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FOREVER WILD LAND TRUST
PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION
5 Rivers Delta Resource Center
Spanish Fort, Alabama
February 20, 2014

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SOUTH DISTRICT

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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 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center, 30945
Five Rivers Boulevard, Spanish Fort, Alabama, on
Thursday, February 20, 2014, commencing at
approximately 6:07 p.m.

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1 PANEL MEMBERS:

- 2 Ms. Patti Powell, State Lands Director
- 3 Mr. Chris Smith, State Lands Manager
- 4 Ms. Jo Lewis, Natural Heritage Section Chief

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9 MS. POWELL: Good evening, everybody. We've
10 still got a couple of people signing in,
11 but I'm going to go ahead and start with
12 just some introductory remarks while
13 they're signing in. Hopefully we'll get
14 everybody out before you get rained on,
15 but I'm not going to make any real
16 promise on that.

17 But I want to welcome everybody.
18 I'm Patti Powell. I'm the director of
19 the State Lands Division of the
20 Department of Conservation and Natural
21 Resources. I want to welcome you on
22 behalf of the department as well as our
23 Commissioner, Gunter Guy.

1 We're here tonight in relation to
2 the Forever Wild Land Trust program.
3 That is the State of Alabama's
4 land-acquisition program. Our role in
5 that as the State Lands Division on
6 behalf of the Department of Conservation
7 is to serve as administrator for the
8 program. The program is really led by a
9 15-member board. Our division and other
10 divisions in the department, which
11 include Wildlife and Freshwater
12 Fisheries, Marine Resources, State
13 Parks, and Marine Police -- I hope I
14 didn't skip anybody -- all do assist
15 with the effort of administering the
16 program.

17 But we're here tonight as a second
18 public listening session that we're
19 hosting at the board's request. And
20 what they would like to get is some
21 input seeking ideas from the public both
22 through these public listening sessions
23 and also through commenting on our

1 Website, which Chris will detail in a
2 minute, comments from the public on what
3 they would like to see as part of the
4 board beginning to look at a long-range
5 planning process. And Chris will tell
6 you more about that too. But that's why
7 we're here.

8 And, again, we very much appreciate
9 you coming. I am getting a bit of a
10 complex. The first meeting we held was
11 in Huntsville, Alabama, on a night that
12 the temperatures dipped into the single
13 digits, and I come down here, you know,
14 on the drive down I get blown away. So
15 I'm beginning to think I have a black
16 cloud following me, but, again, we'll
17 try to ...

18 We will have a very short PowerPoint
19 that Chris Smith, who's State Lands
20 manager for the State Lands Division --
21 that he will walk through. It's a very
22 brief, very broad overview of the
23 Forever Wild program. I suspect many of

1 you are familiar with it, but for those
2 who are not, we wanted to give some
3 context to why we're here and what we're
4 asking and what the board has asked us
5 to go talk to the public and take
6 comment on. After that, we will take
7 any public comments anybody wants to
8 make. We've had folks sign up, and so
9 we'll turn to that.

10 The department has other
11 opportunities for public comment. This
12 program, the Forever Wild program, has
13 four meetings a year. We had one in
14 February. There will be one coming up
15 in June, September, and then December.
16 Each of those meetings are public
17 meetings that include a built-in period
18 of public comment. There's an
19 opportunity to comment. Those are
20 during the weekdays on Thursdays.

21 We also have opportunities through
22 the broader department in our advisory
23 committee meetings. The first one of

1 those for this year actually comes up
2 March 1st. That one will be in
3 Montgomery at the Department of
4 Agriculture Auditorium. I honestly
5 haven't been there before, but it's
6 right by -- fairly close to the State
7 Capitol, I'm told. Don't take my word
8 on that. Please check that out on the
9 Website and be sure.

10 But those meetings provide a period
11 for public comment. That meeting,
12 again, March 1st in Montgomery. That
13 meeting starts at nine, but those
14 seeking to sign up for public comment,
15 you'll need to be there and signed up by
16 8:30. So I wanted to pass that along.

17 These meetings -- although we have
18 other opportunities for public comment,
19 the board asked us to do these for a
20 couple of reasons: One, do these at
21 night to give another opportunity. The
22 advisory board meetings for the
23 department are held on Saturday. So

1 this is another type of opportunity for
2 people to come. And, secondly, although
3 we often get a lot of feedback at those
4 meetings, they really wanted us to ask
5 the specific question of, you know,
6 looking long range what would be your
7 comments to the board on developing a
8 long-range plan.

9 The board will develop a draft
10 plan. That will then come back out for
11 public comments, and there will be a
12 second series of meetings. And I'm not
13 taking away Chris' thunder. He'll cover
14 all of that. But I kind of want to give
15 you context for what will be going on
16 tonight.

17 We do have a court reporter here,
18 Tracye, who will be taking down
19 everything. We did that so that --
20 obviously, with a 15-member board of
21 representatives across the state,
22 they're not all going to be able to
23 attend these meetings. We wanted to be

1 sure that in addition to the comment
2 summary-type information that we will
3 give them that they have access to
4 actually everything that was said,
5 exactly how it was said. So we have
6 included a court reporter who will be
7 taking down everything.

8 Every now and then if I ask you to
9 slow down or take a moment -- or you may
10 hear from Tracye -- it's just so that
11 she can get all that taken down for our
12 board. So I just wanted to mention
13 that.

14 I think what we're going to do is
15 I'm just going to go ahead and let Chris
16 come up and run through the overview.
17 At that point we will turn it over for
18 any comments anyone has. Thank you.

19 MR. SMITH: All right. Good evening. And I
20 just want to begin with echoing what
21 Patti said and thank all of you for
22 taking time out of your evening and
23 coming and participating in this public

1 listening session.

2 You know, I'm going to spend maybe
3 about 10 to 15 minutes. I've got a
4 PowerPoint presentation with about 15
5 slides. And I'm going to just give a
6 brief overview of the Forever Wild Land
7 Trust program's -- its purpose, its
8 process, how it's funded, and give a
9 program status update of, you know, the
10 acreage that has been purchased in the
11 first 21 years of its existence and then
12 talk about why we're here tonight and
13 about getting some input and comment on
14 the long-range planning that the Forever
15 Wild Land Trust Board of Trustees is
16 hoping to put together.

17 So I'm going to go ahead and begin
18 with the PowerPoint. It just kind of
19 talks about some really brief general
20 information about the Forever Wild Land
21 Trust program. The Forever Wild Land
22 Trust program is a land-acquisition
23 program with a purchase of -- with a

1 purpose of purchasing land for the use
2 of a nature preserve, recreation area,
3 state park, or wildlife management
4 area.

5 The program is funded with a portion
6 of the interest earned off the Alabama
7 Trust Fund. There is a
8 15-million-dollar cap annually. And
9 there is also a stewardship fund that is
10 funded by 15 percent of the appraised
11 value of each acquisition that is made.
12 And that stewardship fund is set aside
13 in a separate interest-bearing account,
14 and annually we have a budget to provide
15 for the maintenance and restoration
16 actions and different stewardship
17 activities on the Forever Wild
18 properties that are purchased.

19 To illustrate a little bit more how
20 the funding works, revenue from the
21 offshore gas leases come into the
22 Alabama Trust Fund, and there's
23 distributions annually that go out to

1 various entities. Ten percent goes to
2 the counties within the state, ten
3 percent to municipalities. 70 percent
4 goes to the general fund. And then ten
5 percent comes to fund the Forever Wild
6 Land Trust program.

7 And, like I said, there is an annual
8 15-million-dollar cap. So, in other
9 words, if ten percent that's earned in
10 interest is more than 15, only
11 15 million will come to fund the Forever
12 Wild Land Trust acquisition program.
13 Once the land is purchased, it is titled
14 to the Alabama Trust Fund. So it is
15 essentially natural resource money that
16 is purchasing more Alabama natural
17 resources and that land.

18 The program was created in 1992 with
19 the passing of Constitutional
20 Amendment 543, and then again it was
21 reauthorized during the general election
22 in November of 2012. And, as Patti
23 said, there's a 15-member board of

1 trustees that are appointed by the
2 Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker
3 of the House, Alabama Commission on
4 Higher Education. And these board
5 members rotate out serving four- and
6 six-year terms. They represent
7 different varieties of the population.
8 There's requirements of some being, you
9 know, from the environmental,
10 conservation, and business communities.

11 To date, in the first 21 years of
12 the Forever Wild Land Trust program's
13 existence there's been 104 tracts
14 purchased totaling 240,000 acres.
15 213,000 of those acres, or 88.5 percent,
16 are within the WMA system, or the
17 wildlife management area system.

18 To give you some examples of what I
19 mean by that, down here in the south
20 district -- and to elaborate on that a
21 little bit, the program has divided the
22 state into three districts. There's the
23 north, central, and south. And in the

1 south district the WMAs are the Upper
2 and Lower Delta, Perdido, Barbour
3 County, which is located in Barbour
4 County, Grand Bay Savanna Community
5 Hunting Area over in south Mobile
6 County, and the Lowndes County WMA
7 located in Lowndes County. All of those
8 are in the WMA system, and some of them
9 are -- a good portion of them were
10 purchased with Forever Wild funds.
11 Like, for example, the Upper Delta and
12 Lower Delta WMA was purchased with
13 Forever Wild funds that were supported
14 with federal land-acquisition grant
15 monies to help further that Forever Wild
16 dollar.

17 17,840 acres, or 7.7 percent, of the
18 overall land purchased at this point are
19 in non-WMA/nature preserve/recreation
20 areas that offer hunting. Examples of
21 that down here in the south district
22 would be the Red Hills Forever Wild
23 Complex and tracts which is located in

1 Monroe County, the Splinter Hill Bog
2 Complex and tracts which is located in
3 northern Baldwin County, the Old Cahawba
4 Prairie tract which is located west of
5 Selma in Dallas County, and the Lillian
6 Swamp Complex and tracts which is
7 located over in Mobile -- excuse me --
8 Baldwin County near Lillian.

9 There's been 725 acres purchased at
10 this point, or less than one percent,
11 that have been additions to existing
12 state parks. And there's been almost
13 9,000 acres purchased that are what we
14 call non-WMA parks or nature
15 preserves/recreation areas. Examples of
16 that down here in this region: There's
17 been several tracts purchased that have
18 become additions to the Weeks Bay
19 National Estuarine Research Reserve.
20 There's been an addition to Blakeley
21 Historic State Park. Those are examples
22 of what I mean by a non-WMA/recreation
23 area. It does not allow hunting.

1 This slide shows kind of a breakdown
2 of the acreage within the various
3 districts. Although it's not equal, you
4 can see there has been -- and it's not
5 by design -- you know, a fairly good
6 distribution of the different
7 percentages or acreage purchased within
8 the different districts.

9 To learn more about the Forever Wild
10 program or Forever Wild tract
11 information, type of hunting or the
12 rules associated with the
13 non-WMA/recreation area/nature preserve
14 that allow hunting or the rules and
15 permits and maps for the different WMAs
16 that have Forever Wild properties
17 associated with them, if you go to the
18 Outdooralabama.com Website and follow
19 the various links, you can find that
20 information.

21 If you're interested in particular
22 about Forever Wild lands, you click on
23 the Forever Wild link, which is located

1 on the right-hand side of the opening
2 page of Outdooralabama.com. And that
3 will carry you to the
4 Alabamaforeverwild.com Website.

5 And on this slide I've circled the
6 interactive map, and the reason I did is
7 because about two years ago we launched
8 an interactive map both on the Forever
9 Wild Land Trust Website and the
10 Outdooralabama.com Website. That is a
11 great tool to find out information
12 about, of course, the Forever Wild
13 properties and different recreation or
14 hunting or trails, different
15 opportunities you find on those
16 properties, but also the different
17 conservation lands, you know, that the
18 Department of Conservation has within
19 the WMA system as a whole.

20 This is an example of the
21 interactive map that I'm speaking of.
22 And, you know, if you were to click on
23 that on the Website and you put your

1 cursor over one of the tracts
2 highlighted in orange or red, you know,
3 a box will pop up and tell you, hey,
4 this is the Red Hills tract. And there
5 will be different options to click on a
6 different link to look at the hunting
7 opportunities or recreation
8 opportunities and that kind of thing.

9 Now, why we're here tonight, the
10 Forever Wild Land Trust Board of
11 Trustees passed a resolution -- passed a
12 resolution to develop some long-range
13 planning. In particular, the board
14 passed a resolution to develop the
15 initial five-year plan that would be
16 updated at five-year increments
17 thereafter. That plan is to outline
18 goals of future acquisitions of lands,
19 to outline anticipated activities on
20 currently held trust lands, and to
21 provide for anticipated activities of
22 the board itself.

23 And, Patti, if there's anything that

1 you feel like adding as I'm talking
2 about the resolution and why we're here
3 tonight, please help me out.

4 Additionally, the board resolved
5 that farmland will not be a primary
6 acquisition focus, especially lands in
7 active row crop production or livestock
8 pastureland, that purchases of land
9 leases will be a low priority, to
10 implement a public education initiative
11 to better communicate about the program
12 benefits and tract information, and to
13 also post the board minutes on the
14 Alabamaforeverwild.com Website. So that
15 is why we're holding these various
16 public listening sessions across the
17 state in the different districts is to
18 assist the Forever Wild Land Trust Board
19 of Trustees in putting together a
20 long-range planning document.

21 So to help, I guess, maybe
22 illustrate some suggestions of what the
23 board is looking for -- and certainly

1 this is not meant to, you know, direct
2 anybody to comment on a particular
3 thing. But some of the comments we do
4 have -- and online at the
5 Alabamaforeverwild.com Website there is
6 a page where you can comment through
7 e-mail. You know, and some of the
8 comments we've received at this point
9 are, you know, purchasing land in all
10 the various counties within the state or
11 purchasing land for a particular use,
12 activities, you know, managing land with
13 more recreational trail opportunities or
14 more wildlife-viewing or bird-watching
15 opportunities. That's some of the
16 feedback that we're receiving so far
17 through the Website, and that's, I
18 guess, the -- we're trying to get
19 feedback like that on these very topics
20 to help put this draft document
21 together.

22 And this is a screen shot of the
23 Alabamaforeverwild.com Website. And

1 you'll notice on the right-hand side
2 there's a -- you just click on that link
3 and you can submit any comment -- and,
4 of course, as many comments as you
5 have -- to assist with the development
6 of this long-range plan.

7 And that's all I have. Just a brief
8 overview. I think we'll -- we're going
9 to go into the public comment period.
10 We'll call your name. If you'll come up
11 and state your name so that, you know,
12 the court reporter can get that. And
13 we'll just kind of go from there. And,
14 you know, if -- I'm not sure exactly how
15 many people have signed up, but if we --
16 we might have to limit the time, but,
17 you know, we can always circle back
18 after everybody has had an opportunity
19 to continue on.

20 MS. POWELL: And I will mention a couple of
21 things, Chris.

22 And Chris did a great job, so I
23 wasn't going to interrupt him.

1 I will go ahead and say for some --
2 I know for some organizations who often
3 do long-range planning, I'm going to let
4 you know, you know, up front this is
5 probably a little different when we use
6 the word long-range planning.

7 The Forever Wild program is really a
8 grassroots nominations program. The
9 nominations come in from the public.
10 It's also dedicated to confirming that
11 any parcel nominated, before we spend
12 any time on it, has been presented -- or
13 is owned by a willing seller. By
14 willing seller, I mean not necessarily
15 that they want to let the program
16 acquire the land, but they're willing to
17 have it at least be considered in the
18 program. If we can't confirm that, then
19 the tract doesn't move forward at all.

20 So I say all that to say, what that
21 means, we really never know when we'll
22 get a tract nominated, when it may come
23 in, whether or not the seller will

1 actually want to have their tract
2 considered by the program. And so we
3 don't know what we're going to get, when
4 we're going to get it, or how much money
5 the program has at that time to even
6 purchase any particular tract of land.

7 So I don't know -- I'm not sure if
8 planning in the traditional sense is
9 really what we're doing. But what the
10 board can do and does want and we've
11 been tasked with is how to try to do
12 some long-range planning. And a lot of
13 that can go to what's important to you,
14 what factors do you want the board to
15 consider in looking at tracts and
16 whether to acquire them, what do you
17 want to see as activities on those
18 tracts.

19 So I think, you know, at this point
20 that any feedback would help in
21 developing, again, a draft document that
22 will come back out for public comment.
23 It will be a five-year -- initially a

1 five-year plan that would then be
2 updated in five-year increments going
3 forward. So there will be another --
4 again, another set of meetings once
5 there is some type of document drafted.
6 That's our task, to try to figure out --
7 have a long-range plan for this type of
8 program.

9 And I was remiss in a couple of
10 things. One, Chris talked about the
11 board members. I did too. I failed to
12 say that our Commissioner, Gunter Guy,
13 because of his position as Commissioner
14 of the department, serves as the chair
15 of the board of trustees for the
16 program. So I did want to mention
17 that.

18 I also failed to introduce Jo Lewis,
19 who serves as chief of our Heritage
20 section. So I wanted you to know who
21 else besides the two of us was sitting
22 up here.

23 Let's see if there's anything else.

1 Did you mention the multi-use -- I'm
2 sorry. I was making a note.

3 I will mention again that the
4 program looks at acquiring land for four
5 purposes, just to kind of run back
6 through that. It's for nature
7 preserves, to provide recreational
8 opportunities, specifically to add
9 acreage to WMAs, or if the tract has
10 enough acreage within itself, it can be
11 entirely a new WMA. The same concept
12 with state parks, either adding acreage
13 to state parks perhaps so you can add
14 trails or other activities or just a
15 buffer due to encroaching development,
16 or, again, if there was enough acreage,
17 it could be an entirely new state park.

18 Those four purposes are why -- are
19 how the land is evaluated, what type of
20 land acquisition qualifies. Once
21 acquired, our job is to manage it under
22 a multi-use philosophy. And let me give
23 you an example of that.

1 A tract might have a very sensitive
2 habitat on it. That might be one of the
3 reasons that they consider it a valuable
4 acquisition by the board. However, that
5 doesn't mean that nothing else happens
6 on that tract. Jo Lewis and the Natural
7 Heritage section in connection with our
8 folks that work on the trails, as an
9 example, work together to route, you
10 know, a horseback trail around the
11 sensitive area.

12 So we are charged with making as
13 much use as possible, providing as much
14 public access as possible. And that's
15 why in looking at the percentages you
16 see such a high percentage of multiple
17 use, such as for hunting, on so many of
18 the tracts. So that is how we approach
19 the management of the tracts.

20 I'll also mention -- you saw a
21 reference to -- you notice the board
22 didn't give us a lot of specifics in the
23 resolution. The only specifics they

1 gave us were the ones Chris mentioned
2 relating to not putting a high priority
3 on crop -- row cropland, pastureland,
4 and not putting a high priority on land
5 leases. I wanted to explain that
6 reference a little bit.

7 The program did enter into some very
8 long-term 90-plus-year leases related to
9 some WMA acreage. As several of you in
10 here would know, I know, from advisory
11 board meetings, that the WMA system is
12 largely a voluntary system. We went
13 through a period, especially during the
14 economic downturn, when folks were
15 withdrawing their acreage from the
16 system. One way to curb that was on a
17 couple of opportunities that were
18 presented to enter into 90-plus-year
19 leases to try to secure that and
20 hopefully maybe eventually even secure
21 it in fee, I mean, actually purchase.
22 But it was, again, an effort to preserve
23 some dwindling WMA acreage. So that's

1 what that reference was to. And that's
2 not to say -- WMA is still a priority,
3 but the board wants to try to, when
4 possible, acquire it fully, not just a
5 lease. So that's that reference.

6 I wanted to explain those couple of
7 things. It may be more than you wanted
8 to hear. But, anyway, we'll go into
9 public comment. And as Chris said, I
10 think we have a manageable number. So
11 I'm just going to call out the names.

12 For those who do attend the advisory
13 board meetings, they're usually -- the
14 comments there are usually limited to
15 three minutes. I'm not going to do that
16 tonight. I would just ask everybody,
17 you know, to try to say what you need to
18 say. If I do interrupt you, it's solely
19 to ask you to loop back around to get
20 through everybody in case some folks
21 need to leave, because our main charge
22 is to try to get as many comments in as
23 possible.

1 For anybody who does want to leave
2 or needs to leave at any point, in
3 addition to commenting on the Website or
4 mailing in a comment, as we've noted up
5 here, we also have a couple of computers
6 here tonight if you'd rather do that
7 while you're here. If you'll step out,
8 somebody will assist you with what.

9 So, finally, after promising you
10 we'll get to public comment, I'm just
11 going to call in the order that I've
12 got. If you would, when you get up,
13 please do state your name for the court
14 reporter. If you are here as an
15 individual, let us know that. If you're
16 here actually representing an
17 organization of some type in addition to
18 being here as an individual, if you
19 would, just let us know that so we'll
20 have a record of that also.

21 Art Dyas.

22 And I'll apologize in advance for
23 any names that I destroy.

1 MR. DYAS: Good evening. Thank you very much
2 for the opportunity to be here. My name
3 is Art Dyas. Actually, I'm here tonight
4 representing myself. I'm on the board
5 of the Coastal Land Trust, but I'm not
6 here on that -- for that purpose.

7 I've got a couple of questions to
8 start off, but first I'd like to say
9 thank you for everything that all of you
10 have done for the state of Alabama
11 through the Forever Wild program.
12 Excuse me. I had an opportunity 21
13 years ago to serve on the committee that
14 helped write the enabling legislation,
15 and it was a really big deal back then.
16 And special thanks to all of the board
17 members because I don't think their pay
18 is real high in their high-paying
19 extracurricular endeavor. And so we
20 certainly appreciate everything that
21 they do on behalf of Forever Wild and
22 for the state of Alabama too. I've got
23 a couple of questions, and then I've got

1 a comment or two.

2 When our state legislature
3 removed -- I would say borrowed, but I'm
4 not sure that it borrowed the money from
5 our oil and gas trust fund. Did that
6 have an impact on the amount of dollars
7 that will now come to Forever Wild, or
8 is the 15-million-dollar cap still able
9 to be attained?

10 MS. POWELL: Yes. We receive ten percent --
11 for those who may not know, although
12 Chris touched on it -- of the proceeds
13 that go into the Alabama Trust Fund, and
14 those proceeds are basically offshore
15 gas proceeds from leases -- offshore gas
16 leases. Once that goes in the Alabama
17 Trust Fund, the interest is then
18 distributed in a manner of ways. Ten
19 percent of that interest is made
20 available to the Forever Wild program,
21 but it is capped every year at
22 15 million.

23 And, frankly, no, it would not

1 affect that. I think for a few years
2 the economy affected a little bit how
3 the interest has performed, but we have
4 been pretty much getting that
5 five million -- excuse me -- 15
6 million -- if I said five, it's 15 --
7 15-million cap. There's nothing by
8 design that should impact the program.
9 Actually, some of the language in
10 another -- well, an amendment likely
11 will keep us at the 15 million.

12 MR. DYAS: Which is also the process -- and I
13 guess it goes -- now, talking long-term,
14 the legislature also indicated that
15 there may be another one of those
16 principal withdrawals in the near
17 future. Would another third of the
18 trust fund removed have a further impact
19 on the program?

20 MS. POWELL: I'll be honest. I don't know
21 what percentage, for example, a
22 reduction of -- or withdrawal from the
23 trust itself would then so reduce the

1 interest that it would reduce the
2 15 million. I really -- I really
3 haven't done a calculation. I'm not
4 really familiar with the additional
5 legislation you're speaking of. All I
6 can tell you is, as we sit, we do not
7 have a real concern as we sit. I
8 can't -- not knowing what the
9 legislature through some statutory
10 provision or through another
11 constitutional amendment -- which is
12 really what -- I believe a
13 constitutional amendment would be
14 necessary. But, in any event, to answer
15 your question --

16 MR. DYAS: Don't know yet?

17 MS. POWELL: -- I don't know. And it's,
18 obviously, something we get questioned
19 on. But there is no concern coming out
20 of anything that's happened so far.

21 MR. DYAS: In the initial enabling legislation
22 I do not remember an article that
23 provided for the opportunity for the

1 Forever Wild Board to sell any acreage
2 out of Forever Wild. However, now I
3 understand that that is in the enabling
4 legislation. Did that come in on the --
5 a year ago, or did -- was that actually
6 put in --

7 MS. POWELL: The language that is there is in
8 the original constitutional amendment.
9 And I apologize. I don't know that I
10 can quote it to you exactly, but it does
11 require a supermajority of the board.
12 And other -- other criteria --

13 MR. DYAS: Yeah.

14 MS. POWELL: But the language that is there
15 would be a little tough to hit likely,
16 but it does not rule it out. But it's
17 in the original -- what passed in 1992.

18 MR. DYAS: Well, we all know that the
19 legislature took the enabling
20 legislation 21 years ago and decided in
21 the 11th hour and 59th minute that they
22 would make some adjustments to it, one
23 of those being that any money generated

1 off Forever Wild lands went back to the
2 general fund, which is a -- now, back --
3 over to my main point.

4 The concern that I've got, and
5 especially this last go-around and 21
6 years ago, had to do with Forever Wild
7 lands. Really, when we talked about it
8 way back when, it had nothing to do with
9 what I perceive now as a preservation
10 organization. Now, granted it works
11 with walking trails and it works with
12 bird watching and it works with hunting
13 in some instances, but that's not the
14 entire realm of multiple-use
15 objectives.

16 I happen to have had an opportunity
17 when the state bought -- the Forever
18 Wild program bought the Upper Wildlife
19 Management Area, I took it on myself --
20 I did the timber evaluation for that
21 acquisition, and I took it on myself to
22 write a management plan, a hardwood
23 management plan that dealt with the

1 removal of some of the timber to
2 encourage the development of the more
3 desirable species on that large tract of
4 land. I came to find out that that one
5 was put on a shelf and never paid
6 attention to.

7 In -- throughout the state -- Chris,
8 can you tell me, does the Forever Wild
9 program actually manage properties via
10 some kind of forestry management program
11 through prescribed burning or timber
12 removals? Because I don't see it
13 happening down here.

14 MS. POWELL: Let me interject one comment for
15 folks that may not be as familiar with
16 some of the tracts and timber, and then
17 I will turn it over to Chris because he
18 knows many more of the specifics than I
19 do.

20 Let me explain to some here that the
21 timber management -- any harvest from
22 the property is related to, just what
23 you're getting to, the management of

1 certain habitats, certain restoration
2 activities, certain types of habitats
3 we're trying to bring back. It is not
4 harvested for revenue-generation
5 purposes. So I just -- for some of you
6 who may not be familiar with that
7 distinction of this program, I did want
8 to mention that.

9 And, Chris, yes, why don't you
10 address the specifics.

11 MR. SMITH: There are a lot of properties, in
12 particular down here in the southern
13 district, that have prescribed burn
14 programs. You know, over -- just to
15 give you some examples, the Perdido WMA,
16 which is one of those properties that --
17 and I failed to mention when I was
18 talking about that multi-use. But
19 Perdido is a perfect example of that.
20 And we're currently in the process of
21 implementing canoeing trails on the
22 Perdido River with three different
23 accesses to the river. The Alabama

1 Hiking Trail Society has partnered with
2 us in developing a hiking trail, and
3 we're also in the planning stage of
4 putting in some horseback trails. Along
5 with it, there's the hunting and
6 there's -- I can't sit here and tell you
7 the number of acres, but I think this
8 year there's about 800 acres that have
9 been burned on the Perdido tract
10 prescribed fire. That's one of the
11 Forever Wild properties that we've got a
12 huge restoration program going. That
13 one in particular is geared toward
14 restoring the sandhill community --
15 longleaf-sandhill community.

16 Up at the Clearwater tract you were
17 just talking about, there was a pine
18 plantation there. You know, recently
19 that has been -- some of that has been
20 thinned. Some of that has been
21 clearcut, not to generate any money or
22 anything like that, but to convert that
23 habitat that is also an upland sandhill

1 community -- to convert that to a
2 longleaf pine habitat. No doubt, once
3 that's established, prescribed fire will
4 become an important aspect of that
5 acreage right there where that's
6 happening.

7 So as far as, you know, the -- all
8 of the properties have a management
9 plan, and we have a forester on staff
10 that -- you know, he evaluates the
11 forest stands on these properties, and,
12 you know, over time that is implemented,
13 whether it's converting a loblolly pine
14 plantation to, you know, native
15 habitat.

16 Another example down here in this
17 area is the Red Hills property. You
18 know, that property -- a good portion of
19 that was clearcut when Forever Wild
20 bought it. Some of that -- you know,
21 we -- it was pine plantation before it
22 was cut. You know, we -- as a
23 habitat-management practice, our

1 forester and our land stewardship
2 officers who manage that are converting
3 some of that back into hardwood habitat,
4 so -- and, actually, that's on the slate
5 in that area I'm talking about to be
6 burned this spring.

7 So I don't know if that's answering
8 your question, but --

9 MR. DYAS: It does. And I appreciate it. I
10 guess I feel like -- is there an issue
11 with generating revenue just to -- well,
12 to accomplish an objective, but to
13 actually generate the revenue? I
14 mean ...

15 MS. POWELL: I think that the distinction
16 would be the primary management purpose
17 of why we are working with this land,
18 you know, generated from the purposes of
19 the program, which is not the primary
20 purpose of which to generate revenue.
21 Revenue is generated.

22 I think what I would say is, for
23 example, it may be that your comment

1 that you want to make for the board is
2 your view is that the program should
3 look more toward that. I mean, you see
4 what I'm saying? I mean, I think
5 that's -- if that's --

6 MR. DYAS: No. I'm just saying I don't think
7 that's --

8 MS. POWELL: No, no.

9 MR. DYAS: I don't think that's a negative.

10 MS. POWELL: I don't think it's a negative,
11 but I did want to make the distinction
12 between -- you know, and I do want to
13 wrap this up and maybe -- I know -- I
14 think you may have talked to Galen
15 Grider, our forester, before, but we
16 can, I think -- and some information may
17 have even been provided. We can dig
18 back into all that.

19 But the reason I make that
20 distinction is sometimes when folks see
21 us taking timber action on the tracts
22 they do not understand that it really
23 is -- you know, we are trying to -- I

1 mean, the purpose of it is to get to
2 another purpose, I mean, what are we
3 accomplishing, you know, whether it's
4 back to longleaf or it's some other
5 purpose. There is -- there is a
6 management -- there is a management
7 plan, but that is not solely to generate
8 revenue.

9 Revenue generation is by no means a
10 negative, but it's not the primary
11 management, as opposed to taking it out
12 of the Forever Wild context and to some
13 other trust lands that our division
14 manages for other agencies. The primary
15 purpose of that management is generation
16 of revenue.

17 Now, at the same time you want to
18 perpetually generate revenue. So if you
19 don't take care of the land, you're not
20 going to be able to do that. Okay. So
21 it's never -- it can't travel by
22 itself. But that is work we do for
23 other agencies such as education and

1 mental health, and we manage -- the
2 State Lands Division, not Forever Wild.
3 I'm using that as a distinguishing
4 factor.

5 The other distinguishing factor I
6 would mention, too, kind of on the other
7 end of the spectrum, you know, I've had
8 some questions -- there are some
9 different management philosophies by
10 some different federal agencies that --
11 I often hear it termed nature is
12 nature. You know, for example, if you
13 have a bug, you don't treat the bug.
14 You know, we don't -- that is not our
15 philosophy. We do manage the land and
16 take care of the land.

17 So if you don't mind, I'm --

18 MR. DYAS: That's fine.

19 MS. POWELL: Unless there's another comment --

20 MR. DYAS: No. I'm good.

21 MS. POWELL: Okay. Thank you very much.

22 MR. DYAS: Thank you very much.

23 MR. RAINES: I think you're calling the people

1 to make comments in reverse order of how
2 they signed up.

3 MS. POWELL: Probably because that's how it
4 was handed to me as they came in. Is
5 that -- do you need to go, Ben? I'll
6 let you --

7 MR. RAINES: I've got a sick family at home,
8 so I came early to get to --

9 MS. POWELL: Okay. Come on up and talk into
10 the microphone so Tracye can hear you,
11 Ben, and I'll -- nobody minds if Ben
12 goes next, I don't think.

13 MR. RAINES: I appreciate it.

14 MS. POWELL: A sick family member, that's the
15 ticket to the front of the line. Is it
16 a young family member or --

17 MR. RAINES: No. It's a 17-year-old and my
18 wife, so --

19 MS. POWELL: So you do need to get home.
20 Please go ahead.

21 MR. RAINES: My name is Ben Raines. I'm here
22 representing the Weeks Bay Foundation.
23 We are also a land trust.

1 First I want to applaud Forever
2 Wild. I have been a long fan of the
3 program, and it's done great things. We
4 need to buy a lot more land in Alabama.
5 The one thing I worry about, having gone
6 to some of the Forever Wild meetings, is
7 I worry the board is developing coastal
8 fatigue and they feel like maybe they've
9 bought enough land down here on the
10 coast.

11 I would just say we only have
12 54 miles of coast in Alabama. Most of
13 it's privately owned. And this is some
14 of our most valuable land in terms of
15 recreation value and what it means to
16 the rest of the state. So I would say
17 that, you know, in terms of diversity of
18 creatures and diversity of habitats,
19 those should always be key in Forever
20 Wild's mind when they purchase
21 properties, and some of the best places
22 in the state are down here. So, you
23 know, don't get tired of the coastal

1 counties.

2 And I would also say the notion of
3 buying land in every county, while it's
4 appealing in the idea of giving -- you
5 know, putting stuff near everybody,
6 Alabama is one of the richest states in
7 the country, but not every county in
8 Alabama is particularly rich. There are
9 certain portions of the state that are
10 much, much richer in terms of what the
11 habitat looks like in its mountains and
12 rocks and things like that and the
13 creatures that live there. So I would
14 encourage Forever Wild to continue
15 focusing on diversity of creatures and
16 habitat and trying to get the best we've
17 got to offer, not a piece in every
18 county.

19 And I just want to applaud Forever
20 Wild. I will say we have four percent
21 of our land protected right now. We had
22 about three-and-a-half percent when
23 Forever Wild started. So we've got a

1 long way to go. Florida right next door
2 has 20 percent of its land protected.
3 So if we can get some really big
4 purchases.

5 I would also encourage Forever Wild
6 to lobby the state to be one of the
7 groups that handles the RESTORE Act and
8 NFWF money coming from the BP oil
9 spill. You know, we've already got a
10 mechanism in the state designed to rate
11 properties and decide the best
12 purchases. That seems like one of the
13 smartest ways that we could spend that
14 BP windfall, use our great land trust to
15 pick out what we should buy.

16 That's all I've got. Appreciate
17 it.

18 MS. POWELL: You're welcome. And, Ben, I do
19 want to say, obviously, I mean, we're
20 administrator for the board and not the
21 board, so I don't -- I try not to speak
22 on their behalf. But I will certainly
23 be sure they understand your concern of

1 coastal fatigue, but for a long time the
2 south district actually, you know, did
3 have the most acreage. So I don't think
4 it's -- I really -- I don't think
5 that's -- but we will -- we will put
6 that forward and thank you.

7 MR. RAINES: Well, the one thing I would say
8 to that, you know, we bought this huge
9 hunk of land in the Delta. And it's
10 great land. It's wonderful we have it.
11 But it's only a portion of the habitats
12 that are down here. And so we don't
13 want to miss out -- you now, Splinter
14 Hill is a great example. It's one of
15 the richest spots in the state, so ...

16 MS. POWELL: Thank you, Ben.

17 MR. RAINES: All right. Thank y'all.

18 MS. POWELL: Thanks for letting me pick on
19 you.

20 I apologize if I'm going in reverse
21 order. I no longer know what the order
22 is. If anybody else has a sick family
23 member, speak up, and I'll put you in

1 front.

2 Dean Monks.

3 MR. MONKS: Hello. My name is Dean Monks.

4 I'd also like to say thank y'all for the
5 preservation of land and the things that
6 you've done. But the biggest complaint,
7 I guess -- I'm kind of going in a
8 different direction than everybody
9 else. I don't know what everybody else
10 is here for.

11 But my complaint is you've basically
12 eliminated all camping facilities
13 throughout all of the Delta, Perdido,
14 everywhere. There's nowhere to camp out
15 anymore on the rivers since y'all have
16 acquisitioned all these lands. And I
17 would just like to know what the
18 long-term plan is for --

19 MS. POWELL: And by camp, do you mean
20 hunting-camp type, or do you mean
21 overnight --

22 MR. MONK: Overnight camping with your family,
23 recreational camping. You've basically

1 eliminated that in the -- and I'm
2 speaking now -- say, the Perdido tract.
3 You've totally eliminated all camping in
4 the Perdido tract except for one place,
5 which is up on Highway 112. Well,
6 nobody wants to stay up there. They
7 want to stay down on the river.

8 I'm 57 years old, and I've been
9 camping in all these deltas my whole
10 life until y'all bought this -- bought
11 these lands out. And you eliminated our
12 camps. You eliminated our houseboats.
13 And you've eliminated basically
14 everywhere we can go camping in the
15 Delta and go catfishing or anything like
16 that. So that's my public comment on
17 the direction y'all are going with that.

18 MS. POWELL: Okay. Thank you.

19 MR. SMITH: I appreciate your comments, sir.

20 And, you know, there are limited areas
21 on the WMAs to camp right now. I will
22 say on Perdido we are in the process of,
23 I would say, making some road

1 improvements going back to the river on
2 the Perdido WMA all geared toward three
3 access points that are going to be right
4 at the river to provide for, you know,
5 camping. We're going to be putting in
6 some screened-in camping platforms on
7 the landing in three different locations
8 so when you float down the river you can
9 spend the night there.

10 So you are correct. Right now the
11 only place you can camp is at the
12 check-in station on the WMA. And, you
13 know, one of the reasons -- and I'm not
14 saying this is an excuse or the greatest
15 reason in the world, but sometimes in
16 some areas where a lot of that camping
17 happens, you know, we have a lot of
18 management issues, a lot of damage done
19 to the property. And so, you know, we
20 try to manage that access in those
21 different areas, and that's where we're
22 heading to. Within the Delta we're in
23 the process of expanding the canoe

1 trail, camping platforms, and land-based
2 campsites, you know, down to this
3 5 Rivers location.

4 So I know that might be frustrating
5 to have some of that eliminated, but we
6 are working toward improving that.

7 MR. MONKS: Well, if you're going to --

8 MS. POWELL: I'm sorry. Could you step up to
9 the microphone?

10 I'm sorry. I want to be sure the
11 court reporter can -- or just stand
12 there so she can hear you.

13 MR. MONKS: I think she can probably hear me.

14 MS. POWELL: That's fine.

15 MR. MONKS: I mean, if your objective is to
16 have managed camping areas in the Delta,
17 then that's not going to work. I mean,
18 I -- if that's -- if that's what you're
19 trying to move towards. I mean, why
20 don't you just open the Delta up to camp
21 out wherever you want like we used --
22 like we have forever?

23 That's the way it is in Florida on

1 Escambia River and over in there. You
2 can camp out anywhere you want, so ...

3 MS. POWELL: Okay. Thank you.

4 Larry Wise.

5 MR. WISE: It did get reversed.

6 MS. POWELL: So maybe I'll correct it after
7 this.

8 MR. WISE: I wasn't sure that I was -- this
9 was the right time to bring it up,
10 but --

11 MS. POWELL: You can bring up anything at any
12 time.

13 MR. WISE: The only thing I wanted to ask for
14 is more dog-hunting days on the -- and
15 especially south of 65. The -- that
16 land, we're not allowed to dog-hunt it
17 at all, and it's -- I grew up there as a
18 boy hunting that. That's all it's
19 fitting for is dog hunting. That's all
20 I want.

21 MS. POWELL: Thank you very much.

22 Bo Presley. You might repronounce
23 it for me.

1 MR. BO PRESLEY: Yeah. My name is Bo
2 Presley. Just touching on what
3 Mr. Larry said, more dog-hunting days.
4 Like can we hunt the Perdido River
5 tract? Will you give us dog-hunting
6 days down there as adjacent to more days
7 on the Upper Delta? And like why as far
8 as opening up all of the Upper Delta on
9 dog days and not just the back portion
10 of it like it used to be?

11 MS. POWELL: And those are some crossover
12 issues into, you know, WMA and the
13 Conservation Advisory Board regulations
14 and various things. But I hear --
15 certainly hear what you're saying, and
16 we'll, you know, present that to the
17 board as a type of, frankly, activity
18 that you would like to see increased.

19 MR. BO PRESLEY: Yeah. Like closing the rifle
20 range up there on dog days and opening
21 up everything, you know, instead of just
22 half of it. Thank you.

23 MS. POWELL: Thank you. Sorry about the name.

1 Susan Morrow.

2 MS. MORROW: I'm Susan Morrow, and I'm the
3 vice-president of the Alabama Dog
4 Hunters Association. And I'm here to
5 thank y'all for the Forever Wilds.
6 They're beautiful. We enjoy hunting in
7 them.

8 We would like to see more dog days
9 increase because on the Forever Wild
10 tracts is a lot of land. And that is
11 where we can run our dogs and we don't
12 interfere with anybody else. And dog
13 hunting has been around for a very long
14 time. It's our heritage and our right.

15 And we would also like to see dog
16 hunting for hogs opened up on these
17 Forever Wilds. Because there are hog
18 problems there. I'm not saying that
19 this would eliminate it, but this would
20 help. And with the combination of
21 trapping, hunting the hogs --

22 At certain times, now. I'm not
23 saying all the time.

1 -- hunting the hogs with the dogs
2 and then maybe -- very seldom are you
3 going to walk up on a hog. But in the
4 Delta it can happen at times because
5 there are so many hogs there. And up in
6 Lowndes County there is an awful lot of
7 hogs.

8 So we would like to see more dog
9 days because it is big tracts of land.
10 And if you will look at the numbers,
11 there are a lot of hunters that show up
12 for dog hunts. And down here in the
13 south dog-hunting clubs are not as
14 predominant as they used to be, and
15 nowadays it takes a mother and a daddy
16 working. And if you want to get your
17 kids out -- and kids love dog hunting --
18 you've got to go to the Forever Wild
19 management areas and places like that.
20 Because, let's face it, we can't afford
21 these leases to have a place to dog
22 hunt. There are some clubs, yes, but
23 the lease -- the membership is

1 outrageous for a family if you have two
2 or three kids. And you want to get your
3 kids out and let us enjoy our Forever
4 Wild. And we would like for y'all to
5 look at this because it is such big
6 acreage.

7 And I don't think -- you can ask
8 Mr. Barnett. I think we're pretty good
9 at doing our job. Now, but as in
10 everything -- you have good and bad in
11 every walk of life, and we cannot -- you
12 know, we do not uphold bad dog hunters
13 by no means. And we do try to police
14 ourselves. But you're going to have
15 good and bad.

16 So, you know, I'd like for y'all to
17 look at that, too, because I know that
18 it has been -- I have met with Mr. Chuck
19 Sykes. I have talked with Gunter Guy.
20 I have talked with the advisory board.
21 And I know that one of the concerns for
22 opening up hog hunting with dogs is that
23 they're so scared that somebody is going

1 to catch a hog and take it out and
2 transplant that hog somewhere else.
3 Well, that has happened forever. If
4 they do do that, then they need to be
5 arrested.

6 We have told all our hog hunters --
7 I mean, hog hunting has gotten to be a
8 very big sport. You use different types
9 of dogs. It is not like dog deer
10 hunting by no means. Hog hunters are
11 not going to have a dog that will run
12 anything but a hog, and deer hunters
13 like to have nothing but dogs that run
14 deer, but that does not always happen.

15 But we would like for Forever Wild,
16 since it is down here and it is a huge
17 chunk of land that we can turn our dogs
18 loose on -- and we thoroughly enjoy it,
19 and I thank y'all for letting us do
20 that -- we would like for y'all to look
21 at giving us more dog days so we can get
22 out with our kids, our grandkids and do
23 and enjoy the way we like to hunt.

1 Thank y'all.

2 MS. POWELL: Thank you, Susan. And, Susan, I
3 anticipate you will probably be at the
4 advisory board meeting.

5 MS. MORROW: I will.

6 MS. POWELL: Certainly, you know, I would
7 cross-reference having been here --

8 MS. MORROW: I will.

9 MS. POWELL: -- you know, tonight at this
10 meeting. Thank you very much.

11 Roger Guilian.

12 Y'all are waiting for me to mess up
13 now. You might want to restate that,
14 I'm sure.

15 MR. GUILIAN: I will. I appreciate it very
16 much. My name is Roger Guilian. I'm
17 going to try to raise this microphone a
18 little bit.

19 Ms. Tracye, that's spelled
20 G-U-I-L-I-A-N.

21 I want to thank y'all for having
22 this meeting and for giving us the
23 opportunity to speak. I want to thank

1 Chairman Guy, chairman of the committee,
2 Commissioner Guy, and the other members
3 for considering all of our comments.

4 I'm addressing the board and the
5 staff here as well as the audience
6 tonight on behalf of the Alabama Chapter
7 of the National Wild Turkey Federation.
8 I'm one of 18 statewide at-large
9 directors that make up the board of the
10 Alabama Chapter of the National Wild
11 Turkey Federation. And I'm here tonight
12 to ask the Forever Wild Board to
13 consider continuing and enhancing the
14 use of public lands acquired through the
15 Forever Wild Land Trust program for the
16 purpose of public hunting. So I want to
17 talk just a couple of minutes about some
18 reasons not only to continue what it's
19 been doing but to enhance that as well.

20 In the hopes that the board will
21 consider what the Alabama NWF Chapter
22 has to say, I would like to point out a
23 couple of things.

1 The Alabama State Board of the NWTf
2 is the steward and the manager of a
3 state Superfund of dollars that are
4 raised by local NWTf chapters around the
5 state of Alabama. Our charge as the
6 stewards of that money is to use that
7 fund for habitat improvement and to
8 support both legislation and action to
9 enhance public-hunting opportunities.
10 That's one of the main things that our
11 board does with our money.

12 And we've had a long-standing
13 partnership, a very healthy partnership
14 with the Alabama Department of
15 Conservation and Natural Resources, the
16 Lands Division, and the Wildlife and
17 Freshwater Fisheries Division. We have
18 spent over our board's history --
19 20-something-year history, we've spent
20 almost a quarter-of-a-million dollars
21 donating money to the state and the
22 Lands Division and Wildlife and
23 Freshwater Fisheries for

1 land-acquisition purposes, either paying
2 for appraisals for tracts or outright
3 purchasing the tracts and then
4 immediately deeding it over to the state
5 to add onto existing WMAs or to help out
6 with purchases.

7 We also provide money to the
8 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries
9 Division to assist them with their
10 habitat improvement goals and the work
11 that they do. This past August we gave
12 almost \$55,000 to the state so they
13 could go out and purchase equipment and
14 attend seminars for wildlife and habitat
15 improvement.

16 My good friend Art Dyas brought up
17 management of these lands. And I'd just
18 like to point out, since he raised that
19 issue, that the state chapter of the
20 NWTf provided more than \$7300 just for
21 prescribed burn equipment alone because
22 there was a lot of burn activity that
23 was being anticipated in the Barbour

1 WMA.

2 So I say all that in the hopes that
3 the board will listen to what its
4 partner, the NWTF, would like to ask,
5 and that is to continue and to enhance
6 public-hunting opportunities on lands
7 that are acquired outright or lands that
8 are augmented through the Forever Wild
9 Land Trust program.

10 Ms. Morrow immediately preceded me,
11 and she said it best when she brought up
12 families and children getting into
13 hunting. Hunting has so many opponents
14 nationwide now. We are, it feels like,
15 an extreme minority. And if we do not
16 bring up new generations of hunters and
17 sportsmen and sportswomen, then our way
18 of life is going to die out. And you
19 can go on Websites of anti-hunting
20 groups, and they will say we just have
21 to wait for these people to die off
22 because nobody is coming along to
23 replace them. There's only about

1 12 million hunters in the U.S. right
2 now, and the National Wild Turkey
3 Federation is trying to recruit new
4 hunters. And there are a lot of other
5 groups and there are people like
6 Ms. Morrow and her family and friends
7 doing the same thing. We can't do that
8 if people don't have a place to go
9 hunt. That's crucial.

10 Most Alabamians cannot afford to
11 join hunting clubs. They cannot afford
12 to lease land. They cannot afford to
13 join some nice place where they can go.
14 And an even smaller fraction of
15 Alabamians can afford to buy land. And
16 without public access to land, then
17 people are going to go do some other
18 competing interest that's vying for
19 their attention. And we've got an
20 obligation, if we expect people to
21 continue with this tradition, to give
22 them a place to do it. And so I would
23 ask the board to consider enhancing what

1 it's already doing in terms of providing
2 public access to hunting. And there's a
3 really, really good reason for that.

4 I've heard recently about some
5 Forever Wild acquisitions or lands being
6 used for bike trails and parks and
7 things like that. Those are noble
8 purposes, no question about it. But
9 unlike bike trails and things of that
10 nature, thanks to the Pittman-Robertson
11 Act, every time someone goes and buys a
12 hunting license or a bow or some arrows
13 or a shotgun or a rifle or some .22
14 bullets or some dove loads, federal
15 dollars are coming back to the State of
16 Alabama because of the Pittman-Robertson
17 Act. And you can leverage
18 hunting-related dollars to come back to
19 the state. And that doesn't happen when
20 you buy a bike tire.

21 So while those are noble
22 activities -- and I'm not trying to
23 dissuade the board from considering

1 them -- when the board looks at a
2 long-term -- long-range plan every five
3 years, please consider keeping hunting
4 at the forefront of the purpose for
5 these lands.

6 Same with fishing. The
7 Dingell-Johnson Act does the same thing
8 with marine resources, restoration.
9 When you buy fishing tackle, federal
10 money comes back to the state for
11 restoration of waters, for marine
12 education, marine safety.

13 So all of these -- all of these
14 activities are crucial, and it can't
15 happen without public dollars. So I
16 appreciate the opportunity to speak,
17 again, on behalf of my fellow board
18 members with the National Wild Turkey
19 Federation Alabama State Chapter.

20 On a personal note, I would like to
21 ask the board to consider finding a
22 way -- and I'm not educated in this the
23 way Art is. But I would like the board

1 to look at turning some of this habitat
2 over into longleaf and managing it in
3 such a way to try to bring back some
4 quail population. We've got to get some
5 early successional grasses growing in
6 this place so families can go out and
7 hunt birds and get behind dogs and shoot
8 birds. Right now that's a rich man's
9 game, and that's not right. A lot of
10 hunting is getting that way with the
11 price of land.

12 So Forever Wild is a wonderful
13 program. We commend y'all. We thank
14 y'all. We ask that you continue to keep
15 hunting at the forefront of the Forever
16 Wild program. And I thank you very much
17 for this opportunity to speak.

18 MS. POWELL: Thank you. And we will certainly
19 pass that along to the board. I think
20 that the percentage of the tracts that
21 are open for hunting currently that
22 Chris discussed -- and, Chris, that --

23 MR. SMITH: 88 percent.

1 MS. POWELL: -- like 88.5 percent, indicates
2 the board's appreciation of that
3 activity. And I would say overall the
4 various activities that provide not
5 only -- that, you know, can provide both
6 public access while, you know, providing
7 opportunities for economic impact to the
8 surrounding communities, that those
9 are -- and those go hand in hand -- that
10 that is, you know, a wonderful thing.

11 Next we have Hank Caddell.

12 MR. CADDELL: Hello. Good evening. I'm Hank
13 Caddell. I'm the secretary/treasurer of
14 the Alabama Coastal Heritage Trust. And
15 I would like to leave our brochure with
16 you so you can see more about us. We
17 were created about 20 years ago, and we
18 focus on preserving endangered beach and
19 dune habitat. And I think here again we
20 hear the theme about access for the
21 average citizen.

22 Alabama has wonderful and fabulous
23 beach and dune systems, but the patterns

1 of development have foreclosed a great
2 majority of that to the average
3 six-pack -- average -- I'm sorry -- to
4 Joe Sixpack, to the average citizen,
5 okay, to go down -- and all you have to
6 do is go down there and try to go to the
7 beach. There are limited and restricted
8 areas where you can do that.

9 I recently vacationed at Pawleys
10 Island, South Carolina, and I saw that
11 the state of South Carolina has for
12 every half-mile or quarter-mile
13 guaranteed access points with parking
14 along their beach. They have open
15 beaches and they have access.

16 Alabama has a small coastline, a
17 fabulous and beautiful -- much more
18 beautiful than anything I saw in South
19 Carolina. And we've been working to set
20 aside and preserve -- our organization
21 has preserved about 50 acres on the Fort
22 Morgan peninsula, much of which has been
23 added to the Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge

1 down there. And we built an endowment.

2 We were pleased to help keep the
3 Blakeley Park area afloat while it was
4 getting -- finally got money from you
5 guys and they burned their mortgage.
6 About 10, 15 years ago we were -- helped
7 them keep it afloat with some grants
8 before that happened. We're very much
9 attune to that.

10 What I would like to ask and suggest
11 as far as the plan goes for the
12 long-range plan is that you have an item
13 to look at beach and dune systems.
14 They're very endangered. It comes and
15 goes as to the opportunity to acquire
16 these properties.

17 Patti, you know that they can be
18 pricey.

19 But the one that Ben Raines and I
20 were -- we're working hard to advocate
21 is the Gulf Highlands tract, which is a
22 fabulous, marvelous beach and dune
23 system and probably the last large tract

1 that can be put into public hands in
2 Alabama. And there's a convergence of
3 factors that's helping us now, which you
4 may not have really thought of this.

5 But Ivan and Katrina came along and
6 slapped down the development hopes down
7 there. It sort of was a reality check
8 for those that -- maybe snowbird
9 developers that would come down thinking
10 this is the most fabulous place in the
11 world. Then you get blasted with a
12 hurricane. And we are in hurricane
13 alley for sure. It's not if, but when
14 are you going to have a major
15 hurricane.

16 You can go to the NOAA Website and
17 get a printout of the tracks of
18 hurricanes going back 250 years. The
19 Alabama coastline -- we picked a zip
20 code in the middle of the Alabama
21 coastline. It looks like a pile of
22 spaghetti. You can't even see the
23 coastline. These hurricanes are on the

1 way. They're coming. The area is
2 fragile. It's not really suited for the
3 urban beach that we so often construct.
4 So we construct a beach that looks like
5 New Jersey after the storms come and
6 then they build sea walls, et cetera.

7 So we hope that the long-range plan
8 considers this and also considers the
9 priciness of this property and that
10 Forever Wild can partner with others to
11 try to acquire some of this property.
12 My organization, they like to partner --
13 The Nature Conservancy is there. We
14 work with them.

15 Another backhanded good thing that's
16 happened has been the BP oil spill,
17 because there's a ton of money in the
18 pipeline coming down the row on that.
19 The major part of it --

20 And, Patti, when you get back to
21 your office, you're going to find a fax
22 that I sent out to you today. I would
23 have hand-carried it if I had known you

1 were going to be here.

2 MS. POWELL: I'm everywhere.

3 MR. CADDELL: All right. Okay. But we're
4 pointing out that -- I think this is
5 correct -- the money could be three to
6 five years down the road because BP is
7 going to appeal this thing. The lawsuit
8 is not even over, and BP is -- and there
9 are numerous issues that -- they're
10 going to be fighting for years appealing
11 the designation of whether they were
12 willful or negligent or all of the
13 above. That all determines how much
14 civil penalty there is. And that's
15 going to be hung up for a long time,
16 so -- but those funds are out there, and
17 we would like to ask Forever Wild to
18 partner -- partner with others,
19 including some of these funds. Let's
20 get our foot in the door and let's save
21 and preserve some beach and dune access
22 and habitat.

23 And the one site that we're trying

1 really hard to call to everyone's
2 attention is the Gulf Highlands. It is
3 prime habitat for the endangered sea
4 turtle, the beach mouse. And the beach
5 mouse never asks -- it's a very shy
6 species. It never asks to be in the
7 spotlight like it is. I'm sure it
8 didn't and it wouldn't have. But,
9 ironically, that's what we depend on to
10 save a lot of this habitat. Because
11 it's endangered and it is -- the beach
12 mouse thrives where there's an absence
13 of human civilization. And so that's
14 naturally going to be sort of a canary
15 in the coal mine as far as whether
16 you've got a natural system.

17 But I -- so we ask that Forever Wild
18 be attune -- put beach and dune systems
19 into your plan, be attune to partnering,
20 and also be attune to a little -- and to
21 better access for the four-million
22 citizens of Alabama, not all of whom are
23 going to be able to afford \$300 a night

1 to come down to the wonderful new Gulf
2 State Lodge and Hotel at Gulf State
3 Park.

4 So I will hand off our brochure
5 and --

6 MS. POWELL: And, Hank, for the benefit of
7 some who may not be as familiar -- and a
8 question I have while you're here -- I
9 think that the tract -- the Gulf
10 Highlands tract -- and correct me -- has
11 been -- y'all have estimated that at
12 about a 30- to 35-million-dollar tract?

13 MR. CADDELL: That's right. It's way out of
14 your annual budget and --

15 MS. CAROL ADAMS DAVIS: That's what the owner
16 is asking for it.

17 MR. CADDELL: That -- no. Well, that is what
18 we think the Yellow Book appraisal will
19 be. And that's a whole different topic,
20 but --

21 MS. POWELL: And I don't want to go too far
22 down that road. I just -- for some here
23 who are not as -- have not heard you

1 speak on that before, I wanted to
2 mention it. I assume the partnering
3 concept would be -- would be, though,
4 eventually to be taken out. So the
5 program would eventually need to
6 purchase over time perhaps the
7 purchase. You're not talking about
8 partnering and owning part of it and the
9 program owning part of it, are you?

10 MR. CADDELL: Well, but, see, if Forever Wild,
11 for instance, could put some money
12 together or partner with some of the
13 NFWF money or some other of the money
14 that might be on the way.

15 MS. POWELL: Okay. And I will -- this is an
16 opportunity to bring up another point
17 that Chris touched on.

18 With the program, when Forever Wild
19 acquires a tract, it is acquired at
20 appraised value, not greater than
21 appraised value. There are actually two
22 appraisals done to be sure that that
23 is -- the first appraisal is a good

1 appraisal. If the second appraisal is
2 more than ten percent outside of that,
3 we do a third appraisal to try to figure
4 out to be sure we're not paying more
5 than the true value.

6 Under the program, under the law, we
7 cannot acquire a tract unless at the
8 time we acquire that tract the program
9 also has enough money to place
10 15 percent of appraised value into the
11 stewardship account with the idea that
12 if this is a self-sustaining program,
13 that we don't acquire things we do not
14 have the money to manage and we don't
15 ask for more money, that this is a
16 self-sustaining program.

17 And I will say one nut that would
18 have to be cracked in partnering with
19 NFWF or RESTORE would be that enough
20 money would also be available to
21 provide, you know, support for the
22 property.

23 And then let me clarify one thing

1 that you said, Hank, because I don't
2 want to confuse anybody here that might
3 also cross over into -- because I see
4 some familiar faces -- into the various
5 public meetings that they've had related
6 to the oil spill, whether it's NRDA,
7 RESTORE Act, or NFWF.

8 Hank is very right, that I am sure
9 that BP would -- will continue to
10 fight. There is always a chance of a
11 settlement. The Clean Water Act fine
12 that you mentioned, those would be what
13 flowed through the RESTORE Act to send
14 some money to the Gulf. And, actually,
15 you're right. We have no idea how long
16 that could take. Like with any lawsuit,
17 it could go on for many years.

18 However, due to some prior
19 settlements, there is already money that
20 has been deposited into the RESTORE Act,
21 and there are several things that have
22 to occur before any of that can actually
23 flow out, first of which would be some

1 treasury -- final treasury regulations
2 that by the RESTORE Act's provisions
3 itself must become final before anything
4 can happen. We are many, many months
5 from that point.

6 But I mention that to say that
7 cannot be appealed. That money is set,
8 and once various things are provided
9 for, that -- and that's not the
10 end-amount money, but it's an initial
11 money from some early settlement with
12 some early responsible parties that will
13 ultimately become available. We're not
14 there yet, but -- so the whole thing
15 will not be held up. There is some
16 money that will flow. So I just wanted
17 to clarify that.

18 MR. CADDELL: Can you tell us -- you may be
19 talking about the settlement with
20 Transocean.

21 MS. POWELL: There are -- there's some money
22 that's in NFWF due to some criminal suit
23 settlements between Transocean and BP,

1 the criminal money. That's in NFWF.
2 But the other money I'm talking about I
3 do believe was Transocean that has
4 already come through settlement that's
5 allocated to the program and will be
6 flowing without further appeal.

7 MR. CADDELL: Can you tell us how much?

8 MS. POWELL: I can give you -- the reason I
9 can tell you off the top of my head is
10 because I know. To the Federal Council,
11 the body that was named under the
12 statute to have access to money, that
13 will be 246 million, I believe. That's
14 going to the Federal Council.

15 MR. CADDELL: And it's already there?

16 MS. POWELL: It is --

17 MR. CADDELL: Relatively speaking.

18 MS. POWELL: It is there. It is hung up
19 because of the statutory provisions that
20 must be met before any of it can be
21 accessed.

22 Yes, it's already there and would
23 not be subject to further appeal. There

1 is additional monies that would come
2 through allocated to each state -- I
3 don't mean to get off on the oil spill
4 because not everybody wants to hear
5 about it. But it would go to the state,
6 to the Alabama -- to the council here in
7 Alabama.

8 But I just wanted to clarify that
9 not all of that is subject to appeal.
10 Obviously, the largest settlement
11 that -- or litigation that would result
12 from BP ultimately could be Exxon Valdez
13 and go on for 20 years. Who knows. But
14 there is some money already there.

15 MR. CADDELL: And I know with only 15 million
16 a year -- which it sounds like a lot,
17 but it's not really a lot. The beach
18 and dune is pricey. That's why I'm
19 saying let's possibly look at
20 partnering, help get our foot in the
21 door on some of it, get some commitments
22 and help us find the other money.

23 MS. POWELL: And I just want to clarify to the

1 crowd that it still would be -- that
2 partnering would be a temporary helping
3 us secure the land until it could be
4 further purchased by --

5 MR. CADDELL: Thank you.

6 MS. POWELL: Okay. Thanks, Hank. And I
7 didn't mean to digress in the oil
8 spill.

9 The last person I've got that has
10 signed up is Deborah Jessup.

11 MS. JESSUP: Yes. I'm representing myself
12 tonight, but I have been on the Baldwin
13 County Environmental Board -- Advisory
14 Board and also work with NEP.

15 I'm here just to -- I have nothing
16 against all you hunters. I appreciate
17 your hobby and your sport. But I also
18 want us to remember the word "wild" in
19 Forever Wild. And it's protecting
20 lands. It's protecting landscape for
21 the animals and the critters that live
22 on that land. So there has to be a
23 balance there.

1 But what I particularly wanted to
2 emphasize tonight was my love and
3 appreciation of wetlands. And, of
4 course, we have a lot of the land down
5 on the Delta that is -- a lot of it
6 pretty inaccessible to many people. But
7 I have appreciated the wetlands and land
8 down off Perdido Bay, off Rushing
9 River. We've canoed up through that
10 area. And I don't know how available
11 any of that land might be. I know a lot
12 of it's owned by the Barbers. But a lot
13 of it, if it is undevelopable as living
14 land, could perhaps -- I'd like Forever
15 Wild to look into that area and see if
16 they wouldn't be able to purchase more
17 of that marshland. Thank you.

18 MS. POWELL: Thank you.

19 MR. SMITH: What was the name of that, the
20 marshland?

21 MS. POWELL: I'm sorry. Deborah, could you
22 step back up for a second?

23 Chris had a question. I want to be

1 sure everybody can hear it.

2 MS. JESSUP: Oh, I didn't say my name. My
3 name is Deborah Jessup.

4 MR. SMITH: What was the name of that
5 marshland you were talking about on the
6 Perdido River?

7 MS. JESSUP: Well, there are two rivers that
8 kind of come off Perdido Bay. And one,
9 of course, is the Perdido, but the other
10 is Rushing River. And Rushing River is
11 not very long. It's much shorter. But
12 it is -- unless I remember completely
13 wrong, it's Rushing River. Rushing
14 River is the one that has the
15 marshland. And then when you -- and
16 then all along you just see this
17 beautiful -- just sort of wild feeling
18 as you paddle through there. And it
19 won't be there forever unless we protect
20 it.

21 MR. SMITH: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

22 MS. JESSUP: Thank you.

23 MS. POWELL: And I will take this opportunity

1 just to briefly say we've talked before
2 about this being a nomination-driven
3 program. Anybody that has a particular
4 tract of land that they want to nominate
5 to the program to be considered, that
6 sounds like a fancy word, but really
7 it's an e-mail, a letter, or clicking on
8 the Website and sending us the
9 information. Now, we will confirm
10 willing-seller status, again, before
11 anything proceeds, but you do not have
12 to be an owner to nominate a property.

13 And next I will say anybody that did
14 not sign up but would like to speak, if
15 you want to come to the microphone --
16 and I will just so we have a record --
17 Jo, would you get some more sheets so --

18 MR. OLLIE PRESLEY: Patti, I'd like to say
19 something if you don't mind.

20 MS. POWELL: Yes, sir. I told him he could go
21 and you can be second. I pointed to
22 him.

23 And for y'all, because I do not have

1 a card, please do state your name and
2 before you get out of here just sign one
3 so I have it for Tracye also. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. COX: I'm Allen Cox, and I'm a real estate
6 developer in a lot of environmentally
7 sensitive areas. But Dr. Bronner got me
8 on this board years ago, the Alabama
9 Trust Fund, to get all of y'all
10 started. So I've been aware of y'all
11 over the years, but -- and, secondly,
12 The Nature Conservancy named me their
13 conservationist of the year back in 2006
14 or '7 because of all the land I got
15 donated down in Fort Morgan and
16 Highlands and stuff in the coastal
17 areas.

18 But the main thing I wanted to say
19 for the people of Alabama, what I would
20 like y'all to really consider, please
21 try to acquire adjoining or near acreage
22 land so you can make something for the
23 people of Alabama, whether it's the

1 hunting or the bike paths or anything
2 else. Don't spread it out to where
3 people can't go and enjoy a day. If you
4 put it six places in one county, people
5 can't enjoy it. They need to have as
6 much of it as adjoined as you can. All
7 the land in the west that the National
8 Park System and everyone has, it's large
9 tracts, so you can have multiple use one
10 day. You could have bike paths. You
11 could have hunters. You could have
12 people camping on it. But if you make
13 small tracts scattered all over the
14 place, it's never going to be able to --
15 there's going to be people arguing about
16 the use of it every Saturday. I'm
17 serious. And I really hope y'all
18 consider like buying adjoining or closer
19 land so the people of Alabama can use
20 it. If you have -- and, plus, it's
21 going to cost a lot more money to manage
22 ten tracts in a county versus two. You
23 can have the same security people at the

1 two tracts and you would have to have
2 ten times as many at ten tracts.

3 So costwise it makes a big
4 difference to y'all over the years. So
5 I really wish your board in your
6 long-term plan would actually sit down
7 and talk about that, the difference
8 between having so many multiple tracts
9 versus larger tracts or close tracts so
10 the people of Alabama could have varied
11 uses on a Saturday afternoon rather than
12 everything having to be argued which
13 Saturday is going to be here and which
14 Saturday is going to be there.

15 And then it's going to take a ton of
16 administration from y'all's end to run
17 it day to day to make sure the camps
18 aren't being torn up. If they're all in
19 two miles of river front versus ten
20 different places, you could have two
21 people monitoring one rather than 40
22 people having to go to 20 of them.

23 So please start looking at the land,

1 the contiguous or adjoining, where you
2 can have multiple uses in one area and
3 not -- let's not end up with 2,000
4 tracts and never getting to figure out
5 what to do with them. I'm serious.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. POWELL: Thank you. If you would, just
8 get with Jo and just, if you don't mind,
9 fill that out.

10 Yes, sir. You're up.

11 MR. OLLIE PRESLEY: My name is Ollie Presley.
12 What I'd like to talk about is the
13 hunting of the Upper Delta. I know that
14 the dates is already set each year to
15 hunt in the Delta. But you don't, I
16 don't, Ms. Susan don't, nobody here
17 controls Mother Nature. We walk in that
18 Delta one Friday. Nine foot of water
19 Saturday. It's closed. There goes our
20 dog -- our hunting. Why can't it -- the
21 board bring it up to let the state
22 warden on that tract set another date or
23 another two or three days for dog

1 hunting after the high water is gone
2 instead of it still all open stalk
3 hunting?

4 Give the dog hunters a chance. I
5 don't think there's a game warden in
6 that Delta up there that will say he has
7 any trouble out of dog hunters because
8 we try to help him every way we can,
9 reporting violations and everything
10 else. So we can't control the
11 floodwaters.

12 MS. POWELL: And I will pass that along to
13 Commissioner Guy. And I think that is
14 another matter that the Conservation
15 Advisory Board and also Wildlife and
16 Freshwater Fisheries Division has some
17 regulation issues. But I will pass that
18 on to the Commissioner. And, also, for
19 those who might be at the advisory board
20 meeting, that is also an example of what
21 I would call a cross-over comment.

22 MR. OLLIE PRESLEY: Thank you, ma'am.

23 MS. POWELL: Yes, sir. Come on up to the

1 microphone.

2 MR. PARKER: My name is Knox Parker, and I'm a
3 hiker and a paddler and a cyclist. I'm
4 not a hunter, and I'm the lousiest
5 fisherman in the room.

6 Some of the things that -- some of
7 the comments I've heard today -- is
8 there a provision in the works or in
9 there to have people operate -- set up
10 training for various activities such
11 as -- let's pick on the turkey hunters.

12 If I went out there, I would have no
13 idea what to do or how to do it. The
14 only people who are going to learn to
15 turkey hunt or hog hunt or whatever are
16 people in the families where that's
17 going on. Other people could be
18 interested. I'm picking on the hunters,
19 but this could be paddlers or cyclists,
20 mountain bikers or whatever. You've got
21 to start somewhere, and if it's not
22 already in your family, you're not going
23 to get it. And I want to make sure that

1 there's a provision for working with
2 groups to set up training opportunities.

3 MS. POWELL: And I don't really think that
4 there's a specific provision, you know,
5 either way in the law as it is. But
6 that is an example of something that is
7 a request to the board that you want to
8 see. We do have certain programs -- not
9 to the extent that you're talking
10 about -- that are providing
11 youth-hunting opportunities, youth
12 fishing. There's -- the Department of
13 Conservation has a "Becoming an Outdoor
14 Woman" program, or BOW, B-O-W, program.
15 We have used some of our Forever Wild
16 acreage to contribute to helping the
17 women learn to hunt, helping the youth
18 learn to hunt, as well as hunts for
19 those with physical disabilities.

20 So that concept is there, not to the
21 extent that you're talking about. And I
22 don't believe it's ever crossed outside
23 of -- well, it has. And something from

1 "Becoming an Outdoor Woman" could be
2 photography. It could be -- you know, I
3 mean, it could be many different --
4 fishing, many different things.

5 But, Chris, I don't know if you want
6 to add anything.

7 But I do understand the comment, and
8 I think that's exactly the type --

9 MR. PARKER: Yeah. You know, how many
10 different activities can go on and who
11 would -- there are people out there that
12 would partner with you --

13 MS. POWELL: Exactly.

14 MR. PARKER: -- to run the education stuff to
15 get more people into the -- into what
16 they're doing.

17 MS. POWELL: And that would be a partnering
18 scenario that -- Chris, I don't know
19 if -- you may not know, but if you --

20 MR. SMITH: Yeah. There isn't a provision in
21 the amendment or the guidelines of the
22 program to do that. But we do have a
23 lot of that happening.

1 To give you an example, with the
2 Alabama Hiking Trail Society that I
3 mentioned that are working on the
4 Perdido WMA and on various tracts, you
5 know, if you were interested in learning
6 about hiking or backpacking or camping
7 and that kind of thing, you know, they
8 always welcome to have people join their
9 chapters and help participate. And they
10 have training programs at their annual
11 conferences about these various
12 activities. Also, say, like you
13 mentioned mountain biking. There's a
14 big mountain-biking track up in Anniston
15 or Calhoun County. And the local
16 mountain-biking organizations are the
17 same way. They encourage -- so they do
18 offer training and opportunities to
19 learn those activities. It's not
20 necessarily part of the Forever Wild
21 Land Trust program's provisions, but
22 those activities are happening as things
23 that are happening on Forever Wild

1 lands. Thank you.

2 MS. POWELL: Yes, sir. Come on up.

3 MR. KISER: Good evening. My name is Anthony
4 Kiser, and I'm speaking on behalf of
5 the -- just the underprivileged. I want
6 to just ask the question for Forever
7 Wild, in your long-term planning is
8 there anything -- or could you consider
9 anything in the way of -- let's say in
10 our urban communities where we can
11 perhaps consider something like the
12 gentleman just mentioned.

13 Even in our decaying communities,
14 perhaps if we laid aside small tracts --
15 like even five acres would go a long
16 way -- to maybe have things like walking
17 trails or biking trails or, you know,
18 the basketball goals or maybe a place
19 where they could teach the
20 underprivileged, you know, skills as far
21 as planting certain things, farming
22 skills, maybe orchards where -- nice
23 fruit trees or nuts, all kind of things,

1 like a garden, if you will, right in our
2 underprivileged communities. Or maybe
3 set up classes in these small tracts
4 where they can be taught certain things
5 like archery and certain things that
6 they may not be familiar with.

7 And I know the name Forever Wild,
8 but I think when we teach -- human
9 beings -- I know that many of you in
10 this room have a very good track record
11 for the love for animals, but the
12 greatest -- God's greatest creation, the
13 human being, if we can preserve that and
14 give them a sense of nature, it creates
15 a calm and a peace so the whole earth
16 benefits overall.

17 So I know if we could concentrate on
18 some smaller tracts maybe in some of the
19 urban communities, I'd like to see that,
20 especially teaching, you know, like
21 grape orchards and beautiful things like
22 that and teach them the difference in
23 flowers and stuff like that. Maybe you

1 can consider something like that in your
2 long-range plan too.

3 And, also, it's beautiful the job
4 you guys are doing and thank you so
5 much, Patti and everyone.

6 MS. POWELL: I haven't seen another hand, but
7 let me ask. Anybody else?

8 MR. BO PRESLEY: I want to --

9 MS. POWELL: Come up to the microphone.

10 MR. BO PRESLEY: -- touch on one more thing.

11 We can talk about all the dog days
12 on the management area and everything,
13 but the dog hunters right now are
14 fighting an issue in Montgomery of
15 putting Baldwin County on a permit
16 system, and that would affect the
17 management area if it passes. There
18 will be no dog hunting on the management
19 area. Is that true?

20 MS. POWELL: I'm going to have to tell you I
21 don't know. I mean, since that -- I
22 mean, the regulations and what relates
23 to hunting on the WMAs, although Forever

1 Wild contributes to the acreage, the
2 regulations, the administration of those
3 tracts are still within the department
4 regulations through the Wildlife and
5 Freshwater Fisheries Division and issued
6 through the department. And I'll be
7 honest with you. State Lands -- I
8 honestly don't know the details of
9 that. I'm sorry.

10 MR. BO PRESLEY: Thank you.

11 MS. POWELL: Yes, Susan. Come on up.

12 MS. MORROW: I forgot to mention that we would
13 also like to see some of the roads
14 opened up in the Forever Wild. The
15 gates stay locked, but the roads are
16 heavily traveled. But it's not by us.
17 So we understand that you can't just go
18 anywhere in there, and there is a lot of
19 roads that has been traveled -- not that
20 we want to go in there and tear them up
21 or anything, but to go in there to get
22 our kill or to drive in there to turn
23 our dogs loose.

1 There's a lot of gates that stay
2 closed and especially if you look at the
3 Lowndes County management area. They --
4 if you go up there and you kill
5 something, you better have a bike, a
6 cart or something to bring it out
7 because you're not going in there any
8 other way. You're going to walk. As
9 the words of Mr. Jaworski, if you're
10 going to hunt in there, he wants you to
11 really hunt, sort of like Boone and
12 Crockett and things like that. So that
13 would help out a whole lot with the dog
14 hunters or even with the stalk hunters.
15 Thank y'all.

16 MS. POWELL: Anybody else? Anything else?

17 MR. ALLEN: I'd like to say something.

18 MS. POWELL: Come up to the microphone, if you
19 would.

20 MR. ALLEN: I came here tonight really just to
21 kind of listen and --

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Who are you?

23 MR. ALLEN: My name is John Allen. I grew up

1 in the Black Belt, and a lot of people
2 know that that part of Alabama is an
3 underprivileged area. And I think our
4 main problem today is that, you know,
5 we've got a great resource, but I think
6 we need to somehow improve getting the
7 word out. You know, this is a great
8 program. It's been around for a long
9 time, but I've never heard about it
10 really until the past five years. I did
11 live out of state for a little while.
12 But I think that if we don't, you know,
13 somehow promote our youth, whether if
14 it's in an urban area or it's in a rural
15 area -- because a lot of times everybody
16 is viewing this, you know, as hunting is
17 bad or this is bad or maybe -- like the
18 gentleman said earlier, maybe having
19 more access.

20 So I don't know how many people are
21 employed by y'all. I know y'all work
22 with all different departments of the
23 state, but really somehow helping maybe

1 the youth and the older crowd more.

2 Thanks.

3 MS. POWELL: And I would encourage you and
4 anyone else that -- and one of the
5 things the board also mentioned in the
6 resolution was an effort to increase
7 public awareness of the tracts. That
8 was the reason for the development of
9 the new Website. It was the reason for
10 the development of the interactive map
11 on the Website. I would very much
12 encourage all of you -- and, actually,
13 that map will show you more than Forever
14 Wild properties. But, nonetheless, I
15 would encourage you to go on and look at
16 that map.

17 I will say it is somewhat of a
18 challenge. There is some tension
19 between us spending money to get the
20 word out that's sometimes criticized,
21 you know, is that really how we should
22 be spending the money.

23 We do believe it's important to

1 spend some resources on getting the word
2 out as it's a public-access program.
3 You know, part of public access is the
4 public being aware of the tracts and the
5 opportunities offered on the tracts.
6 But I would encourage you, in addition
7 to speaking tonight, to also enter any
8 comment along those lines on the
9 Website. That helps us demonstrate that
10 the public does want us to be able to
11 communicate more about the program and
12 get the word out. And if that does cost
13 some money, then maybe that's a very
14 good use of the money for a
15 public-access program. Because that is
16 something that sometimes there are
17 divergent opinions on.

18 Anyone else have a comment?

19 MR. OLLIE PRESLEY: Patti, that gentleman was
20 saying awhile ago about having somebody
21 to show them what to do. I don't think
22 there's a dog hunter nowhere -- if him
23 and his family come up there and ask,

1 they'll take them hunting. Because
2 there's no greater privilege in the
3 world than seeing your grandkids, your
4 kids, or anybody kill a deer in front of
5 a dog. You can look at the faces.

6 MS. POWELL: Thank you.

7 Anything else?

8 I do want to say a couple of
9 things. One, I really do -- I know
10 people thank you for coming to meetings
11 all the time. I do want to extend my
12 appreciation for a couple of reasons.
13 One, I know it is taking time away from
14 your family and other things that you
15 have to do and probably a risk of
16 getting rained on. So I appreciate it.

17 But I will tell you, even when you
18 come to a meeting like this and even if
19 you complain, that's okay because that
20 shows that you're interested in the
21 program and you care about it and
22 indicates the value of the program and
23 you trying to get it, you know, where

1 you want it. So, quite sincerely, even
2 a complaint is appreciated. It's when
3 we have these meetings and no one comes
4 that we're bothered, not when people
5 come. And even if they're upset with
6 us, that's -- that's okay.

7 And I also think tonight is a very
8 good example, you know, for the history
9 of the program, how this program came to
10 be way back in, I guess, 1992. Several
11 different independent groups
12 representing different interests prior
13 to that time had tried many occasions to
14 get through the legislature some type of
15 program focused on land acquisition. It
16 never worked because those interests
17 were going after only their own.

18 Forever Wild finally was successful
19 in what I call a great experiment.
20 Because when I talk about the supporters
21 of the program and who really were the
22 founders of the program, talk about who
23 was at the table, it included folks such

1 as Audubon and NRA sitting next to each
2 other striving to get the same program
3 passed, TNC, AWF, I mean, very
4 seriously, divergent groups who had
5 before this tried to do it themselves
6 and proved they couldn't. That is why
7 we do have the strong commitment in
8 trying to achieve, you know, multiple
9 use of these tracts.

10 But this program is an example of an
11 experiment that worked, that shows that
12 groups that normally maybe don't travel
13 together hopefully can find a way to all
14 take advantage of the program. So when
15 we hear divergent views or even
16 complaints, again, that's okay. I mean,
17 we appreciate you coming.

18 We'll be around for a while if
19 anybody has any additional questions.
20 Again, the Website is
21 Alabamaforeverwild.com. Again, for
22 those of you that are used to going to
23 Outdoor Alabama, you can access it from

1 there. Just click on the Forever Wild
2 words on the side. But I would
3 encourage everybody to go.

4 Again, your comments tonight will be
5 taken as official comments. So if you
6 have any additional thoughts, please do
7 enter them in the Website. And, again,
8 we'll see you for another round of
9 meetings once we get a draft document up
10 and out. Thank y'all very much.

11 (Session ended at approximately
12 7:42 p.m.)

13 * * * * *

14 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

15 * * * * *

16 STATE OF ALABAMA:

17 MONTGOMERY COUNTY:

18 I, Tracye Sadler Blackwell, Certified
19 Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of
20 Alabama at Large, do hereby certify that I reported
21 the foregoing proceedings of the Forever Wild Land
22 Trust Public Listening Session on February 20,
23 2014.

1 The foregoing 105 computer-printed pages
2 contain a true and correct transcript of the
3 proceedings held.

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

7 This 13th day of May 2014.

8
9
10
11 _____
12 Tracye Sadler Blackwell
13 ACCR No. 294
14 Expiration date: 9-30-2014
15 Certified Court Reporter
16 and Commissioner for the State
17 of Alabama at Large
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