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MINUTES OF THE
FOREVER WILD BOARD MEETING
CAPITOL AUDITORIUM
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA
February 5, 2015

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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 Capital Auditorium, Montgomery,
Alabama, on Thursday, February 5, 2015, commencing
at approximately 10:06 a.m.

* * * * *

1 BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

- 2 Mr. N. Gunter Guy, Jr. Commissioner
- 3 Dr. John Valentine
- 4 Dr. Robert O. Lawton
- 5 Dr. Gary Hepp
- 6 Mr. Frank "Butch" Ellis
- 7 Dr. Patricia G. Sims
- 8 Mr. H.E. "Sonny" Cauthen
- 9 Dr. Warren Strickland
- 10 Mr. Leo Allen
- 11 Mr. Charles E. Ball
- 12 Mr. Russell Runyan
- 13 Mr. Greg Pate
- 14 Dr. Michael Woods

11 * * * * *

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: I'd like to call to order
 15 the Forever Wild Board meeting of
 16 February 5, 2015. And I want to thank
 17 everyone for being here and welcome all
 18 of the board members here today.

19 Before I call role to establish a
 20 quorum, I wanted to recognize that we
 21 have three new board members. Y'all
 22 might remember a couple of -- three
 23 board members' terms expired last year

1 and we've now replaced them.

2 One of those new board members who
3 intended to be here today could not be
4 here for some other reasons beyond his
5 control. And many of you know him. And
6 that's Horace Horn. Horace is with
7 PowerSouth. And he, I know, is very
8 interested in being a participant on
9 this board. Horace is, of course, from
10 Greenville and was appointed by Governor
11 Bentley representing the southern
12 district.

13 But two of our other new board
14 members are here today, and I'd like to
15 introduce them to you. And I'd ask them
16 would they just say a very short summary
17 about themselves for the public and for
18 the rest of the board members because
19 we've just now had a chance to say hello
20 to them.

21 So first I'd like to recognize
22 Mr. Charles Ball from Birmingham.
23 Mr. Ball was appointed by Speaker

1 Hubbard representing the central
2 district.

3 Welcome, Mr. Ball. Thank you for
4 being here today.

5 MR. BALL: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: Tell us a little something
7 about yourself, if you don't mind, just
8 briefly.

9 MR. BALL: If I must. Good morning. I'm a
10 Birmingham native, Auburn grad, and I've
11 been in the planning profession for
12 about -- I guess since 1992. And I'm
13 glad to be back to Alabama. It's truly
14 an honor to be a part of this august
15 body, and I look forward to helping out
16 any way I can.

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, thank you for being a
18 part of this and we welcome you. And
19 from one Auburn graduate to another, War
20 Eagle.

21 MR. BALL: War Eagle.

22 COMMISSIONER GUY: The next new member is
23 Mr. Russ Runyan from Jasper, Walker

1 County, appointed by Lieutenant Governor
2 Ivey representing the northern district.

3 Mr. Runyan, thank you for being
4 here.

5 MR. RUNYAN: I didn't know I was going to get
6 to say anything this morning.

7 I have roots in Clay County. That's
8 where I was raised and then a brief
9 stint at Auburn and graduated with a
10 degree in forest management and been
11 practicing forestry for the last several
12 years. Work has taken us to various
13 parts of the state, but we've been in
14 Jasper and Walker County for probably
15 about 25 years now and just thoroughly
16 enjoy it there.

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you. We look forward
18 to working with both of you and also --
19 both of you and Horace. And the rest of
20 the board members, I know, will get to
21 know y'all and are very helpful in this
22 process, so anything we can do to make
23 it easier for you. Thank you very much.

1 So with that, it's time for me to
2 call role to make sure we have a quorum,
3 although just looking over the table, I
4 think we have one.

5 But for the record, Mr. Pate?

6 MR. PATE: Here.

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Strickland?

8 DR. STRICKLAND: Here.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Lawton?

10 DR. LAWTON: Here.

11 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Sims?

12 DR. SIMS: Here.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Runyan?

14 MR. RUNYAN: Here.

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Ball?

16 MR. BALL: Here.

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Hepp?

18 DR. HEPP: Here.

19 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Ellis?

20 MR. ELLIS: Here.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Woods?

22 DR. WOODS: Here.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Cauthen?

1 MR. CAUTHEN: Here.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Allen?

3 MR. ALLEN: Here.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Horn?

5 (No response.)

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Porter?

7 (No response.)

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: And Dr. Valentine?

9 DR. VALENTINE: Here.

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: And with myself we have a
11 quorum, and so we do have the number it
12 requires to conduct business.

13 Is there a recognition of any
14 special guests by any board members
15 before we get started?

16 (No response.)

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. If not, I would
18 like to just move right into public
19 comments unless anybody else has
20 anything else before we begin.

21 And I will say for those that are
22 about to speak, as I usually do, that
23 Tracye is our court reporter down here

1 at the front. And you'll see her little
2 fingers going real fast keeping up with
3 what you say.

4 And for those that have been here,
5 you know the drill, but for those who
6 have not been here, please understand
7 that you'll be speaking into the
8 microphone. And even though you might
9 be nervous or uncomfortable, try to
10 speak slowly, particularly if you're
11 reading from something, because we take
12 minutes that we publish online for the
13 public, and she wants to make sure that
14 she gets correct what you are saying.
15 So if she doesn't, she will give you one
16 of those little evil eye things that
17 Tracye does.

18 So with that, I will call on, first,
19 Steve Northcutt. Steve.

20 MR. NORTHCUTT: Good morning, Commissioner.

21 Good morning, members. I'm Steve
22 Northcutt with The Nature Conservancy.
23 I'm the director of protection, and that

1 actually means I do land acquisition.
2 We've been able to partner with
3 Department of Conservation and Natural
4 Resources, both Lands Division and, of
5 course, Forever Wild and also Wildlife
6 and Freshwater Fisheries. And I just
7 really want to give a vote of support to
8 an acquisition that they'll bring to you
9 today in Autauga County.

10 The Nature Conservancy has an
11 investment in that county. We have a
12 preserve that's called the Roberta Case
13 Pine Hills Preserve. It's only about
14 400 acres, but there's some interesting
15 aspects to this preserve. We're
16 restoring longleaf pine. It's kind of a
17 sandhills community. It does have a
18 rare population of pitcher plants. And
19 so a lot of these seepage bogs in that
20 area have these rare pitcher plants.

21 And so the acquisition that the
22 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries is
23 looking to do is in the same area. It's

1 director for The Conservation Fund.
2 Like Steve with The Nature Conservancy,
3 I just wanted to speak in support of the
4 project.

5 I believe Director Sykes will
6 present this morning if he makes it
7 here. If not, I suppose Drew will make
8 the presentation.

9 But as Steve said, this is an
10 opportunity for Forever Wild and for the
11 Fish and Wildlife to combine forces and
12 work in partnership to get a great piece
13 of land for the state. The
14 collaboration between the
15 Pittman-Robertson monies, as Steve
16 described, coming into the state as
17 federal dollars being utilized matched
18 by the state's Forever Wild funds is
19 critical. And it's a critical
20 beginning, I think, to a partnership
21 that you all will enjoy. Because I
22 believe about 25 percent of your money
23 comes to the table and 75 percent of

1 other monies come to the table, so you
2 get a big bang for that buck, you know.

3 And so I just want you to consider
4 that and support the project as The
5 Conservation Fund does. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you. Any questions?

7 (No response.)

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: Linda Derry. Good morning.

9 MS. DERRY: Good morning. Thanks for letting
10 me speak to you. I'm the site director
11 of the Old Cahawba Archeological Park
12 which is adjacent to the Hall tract. So
13 I'm here to speak on behalf of the Hall
14 tract in hope that it's acquired by
15 Forever Wild.

16 I just wanted to let you know that
17 we have been so pleased to be next door
18 to another piece of Forever Wild, the
19 Old Cahawba Prairie tract. I think
20 we've really had a synergy working
21 together. We've had good experience
22 working with like the botanical
23 explorer, your enforcement officers.

1 And to let you know, if you spend
2 this money, it's going to be multiplied
3 by the fact that we're adjacent to you.
4 We have a visitors center that's open.
5 We have programming. We have staff
6 that's there. We have bathrooms, a lot
7 of things that are really important so
8 that your property will be fully used.

9 Also, I'm going to speak to you on
10 behalf of -- well, I'm an employee of
11 the Alabama Historical Commission, and
12 our executive director is here to say
13 something to you also. But I also am
14 representing the Cahawba Foundation,
15 which has raised a million dollars to
16 buy public land at our site, and the
17 Cahawba Advisory Committee that's
18 appointed by the governor. And both of
19 them wanted to let you know that they're
20 in favor of the Hall tract becoming part
21 of Forever Wild.

22 And, also, just lastly, I want to
23 mention, as a canoer, I would be so

1 excited if this land became public land
2 because it would protect the water
3 quality and its unique quality of the --
4 not only the canoe trail, but also the
5 viewshed from our property. And my
6 personal favorite place to canoe
7 anywhere is on Childers Creek, which is
8 part of this, and to know that that --
9 the border of that creek would be
10 protected and preserved would just be
11 absolutely fabulous. So thank you for
12 letting me speak.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Yes, ma'am. Any questions?

14 (No response.)

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: Jim Hodo.

16 MR. HODO: I'm Jim Hodo. I'm past chairman of
17 The Nature Conservancy of Alabama and
18 also past chairman of the Selma-Dallas
19 County Center for Commerce. I'm
20 speaking in favor of the Hall tract
21 nomination, and I think this is an
22 important acquisition for several
23 reasons.

1 One, I think it greatly enhances the
2 value of the property that you already
3 have by protecting several miles of the
4 river, both banks, or whether it's for
5 canoeing or hiking or fishing or hunting
6 or whatever you're doing. And having
7 both banks of the river protected
8 creates a completely different
9 experience.

10 I also think there's broad-based
11 community support for this. I've talked
12 with the probate head judge there, Kim
13 Ballard, Mayor George Evans, Wayne
14 Vardaman, director of the Center for
15 Commerce. I think the Cahawba
16 Foundation has already shown its support
17 with millions of dollars. The county
18 operates a canoe launch at Highway 22
19 and the bridge, which shows that their
20 money has always been very supportive of
21 everything that's done there.

22 This is a great hunting tract.
23 Notice to the south of the Old Cahawba

1 Prairie tract there's a very large
2 hunting preserve and due north of the
3 Hall tract are two large hunting
4 preserves and then east there are
5 several other large preserves. So this
6 is in the heart of deer-hunting country.

7 It's a great location. It provides
8 a valuable protection to the Cahaba
9 River which I think is one of the great
10 natural resources of the state. And for
11 those reasons I would like to see us
12 move forward with the first appraisal of
13 the Hall tract. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you. Any questions?

15 (No response.)

16 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, sir.

17 Frank. Frank White.

18 MS. POWELL: Commissioner, I just want to note
19 for those on the board that the Hall
20 tract, in probably our terms as it got
21 named in the nomination, is the Old
22 Cahawba Prairie addition.

23 Is that correct?

1 Just in case you run across that.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you.

3 DR. LAWTON: Okay. I've got a question.

4 The maps that we just got suggest
5 that most of the parcel is deforested,
6 cleared land. Is that true?

7 MR. HODO: That most of the Hall tract is
8 forested?

9 DR. LAWTON: Deforested.

10 MR. HODO: No, that's not correct. All your
11 USGS maps are about 30 years old.
12 Currently the large part of the property
13 is a pine plantation, and that's one
14 thing I did forget to mention.

15 The owner is willing to take back a
16 timber reservation on the property which
17 would substantially reduce the price
18 and, I think, would mean that the
19 property could be very attractively
20 priced.

21 There are hardwoods bordering the
22 Cahaba River and Childers Creek, which
23 is to the north, so you do have

1 hardwoods on -- but the majority of the
2 population -- I mean, of the property is
3 a pine plantation.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. I tell you
5 what. Why don't we let -- if you don't
6 mind, Jim, just stay right there.

7 Frank, aren't you going to speak on
8 the same thing?

9 MR. WHITE: Yeah.

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: So I'm going to let Frank
11 speak, if that's okay, and then y'all
12 can ask questions about the whole thing
13 of either one of them, if that's okay.

14 MR. WHITE: All right. Fine. Good morning,
15 everyone. My name is Frank White, and
16 I'm executive director of the Alabama
17 Historical Commission. Linda Derry just
18 stole all of my notes, so I will be very
19 repetitive unfortunately.

20 But I'm here to show the Alabama
21 Historical Commission's support for
22 acquiring the Hall tract for various
23 reasons. It will be, of course, a great

1 add-on to the adjacent public land that
2 is adjacent to Old Cahawba. We have a
3 thousand acres at our park now, and we
4 are continuing to purchase more property
5 at the park. And, of course, Forever
6 Wild's Old Cahawba Prairie tract is
7 3,000 acres.

8 So the value of this investment is
9 going to be multiplied by we are a good
10 neighbor for that area down there,
11 because we have built facilities,
12 bathrooms, picnic areas, information
13 center. We've got a full-time staff on
14 board. So visitors can come over to
15 Cahawba and -- where we have monthly
16 programs. We have explorer guides. We
17 have different events. We have free
18 loaner bikes if people want to come and
19 bike through Old Cahawba, which is
20 wonderful.

21 So the Hall tract is very important
22 because it's going to protect the water
23 quality from downstream where we are.

1 And as Linda mentioned, we are looking
2 at doing a canoe and kayak trail down
3 through there, which is going to be a
4 real benefit. So I just want to support
5 the purchase of the Hall tract. And
6 thank you for your time.

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you for being here,
8 Frank.

9 All right. Now, Mr. Allen, I
10 believe you had a question.

11 MR. ALLEN: Who owns the property now?

12 MR. HODO: The Hall family does.

13 MR. ALLEN: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: Any other questions on this
15 particular piece while we have the
16 speakers here?

17 Of course, you can ask later, but --

18 MR. ELLIS: Well, how much land/acreage is in
19 that tract?

20 MR. HODO: I'm not positive, but --

21 MR. ALLEN: The book says 1505.

22 MR. HODO: Yeah, I think that's correct, 1505.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Thank you, Jim.

1 Drew Porter.

2 MR. PORTER: Good morning, everyone. My name
3 is Drew Porter. Thank you for the
4 opportunity to speak here today.

5 I'm a former Marine, honorably
6 discharged, a taxpayer and just "Joe
7 Public" as far as the hunter goes. And
8 I want to talk to you today about some
9 issues and concerns that I have with
10 some things that have been coming along
11 that we're going in a direction that I
12 don't want to see us go in the state.

13 And what I'm mainly talking to y'all
14 about today is the practice of
15 man-driving when you're deer hunting.
16 Okay. This is something we've done for
17 years and we enjoy doing. And we've
18 been talking about the Old Cahawba tract
19 this morning. I've seen -- we went down
20 there back earlier in the season ready
21 to, you know, hunt a little while and
22 stuff, and we read on the board rules
23 there, on the map, that man-driving has

1 been prohibited.

2 Well, I go to digging, and I called
3 the game warden there, Mr. David Hopper.
4 And he's the one that actually told me I
5 needed to come before the board here and
6 also the Conservation Board meeting
7 later and, you know, bring my concerns
8 up.

9 I guess that's the only place in the
10 state that this is the case, that this
11 practice is prohibited. And I don't
12 really -- you know, I've been told that
13 somebody got on the landowner's land
14 beside them or whatever. And I don't
15 know if it came from that or whatever,
16 but it wasn't us. And, you know, it
17 doesn't matter if you're duck hunting or
18 quail hunting or whatever. Sometimes
19 people trespass. And if they get
20 caught, they get a ticket. But you
21 don't do away with quail hunting and
22 duck hunting, you know, and squirrel
23 hunting. You understand what I mean.

1 And so I just don't understand why
2 we want to prohibit, you know, an honest
3 taxpayer like myself from being able to
4 enjoy a public land because somebody
5 made a mistake or -- I really don't know
6 what the deal is, but I just want to
7 bring it -- you know, I wanted to come
8 and tell y'all that, you know, I would
9 like to see this language done away with
10 on that tract.

11 And I'm going to also talk to the
12 Conservation Board meeting later on, the
13 review board, at the end of the hunting
14 season. You know, we don't want to see
15 this style of hunting done away with.
16 This has been -- you know, I've got a
17 few points here that I'll go over. And
18 Mr. Guy has got them. He said he would
19 get them to all of y'all today.

20 And, you know, why keep man-driving
21 legal in Alabama? Because this is an
22 age-old method of hunting. It's older
23 than America itself. It was done in

1 Europe and Africa years ago before, you
2 know, America was even settled.

3 You know, and some say -- well, the
4 safety aspect of it I've heard people
5 say. And so I done a little digging and
6 a little research. Tree-stand accidents
7 in the last three years versus man -- or
8 it doesn't really say man-driving. It
9 just says drives. It's not even close.
10 In the '13-14 year I think there were 14
11 people hurt seriously in tree stands and
12 there was one hurt in a deer-driving
13 incident. And it doesn't say if it was
14 with dogs or just man-driving. It just
15 says drives. And neither the shooter or
16 the guy that got shot had on orange.

17 So, I mean, you know, they were --
18 I don't know what they were thinking
19 there. But it's not dangerous when it's
20 done right. There's rules and
21 regulations. You know, you can't be 50
22 yards on a main right of way. It's set
23 up -- the state already has it set up to

1 where, you know, it's safe. You know,
2 it's -- that's not the deal.

3 These lands are for public use:
4 WMAs, National Forest Service lands,
5 Forever Wild lands. These are for
6 public use. And in the -- in the
7 "Outdoor Alabama" thing here under the
8 Forever Wild lands -- and I've
9 highlighted it and you can see it
10 later -- right there it says these lands
11 are for public use. You know, we don't
12 want to see the complaints of a few
13 people ruining, you know, what a lot of
14 people enjoy doing.

15 You know, we've seen, you know, one
16 lady get prayer took out of schools.
17 You know, we've seen -- we've seen what
18 one person can do if nobody stands up
19 for what they, you know, feel is right,
20 and I'm here today doing that. I don't
21 want to see this done away with.
22 Because if it starts here, it will go
23 bigger. It will go bigger. And in five

1 years we won't be able to do it anywhere
2 in the state. And, you know, it's
3 just -- we don't want to see that.

4 My fifth point is everybody's
5 hunting tactics are not the same. I
6 enjoy tree-stand hunting, but I don't
7 always do it. You know, just because I
8 like to do man-drives and somebody else
9 doesn't -- if you're on public land --
10 I'm sure all of y'all has hunted on
11 public land at some time in your life --
12 and somebody comes in there on you
13 squirrel hunting, you can't get mad.
14 They've got just as much right to be
15 there as you do. So, you know, it's
16 just -- we try to be respectful, and if
17 we see where somebody's at, we go away
18 from them.

19 And, you know, dog-driving versus
20 man-driving, that's not even a
21 conversation. We're not dogs. We can
22 see the land lines. I always understood
23 the dog argument, you know. They would

1 go wherever getting on people's places
2 and stuff. So that's not even an issue
3 here, I don't believe.

4 And then that was my sixth point.
5 We don't want to see a small group of
6 people's complaints stop a complete
7 style of hunting that's been going on
8 for ages. You know, we just -- we're
9 here to speak against that.

10 And, in summary, we would like to
11 see the language prohibiting man-driving
12 removed, especially, I guess -- and I've
13 got in parentheses -- at the Old Cahawba
14 tract, because as far as I know that's
15 the only place right now that it's so in
16 the state from all I can find.

17 So thank you for your time. Like I
18 said, I'm representing here a large
19 group of people. Ever since I found
20 this out three months ago, I've been
21 talking with people all over the state,
22 and nobody wants to see this, you know.
23 I mean, so I bring it to you that we

1 have this language removed and not limit
2 what the public can do on our lands that
3 we support with our tax dollars. Thank
4 you.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Mr. Porter. And
6 I recognize that -- I've got your notes
7 here that you gave me. I'll make sure
8 those are disseminated to the minutes
9 and to the board members. And
10 apparently you're aware about the
11 February 28th Conservation Advisory
12 Board meeting. I think a lot of those
13 comments are going to be better directed
14 there.

15 MR. PORTER: Right.

16 COMMISSIONER GUY: And appreciate you. We
17 look forward to seeing you there.

18 MR. PORTER: Okay. Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you.

20 Brandon Smith. Are you going to be
21 talking on the same topic?

22 MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: Let me just -- I'm not

1 trying to stop it, but they've heard
2 that conversation. If it's -- please
3 state your name. Please say anything
4 you want. But you don't need to belabor
5 the same things that Mr. Porter said,
6 but I certainly don't want to cut you
7 off from any new or different statements
8 you want to make.

9 MR. SMITH: Yes, sir. No, sir. It's
10 basically the same thing.

11 My name is Brandon Smith. I'd just
12 like to thank the board for allowing me
13 to come down here to speak. It is
14 basically on the same thing, but I won't
15 bore you and hinder you with the exact
16 same things. But I would also like to
17 see the language taken out. I don't
18 know if it's across statewide on the
19 Forever Wild, but the only tract that
20 myself and my boys have been to is the
21 Prairie Creek tract. And I knew it was
22 there, so that took us out of being able
23 to hunt that area. So thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you. And we've got
2 some people here from Wildlife and
3 Freshwater Fisheries, and I know they
4 will make note of that as well,
5 Mr. Smith and Mr. Porter. And then,
6 again, we'll look forward to seeing
7 y'all at the Conservation Advisory Board
8 meeting because that has to do with some
9 management issues that, you know, the
10 board can certainly weigh in on to the
11 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries
12 Division. And we welcome any of those
13 comments. And I'm sure Mr. Sykes, the
14 director, and any of the staff would be
15 happy to hear from the board on any of
16 those issues that were brought up or
17 questions about that, would be happy to
18 entertain them.

19 Ms. Lizzie Condon. Ms. Condon.

20 Good morning.

21 MS. CONDON: Good morning. Hi, I'm Lizzie and
22 I'm not from Alabama. I'm from
23 Wisconsin. And this is Archie. He's a

1 whooping crane.

2 I work for the International Crane
3 Foundation. Came down from Wisconsin
4 because there are whooping cranes down
5 here. You have the rarest crane species
6 in the world hanging out here in
7 Alabama. You also have the most
8 abundant sandhill crane.

9 I'm here because whooping cranes
10 have come a long way. They were down to
11 just 22 birds in the 1940s, so we almost
12 lost them. And then my organization
13 partnered with many other organizations.
14 We said we want to save these birds. We
15 want future generations to enjoy them.

16 So we went from 22 to now we have
17 about 450 whooping cranes in the wild.
18 That includes 96 whooping cranes that
19 migrate between Wisconsin and Florida,
20 but between 20 and 30 of them stop short
21 and they're hanging out in Alabama. We
22 can't control them. They have wings.
23 So they're hanging out here because they

1 really love it. We're really excited
2 that whooping cranes are choosing to
3 live in Alabama in the wintertime, but,
4 unfortunately, there are still a lot of
5 obstacles to the recovery of this
6 species.

7 We've come a long way. We've gone
8 from zero to 96. But the number-one
9 obstacle right now, the biggest source
10 of mortality for whooping cranes is
11 illegal shootings. This is done by
12 irresponsible people, and it's also done
13 because people don't know what whooping
14 cranes are. They don't know what they
15 look like. They don't know that this is
16 a rare crane species that we should all
17 be celebrating.

18 So I'm hoping, with your help and
19 with other folks in the room, we can
20 help Alabamians really celebrate the
21 fact that whooping cranes are here and
22 raise some awareness. So I'm going to
23 hand this out to you guys. It has my

1 contact information on it. We just want
2 your help to help Alabamians celebrate
3 whooping cranes.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Ms. Condon.

5 Any questions?

6 MR. CAUTHEN: Where are they?

7 (Multiple board members respond.)

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. We have a few. I
9 heard, in no particular order -- I think
10 Sonny was at least talking first.

11 MS. CONDON: So I heard somebody ask where
12 they're hanging out.

13 MR. CAUTHEN: Where are they?

14 MS. CONDON: Yeah. So the best place to see a
15 whooping crane right now is at Wheeler
16 National Wildlife Refuge in Decatur,
17 Alabama. So that's the best crane
18 viewing I've ever seen in my entire
19 life. They have a two-story observation
20 tower. It's heated. It's wonderful.
21 It's got all this glass. You don't have
22 to get up early. You can go any time of
23 the day. You can see whooping cranes

1 from there.

2 But they're hanging out in Decatur.
3 They're going over to Florence and east
4 over at Fort Payne. So they're kind of
5 hanging out around the Tennessee River
6 Valley.

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Where there's a lot of, you
8 know, duck activity. We have a lot of
9 wild birds in that area up there, of
10 course, migratory birds.

11 MS. CONDON: Yeah. So there's some great
12 wetlands up there.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Yeah, very prevalent.

14 MS. CONDON: It's a great place for whooping
15 cranes.

16 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Woods, did I see your
17 hand?

18 DR. WOODS: Yes. All of these are banded;
19 correct?

20 MS. CONDON: Yeah, just about -- just about
21 all of them. There are -- the ones that
22 have been hatched in the wild, those
23 don't have bands, but the vast majority

1 of them have been bred in captivity and
2 released into the wild. And so they're
3 going to look like the ones that you
4 have on the postcard where they have
5 colorful bands.

6 And you can report those sightings
7 in as well. If you see a whooping
8 crane, we want to know from you guys,
9 you know, which whooping crane did you
10 see, where was it. And we also have
11 radio transmitters on them, and some of
12 them have satellite transmitters.

13 DR. WOODS: How many have been killed in
14 Alabama?

15 MS. CONDON: In the eastern population over
16 20. Overall in the -- overall that
17 we've been keeping records, over 30.

18 And I will say that, you know, a lot
19 of these birds we find are carcasses
20 that are decomposed. And, you know, it
21 might be a suspected shooting, but we
22 can't confirm it from a necropsy. So
23 it's just an estimate.

1 But right now, as far as the best
2 science goes, it's the number-one
3 human-caused form of death. There's
4 also power-line collisions and other
5 things like that that are happening to
6 them.

7 DR. STRICKLAND: Commissioner?

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Strickland.

9 DR. STRICKLAND: Are they full-time residents
10 here, or are they just --

11 MS. CONDON: They migrate.

12 DR. STRICKLAND: They migrate. I see.

13 MS. CONDON: They migrate. So if you want to
14 see them, I recommend --

15 DR. STRICKLAND: When are they here?

16 MS. CONDON: Well, they're here right now. I
17 believe that they start coming in
18 November, December. When I was here
19 about a month ago, there were -- I could
20 see eight at one time. This is the
21 rarest crane species in the world, so
22 that was really amazing. And I've never
23 had that opportunity to see so many at

1 the same time before. So it's really
2 special.

3 They migrate north to Wisconsin.
4 They hang out at some national wildlife
5 refuges and other lands that are up
6 there. And they breed in the
7 summertime, and then they start coming
8 down, so ...

9 MR. CAUTHEN: Gunter?

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: Yes, Mr. Cauthen.

11 MR. CAUTHEN: In your remarks -- I'm reading
12 on this card where there was 20 in the
13 1940s and now there's 400, but in your
14 remarks you mentioned the number 96.

15 What was significant about that number?

16 MS. CONDON: That's in the eastern population.

17 So we have many different -- well,
18 we don't have many. There's the
19 sustaining population, the only one
20 that's left, that only had about 15
21 birds left in it. There were some that
22 were in captivity, so that's where that
23 20 comes from. But that migrates

1 between northern Canada with Buffalo
2 National Park and Port Aransas in Texas.
3 So that's what we call the Central
4 Flyway population.

5 This is the eastern population that
6 was taught to migrate with an ultralight
7 aircraft. And Jo Lewis, right here, she
8 actually has hosted the Operation
9 Migration aircraft with the crane chicks
10 at her -- at her private property in
11 Alabama. So we taught them to migrate
12 with an ultralight aircraft between
13 Wisconsin and Florida.

14 There's also a recently reintroduced
15 nonmigratory population in Louisiana.
16 So they spend all year around there.
17 And we're working very close with them
18 because they have a lot of public
19 outreach going on in their rural
20 community there.

21 MR. CAUTHEN: Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER GUY: May I ask a question real
23 quick.

1 MS. CONDON: Yeah.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: So the fact that y'all know
3 that they're mostly, you know, hanging
4 around in north Alabama, does the
5 Foundation have a plan or are they doing
6 any kind of media work at that time
7 particularly to educate the public?
8 Because I would think that if they were
9 getting killed it would probably be
10 because they don't recognize the bird
11 and what they're shooting.

12 MS. CONDON: Right. And we think that's
13 mostly what it is. It's just people
14 don't know. And so that is part of
15 our -- we're at the very beginning now.
16 So I'm trying to get feedback from
17 people in Alabama about, you know, how
18 do we deliver messages to people in
19 Alabama.

20 A lot of the feedback has been,
21 well, Alabamians watch television just
22 like everyone else. They watch public
23 television. They get -- you know, they

1 listen to the radio, so we need radio
2 commercials. We need TV commercials.
3 We need to do all kinds of public
4 outreach. And we want to focus it in on
5 the Decatur area, kind of the top of
6 Alabama, but we want all Alabamians to
7 be excited.

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: So can I make two
9 suggestions?

10 MS. CONDON: Sure.

11 COMMISSIONER GUY: If you haven't already done
12 this.

13 So I would contact our Wildlife and
14 Freshwater Fisheries Division, and we
15 have a digest that comes out before the
16 hunting season each year. And if the
17 Foundation were willing to purchase an
18 ad or something in there, most hunters
19 would see that as an opportunity to know
20 what not to shoot as a migratory bird.

21 And I'm not even saying hunters are
22 shooting them, but I'm saying that would
23 give you some -- and then

1 Dr. Strickland, who is also on our
2 Conservation Advisory Board who serves
3 on this board, I'm sure, would be a
4 valuable resource to you. And then
5 Raymond Jones is also in that district
6 up there. And they're very involved in
7 that community and would be -- I'm not
8 trying to volunteer, but I'm sure if you
9 reached out to him he could give you
10 some pretty good insightful knowledge
11 about things that could be helpful.

12 MS. CONDON: Well, that's one thought.

13 DR. STRICKLAND: Yeah. I didn't realize, you
14 know, there's a population of whooping
15 cranes in that part of Alabama.

16 MR. CAUTHEN: I didn't either.

17 MS. CONDON: And we want to change that. I
18 think you're just like most Alabamians.
19 But we want to do some public outreach.

20 But I'm here today and I'm in
21 Alabama for the entire month of
22 February. So you have my contact
23 information. Please feel free to get

1 ahold of me.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you. Any other
3 questions?

4 (No response.)

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Ms. Condon.

6 MS. CONDON: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. That's all the
8 people I have that had signed up for
9 public speaking. Did we miss anybody?

10 (No response.)

11 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. Thank you.

12 So, by regulation, before we recess
13 into executive session I must state on
14 the record that appraisal values are
15 confidential during periods of
16 negotiation. Accordingly, in order to
17 discuss tract appraisal values, the
18 board will need to go into recess for an
19 executive session.

20 I need a motion from the board now
21 to recess to attend to an executive
22 session. Is there a motion?

23 DR. STRICKLAND: So move.

1 DR. SIMS: So move.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Sims. Do I have a
3 second?

4 DR. WOODS: Second.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. That's
6 Dr. Woods.

7 I must call your name to approve the
8 recess. I almost forgot.

9 If you would, I will call your name,
10 and if you would indicate your approval
11 of the motion to recess, please say so.

12 Mr. Pate?

13 MR. PATE: Aye.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Strickland?

15 DR. STRICKLAND: Aye.

16 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Lawton?

17 DR. LAWTON: Aye.

18 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Sims?

19 DR. SIMS: Aye.

20 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Runyan?

21 MR. RUNYAN: Aye.

22 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Ball?

23 MR. BALL: Aye.

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Hepp?

2 DR. HEPP: Aye.

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Ellis?

4 MR. ELLIS: Aye.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Woods?

6 DR. WOODS: Aye.

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Cauthen?

8 MR. CAUTHEN: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Allen?

10 MR. ALLEN: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Valentine?

12 DR. VALENTINE: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: And myself. So the motion
14 is unanimous.

15 At this time, for those in the
16 audience, I note that the time is about,
17 according to my phone, 10:40. So we
18 will take a 20-minute recess for
19 executive session and return at
20 approximately 11 o'clock.

21 **(Recess for executive session was**
22 **taken at approximately 10:40 a.m.**
23 **and the meeting was called back to**

1 **order at approximately 11:02 a.m.)**

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thanks to everyone for
3 their patience. And my little outline
4 says announce the time. So we are
5 resuming at 11:02. So we're two minutes
6 behind schedule.

7 All right. At this time I would
8 like to call on Chris Smith for some
9 program status reports. Chris.

10 MR. SMITH: Yes, sir. Thank you,
11 Commissioner. And good morning,
12 everybody.

13 The program status information is
14 located in Tab 2 of your meeting packet
15 information. And on the first page of
16 that Tab 2 is a list of all of the
17 nominations that the board has
18 previously made some motion to purchase.

19 You will see that there's several
20 that are in the closing -- that are in
21 our legal section and then some in the
22 process of closing, and then there are
23 several that are still under

1 negotiation. What that means is that
2 there's been an offer made, the offer
3 has been accepted, and we're in the
4 second appraisal phase, we're waiting on
5 an environmental site assessment, or the
6 owner still is contemplating the offer
7 made. But I'm going to go through those
8 nominations.

9 And to begin with, the current
10 balance prior to these transactions is
11 \$21,021,143.00.

12 The nominations that are currently
13 within our legal section and closing
14 include the Riverton Community Hunting
15 Area-Hog Hollow nomination, which is 507
16 acres in Colbert County. The Riverton
17 Community Hunting Area-RMK nomination,
18 20 acres in Colbert County. The Heron
19 Bay nomination, which is 487 acres in
20 Baldwin County -- excuse me. That's
21 Mobile County. Heron Bay, 487 acres in
22 Mobile County.

23 Also in closing is the swap that the

1 board approved between the Martin Timber
2 group and the Forever Wild Land Trust
3 holdings in Lauderdale and Colbert
4 County. The Grand Bay Savanna-Drake
5 nomination, 120 acres in Baldwin County.
6 The Pritchett tract, 400 acres in
7 Covington County.

8 Those are the ones that are
9 currently in our legal section and
10 closing.

11 Nominations that are currently in
12 some step of the negotiation process
13 include the Big Canoe Creek Preserve,
14 381 acres in St. Clair County. Lillian
15 Swamp, 689 acres in Baldwin County. The
16 DeSoto State Park-Gray Road addition,
17 105 acres in DeKalb County. The DeSoto
18 State Park-Steward Gap addition, 253
19 acres in DeKalb County. The
20 Guntersville State Park-Stubblefield
21 addition, 636 acres in Marshall County.
22 The Turkey Creek Nature
23 Preserve-Shepherd addition, 242 acres in

1 Jefferson County. The Walls of
2 Jericho-Estillfork addition, 72 acres in
3 Jackson County. The Weeks Bay
4 Reserve-Swift Number 2 tract, 29 acres
5 in Baldwin County. And the Yates
6 Lake-Guy addition, 123 acres in Elmore
7 County.

8 Considering all those transactions,
9 the unencumbered balance available to
10 you today is \$14,409,000.00. This is
11 within your 20-million current spending
12 authority for FY15.

13 Remaining in Tab 2, on the next page
14 you will see a list of properties that
15 have been closed in the previous fiscal
16 year and then those couple of
17 transactions that were closed in fiscal
18 year 2015. And in 2015 there's been two
19 purchases made. One was the Sipse
20 River Swamp-Pruett addition, 274 acres
21 in Tuscaloosa County, and the Perdido
22 WMA-Barnhill addition, 191 acres in
23 Baldwin County.

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: Chris, may I ask a
2 question.

3 MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Just tell me if you have.
5 The Weeks Bay Reserve that was declined,
6 did y'all discuss that at the last
7 meeting?

8 MR. SMITH: We did.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay.

10 MR. SMITH: I mentioned that it's been
11 declined. And I'll talk about that
12 again here in a second associated with
13 the grant.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Thank you.

15 MR. SMITH: Yes, sir.

16 On the next page, the final page of
17 Tab 3, there's a breakdown, you know,
18 illustrating the expenditures of the
19 stewardship fund at this point. Your
20 authorized budget for 2015
21 is \$1 million. Currently there has been
22 175,000-plus dollars spent toward
23 maintenance and habitat management and

1 reforestation projects.

2 As I've mentioned in previous years,
3 the bulk of the spending of the
4 stewardship happens during the -- after
5 hunting season and during the late
6 spring and summer months. That's when a
7 lot of management activity occurs.

8 So we have remaining for this year
9 the authority to spend \$824,000.00 yet.

10 So that concludes the Tab 2 section,
11 the program status financial information
12 update.

13 I'm now going to move into Tab 3,
14 which is a listing of all of the
15 nominations that the board has motioned
16 to get a first appraisal on. And those
17 include the Byrnes Lake nomination,
18 which is 2,952 acres in Baldwin County.
19 The Coosa WMA-Hancock Phase III
20 nomination, 877 acres in Coosa County.
21 The Beaverdam Swamp nomination, 167
22 acres in Limestone County. The Hinds
23 Road Outcrop nomination, 80 acres in

1 Etowah County. The Indian
2 Mountain-Simmons addition, 520 acres in
3 Cherokee County. The Natural Bridge
4 tract, 1200 acres in Covington County.
5 And the Pintlala Creek nomination,
6 601 acres in Lowndes County.

7 So that concludes the update for
8 Tab 2 and Tab 3.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: Does anybody have any
10 questions from Chris on any of the
11 reports he just made?

12 (No response.)

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Thank you,
14 Chris.

15 MR. SMITH: I'll move into just our grant
16 status update.

17 I just want to mention for the new
18 board members, Mr. Runyan and Mr. Ball,
19 when we receive a nomination, there's
20 several federal Land Acquisition grant
21 programs that we try to participate in
22 if a nomination meets the criteria of
23 those various programs. Generally, we

1 typically have a couple of nominations,
2 it seems like, every year that fit that
3 criteria as we submit a proposal hoping
4 to get some federal funds support to
5 leverage the Forever Wild dollars a
6 little further. And so at each meeting
7 I give an update of the status of those
8 grant projects.

9 Currently we have two nominations
10 that have federal awards associated with
11 the National Coastal Wetland
12 Conservation program, and one of those
13 nominations is the Heron Bay tract that
14 I mentioned was in the closing phase.
15 We hope to soon close on that property,
16 and at that point we will seek the final
17 reimbursement for that grant and close
18 that grant out.

19 We have another National Coastal
20 Wetland-approved proposal associated
21 with the Lillian Swamp nomination, and
22 that's one of the ones I just mentioned
23 a minute ago that's still in the

1 negotiation phase. We're waiting on the
2 environmental site assessment on that
3 particular tract before it moves to
4 closing.

5 And then we do have -- or we do have
6 a NOAA grant award that was to support
7 the Benton tract that Commissioner Guy
8 just mentioned. And the board had
9 authorized the purchase of that property
10 and an offer was made and that owner
11 declined that offer. And so we're
12 working right now looking at other
13 nominations that fit the criteria of
14 that grant program to try to find -- we
15 have two years of that grant period.
16 And so we haven't necessarily lost that
17 money, but we're trying to find another
18 nomination that will fit that criteria
19 where we can move on to replace that
20 Benton tract.

21 And that concludes my portion of the
22 grant status update. I'm going to at
23 this point -- does anybody have any

1 questions about those grants?

2 (No response.)

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Chris.

4 MR. SMITH: I think Chuck is going to come up
5 and give an update on the Wildlife
6 Restoration grant possibilities.

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. Thank you, Chris.

8 So, Chuck, you and Drew or whoever
9 or maybe Ashley.

10 MR. SYKES: I'll be happy to let Drew do it if
11 you would prefer. I've already given
12 one today.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, you're on a roll.
14 Might as well do another one.

15 MR. SYKES: Part of this, I'm going to give
16 just a couple of slides, especially for
17 the new members, just to refresh what we
18 had talked about in December.

19 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, we can't see it,
20 so --

21 MR. SYKES: I know. I'm just prefacing before
22 we get up there.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. Are you going to

1 want the board to move?

2 Patti is --

3 MR. SYKES: I think they've got copies of
4 everything.

5 MS. POWELL: They should have --

6 MR. SYKES: They've got copies of everything.
7 Everybody has got a handout.

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, let everybody find
9 their handout. I just didn't want to
10 interrupt your speaking.

11 So it's this document right here.
12 You got that?

13 If you don't have it, just say so.

14 MR. SYKES: I'm going to try to keep it short
15 and sweet.

16 We've been working -- the U.S. Fish
17 and Wildlife finally got everything --
18 all the "I's" dotted and "T's" crossed
19 where we can use the Pittman-Robertson
20 federal excise tax money as utilization
21 with the Forever Wild program, using
22 Forever Wild money as our state match.

23 We've got 370 acres in Autauga

1 County that was the core of a 7,000-acre
2 management area years ago that we would
3 like to put back together. As I told
4 y'all at the December meeting, we found
5 willing sellers that have properties
6 adjoining this that total about
7 650 acres. We are kind of shooting at a
8 moving target right now. We had to
9 almost give Patti some Valium this week
10 trying to get all these facts and
11 figures right where we could have
12 everything together for y'all.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Chuck, you said -- just for
14 the record, you said 650. It's 6,050.

15 MR. SYKES: I'm sorry.

16 The new map, which is on page 3, we
17 have got them broken down by addition
18 name. We've got a 1321-acre Oak Grove
19 addition, a 1497-acre Poseys Crossroads
20 addition, and a 1420-acre -- 1420-acre
21 Old Kingston addition that all falls
22 around that 370 acres that we currently
23 own.

1 They're willing sellers. I think
2 there were some people that spoke on
3 this nomination before I got here today.
4 I think this will be a highly utilized
5 area in our WMA system.

6 We're still looking to add some more
7 acreage to it. One of the property
8 owners is under a 1500-acre-a-year
9 restriction as to what they can sell.
10 So hopefully in the coming years we will
11 be able to add more and try to get this
12 tract back to what it was, to
13 approximately 7,000 acres -- between six
14 and 7,000 acres.

15 That's what it will look like on
16 page 4 once we get this addition, if the
17 board chooses to.

18 And then scroll to the last page.
19 This is the nuts and bolts of it.

20 For fiscal year 2015 these are the
21 three additions that we would like to
22 make to the Autauga WMA. And just put a
23 note at the bottom that one-fourth of

1 the total value of this property will be
2 deeded to Forever Wild. Three-fourths
3 of it will be deeded to Wildlife and
4 Freshwater Fisheries. That way we can
5 fulfill our federal obligations for our
6 money and Forever Wild can fulfill their
7 obligations for their money.

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, Chuck, I know most
9 board members have heard it, but a few
10 are new and a couple may have missed the
11 last meeting. Just very briefly, if you
12 don't mind, just tell them how that
13 works, you know, \$1 of Forever Wild
14 being used to match up with \$3 of the
15 Pittman-Robertson money. Just briefly.

16 MR. SYKES: Okay. The way the federal excise
17 tax works is a three-to-one match. We
18 have to come up with \$1 of state money
19 where we can access \$3 of federal money.
20 It took a long time to get it where we
21 could use Forever Wild to match up with
22 our federal dollars.

23 But we've got all of that taken care

1 of. We've got all the paperwork ready.
2 It's going -- we're going to have to
3 jump through a bunch of hoops to get it
4 done, but we think it's well worth our
5 time and everybody's effort for us to be
6 able to utilize this program to help
7 provide some quality hunting land.

8 So that's why we said the total
9 value of the property. We're going to
10 have to get appraisals, and rather than
11 say acre for acre, there may be
12 different timber stands on it that's
13 worth different amounts of money. So
14 when we get the property appraised, it
15 will be a total value of the property.
16 One-fourth of it will be deeded to
17 Forever Wild. Three-fourths will be
18 deeded to Wildlife and Freshwater
19 Fisheries. We will still manage it the
20 way we do now with current Forever Wild
21 properties that fall in under the WMA
22 system.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: Does anybody have any

1 questions?

2 MR. CAUTHEN: I've got one, only one.

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: Sure. Mr. Cauthen.

4 MR. CAUTHEN: Chuck?

5 MR. SYKES: Yes, sir.

6 MR. CAUTHEN: I know we've probably been told
7 this. But if it was 7,000 acres at one
8 time, how did it get away from us?

9 MR. SYKES: The week before we had our meeting
10 with the landowner they divested and
11 sold it to different parties. So it
12 went from one landowner to three.
13 Timing.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: And may I add, Sonny, it's
15 just a lot of our WMAs are privately
16 held and it's just up to the individual
17 to elect, you know, whether or not it's
18 worth whatever benefit they wanted to
19 get out of it as a WMA versus something
20 else.

21 MR. SYKES: Yeah. We lost probably 17,000
22 acres last year. Look, times have
23 changed. People got a lot of benefit

1 out of donating their properties for
2 public hunting land 20 or 30 years ago.
3 Now it's a money-making business. And I
4 understand that. And there is timber
5 management investment groups, and their
6 responsibility is to their shareholders
7 to make money. So while we've got an
8 opportunity with this flush of
9 Pittman-Robertson dollars, we want to
10 get as much public hunting land as we
11 can. Try to buy it wisely and spend the
12 money wisely and do it in the proper
13 locations, and we think this Autauga
14 tract is a good one.

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: Dr. Strickland, if you
16 would, just hold -- was there another
17 hand, though, Dr. Strickland?

18 Who else had a question?

19 (No response.)

20 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay, Dr. Strickland. Go
21 ahead. I apologize.

22 DR. STRICKLAND: Chuck, how many
23 Pittman-Robertson dollars do you think

1 we get annually?

2 I know it depends on sales --

3 MR. SYKES: It depends. We get our
4 apportionment every year depending on
5 gun sales --

6 DR. STRICKLAND: License.

7 MR. SYKES: -- license and all that.

8 When I first started, I think our
9 apportionment was about \$6 million.
10 It's 18 this year.

11 DR. STRICKLAND: 18 million. Yeah. And I
12 think it's important for new board
13 members to understand Pittman-Robertson
14 funds and where that money comes from.

15 MR. SYKES: Thank goodness, back in the '30s
16 legislators in Washington had the
17 foresight to talk to the gun
18 manufacturers industry that made their
19 money off of people hunting and fishing.
20 Those industry leaders put a
21 self-imposed excise tax where they put
22 money in a fund to help fund state
23 agencies because they knew if the state

1 agencies managed wildlife populations
2 and fish populations correctly they
3 would always have clients coming and
4 buying their products. All of that
5 money goes into one fund that is doled
6 out among the states based on your
7 acreage and based on how many licenses
8 you sell.

9 So our apportionment this year, I
10 think, was 18 million, and it's going to
11 go up to about 22.

12 DR. STRICKLAND: And it can only be used for
13 hunter-education purposes --

14 MR. SYKES: It can only be used for certain
15 things. We can't use it for law
16 enforcement. We can't use it for --
17 it's easier to tell you what we can use
18 it for, and that's management of
19 wildlife resources, buying public
20 hunting land, and managing our
21 department.

22 COMMISSIONER GUY: Programs associated with
23 that.

1 MR. SYKES: Right.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: But, Dr. Strickland, I
3 think here's the real critical thing
4 that -- I think we've explained this to
5 the board, but -- you know, you know
6 this -- is that because
7 Pittman-Robertson dollars are bigger
8 than normal -- and I think the board --
9 we talked about this. This is probably
10 a snapshot. This won't last forever.

11 DR. STRICKLAND: Right.

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: But I think the important
13 thing that Chuck, you know, talked about
14 and I agree with is that should the
15 board look at this, you know, the
16 opportunity is here, and if we don't use
17 the Pittman-Robertson monies, we lose
18 them. So, you know, that's the
19 opportunity we really don't want to
20 miss.

21 We don't presently have enough
22 license sales, honestly, to match up
23 with all the Pittman-Robertson dollars.

1 So this was -- the Wildlife and
2 Freshwater Fisheries Division, Chuck,
3 looked at this issue, worked with the
4 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And
5 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
6 interestingly, worked with us really
7 cooperatively. Very good partnership
8 there.

9 And so, you know, again, this is for
10 the board's choice. But that's the
11 other thing that's going on is there are
12 so many dollars, and if we don't -- if
13 we elect not to use it, that's fine, but
14 we potentially lose that opportunity for
15 that match.

16 DR. STRICKLAND: I think we should use the
17 dollars.

18 COMMISSIONER GUY: Yes.

19 MS. POWELL: Commissioner, as a segue, I've
20 mentioned and I know we've talked about
21 before and Chris talked on it or
22 mentioned it earlier, but let me also
23 just note to the board and especially

1 for the benefit of the new members.

2 Part of what the State Lands
3 Division staff tries to do as we see
4 nominations is to continue to remain
5 updated on potential grant opportunities
6 for potential funds to leverage
7 properties. It doesn't mean this board
8 is going to want to pursue that
9 property, but that's one of the charges
10 the board gave our staff years ago. So
11 we try to do that. This is nothing more
12 than that effort. It's just the first
13 time we've been able to do it to match
14 these funds.

15 But the second thing I would mention
16 to you -- I've referenced it, but, also,
17 these funds -- and, you know, Chuck is
18 the expert on it -- but they are -- as
19 Chris talked about, we have two years to
20 try to identify potential tracts that
21 may fall within the availability of the
22 NOAA grant funds. These funds are going
23 to be fiscal year funds.

1 I hate he walked away in case I
2 screw this up.

3 But, anyway, we are going to have to
4 look at being able to spend the money so
5 we don't lose this fiscal year's money,
6 being able to wrap that up by the end of
7 the fiscal year, which is the end of
8 September, which isn't just an
9 obligation or a commitment to purchase,
10 but actually working through the closing
11 process. And as you've seen on some
12 tracts, we sometimes will hit title
13 issues. We hit various issues.

14 So with each grant, just as Chris
15 did with the Weeks Bay opportunity -- I
16 wanted to mention that here. You know,
17 we are for this fiscal year on a fairly
18 tight, aggressive "we're having to keep
19 an eye on it" timetable. And so I just
20 wanted everyone to be aware with our
21 process of first appraisals for --
22 motion for first appraisals and then
23 decisions on whether or not to then act

1 on a tract -- I just wanted to -- I
2 would be remiss if I didn't remind
3 everyone. Unlike some of our
4 longer-grant opportunities, this one has
5 a shorter fuse. So I just wanted to
6 remind you of that. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Ms. Powell.

8 Any other questions for Director
9 Sykes?

10 (No response.)

11 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. Thank you, Chuck.

12 MR. SYKES: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Ms. Lewis, nomination short
14 list update.

15 MS. LEWIS: Good morning. I'm Jo Lewis, and
16 I'm going to present to you the current
17 short list for nominations that are
18 available and ranked higher than the
19 majority of the rest of the active
20 nominations.

21 Whenever the office receives a
22 nomination from the public for a tract
23 of land, it's immediately evaluated to

1 determine whether it has a willing
2 seller. Then it is assessed with a
3 standard scoring criteria in the four
4 categories of use, and that's how these
5 scores come about. The short list is
6 the top-three nominations in each
7 category of use, which there are four,
8 in each of the three geographic regions
9 of the state. You can, therefore, have
10 up to 36 nominations on the short list.

11 Nominations that score well in one
12 category of use often score well in an
13 additional category of use. Then we end
14 up with a different number. Today we
15 have 28.

16 The nominations vary in size from
17 about three acres to up to over 6,000
18 acres, and they're distributed
19 throughout the state from Baldwin County
20 to Jackson County. And there are 14
21 different counties represented by the
22 nominations that are on the short list
23 today.

1 I'm going to run through the short
2 list. They're arranged alphabetically.
3 They're -- basically I'm going to read
4 the list that is Tab A -- 5-A. You have
5 in Tab B -- 5-B maps of each of these
6 nominations and a brief narrative
7 description. So the PowerPoint that
8 Ashley is going to run through that is
9 showing behind you is available to you
10 in a hard copy in Tab 5-B.

11 The short list nominations
12 alphabetically arranged begin with the
13 Autauga WMA-Oak Grove addition with
14 1,321 acres in Autauga County. The next
15 is Autauga Wildlife Management Area-Old
16 Kingston addition at 1,420. The third
17 is Autauga WMA-Poseys Crossroad addition
18 at 1,497. And, of course, these are the
19 three nominations that we've just been
20 discussing in detail.

21 Additionally, there's the Big Coon
22 Creek -- Big Canoe Creek-Bettis
23 addition. It's 197 acres in St. Clair

1 County.

2 Then we have --

3 MR. ALLEN: Jo?

4 MS. LEWIS: Yes.

5 MR. ALLEN: Could you give me the acreage --

6 if we have --

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: You said on the first

8 one -- you said it was over a thousand.

9 It shows up here as 775.

10 DR. WOODS: All three of those. Is that our

11 share or --

12 MS. LEWIS: All right. All three of the

13 Autauga Wildlife Management Area

14 additions, the first one says 775 acres.

15 That was the original nomination. Chuck

16 mentioned the restriction back to 1500

17 acres per year. So the original

18 nomination was reduced in size.

19 The current -- currently available

20 total acquisition between the two

21 funding sources is 1,321, of which about

22 328 would be deeded to Forever Wild and

23 the remaining portion would be deeded to

1 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.

2 MR. SYKES: All that is, was an approximation
3 of what would be deeded to Forever Wild
4 versus the whole tract. The numbers
5 that I gave you on my presentation are
6 the whole tract size. And, again, it's
7 hard to say it's going to be 322 acres
8 until we can get an appraisal because
9 it's the total value.

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: So if the board chose to
11 nominate, you'd just really be
12 nominating one or more of those pieces
13 and then the actual amount would be
14 determined later?

15 MR. SYKES: Correct, once we get the
16 appraisal.

17 MR. ALLEN: And that amount would be the 25
18 percent?

19 MR. SYKES: That's right. That's right.

20 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thanks, Jo. Sorry.

21 MS. LEWIS: Not a problem. It's complicated
22 until you get used to the concept, and
23 then it's pretty straightforward.

1 We were at the Big Canoe
2 Creek-Bettis addition, which was 328.

3 The next one is Cheaha State
4 Park-Cassidy addition. It has been
5 determined that this one is no longer
6 available. The landowner has sold it to
7 somebody else.

8 Now we have Conecuh County Preserve,
9 which is 19 acres in Conecuh County.
10 It's actually in the town of
11 Castleberry. It's adjacent to some land
12 that Castleberry has purchased, and it
13 is a part of a municipal park project.

14 Then we have Coon Gulf-Heard, which
15 is 40 acres adjacent to the wildlife
16 management area out there. Then we have
17 Deer Head Cove-Low Gap, which is 280
18 acres. Then we have DeSoto State
19 Park-French addition, which is three
20 acres adjacent to the park. Then we
21 have DeSoto State Park-Jones addition,
22 which is approximately ten acres
23 adjacent to the park. Then we have

1 Double Mountain, which is 1,550 acres in
2 Shelby County. And then Emauhee Creek,
3 which is 915 acres in Talladega County.

4 High Rocks Preserve, which is 39
5 acres in Etowah County. This -- these
6 landowners originally offered a value
7 donation on this tract.

8 Then we have Laguna Cove in Baldwin
9 County, 53 acres. Then we have Lake
10 Lurleen State Park-Roebuck addition with
11 70 acres adjacent to the state park.
12 That's Tuscaloosa County.

13 Then we have what we call MTD or
14 Mobile-Tensaw Delta-Simmons addition,
15 300 acres adjacent to the wildlife
16 management area in the Delta.

17 Then we have Old Cahawba Prairie
18 addition, 1,505 acres, which was earlier
19 today referred to as the Hall tract.

20 Then we have Perdido WMA-Freise
21 addition, which is 47 acres which is
22 within an inholding in the Perdido
23 Wildlife Management Area.

1 We have Post Oak Flat-Shiflett
2 addition, which is 290 acres in Jackson
3 County adjacent to the wildlife
4 management area and Forever Wild
5 holding.

6 We have Red Hills-Fountain, which is
7 our largest nomination. It's 6,000
8 acres in Monroe County. And we have Red
9 Hills-Parris addition, which is 300
10 acres also in Monroe County. Then we
11 have Shell Banks Bayou, which is 25
12 acres in Baldwin County.

13 Skyline Wildlife Management
14 Area-Pole Branch addition, 111 acres in
15 Jackson County. Splinter Hill Bog-North
16 addition, which is 511 acres immediately
17 to the north of the Forever Wild
18 holdings at Splinter Hill in Baldwin
19 County.

20 We have The Middle Ridges. And this
21 acreage I recently realized had been
22 corrected to a lower acreage, but I
23 don't have it in my notes.

1 Then we have the Weeks Bay
2 Reserve -- that's what the WBR is --
3 Ollinger addition, 143 acres in Baldwin
4 County. We have the Weeks Bay
5 Reserve-Sunset Shores addition, which is
6 approximately three acres which was
7 originally offered with a 50-percent
8 value donation. And I assume these have
9 remained in place, but I have not
10 double-checked these potential
11 donations.

12 The last one is the Wiregrass Trail,
13 which is the 521 acres which -- of the
14 linear nomination, 42-acres long, on the
15 old railroad bed. And that's in Geneva
16 County, among others.

17 So that is all of the currently
18 available high-scoring Forever Wild
19 nominations. I'd be happy to take any
20 questions.

21 DR. WOODS: Wiregrass Rail Trail, the grant
22 below that --

23 MS. LEWIS: Yes.

1 DR. WOODS: -- could you explain that?

2 MS. LEWIS: That was secured through ADECA.

3 And we're not -- the Conservation
4 Department is not administering that.
5 It is offered. There is also some
6 litigation going on about the ownership
7 of a small portion of this overall tract
8 where one landowner is addressing this.
9 So we don't know how long the grant
10 would be available. I think Patti knows
11 more about that. It's just the
12 lawsuit --

13 MS. POWELL: Well, as to the grant, my
14 understanding -- it's not a grant that
15 we -- as Jo said, that we administer.
16 My understanding is it's a grant that
17 could be rolled to the future. And
18 based on timing and some pending issues,
19 I imagine that's, you know, probably
20 what would happen here. It would
21 probably remain available, but I think
22 that's probably what's going to occur.

23 MS. LEWIS: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Ms. Lewis.

2 Any other questions?

3 (No response.)

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. So at this time we
5 generally take up any nominations or
6 other discussions by the board members
7 on any tracts you wish to talk about.
8 And Ms. Powell is standing up, so I'm
9 not sure what that means.

10 MS. POWELL: Goodness knows, I would not want
11 to interrupt you, but I thought we might
12 give a brief overview of the -- I mean,
13 although anything can be discussed with
14 the motion, I just thought for the --
15 maybe the benefit of the new members the
16 type of motions we sometimes receive
17 here.

18 COMMISSIONER GUY: Since it's not on my
19 agenda, why don't you go ahead and do
20 that.

21 MS. POWELL: And I apologize. No. It
22 occurred to me that I thought this might
23 be a good time.

1 During this portion, as Commissioner
2 Guy referenced, any matter can be
3 discussed and any questions can be
4 brought up. The board can also use this
5 period of time to make motions that they
6 may have that might reflect interest in
7 certain tract nominations, and those can
8 include a motion for first appraisal.

9 For benefit of some of those who
10 maybe have not attended before, if the
11 board makes a motion for a first
12 appraisal, that's what triggers our
13 staff to begin the work of getting the
14 deeds from the willing sellers and then
15 working with the appraisers to get the
16 appraisals done and brought back to the
17 board for their review.

18 Subsequently, if there's continued
19 interest by the board in a tract, either
20 we follow up on information or if that
21 interest is to go ahead and proceed with
22 purchase, a motion can be made at that
23 point to proceed with purchase of that

1 tract. In our process under the program
2 requirements, what that means is that
3 our staff at that point will begin
4 additional work to negotiate closing of
5 that tract, which will include pursuing
6 and obtaining a second appraisal.

7 If our second appraisal comes back
8 off more than ten percent, that triggers
9 a need under the program requirements
10 for a third reconciling appraisal.

11 However, if all of that proceeds as
12 planned, we, based on that motion to
13 proceed to closing, do close on that
14 tract. If we hit a glitch in the
15 meantime, either there could be a title
16 issue, could be a restriction on the
17 deed we were not aware of or something
18 that came to light later that requires
19 us to need some further direction to the
20 board, we will come back to the board.

21 But, anyway, the period is for any
22 questions you may have or any directions
23 to our staff that you want us to follow

1 up as to any matter. I just wanted to
2 give that overview. And I'll sit down
3 now.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: And, you know, and as we
5 said, you know, this board -- the
6 discussions about tracts are open and,
7 you know, in front of the public, and
8 that's what you should feel comfortable
9 doing.

10 And the only other thing that I
11 would add that, you know, when I first
12 got here I felt uncomfortable about is
13 don't -- if you, you know, have a
14 question or something either of the
15 person who might know more about it or
16 nominated it or also of our staff -- so,
17 you know, from time to time we forget
18 maybe what happened at the last board
19 meeting or something that was said about
20 a particular tract. I would just add
21 don't feel uncomfortable about asking
22 about that. Some of the older heads on
23 here are very good at that and know that

1 already.

2 So it is an opportunity to talk
3 about anything you want to talk about
4 right now, whether it's nominations or
5 questions or anything else.

6 Dr. Strickland.

7 DR. STRICKLAND: Commissioner, is it
8 appropriate at this time to make a
9 motion for a purchase?

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: Yes, sir.

11 DR. STRICKLAND: Okay. I would like to make a
12 motion to proceed with purchase and
13 second appraisal for Skyline Wildlife
14 Management Area-Little Coon Creek
15 addition.

16 DR. LAWTON: Second.

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. We have a
18 motion and a second. Any discussion on
19 the motion?

20 (No response.)

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: All in favor of the motion
22 say "aye."

23 (All board members present respond

1 "aye.")

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: All opposed?

3 (No response.)

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Motion carries.

5 Anyone else?

6 Dr. Hepp.

7 DR. HEPP: Yeah. I would like to make a
8 motion for first appraisal on the
9 Autauga Wildlife Management Area that
10 Mr. Sykes was talking about, the Oak
11 Grove addition. I guess we'll do them
12 one at a time.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Well, I was going to ask
14 that. Do we need to do them separately?

15 MS. POWELL: Yes. And hopefully if there is
16 any -- if you wish to nominate more than
17 one but there's a glitch in one, doing
18 the motions separately will allow us to
19 just keep proceeding to the extent that
20 we can.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. So we'll do that,
22 then, Dr. Hepp. And you say the first
23 one that you wanted a motion for a first

1 appraisal is the Oak Grove addition?

2 DR. HEPP: Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Is there a
4 second?

5 DR. LAWTON: Second.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: Second, Dr. Woods. Or who
7 was that?

8 Did you get who it was?

9 Okay. I'm trying to look from down
10 here and look down at the same time. I
11 apologize.

12 There's a motion and a second. Any
13 discussion?

14 (No response.)

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: All in favor of the motion
16 say "aye."

17 (All board members present respond
18 "aye.")

19 COMMISSIONER GUY: All opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Motion carries.

22 All right, Dr. Hepp.

23 DR. HEPP: Motion for first appraisal on the

1 Autauga Wildlife Management Area-Old
2 Kingston addition.

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: Do I have a second?

4 DR. WOODS: Second.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Dr. Woods. A
6 second.

7 Any discussion on the motion?

8 (Brief pause.)

9 MR. ELLIS: Which parcel was that?

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: Old Kingston. That would
11 be the --

12 MR. ELLIS: Okay. I got you. I got you.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Bottom left-hand corner on
14 your map.

15 Any discussion on the motion?

16 (No response.)

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: All in favor of the motion
18 say "aye."

19 (All board members present respond
20 "aye.")

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: All opposed?

22 (No response.)

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: Motion carries.

1 Dr. Hepp.

2 DR. HEPP: Yeah. And the third one, motion
3 for first appraisal on the Autauga
4 Wildlife Management Area-Poseys
5 Crossroads addition.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Is there a
7 second?

8 DR. WOODS: Second.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: I heard a second.

10 All right. Dr. Woods again.

11 Any discussion on the motion?

12 (No response.)

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: All in favor of the motion
14 say "aye."

15 (All board members present respond
16 "aye.")

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: All opposed?

18 (No response.)

19 COMMISSIONER GUY: Motion carries.

20 Anyone else?

21 Yes, Dr. Woods.

22 DR. WOODS: I'd like to make a motion for a
23 first appraisal on the Old Cahawba

1 Prairie addition.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. There's a
3 motion. Do I have a second?

4 DR. VALENTINE. I'll do it.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. That was
6 Dr. Valentine with a second.

7 Any discussion on the motion?

8 (No response.)

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: All in favor of the motion
10 say "aye."

11 (All board members present respond
12 "aye.")

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: All opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: Motion carries.

16 DR. LAWTON: I'd like to move to get a first
17 appraisal on the Splinter Hill Bog-North
18 addition.

19 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Dr. Lawton, did
20 you say north addition?

21 DR. LAWTON: That's what it says on my list.

22 COMMISSIONER GUY: So there's a motion. Is
23 there a second?

1 DR. STRICKLAND: Second.

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: I think that was

3 Dr. Strickland.

4 A motion and a second. Any

5 discussion?

6 (No response.)

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: All in favor of the motion

8 indicate by saying "aye."

9 (All board members present respond
10 "aye.")

11 COMMISSIONER GUY: All opposed?

12 (No response.)

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: Motion carries.

14 DR. LAWTON: I'd like to make another motion.

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right, Dr. Lawton.

16 DR. LAWTON: I would like to move that we get

17 a first appraisal on the Post Oak Flat-

18 Shiflett addition, Jackson County.

19 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. We have a

20 motion. Is there a second?

21 DR. STRICKLAND: Second.

22 COMMISSIONER GUY: I think that was

23 Dr. Strickland again.

1 All right. Any discussion on the
2 motion?

3 (No response.)

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: All in favor of the motion
5 say "aye."

6 (All board members present respond
7 "aye.")

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: All opposed?

9 (No response.)

10 COMMISSIONER GUY: Motion carries.

11 Anybody else? Any other discussions
12 on a nomination or otherwise?

13 (No response.)

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Hearing none,
15 we'll move on to other business.

16 At this time I would like to call on
17 Chris Smith again to get some more
18 reports. At least that's what I have on
19 my agenda, Chris. Is that right?

20 MR. SMITH: Yes, sir, that's correct.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, sir.

22 MR. SMITH: These items would normally be in
23 Tab 4, but your Tab 4 is probably empty

1 today because we didn't have these items
2 ready when we mailed the packet out a
3 couple of weeks ago, but -- so you
4 should have a folder that you found in
5 front of you that's probably labeled
6 supplemental information. And the items
7 that, I think, myself and Patti are
8 about to talk about are in that folder.

9 And the first item I want to mention
10 is your copy of the FY2014 Forever Wild
11 Land Trust Annual Report. And there's
12 no action or anything that's going to be
13 needed or required for that, but that is
14 just your copy of the report that was
15 delivered to the governor, lieutenant
16 governor, and the speaker of the house,
17 as well as shared with the lieutenant
18 governor and the speaker's staff to be
19 distributed throughout the legislature.

20 And you'll see that that report --
21 you know, it contains a list of all the
22 board members that served during 2014.
23 It talks a little bit about some of our

1 public awareness and advertising
2 initiatives, profiles of the ten
3 properties that were purchased during
4 2014. I think there was a little bit
5 more than 4600 acres purchased in 2014.

6 It also has a list of several
7 different management actions that DCNR
8 staff accomplished during the year, as
9 well as an active nomination list and
10 then the 2014 financial information.

11 So that is your copy for your
12 information. And that was delivered to
13 the various reporting bodies that we had
14 to send that to last week. And by
15 amendment that is required to be
16 delivered by February 1st each year.

17 I know you haven't had an
18 opportunity to probably look at that,
19 but, you know, if you see anything later
20 on, feel free to please contact me and
21 ask questions if you have any about that
22 report.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: It's a good synopsis -- I

1 would just mention to everyone it's a
2 good synopsis of the program that we --
3 you know, for your own benefit or for
4 somebody else you want to share it with.

5 And do we post that on the Website
6 too?

7 MR. SMITH: Yes, sir. Thank you for asking
8 that. We do. We haven't got it up
9 there yet, but we probably will tomorrow
10 or early next week and have that on the
11 Website. And that's in the -- I think
12 the section called "board notes" on
13 the -- one of the top menus on the
14 Alabamaforeverwild.com Website.

15 The next item in that supplemental
16 folder is the initial draft of the
17 Forever Wild Land Trust Five-Year Plan.

18 MS. POWELL: Thanks, Chris.

19 And this is a rough -- very rough
20 draft. You know, we have been
21 struggling a little bit with how to pull
22 this together and what to present to
23 you. We finally decided that probably

1 the best thing to do, as with any
2 document we normally review in a
3 committee or group form, is to try to --
4 is just get something on paper, a
5 starting point largely for discussion
6 purposes to generate in your minds
7 whatever questions or thoughts you may
8 have. And it really -- I mean as to
9 both form and substance.

10 You will see some of the background
11 on the program in this report is far
12 less than what you will see in a much
13 broader description of how the program
14 operates each fiscal year that we give
15 in the annual report that we just
16 submitted that Chris just went over. It
17 is the type of information to include.

18 We came to this rough draft for your
19 initial review after we had
20 summarized/received the public comments
21 that were generated at the
22 public-listening sessions that State
23 Lands Division held in each district, as

1 well as an ongoing effort to collect
2 comments through our Website that lasted
3 far past the dates of those initial
4 public meetings.

5 So what we did, we summarized that,
6 comment. You will see that as
7 Appendix A. Then for this initial draft
8 what we went through is a very brief
9 history of the program, very short, on
10 into some current facts as to the tracts
11 the program currently holds, where they
12 are, how much acreage is used for which
13 of the four uses that's authorized under
14 the program, and then went into two
15 different sections. That is based on
16 the board's resolution that was passed
17 initiating the long-range planning
18 effort to develop an initial five-year
19 plan that would then be updated in
20 five-year increments going forward
21 thereafter.

22 The two types of recommendations
23 that really went out to the public were

1 for goals and recommendations as to
2 future tract acquisitions. That was
3 sort of one category we asked the public
4 about.

5 The second category relates to
6 taking into account currently held
7 tracts, any suggestions or
8 recommendations, goals as to either
9 enhanced or different management
10 activities as to each of the tracts.
11 And management could range from
12 management of timber to what type of
13 activities occur, horseback riding,
14 hiking, hunting, any type of
15 recreational activity. So you will see
16 the report thereafter, the next segment,
17 broken into those two types of
18 recommendations.

19 We reached some of those
20 recommendations -- and, again, those are
21 not to anticipate or suggest what your
22 priorities are. This report will state
23 your recommendations and your goals.

1 But it was drawn both from some of the
2 public comments that we received as well
3 as a review by each of the divisions in
4 light of the management that we engage
5 in on the tracts, whether it's a nature
6 preserve, recreational tract, WMA, or
7 state park. So that's factored in.
8 But, again, those are simply some ideas.
9 It also will bring to light how detailed
10 you want those goals to be.

11 We then have some general -- some of
12 the comments we received from the public
13 as well as some of the thoughts that we
14 had are more of a general nature. They
15 wouldn't be limited to a nature
16 preserve. They would relate to
17 acquisition strategies, as well as a
18 couple of determinations the board made
19 in its prior 2011 resolution -- included
20 a couple of emphasis or goals that we
21 included.

22 Again, this is very much for
23 discussion purposes for the new members.

1 We will back up and guide you through
2 how we got to this step. We will -- we
3 really would like to -- after you've had
4 a chance to look at it, you know, please
5 do call us with any questions or
6 thoughts or comments along the way.

7 What the ultimate next steps would
8 be, would be to get the draft that the
9 board is comfortable with and expresses
10 your priorities in a form -- and our
11 staff will help do that -- that we could
12 then post it again for public comment --
13 that is a commitment the board made in
14 the past once the plan -- to seek public
15 comment both to shape it and then public
16 comment after a draft was prepared.

17 Following that round of public
18 comment, we want to work with the board
19 to incorporate any of that comment that
20 is applicable into a final plan which
21 would then start the time clock of the
22 five-year increments.

23 So I'll take any questions on how we

1 got to what we've given you to look at
2 or any direction on what you would like
3 us to do next if you have it today.

4 Yes, sir.

5 DR. LAWTON: I've got one question.

6 I notice mention of the Alabama
7 Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation
8 Strategy. How do we get a copy of that?

9 MS. POWELL: We can -- I can send you that.

10 DR. LAWTON: Okay. Is it up on the Web
11 anywhere?

12 MS. POWELL: I think it is. But which -- for
13 the benefit of the public -- and we'll
14 send you one directly -- can y'all help
15 me with which Website?

16 MS. LEWIS: The "Outdoor Alabama."

17 MS. POWELL: Go to Outdooralabama.com.

18 COMMISSIONER GUY: Could we put it on the
19 Forever Wild Website, please?

20 MS. POWELL: Sure.

21 DR. LAWTON: Yeah. Yeah.

22 MS. POWELL: Put a link to that.

23 And that's, again, just an example

1 of one type of strategy and plan effort.
2 There could be more. You may not want
3 that one. But that is another example
4 of the type of recommendation that -- or
5 factor that could -- I think that -- you
6 know, you're still going to have our
7 usual process of how we score the
8 tracts, how they make it to the short
9 list. I think in my mind this is how
10 you begin to focus and under -- you
11 know, the nominations on to acquisition,
12 and if it falls within, you know, the
13 goals that are set by this plan or why
14 not. You know, that doesn't mean it
15 relates to everything you're now going
16 to acquire, but it is sort of a guiding
17 document.

18 Any other questions or thoughts at
19 this time?

20 I know you may not at this time.

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: Can I make a few comments?

22 MS. POWELL: Absolutely.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Ms. Powell.

1 So Patti and Chris have talked with
2 me about this, and I would just like to
3 add a couple of comments.

4 Number one is that, you know, this
5 is the first time we've done this. So I
6 would encourage you to think outside the
7 box. I mean, you know, it's no
8 different -- we're asking you to comment
9 on this just like we asked the public to
10 comment on it as well. So it's real
11 important that we get any feedback that
12 you have about it. And when I say think
13 outside the box, you know there's always
14 the acquisition goals and strategies and
15 those kind of things.

16 I would like to mention that under
17 the management section, you know, that
18 could be more than just reforestation.
19 For instance, you know, we heard back
20 when I was going through the
21 reauthorization quite a bit of we don't
22 know enough about this, we don't know
23 where we can access these lands, we

1 don't know that -- you know, those kind
2 of things.

3 And, of course, I want to compliment
4 Patti and the staff for working hard on
5 the Website, working hard -- you know,
6 y'all have seen it. We've been trying
7 to do more public awareness, and we've
8 been working hard at that. But when I
9 say management, it's that part, too, I
10 think. So if you have ideas -- when I
11 say think outside the box, if you have
12 ideas about how we could make the public
13 more aware of what we're doing, those
14 kind of things.

15 I also think -- and you correct me
16 if I'm wrong -- you know, the goal of
17 this is to put together something, but
18 it's dynamic. It doesn't mean it can't
19 change. We might have things coming up
20 like this Pittman-Robertson money that
21 you wouldn't have thought of a year or
22 so ago. And so, you know, don't think
23 of it as a finite document, but a

1 document that you would just use as a
2 map to proceed for the next five years.

3 MS. POWELL: And I would say another -- in
4 addition to the need to -- and the
5 desire to always be dynamic, I think
6 another aspect that is so unique to this
7 program that, frankly, makes long-range
8 planning a little different than most of
9 the master planning or long-range
10 planning efforts you may have been
11 involved in -- there are a couple of
12 things.

13 We receive -- it's sort of what I've
14 called a grass-roots-based nomination
15 program. We never know what nominations
16 we're going to get, when, where they're
17 going to be, what opportunities they
18 present, or what the cost of those
19 opportunities may be at any given time.
20 So that's very different from programs
21 that, you know, you may have been
22 involved in.

23 Secondly, we also have to be sure

1 that we have willing sellers. So that's
2 a -- that's a variable that goes into
3 the overall strategy. And then between
4 having a nomination, confirming a
5 willing seller, and getting to an
6 appraisal that that willing seller will
7 accept and then get to closing, as, you
8 know, we're -- we don't have more than
9 a, you know, fair-market-value --
10 appraised value, also, is another
11 potential reason you don't know what
12 you're going to end up with.

13 So that is a -- not only the need to
14 be flexible, but that's just the dynamic
15 nature of this program. That means
16 long-range planning really does -- is
17 going to relate to goals and
18 recommendations. It's not going to be
19 as -- as clear-cut as maybe some other
20 planning efforts that we've all
21 participated in. So that's also unique.

22 You will also see -- this shouldn't
23 be a surprise -- in some of the public

1 comments that were received we obviously
2 received conflicting comments. You'll
3 see comments on both sides of
4 suggestions, and that's not unusual
5 either.

6 But, anyway, we are -- we do want to
7 be flexible in the entire -- the end
8 result, we do want to be flexible.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: So I'm going to assume that
10 probably most people on this board are
11 just like me. So do we have a goal that
12 you want to get comments by?

13 And I assume the staff will reach
14 out and remind them from time to time.
15 But is it by the next meeting or what do
16 you want?

17 MS. POWELL: I mean, ideally -- we do have a
18 little extra time between this meeting
19 and the June meeting. And so I would
20 first ask everyone to try to look at it
21 and let -- and you can call us with any
22 questions or comments. I mean, I don't
23 have an exact deadline, but, obviously,

1 to have another product back to you, in
2 further review, I would -- ideally, if
3 we could have a draft that the board was
4 comfortable with putting out for public
5 comment -- obviously it's going to
6 change again and others can still be
7 looking at it -- at the June meeting or
8 close enough to where we could shortly
9 thereafter get it out, that sets up a
10 nice timeline, I think, for maybe
11 reaching an actual final plan, you know,
12 before the end or by the end of the
13 year.

14 So I would strive to say let's see
15 where we could go with contacting the
16 staff and the staff's help. And we can
17 also talk about getting out a certain
18 schedule. But I think if we could
19 proceed in a manner to maybe get to a
20 draft, we could go public with that at
21 the June meeting, elicit comment between
22 that and possibly the September meeting,
23 make another final review/revision and

1 get the draft out, announced, and
2 adopted before the December meeting,
3 that would be great. But I'm open to
4 suggestions on that also.

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Any other questions?

6 DR. WOODS: Yes. What about electronic copies
7 so we could correct those?

8 MS. POWELL: We'll send that to you. We will.

9 Okay. And y'all feel -- however it
10 is easiest. If you have thoughts and
11 comments you want to track in the
12 document, if you want to handwrite and
13 scan and send that, or if you'd really
14 just like to talk through -- because
15 we'll take the feedback however is
16 easiest --

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: Who should they try to call
18 first?

19 MS. POWELL: I would say try Chris. I'm on
20 the road so much.

21 MR. CAUTHEN: You're welcome, Chris.

22 MS. POWELL: And Jo has been very involved and
23 will be helping, also, but Chris has

1 probably been the one most directly
2 trying to keep a handle on the entire
3 document as well as continuing to
4 communicate across the department to our
5 other divisions.

6 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. Any other questions?

7 (No response.)

8 COMMISSIONER GUY: Thank you, Ms. Powell.

9 MS. POWELL: I will just stand up. I think
10 I'm next on the agenda.

11 I believe the last item -- unless I
12 have -- okay. We always leave an
13 "other" on the agenda because sometimes
14 other things come up.

15 The last item on the business part
16 of the agenda, annually State Lands
17 Division comes forward and discusses
18 with the board its request for the
19 transfer of administrative support that
20 goes to our staff to engage in the
21 activities that we do as administration
22 for this board. We each year, as we
23 have done this year, will break down for

1 the board -- and this is under Tab --

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: The extra materials.

3 MS. POWELL: Oh, I'm sorry. It's in your
4 manilla folder -- I'm so sorry -- that
5 Chuck's presentation was in and the
6 draft initial plan was in.

7 What we do each year is we will
8 detail for the board the expenditures
9 from the State Lands Division in its
10 administration of the program. Then we
11 detail the sources that come in,
12 including the administrative transfer
13 authorized by this board, to view what
14 support from its own funds that the
15 State Lands Division provides to the
16 program, which we're honored to do. And
17 this is truly one of the joys of our
18 division.

19 As you will see, the expenditures
20 were about 1.86 million. The sources,
21 including a transfer from last year, the
22 annual transfer, 425,000, lended support
23 of about \$840,000. We have maintained a

1 level request to this board for
2 administrative support since fiscal year
3 2009. We've made many, many efforts to
4 keep it at that level funding. We were
5 greatly aided this past year by projects
6 we had in Mobile and Baldwin County that
7 were able to benefit from CIAP, Coastal
8 Impact Assistance funds, that were able
9 to make many new improvements that were
10 included in our activity report updates
11 from the prior meeting. So that
12 provided a little extra support to our
13 division.

14 We are this year -- looking back to
15 the level funding since 2009 and in
16 light of the acreage increase, it's been
17 about 43 percent since the
18 administrative support last increased.
19 And in view of tracking of the expenses,
20 as we have detailed them, we are making
21 a request to the board of an increase to
22 \$600,000 for this next fiscal year.
23 But, obviously, whatever this board's

1 decision on that is will be carried out
2 perfectly, acceptably by our State Lands
3 Division.

4 Commissioner, do you --

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Cauthen, go ahead.

6 MS. POWELL: Yes, sir.

7 MR. CAUTHEN: Is a motion in order?

8 MS. POWELL: Yes, sir, if the board has had a
9 chance to review the request. This is
10 the last item and the only one we've had
11 in this section.

12 MR. CAUTHEN: Well, you've got to have it.

13 MS. POWELL: You have to have a motion to
14 touch the money.

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: And, Patti -- I know you're
16 going to make a motion, Sonny. But let
17 me just say -- I don't think she
18 actually said this in numbers here. But
19 basically -- and make sure I'm right --
20 the State Lands Division's expenditures
21 in support -- net expenditures are a
22 million dollars?

23 MS. POWELL: Just over a million dollars.

1 COMMISSIONER GUY: So do you have a motion,
2 Sonny?

3 MR. CAUTHEN: Yes, sir.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Yes, sir. What is it?

5 MR. CAUTHEN: 800,000.

6 MS. POWELL: Thank you, Mr. Cauthen. We
7 really --

8 MR. CAUTHEN: If you can get by with six,
9 that's my motion.

10 MS. POWELL: Thank you very much. We will
11 make good use of that and try to keep it
12 as we have in the past where we can.

13 MR. BALL: I second that.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: All right. Mr. Ball
15 seconds the motion to approve the
16 600,000-dollar administrative fund
17 support to State Lands Division. Is
18 that the proper motion?

19 MS. POWELL: Administrative support transfer.

20 COMMISSIONER GUY: A 600,000-dollar
21 administrative support transfer.

22 We have a motion and a second. Any
23 discussion on the motion?

1 (No response.)

2 COMMISSIONER GUY: All in favor say "aye."

3 (All board members present respond
4 "aye.")

5 COMMISSIONER GUY: All opposed?

6 (No response.)

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: Motion carries.

8 MS. POWELL: And, Commissioner, that's all we
9 have unless something else from the
10 board --

11 COMMISSIONER GUY: Does anybody have any
12 questions of Ms. Powell --

13 MS. POWELL: On any item.

14 COMMISSIONER GUY: Any item.

15 (No response.)

16 MS. POWELL: Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. Actually, I'm going
18 to come back to number nine.

19 We need approval of the minutes of
20 December 18, 2014. And I know each and
21 every one of you have read those
22 minutes. But is there anybody that has
23 a motion?

1 DR. STRICKLAND: So move.

2 MR. ALLEN: Second.

3 COMMISSIONER GUY: Mr. Allen. We'll let
4 Mr. Allen. He hasn't had a motion
5 today. I want to give him one and a
6 second by Dr. Strickland.

7 Is that all right, Dr. Strickland?

8 DR. STRICKLAND: That sounds great.

9 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. A motion and a
10 second. Any discussion?

11 (No response.)

12 COMMISSIONER GUY: All in favor say "aye."

13 (All board members present respond
14 "aye.")

15 COMMISSIONER GUY: All opposed?

16 (No response.)

17 COMMISSIONER GUY: Motion carries.

18 Our next meeting, as Ms. Powell
19 indicated, is around the first of June.

20 MS. POWELL: June 25th is the --

21 COMMISSIONER GUY: June 25th. And I think
22 that Dr. Sims may have a suggestion for
23 the next place that we're going to meet.

1 DR. SIMS: Yes. I'd like to partner with
2 Dr. Strickland and host the meeting in
3 north Alabama.

4 COMMISSIONER GUY: Okay. So absent that being
5 overruled by somebody --

6 DR. STRICKLAND: Second.

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: A second. We have always
8 had good -- we have good trips
9 everywhere we go. We haven't been back
10 up to north Alabama. I think it's a
11 good opportunity and --

12 MS. POWELL: We'll work with Dr. Sims.

13 COMMISSIONER GUY: And our staff will work
14 with Dr. Sims. And we'll get that
15 disseminated as quickly as we can find
16 the appropriate spot and give y'all all
17 that information you need for travel
18 purposes.

19 MS. POWELL: It's certainly open. We can
20 discuss -- if you have ideas of a
21 specific location, we're happy to look
22 at those suggestions also.

23 COMMISSIONER GUY: I know Dothan wants us to

1 come back sometime this year. We talked
2 about that as well. But we can look
3 toward that maybe later in the year.

4 So does anybody else have any
5 business before the board?

6 (No response.)

7 COMMISSIONER GUY: If not, we're adjourned.

8 (Meeting adjourned at
9 approximately 12:05 p.m.)

10 * * * * *

11 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

12 * * * * *

13 STATE OF ALABAMA:

14 MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

15 I, Tracye Sadler Blackwell, Certified
16 Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of
17 Alabama at Large, do hereby certify that I reported
18 the foregoing proceedings of the Forever Wild Board
19 Meeting on February 5, 2015.

20 The foregoing 114 computer-printed pages
21 contain a true and correct transcript of the
22 proceedings held.

23 I further certify that I am neither of

1 kin nor of counsel to the parties to said cause nor
2 in any manner interested in the results thereof.

3 This 22nd day of April 2015.

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Tracye Sadler Blackwell
ACCR No. 294
Expiration date: 9-30-2015
Certified Court Reporter
and Commissioner for the State
of Alabama at Large