasing it slowly until the entire state did it. I would recommend something like that.

I don't -- I don't disagree that there might be some issues and decline in certain districts, but there's no sense in punishing the whole state for that in my opinion. That's -- I would recommend getting something where -- doing it in the districts where it's needed.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. Thank you,
Mr. Martin.

We've closed debate, and let's vote on this issue as we have before. This is going to be a show of hands.

All of those opposed to this issue -- this motion as has been stated, please raise your hands.

MR. HARTZOG: Hold on. Opposed or --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All opposed.

(The following board members raised their hand in opposition of the motion: Mr. Martin, Mr. Stimpson, Dr. Lemme, Mr. Barksdale, Mr. Brock Jones, Mr. Raymond Jones, Commissioner McMillan.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All of those in favor of this issue, please raise your hands.

(The following board members raised their hand in favor of the motion: Mr. Cagle, Mr. Hartzog, Ms. Butler, Mr. Wolfe.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Motion doesn't carry. The "nays" have it.
MS. BUTLER: I have one more.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: You have another motion?

MS. BUTLER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right.

MS. BUTLER: This is a motion to request a vote for the approval of the seasons, their dates and times, all bag limits, creel limits and restrictions, and all other items set forth in the current proposed regulations and recommendations as relates to all sections and divisions of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Okay. I'm going to repeat this one. This is our housekeeping.

   This is a motion to request a vote for the approval of the seasons, their dates and times, all bag limits, all the creel limits and restrictions, and all other items set forth in the currently proposed regulations and recommendations as relates to all sections and divisions of the Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources.

Is that the motion?

MS. BUTLER: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And all of our chiefs and everybody here are in agreement with that. They're all good.

Do I have a second?

MR. CAGLE: Second.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: And we're just going to take a voice vote on this. All of those -- I'm sorry. Discussion.

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman, if you go to migratory birds, Keith -- if you go to the migratory birds, where it says waterfowl hunters shall not possess any lead shot, period, and then it just says longbows, compound bows, or crossbows -- but that's not a complete -- shouldn't there be a comma after lead shot and then include long bows? Isn't that a typo?

MR. GAULDIN: Are you on the legal arms page, Grady?
MR. HARTZOG: Huh?

MR. GAULDIN: Are you on the legal arms page?

MR. HARTZOG: Where it says waterfowl hunters shall not possess any lead shot, period, but then it doesn't say -- it just says longbows, compound bows, or crossbows, but it doesn't say what pertains to them. So shouldn't that be after lead shot, comma, so it reads waterfowl hunters shall not possess any lead shot, comma, longbows, comma, compound bows, comma, or crossbows?

MR. GAULDIN: Yeah. We'll correct that.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: All right. This motion -- and we stipulate that that correction is going to be made as stated by Mr. Hartzog and agreed to by Mr. Gauldin.

So we're back to voting. We have a second.

Any further discussion?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Let's have a vote.
All of those in favor of this motion say "aye."

(All board members present respond "aye.")

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Any opposed, please let it be known by saying "aye."

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: The "ayes" have it. This motion passes.

Are there any other motions?

Anybody else?

MR. HARTZOG: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Yes, Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: Not a motion or anything. But when is the Auburn turkey study supposed to be finally completed?

MR. GAULDIN: Next year.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Next year before our next meetings or after our next meetings?

MR. GAULDIN: I believe before the meeting.

MR. HARTZOG: Okay.

MR. GAULDIN: Highly anticipated.

MR. HARTZOG: Okay. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Dr. Lemme, do you know the exact date? Have they set a date, Dr. Lemme?

DR. LEMME: I thought it was October 1, but I'll find out for sure and report back to you.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

Any other business before the board today?

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I just wanted -- in my Commissioner's remarks, the one thing I left out, surprisingly, is the red snapper season has been set since our last meeting.

The red snapper season this year -- the states were granted exempted fishing permits to be able to manage the red snapper recreationally off of our coasts. That was done primarily through the work of Senator Shelby, including some language that allowed these to take place. Alabama's exempted fishing
permit was worked on by Scott Bannon, the Director of Marine Resources Division, and Kevin Anson, the chief biologist from the Marine Resources Division.

And so our state season this year is going to be Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays beginning June 1st, and that runs through Labor Day and includes Labor Day. And it will also be open the whole week of the 4th of July. So it ends up being 47 days, and that's how long that we anticipate the season will be this year. The season could be longer if we have some bad weather days and the catch is lower, and it could be shortened by a few days if our catch rate is above what we projected.

But I do want to commend Scott Bannon and the work that's been done by the Marine Resources Division to get that done in a very timely manner and in a very short period of time to be
approved by the National Marine
Fisheries Service to get that in place
for this year and also be managing that
fishery next year.

The charter season is going to be -- it's still managed by the federal
government, and that will open June 1st and will run through July the 20th. So that season will be open. So if you're going on a charter-fishing vessel, it's open during the week during some of those -- some of that period of time during the summer. But the recreational -- private recreational season is only open Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

And if you have any questions on that, Scott Bannon is here, and he'd be glad to answer those. Thank you for your work.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you, Colonel Bannon, very much. That's huge.

MR. CAGLE: Mr. Chairman, I think we also need
to recognize the effort that
Commissioner Blankenship has invested in
this over the years. A few years ago we
thought that --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Hold on. She can't hear.
Would you start over for her.

(Brief interruption.)

MR. CAGLE: I want to recognize and commend
the work that Commissioner Blankenship
has done on this. A few years ago the
idea of the states managing red snapper
in federal waters seemed impossible.
But Commissioner Blankenship, you know,
led a great team with not only Alabama
but the other states, even helped
convince Texas last year to give up some
days to reach this goal.

So we appreciate all the effort you
did. I mean, it's a major
accomplishment with more moving parts
than probably any biological issue our
state has ever faced between the federal
government and the state. So we
appreciate all that you've done on that.

COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHP: Thank you, Patrick.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you.

One more thing I would like to recognize. Dr. Lemme has lost a valued employee and one that was with DCNR at one time. Would you tell us about that.

DR. LEMME: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chris Jaworowski, who had retired from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and then became an employee of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service working in its wildlife management agency focusing primarily on feral hog management, unexpectedly passed away this week. A young man with a family who served conservation in our state for many years.

The visitation will be Monday from five to eight with a Rosary at eight o'clock at the Gassett Funeral Home in Wetumpka. The funeral will be
at ten o'clock on Tuesday at the Catholic Church there in Wetumpka. And I would ask that the Department express the CAB's sympathy to the Jaworowski family. We've lost a true educator and manager of our resources.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you. He was one of the first folks I met when I came on the board, a larger-than-life gentleman. And if y'all will just say a prayer for him and his family, we would appreciate it.

I think that's going to be it.

Mr. Hartzog.

MR. HARTZOG: One last thing. In recognition of Dr. Lemme's friend and supporter, would it be appropriate for us to draft some type of resolution to present to his family at a later date?

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I think that is an excellent idea, yes. Would you like to do that? Can we task you to do that, Grady, or do you want --
MR. HARTZOG: I'm not very good at being verbose, so --

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: I will take that. I will do that. I will handle that.

MR. WOLFE: I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Is there any other business before the board today from the board? Any other questions or comments or thoughts?

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN DOBBS: Thank you very much.

Our next agenda item would be the location and time of our next meeting. It will be sometime in 2019. That is the plan unless some issue arises. So that time is to be determined.

Thank you very much. That concludes this. We're adjourned.

(Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:13 a.m.)
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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
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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 19, 2018.

The foregoing 94 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 16th day of August 2018.

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