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MINUTES OF THE
FOREVER WILD BOARD MEETING
Oxford Civic Center
401 McCullars Lane
Oxford, Alabama
August 4, 2022
10:00 a.m.

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Transcript of Proceedings

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PROCEEDINGS, taken before Stacey
L. Johnson, Certified Court Reporter and
Commissioner for the State of Alabama at
the Oxford Civic Center, 401 McCullars
Lane, Oxford, Alabama, on the 4th day of
August, 2022, commencing at 10:00 a.m.

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BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Commissioner Chris Blankenship, Chairman**
- Mr. James "Mickey" Childers**
- Mr. Reginald N. Holloway**
- Dr. Sean P. Powers**
- Mr. David Wright**
- Mr. Rick Oates**
- Dr. James B. McClintock**
- Mr. Jack Darnall**
- Dr. Salem Saloom**
- Mr. William Satterfield**
- Mr. Raymond B. Jones, Jr.**

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1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Good morning.
2 Let me call our August Forever Wild Board
3 meeting to order. I appreciate everybody
4 here and the Board members that were able
5 to make it today.

6 As I call your name, let me make
7 sure we have a quorum.

8 Chris Blankenship, here.

9 Mickey Childers?

10 MR. CHILDERS: Here.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Jack Darnall?

12 MR. DARNALL: Here.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Reginald

14 Holloway?

15 MR. HOLLOWAY: Here.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Raymond Jones?

17 MR. JONES: Here.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

19 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Here.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Rick Oates?

21 MR. OATES: Here.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Saloom?

23 DR. SALOOM: Here.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP:

2 Mr. Satterfield?

3 MR. SATTERFIELD: Here.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Simms?

5 Dr. Neumann?

6 Dr. Powers?

7 DR. POWERS: Here.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

9 MR. WRIGHT: Here.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Howell?

11 Dr. Valentine?

12 We do have a quorum. Thank y'all
13 for taking time out to be here today.

14 I do appreciate the use of this
15 facility here at the City of Oxford, the
16 Oxford Civic Center. Mayor Alton Craft
17 has been a good supporter of Cheaha State
18 Park and the Department of Conservation.
19 We've had an opportunity to come up and
20 talk with him about several outdoor
21 recreation projects in the area, and so
22 we -- because of their interest in this
23 part of the world and the outdoors and

1 what we do at the Forever Wild Board, I
2 was very pleased that we were able to have
3 the meeting here in Oxford. Coldwater
4 Mountain is one of our premiere properties
5 and very near here, so while you're up
6 here if you have a chance to go to either
7 of the two parking areas at Coldwater
8 Mountain, take a look at the bike trails
9 and the map and see how important that
10 property is for the economy and athletic
11 and outdoor participation from this part
12 of the state. While you're up here, take
13 advantage of that. We did that yesterday
14 afternoon. It was a very, very beautiful
15 spot and very well used.

16 I do have one thing I would like
17 to -- before we get started with the
18 speakers, our staff pulled together some
19 statistics for articles that are being
20 written, and I just thought the Board and
21 the audience might be interested in some
22 of these statistics about the Forever Wild
23 program. You probably already know these

1 things. I may be giving you statistics
2 that may bore you or that you already
3 know, but as we -- when you aggregate the
4 work of the Board over many years and the
5 work of our staff in access to those
6 properties, I think it's pretty impressive
7 when you put that all together. So I just
8 want to read them.

9 I won't bore you with all of these
10 statistics, but, you know, we have
11 purchased 203 tracts across 34 counties,
12 203 different tracts, about 285,000 acres
13 total. We have over 390 miles of
14 multi-use trails, 173 miles of canoe
15 trails, 77 miles of hiking trails,
16 47 mountain bike trails, 39 miles of
17 horseback trails, and 54 miles of
18 multi-use trails. So that's, you know,
19 really getting people out on these
20 properties.

21 This is a stat that I thought was
22 very impressive. 92 percent of Alabama's
23 population lives within 25 miles of one of

1 our tracts, 92 percent of our state
2 population. 99.8 percent of our
3 population lives within 50 miles of one of
4 our Forever Wild tracts. So there's
5 two-tenths of 1 percent of our population
6 that live in the middle of nowhere that is
7 not close to one of our tracts, but I
8 thought that was -- of all the things,
9 that was probably one of the most
10 impressive to me is that people -- almost
11 our entire population lives within
12 50 miles of one of the properties.

13 Over the course of most recent
14 calculations, we've leveraged 128 million
15 dollars in additional funding to go with
16 Forever Wild funding to acquire property
17 around the state, and that's -- all that
18 together, there are 48,000 Forever Wild
19 acres and 38,000 other acres, so you're
20 looking at over 80,000 acres that we've
21 purchased using leveraged funds above and
22 beyond the money in the acquisition fund
23 for Forever Wild but through partnerships

1 with many people, including our Wildlife
2 and Freshwater Fisheries Division, our
3 State Parks Division, the Forestry
4 Commission, our State Lands Division, and
5 others.

6 And there are 52 parking lots. We
7 talked about the Stewardship Fund at the
8 last meeting and maintaining facilities
9 and adding additional access. So
10 52 parking lots that our staff has either
11 constructed or maintained on the
12 properties, and I just -- as we were
13 pulling that together, I thought I would
14 just share that with the Board. I thought
15 y'all might like those -- like to know the
16 impact of the program when you aggregate
17 it over the 20-plus years that the
18 program's been in place.

19 MR. OATES: Commissioner?

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir?

21 MR. OATES: I couldn't write those
22 down fast enough. Would you be willing to
23 send those out to us? It would be nice to

1 have those figures in our heads sometimes.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Sure. Be glad
3 to send those out to the Board.

4 I think that's all the opening
5 comments. We'll move now into the public
6 comment period. We do have quite a few
7 speakers this morning so there will be a
8 three-minute time limit, and the
9 timekeeper is up there. If you'll just
10 please limit your comments to those
11 three minutes so we can make sure
12 everybody has the same amount of time and
13 we can move through all of our speakers
14 this morning pretty efficiently.

15 Our first few speakers will be on
16 a property called Dugdown Mountain. That
17 is Tab 5a. And I think you've been given
18 a map this morning from the Alabama
19 Forestry Commission. This is a potential
20 Forest Legacy Project moving forward.

21 MS. MCCURDY: And just to let the
22 Board know that the maps -- they're the
23 same -- I mean they're the same boarder,

1 represent the same acreage, just the
2 Forestry Commission provided the loose map
3 that you see. I think we wrote on there
4 AFC. So there's no difference. There's
5 just a little more detail in the AFC map.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: And so the
7 first speaker will be Will Brantley with
8 the Alabama Forestry Commission, formerly
9 of the Department of Conservation and
10 Natural Resources.

11 MR. BRANTLEY: Thank you,
12 Commissioner. Thank you, Commissioner, I
13 appreciate that, and I appreciate the
14 opportunity to speak to the Board today.

15 My name is Will Brantley. I'm the
16 Assistant State Forester in Alabama.
17 We're here today to really -- there's
18 going to be two other speakers that
19 follow -- well, three other speakers that
20 follow me, but we want to talk about a new
21 potential opportunity, this Dugdown
22 Mountain Corridor in Cleburne County.
23 It's a really unique kind of opportunity.

1 It would be a partnership with the State
2 of Georgia. The next speaker is going to
3 really get in more detail about some of
4 the details of that tract. I mainly
5 wanted to just -- Commissioner, I really
6 appreciate those statistics you mentioned
7 because we were compiling our own set of
8 statistics as it related to the State's
9 Forest Legacy contribution and partnership
10 with the Forever Wild Land Trust.

11 Over the last 20 years, there's
12 been ten Forest Legacy Projects in the
13 state, and each one of those has been
14 matched by and partnered with Forever Wild
15 Land Trust, so there's a rich history of
16 involvement between this agency and our
17 agency and the U.S. Forest Service. And
18 there's another great opportunity coming
19 down the road as well, and we want to get
20 that on your radar screen.

21 As you may recall, the most recent
22 purchase we did that y'all were all
23 involved in, most of the members of this

1 group, was the Little River Addition down
2 in Monroe and Escambia County, and that
3 has been in addition to one of our state
4 forests. It's increased opportunities for
5 public hunting, and it's been a really
6 good addition to the State's public land
7 holdings.

8 But mainly, I just wanted to
9 remind everybody we've got a great history
10 and tradition of these two programs
11 working together and we're looking forward
12 to continuing that in the future.

13 And, Commissioner, I'm happy to
14 yield my time to the speakers that follow.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,
16 Will.

17 MR. BRANTLEY: Yes, sir.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: The next
19 speaker will be Darci DeBrunner with the
20 Forestry Commission, Alabama Forestry
21 Commission.

22 MS. DEBRUNNER: I'm Darci DeBrunner.
23 I'm the Forest Legacy coordinator with the

1 Alabama Forestry Commission, and this is a
2 project that was brought to my attention
3 about last year from Georgia wanting to do
4 a partnership with Alabama on this piece
5 of property. On the Georgia side, they've
6 got about 8,000 or so acres connected to
7 this piece of property, and with this
8 about 2,000-acre piece in the Dugdown
9 Mountain Corridor, we would like it to
10 become, if acquired, a new state forest
11 but also become part of Alabama's public
12 hunting area, and get something in that
13 area, in addition to the Indian Springs
14 Mountain that's sort of nearby.

15 This project -- I mean, together
16 for this between our project and Georgia,
17 there will be over 10,000 acres going
18 forward for the fiscal year '24 funding
19 from the Forest Legacy if it gets done,
20 and if this is successful, we plan to
21 hopefully continue acquiring more acres of
22 this property that are connected to what
23 we're trying to acquire for fiscal year

1 '24. And if it succeeds and we keep
2 acquiring more, we could even do a full
3 connection of public land to the Talladega
4 National Forest, so that would give us a
5 nice corridor of public land connected
6 from Alabama and Georgia throughout this
7 corridor.

8 On the Georgia side, it would
9 become a WMA. But it's got a lot of good
10 rivers on it. It's got longleaf. The
11 goal is to eventually have it be restored
12 to longleaf where applicable. On the
13 detailed map, you can see the Conservation
14 Fund has already started harvesting
15 loblolly and plan to go back and replant
16 some areas of longleaf, which will help us
17 along forward, and then if we acquire it,
18 we will, of course, go forward with the
19 conversion to longleaf pine. It's got
20 river bottoms, nice streams on it. It's
21 got a little frog pond up there that's
22 really a unique kind of ecosystem on the
23 north side of the property, and it's got

1 good public access as well.

2 And that's all I have.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.

4 Thank you.

5 The next speaker is Ms. Susan
6 Granberry from the U.S. Forest Service in
7 Atlanta.

8 MS. GRANBERRY: Thank you so much for
9 having me today.

10 The Forest Legacy Program uses fee
11 simple land purchases in Alabama to
12 protect important forest areas from
13 fragmentation and development and to
14 protect these areas for the public
15 benefits that they provide. It's
16 implemented as a grant program through the
17 Alabama Forestry Commission, one of our
18 great State partners. Projects are
19 selected through a very competitive
20 national process. This process of
21 applying for and receiving Forest Legacy
22 funding, it can take several years. We
23 have to conduct the due diligence,

1 appraisal review, title review, go through
2 all of those steps, and it requires really
3 a high degree of commitment we realize
4 from our state and our nonprofit and state
5 boards and cost share partners like
6 Forever Wild.

7 We're very grateful for Forever
8 Wild's support to Forest Legacy programs
9 and for the important partnership that you
10 provide to the Forest Legacy program to
11 help states acquire key lands like here in
12 Alabama to restore native longleaf pine,
13 to protect threatened and endangered
14 species, to help protect riverbeds and
15 corridors, protect wildlife values, and
16 all of those really critical habitat and
17 important areas.

18 So the secret is out. We know the
19 Forest Legacy community, that Alabama's
20 natural habitat is critical globally,
21 nationally, and we're looking forward to
22 partnering with you on projects.

23 Thanks.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

2 Next speaker on this same property
3 is Mr. Andrew Schock with the Conservation
4 Fund.

5 MR. SCHOCK: Good morning. I'm Andrew
6 Schock with the Conservation Fund, and I'm
7 going to add on, Commissioner, to what you
8 said about this facility.

9 Not too long ago, I was over at
10 the Performing Arts Center watching
11 Boz Scaggs -- some of you may remember
12 him -- an excellent, excellent facility,
13 so I would encourage anybody that has the
14 time to go see a concert or some sort of
15 show there to go to enjoy the rest of
16 Oxford.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: And that was a
18 very nice place. And there's a fine
19 restaurant right next door.

20 MR. SCHOCK: And that's where we ate
21 dinner.

22 But I'm here actually to talk
23 about the Dugdown Mountain Corridor. The

1 Conservation Fund is the landowner. We
2 own both the -- the almost 2,000 acres
3 here in Alabama as well as the balance of
4 the property in Georgia. We are a willing
5 landowner, willing seller, and we are
6 coordinating, of course, with the State of
7 Alabama but also with the State of Georgia
8 to put together a joint application for
9 the Forest Legacy Program. I have not
10 yet -- and this is on me -- have not yet
11 submitted a nomination to this body, but
12 that will be forthcoming so you will see
13 the rest of the official paperwork for the
14 Forever Wild program.

15 So thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thanks, Andrew.

17 The next speaker will be
18 Representative Tracy Estes on the Natural
19 Bridge project. That's Tab 4b page 15,
20 Tab 4b page 15.

21 MS. MCCURDY: Commissioner, I'll also
22 add there are a couple of memos, one is in
23 your packet and one in the green folder.

1 I believe that's 5h and 5i.

2 REPRESENTATIVE ESTES: First, let me
3 thank the Board for their time this
4 morning. I know you have many others to
5 hear from, so I'll keep it under the
6 three minutes.

7 You should have information in
8 there. I have spoken to the Board on
9 numerous occasions in the past about this
10 particular property. We have put together
11 a team back home. They have each
12 committed to assist with this process. If
13 you'll look, you should have copies of a
14 letter from the Winston County Sheriff and
15 his pledge to increase patrol in the area.
16 We have a letter from the current owner,
17 the private family that owns the property,
18 acknowledging that they understand that
19 your organization would have no interest
20 in retaining the structures on that
21 property, so they understand that that
22 would be a part of the process. And also
23 the Winston County Commission whose

1 Chairman, Roger Hayes, is with us today,
2 they have made multiple commitments. They
3 have committed to come in and destroy the
4 existing structures, remove all resulting
5 debris from the property, and come back
6 and either sod or seed and put hay over
7 the previous building sites to return that
8 to as natural an area as they can as
9 quickly as they can.

10 The Commissioner and I were
11 talking just moments ago about things
12 they're working on as well as far as
13 maintaining the gate that would be open.
14 Some of that you can do by app, and we
15 could get that -- they're going to take
16 care of all of the signage that would make
17 sure people know you've got to be out
18 by -- you know, the park closes at --
19 basically, you must exit by five or 4:30.
20 Although, we know we close at five. That
21 way, everybody knows they've got plenty of
22 time to get out.

23 My main concern from the beginning

1 in speaking with you a couple of times,
2 Board members, is my personal interest and
3 interest as a lawmaker on behalf of the
4 people of Alabama is getting this in the
5 public hands as opposed to a private
6 owner. You might have a private owner
7 come in and do tremendous things. You had
8 a family that's owned this 150 acres for a
9 long time and have been very, very
10 committed to it, but it is a natural
11 wonder.

12 As we've noted before, it's the
13 largest natural bridge east of the
14 Rocky Mountains, and it just seems that it
15 would be a tragedy for us to lose that
16 should it fall in the hands of a private
17 owner who had no interest in sharing it
18 with anyone but him or herself. So the
19 point I would like to make is the
20 uncertainty of what would happen if it
21 fell into private hands, retaining public
22 access, and preserving the property for
23 future generations. To me, that's the key

1 is preserving this property for future
2 generations.

3 You were mentioning earlier, the
4 Chairman was, about how many hundreds of
5 miles of trail and whatnot we've got.
6 There is unlimited potential on this land
7 of trails that can be put in, bike trails,
8 foot walking trails. Some are already in
9 existence, you know, where they've already
10 been kind of beaten down, I guess, by just
11 the natural walking process of the number
12 of visitors that go out to the site. So
13 that would be the thing that I will ask
14 you to keep in mind as we move forward.
15 And it's my goal as a private resident who
16 doesn't live probably 25, 30 miles away
17 and as a state lawmaker would just be to
18 preserve this for future generations.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, sir.
21 Thank you for being here today. I know
22 you've got plenty going on with your
23 district. I appreciate you making the

1 trip over.

2 The next speaker is the
3 Winston County Commission Commissioner
4 Roger Hayes on the same property.

5 MR. HAYES: Thank you, Commissioner.
6 I thank the panel.

7 Tracy stole all my thunder, but I
8 do want to reiterate that the
9 Winston County Commission is working with
10 the Town of Natural Bridge. We are going
11 to tear down the buildings, as Tracy said.
12 We hope that this project is going to be a
13 lot of interest to y'all because we want
14 to keep it.

15 It was established and opened in
16 1954, and the 150 acres that we have
17 there, we think you can have various maybe
18 bike trails, RV parks. It's got a lot of
19 potential. You can have walking trails,
20 you can have a climbing area too that
21 would be of interest, I think, to the
22 general public, and I hope it will be an
23 interest to y'all.

1 One of the problems that we had --
2 as late as yesterday, I talked to a
3 contractor, and he says that opening and
4 closing the park, don't think it's going
5 to be a problem like we thought it was.
6 Internet is there in the area. Power is
7 at the site. With the timers on the gate
8 and what we'll work to is how timers --
9 and what we're really concerned with is if
10 somebody got in there and they stayed
11 longer than they should have getting out.
12 It will have an emergency button where
13 they can get out. What we're talking --
14 and will be talking with Natural Bridge
15 again -- is the shared cost of putting in
16 the gate and the monthly power bill to
17 keep this operating.

18 And as we said before, the sheriff
19 has committed to doing his part, the
20 County Commission has committed to doing
21 our part, and we feel like with the
22 National Forest, the Bankhead Forest in
23 our county, this is going to be a great

1 fit for us and it's going to be a plus for
2 us.

3 So if you have any questions, you
4 know, if I can answer them, I'll take it.
5 Still got a minute 11 on it. But, again,
6 thank you for seeing us today.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes. Thank
8 you.

9 Any questions from the Board?

10 Thank you, sir.

11 MR. HAYES: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Our next
13 speaker is Keith Tassin with the Nature
14 Conservancy on the Oak Mountain State Park
15 Belcher tract Phase II, Tab 4b page 7.

16 MR. TASSIN: Thank you. Keith Tassin
17 state director for the Nature Conservancy
18 here today to speak in support of the
19 Oak Mountain State Park-Belcher Addition
20 Phase II. This is an addition to the
21 Belcher tract that the State purchased at
22 the end of last year.

23 What I'd like to see today is a

1 first appraisal to move forward on the
2 purchase of this nomination. Anybody
3 that's ever been to King's Chair, this
4 tract pretty much speaks for itself. It's
5 really the -- it's the prominent ridge
6 that you see to the south when you're on
7 King's Chair. King's Chair is probably
8 the most visited place in Oak Mountain
9 State Park, so there's a real danger if
10 this tract is not secured that it will be
11 developed for housing as you can see from
12 some of the other ridges that you can see
13 in the distance from there. So it's
14 pretty critical, one of the last
15 opportunities to expand Oak Mountain State
16 Park.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So on this --
18 so what we just recently acquired there on
19 at -- on the Belcher tract where it comes
20 down, and this is that ridge that you see
21 that goes right back up on the --

22 MR. TASSIN: Right. If you're looking
23 down at Belcher Lake, it's the big ridge

1 that's right behind that there.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Okay.

3 DR. POWERS: Mr. Chairman?

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir?

5 DR. POWERS: So that's the -- there's
6 a railroad that runs through there. Is it
7 easily accessible between the two?

8 MR. TASSIN: Yeah, there is. There
9 are crossings on the existing Belcher
10 tract onto that property.

11 MS. MCCURDY: And there's -- but
12 there's also road access.

13 MR. TASSIN: There is also -- it also
14 has part of the county road.

15 MS. MCCURDY: So you have county road
16 frontage, so it has its own road access on
17 that side.

18 DR. POWERS: Oh, in addition to being
19 able to cross over?

20 MS. MCCURDY: Correct.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, sir.

22 The next speaker is Mr. Warren
23 Boddie on the Freedom Hills-

1 Boddie Addition Tab 3b page 6, 3b page 6.
2 If you'll give everybody a second to find
3 that one. Mostly let me find it.

4 MR. BODDIE: That's going to cut my
5 three minutes?

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: No, sir. Go
7 ahead.

8 MR. BODDIE: Where this came about is
9 I was going to sell my property. I came
10 and asked y'all for an easement to get to
11 my property about a quarter mile off the
12 main road. The buyer backed out when I
13 was here at the meeting at the -- I think
14 it was May of '21. One of y'all asked if
15 you could have first refusal, and I said
16 yes. So I think in November, y'all voted
17 to have an appraisal, and the guy came out
18 there and appraised. He didn't have it in
19 by February and I missed the May meeting,
20 so, basically, I'm here to ask for a
21 motion that you approve the second
22 appraisal on this property to move
23 forward.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.

2 MR. BODDIE: Did that take under
3 three minutes?

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: That was quick.
5 That was quick.

6 Any questions for Mr. Boddie?

7 Thank you, sir.

8 MR. BODDIE: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: And our last
10 speaker that I have a card for is Charles
11 Yeager with the Turkey Creek Nature
12 Preserve.

13 While he's coming up, if there's
14 anybody that wanted to speak that didn't
15 have an opportunity to fill out a green
16 slip or to let me know as you came in that
17 you would like to speak, if you'll raise
18 your hand and we'll get somebody to get
19 you a slip.

20 Perfect. Everybody that wants to
21 speak, you filled one out.

22 Go ahead, Charles.

23 MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Commissioner.

1 I appreciate you guys giving me the time
2 today. I'll try to keep it short.

3 As you guys know, I have the honor
4 of managing the Turkey Creek Nature
5 Preserve. I actually work for the
6 Environmental Center at Birmingham
7 Southern College. We have a partnership
8 with Forever Wild and with the State to
9 maintain and care for that property.

10 It has been an incredibly busy
11 year to say the least. At any given point
12 in time in the summer months, we typically
13 see a thousand people a day or more, and
14 this summer's been even more so. It's
15 pushed our capacity to its limits many
16 times, which is a good thing. We're
17 seeing a lot of use and a lot of families,
18 and we're evaluating ways to increase our
19 capacity or at least maintain our capacity
20 in more reasonable ways, which includes
21 kind of dealing with some parking issues
22 that are a constant issue. We have a very
23 narrow road with steep shoulders and the

1 parking is always a constant challenge
2 that we're working through with the State.
3 We're also working with the county,
4 Jefferson County, to get new striping on
5 the roads and to kind of evaluate some
6 places where we can mark off parking
7 problem areas.

8 It's also been an incredibly busy
9 year for our programming. We've had 28
10 environmental education programs this year
11 that have seen over a thousand
12 participants, school kids, 35 service days
13 in 18 public programs and events. This
14 has included the last two weeks we had
15 Birmingham Children's Theater out for an
16 adventure theater program that they did on
17 our trails. We had venomous snake
18 handling workshops. We had a controlled
19 burn and Learn and Burn back in the
20 spring. We also back in the spring hosted
21 a 24-hour BioBlitz. And I want to praise
22 the DCNR staff. They came out and they
23 helped. They led public hikes through

1 this time. We had over 130 participants
2 in this program -- or these events, and
3 we -- there were 416 observations that
4 were made through our naturalist that
5 included about 253 species, which all will
6 be included in the database, I'm sure, and
7 will add to our ability to be able to
8 steward and take care of the property. So
9 I want to extend my gratitude to the DCNR
10 staff for being willing to give up their
11 weekend and their time to do this because
12 it really kind of took it to the next
13 level.

14 Also, I want to mention that
15 Jefferson County has granted us this year
16 a -- they gave us a grant for a UTV, which
17 is a vital piece of equipment for us. Our
18 old UTV went out, and we were very, very
19 grateful for their support.

20 And I want to thank you guys also.
21 I missed the last meeting, but I want to
22 thank you guys for moving forward with the
23 second appraisal on the Parker Addition.

1 Also, I have something on a
2 personal note. So this year, I was very
3 lucky to be drawn for -- after many years
4 of putting it in, I was drawn for an SOA
5 hunt. I was drawn for a turkey hunt at
6 Thigpen this year, and I had the
7 opportunity to visit that incredible
8 property. And I want to brag a little bit
9 about what a wonderful job that Doug
10 Deaton and Chris Smith are doing to keep
11 up that property. The communication was
12 wonderful, the whole experience was
13 incredible, and I really think that's
14 going to be a showcase place for Alabama
15 hunting.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Did you hear
17 any turkeys while you were down there?

18 MR. YEAGER: Yeah.

19 MR. JONES: Did you kill one?

20 MR. YEAGER: Quite a few. Heard a lot
21 of turkeys, and it was successful. I
22 didn't stay as long as I had planned on.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

1 So that ends our list of speakers.
2 Now we'll recess for an executive session
3 to discuss tract appraisal values.

4 By regulation, the appraisal
5 values are confidential during periods of
6 negotiations. Accordingly, in order to
7 discuss the tract appraisal values, the
8 Board will need to go into recess for an
9 executive session. Is there a motion for
10 the Board to now recess to attend the
11 executive session?

12 MR. DARNALL: So moved.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Moved by
14 Mr. Darnall.

15 MR. CHILDERS: Second.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I think it was
17 seconded by Mr. Holloway?

18 MR. CHILDERS: Childers.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Oh,
20 Mr. Childers. Thank you.

21 So as I call your name, please
22 state your position on the motion to
23 recess. Those in favor please indicate by

1 saying aye and those opposed by nay.

2 Chris Blankenship, aye.

3 Mr. Childers?

4 MR. CHILDERS: Aye.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

6 MR. DARNALL: Aye.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

8 MR. HOLLOWAY: Aye.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Jones?

10 MR. JONES: Aye.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

12 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Aye.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Oates?

14 MR. OATES: Aye.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Saloom?

16 DR. SALOOM: Aye.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP:

18 Mr. Satterfield?

19 MR. SATTERFIELD: Aye.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

21 DR. POWERS: Aye.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

23 MR. WRIGHT: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All present are
2 in favor of dismissing to the executive
3 session. It's now 10:32. We'll take
4 approximately a 20-minute recess and
5 return.

6 Thank you.

7 (Recess from 10:32 a.m. to
8 10:55 a.m.)

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: We're back on
10 the Record. The meeting shall resume.

11 We are at number 5 on your agenda
12 of the financial data, Tab 2a, b, and c.
13 And, Ms. McCurdy, take it away.

14 MS. MCCURDY: All right. Well, as
15 usual, what I'm going to start with first
16 is just an overview of the financial
17 condition really. By that, I really mean
18 the money you have available to spend.

19 I'm going to run through the
20 tracts that you have previously motioned
21 and instructed the staff to proceed with
22 closing. I take those tracts and the cost
23 including the 15 percent of appraised

1 value that we transfer to the Stewardship
2 Fund with each acquisition, I run those
3 numbers, and I subtract it from the
4 balance to give you an idea of your
5 unencumbered amount in view of any
6 additional motions that the Board might
7 want to make today or continue to hold
8 those funds for purchases in the future.

9 So the tracts that are in various
10 stages of closing include the D'Olive Bay
11 Addition, Styx River Wetlands, Turkey
12 Creek Nature Preserve-Parker Addition,
13 Bon Secour River Wetlands Addition,
14 Coldwater Mountain-McVey Addition, Perdido
15 WMA-Snowden Branch Addition, and Red
16 Hills-Flat Creek Phase IV. Those are the
17 properties that are in some form of
18 closing. I will complete my totals, and
19 then let me give the Board one additional
20 note. Taking all of those tracts into
21 consideration, you are left with an
22 unencumbered balance just short of
23 17.8 million dollars. And that is within

1 your statutory spending authority, so that
2 is your unencumbered balance and amount
3 available for any additional action.

4 I did want to note to the Board
5 one adjustment since the last meeting that
6 we will -- we can discuss later in the
7 general discussion portion of the meeting
8 if the Board chooses to proceed, but we
9 had a correction to an appraised value
10 since the last meeting for the Red Hills-
11 Flat Creek Phase IV, and so I will need
12 additional Board action to continue with
13 closing on that tract due to that amended
14 value, but I will bring that up during
15 general discussion. However, I have
16 included that tract in the amount so you
17 would know what you had available if you
18 chose to proceed. So these -- just under
19 17.8 is what's available to the Board.

20 I will now give you -- run through
21 the tracts that were previously motioned
22 that have closed or have been declined in
23 this fiscal year. Cedar Creek SOA

1 Addition was declined by the landowner,
2 Coldwater Mountain-Carroll Addition has
3 closed, Hollins WMA Addition 2020 was
4 declined, Oak Mountain State Park-Belcher
5 Lake Addition has closed, Red Hills-Parris
6 Trust Addition has closed, and
7 Thigpen Hill Option A Phase II has closed.
8 Those are the figures for this fiscal
9 year. Any questions on Tab 2a?

10 All right. I'll move to Tab 2b.
11 This is a similar overview of the funds
12 that have been spent and are remaining in
13 the Stewardship Fund that I mentioned
14 earlier. I do need to update the Board.
15 You will see that what's reflected on 2b
16 shows just over 1.16 million. We have in
17 the system that is in some form of
18 processing about 500 -- close to 560,000,
19 but it was not actually out the door when
20 you figure the balance. So for a real
21 picture, subtract another roughly \$560,000
22 that's in process. You will also see two
23 values, one for the close of September 30

1 and the current net assets value, which is
2 further detailed in Tab 2c of the
3 Stewardship Fund, and that is just over
4 40.9 million. Any questions on the
5 Stewardship Fund?

6 All right. We'll move to Tab 3a.
7 I will now go through the properties that
8 the Board at a previous meeting has
9 motioned for a first appraisal. I will
10 run through the status of those as to
11 what -- the ones we have received and ones
12 that are still pending. The appraisals
13 that we currently have in hand and would
14 be available for further motion by the
15 Board include Autauga WMA-County Road 112;
16 Autauga WMA-Hart Addition;
17 Cahaba River-Shelby County-Park Peel
18 Addition; Coldwater Mountain-Robertson
19 Addition; Calhoun County; and Freedom
20 Hills WMA-Boddie Addition, Colbert County.
21 Those appraisals are in hand. And to give
22 you a rough idea, they approach about
23 4 million in appraised properties that are

1 on Tab 3a.

2 There is one appraisal that we did
3 not receive in time for today's meeting,
4 and that's the Red Hills-Flat Creek
5 Phase V appraisal. It is very close to
6 completion but was not complete for me to
7 have for you today. We will have it at
8 the next meeting.

9 That encompasses all the previous
10 motions for first appraisal. Any
11 questions on Tab 3a?

12 All right. If the Board would now
13 turn in your packet to Tab 5a, we're going
14 to -- I'm going to run through the usual
15 sort of grant status report.

16 The Board many, many years ago
17 instructed the staff to routinely try to
18 identify grant opportunities and
19 leveraging opportunities for nominations
20 that are in the system. So what we do in
21 Tab a is give you kind of an overview --
22 some of this is on repeat -- but let you
23 know where we are with anything that has a

1 connection to grant funds we are either
2 chasing or leveraging opportunities we
3 kind of are pursuing. So we have several
4 nominations that are currently in some
5 stage of closing that have benefited from
6 funding from the National Coastal Wetlands
7 Conservation Grant Program, and they
8 are -- somewhat vary in percentage,
9 but those tracts that are in closing and
10 with the assistance of grant funds include
11 the Bon Secour River Wetlands Addition,
12 D'Olive Bay Addition, Styx River Wetlands
13 tract. We also have funds that are U.S.
14 Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Land
15 Acquisition and Habitat Conservation Plan
16 grant funds that are supporting the
17 Red Hills-Flat Creek Phase IV nomination.

18 Of the appraised nominations that
19 present leveraging or grant funding
20 opportunities, we have the Autauga County
21 WMA -- excuse me -- Autauga
22 WMA-County Road 112 Addition. That is
23 being -- the Wildlife and Freshwater

1 Fisheries, Chuck Sykes, has offered to
2 utilize his Pittman-Robertson funding to
3 support approximately a 75/25 split with
4 Forever Wild. Of that, Forever Wild's
5 acquisition of approximately 25 percent of
6 appraised value is the match required for
7 Wildlife to have available of its PR funds
8 to use for their purchase of the remaining
9 approximately 75 percent.

10 Under the PR program, Forever Wild
11 holds title to its purchased acreage and
12 Wildlife would hold title to the acreage
13 that was supported by the Pittman-
14 Robertson funds. That same program and
15 same offer of approximately a 75/25 split
16 from Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries
17 Division is comprised to the Autauga
18 County WMA-Hart Addition.

19 The Wildlife and Freshwater
20 Fisheries Division has also submitted a
21 grant application for additional Recovery
22 Land Acquisition and Habitat Conservation
23 Plan Funds to support the Red Hills-Flat

1 Creek Phase V. That one we see a
2 little -- little higher percentage for
3 Forever Wild at 26 percent, not much.
4 Again, all these are approximate, but I
5 will tell you it's a little closer to the
6 76/24. I want to double check with Doug
7 Deaton.

8 Doug, has that award been
9 received?

10 MR. DEATON: We have not.

11 MS. MCCURDY: That award -- that's
12 Doug Deaton with Wildlife. So that award
13 has not been received, but we are very
14 encouraged about that.

15 Going into short list nominations.
16 These are properties on the short list,
17 but these have not yet received a motion
18 for first appraisal, one would be the
19 Portland Landing SOA-Donald Addition in
20 Dallas County. That tract is another
21 offer from Wildlife of leveraging with
22 Pittman-Robertson funds. That one is at
23 70/30, so that would be a higher

1 percentage than 75/25 for Forever Wild.
2 Again, the ask for Forever Wild is
3 30 percent, but part of that is due to
4 on-the-ground evaluation between the State
5 Lands Division and Wildlife as to on-the-
6 ground boundaries as well as easier
7 boundaries between the program to have,
8 you know, acreage title to. We have one
9 other opportunity that is not quite on the
10 short list but is -- Andrew mentioned
11 he'll be submitting the nomination for the
12 Dugdown Mountain Corridor. That's the one
13 you heard discussed. I did include --
14 you've got maps on that. That's for
15 informational purposes just of an
16 opportunity that's being investigated and
17 pursued for potential grant funding. Any
18 questions on those?

19 All right. What I'd like now to
20 do is ask you to turn to Tab 4. I now
21 would like to run through Tab 4b. And if
22 you'll turn to Tab 4b, you'll have a brief
23 description of the tract but more

1 importantly a map for each tract. These
2 are the tracts that are on the short list.
3 These tracts have received -- we've
4 received willing seller letters
5 returned -- so we have confirmed willing
6 sellers on these tracts -- and these
7 tracts are scored on the four categories
8 outlined in the constitutional amendment
9 and then additions to State Parks,
10 addition to Wildlife Management Areas or
11 new ones of either of those, general
12 recreation, and natural preserves.
13 They're scored on those four categories.
14 A property and nomination then has to make
15 the top three ranking competing against
16 other nominations in the programs through
17 districts, the Northern District, Central,
18 and Southern. So they have to score top
19 three in one of the four categories. Some
20 properties rank in the top three in
21 multiple or all categories. So the number
22 of short list nominations vary each
23 meeting as well as the ones you will see

1 whose score was either high enough to get
2 it on or something might have bumped it.
3 So it's a living list of nominations.

4 So I'll run through those now. As
5 I say each time, speak up if you have a
6 question because I'm going to be looking
7 at my list here. So we have Alligator
8 Bayou, Mobile County; Butler Foster
9 Praytor Mountains in Jefferson County.
10 And as you'll notice on the map, there's
11 several small tracts. That landowner
12 still wants all tracts considered and was
13 not willing to knock out any of those.
14 Chickasaw Creek Tract, Mobile County;
15 Coldwater Mountain-Martin Addition,
16 Calhoun County; D'Olive Bay-North
17 Addition, Baldwin County; Little River
18 Forest-Lomax Branch Addition. That's
19 Escambia County. Now, I will note for the
20 Board, as I mentioned at the last meeting,
21 the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries
22 Division is actively working with that
23 landowner in the process of trying to get

1 that closed so -- but it is not closed yet
2 so it remains on our list, but I do expect
3 that that nomination will be acquired by
4 the Wildlife section solely within the
5 funds. So I'll let you know that status.
6 I think that one will be taken care of
7 without the program's assistance, but it
8 has not yet closed so it remains on this
9 list. Natural Bridge Park,
10 Winston County; Oak Mountain State
11 Park-Belcher Addition Phase II; Oak
12 Mountain State Park-Odess Addition;
13 Persimmon Knob --

14 MR. CHILDERS: Patti?

15 MS. MCCURDY: -- in Morgan County.

16 I'm sorry. Do we have a question?

17 MR. CHILDERS: Over here.

18 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir?

19 MR. CHILDERS: If a piece of land goes
20 under private (inaudible) and is
21 ultimately sold --

22 MS. MCCURDY: I'm sorry. A parcel of
23 land -- I missed that second part.

1 MR. CHILDERS: Persimmon Knob, if it
2 sells to someone but it's still on this
3 list, what happens to Persimmon Knob?

4 MS. MCCURDY: If it sells to someone?

5 MR. CHILDERS: Yeah.

6 MS. MCCURDY: It comes off. If there
7 has been a closing -- because if it's a
8 new owner, I would no longer have a valid,
9 willing seller letter because the
10 ownership has changed, so it has to come
11 off.

12 MR. CHILDERS: So you get notice --
13 you get notice of that when it sells, or
14 does it come some other way?

15 MS. MCCURDY: That depends. Sometimes
16 when -- there is no automatic search of
17 records that we do before each meeting.
18 Normally, the land -- whoever nominated it
19 normally lets us know. Normally there's
20 communication with that landowner, but I
21 would never say that I would know -- it's
22 very possible that something could sell
23 without me knowing. Now, we would find

1 that out in the next stage, but if you --
2 if we have information on that, I'd be --
3 you know, like to have that.

4 MR. CHILDERS: Well, this piece of
5 property is on the short list, but it's
6 never been a motion to get a first
7 appraisal, correct?

8 MS. MCCURDY: That's correct. If that
9 had been made, it would be on the
10 appraised nominations list.

11 MR. CHILDERS: Thank you.

12 MS. MCCURDY: All right. I believe
13 that we've passed through the
14 Oak Mountain. We're on Persimmon. Did we
15 get past Persimmon?

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: No, we did not.

17 MS. MCCURDY: So Persimmon Knob,
18 Morgan County; Portland Landing
19 SOA-Donald Addition, Dallas County;
20 Riverton CHA -- that's Community Hunting
21 Area -- Barnett Mill Hollow Addition,
22 Colbert County; Riverton CHA-Hurd Hollow
23 Addition, Colbert.

1 MR. SATTERFIELD: Patti, I
2 requested -- I've not seen this term CHA
3 before. I understand the WMA and the SOA.
4 What's the difference in those three kinds
5 of categories?

6 MS. MCCURDY: I'll let Doug come up
7 and tell you on behalf of Wildlife a
8 definition, so to speak, of a Community
9 Hunting Area.

10 And, Doug, you might compare it to
11 a WMA as an example.

12 MR. DEATON: A Community Hunting Area
13 is a term that we used to use. We've now
14 shifted over to WMA. But it was smaller
15 areas that didn't have a designated
16 manager for that area, say -- we have
17 Lauderdale WMA and Freedom Hills WMA.
18 Those had designated managers and they
19 were on site at those areas, and then the
20 managers would then move over and manage
21 those properties but not be there full
22 time. So that's the only difference is
23 the size and the staff.

1 MR. SATTERFIELD: And so the smaller
2 ones are called a Community Hunting Area?

3 MR. DEATON: Community Hunting Area,
4 but there may --

5 MR. SATTERFIELD: So they're sort of
6 self-regulating, there's no on-site
7 manager is what you're saying?

8 MR. DEATON: That's correct.

9 MS. MCCURDY: And next we have
10 Saginaw Swamp, Shelby County; Sipsy River
11 Swamp-Brownville Addition Amended. This
12 one is called amended because in this case
13 the landowner did remove the outlying
14 parcels, so the nomination is now the
15 single parcel that you see on the map.
16 That's why the name has amended by it.
17 And then the Weeks Bay Reserve-Marney
18 Addition. We are still keeping an eye out
19 for potential supporting funding through
20 possible NOAA sources from that tract, but
21 we currently have not had that success so
22 right now it is not a grant-supported
23 tract but we remain -- we would still like

1 to make that happen but we don't have
2 anything to support that acquisition yet.
3 I just mention that because I did mention
4 it at a prior meeting also. So those
5 tracts are the ones that are short list
6 and available for potential motions for
7 first appraisal from the Board. Before we
8 move on, any questions on those tracts?

9 All right. Commissioner, I think,
10 unless I missed something, that we're in
11 general discussion.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So we'll move
13 into general discussion. I do have a
14 couple of things that I will discuss
15 relating to the motion that was passed by
16 the Board last meeting on the cooperation
17 with the counties. But before I get to
18 that, I would like to -- while we're on
19 the short list information and the
20 appraised values are fresh in everybody's
21 mind, I would like to go ahead and just
22 open it up if there are any motions or
23 questions related to that as we usually do

1 in general discussion.

2 MS. MCCURDY: In relation to the --

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: No. In
4 relation to acquisition or appraisals.

5 MS. MCCURDY: Okay. You're going to
6 make your other comments later?

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Comments later.

8 MS. MCCURDY: So we'll proceed as
9 usual with any motions or questions or
10 general discussion from the Board.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

12 MR. DARNALL: Yes. I'd like to make a
13 motion for first appraisal for the
14 Riverton CHA-Barnett Mill Hollow property.

15 MR. SATTERFIELD: I'm sorry. I
16 didn't...

17 MS. MCCURDY: That's Riverton
18 CHA-Barnett Mill Addition. That's Tab 4b
19 page 25.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Is there a
21 second?

22 MR. SATTERFIELD: Second.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by

1 Mr. Satterfield.

2 Any questions or discussions on
3 that?

4 All those in favor of a first
5 appraisal for the Riverton CHA-Barnett
6 Mill Addition please say aye.

7 Any opposed?

8 None opposed. The motion carries.

9 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Mr. Chairman, Jim
10 McClintock. I'd like to make a move for a
11 first appraisal of Oak Mountain-Belcher
12 Addition Phase II.

13 MR. SATTERFIELD: I can't hear that.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I'll repeat it.
15 So it's a first appraisal -- motion for a
16 first appraisal for the Oak
17 Mountain-Belcher Addition Phase II.

18 DR. SALOOM: Second that.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
20 Dr. Saloom. The motion is made by
21 Dr. McClintock. Any discussion on that
22 first appraisal on the Oak Mountain State
23 Park-Belcher Addition Phase II?

1 All those in favor please say aye.

2 Any opposed?

3 None opposed. Motion carries.

4 Dr. Powers?

5 DR. POWERS: I'd like to make a motion
6 for a second appraisal and proceed to
7 purchase Freedom Hills-Boddie Addition.

8 MR. JONES: I'll second.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So I have a
10 motion by Dr. Powers and seconded by
11 Mr. Jones for a second appraisal and move
12 to purchase on the Freedom Hills-Boddie
13 Addition. Any questions or discussion?

14 All those in favor in say aye.

15 Any opposed?

16 None opposed. The motion carries.

17 Dr. Saloom?

18 DR. SALOOM: I'd like to make a motion
19 for the staff to proceed with a second
20 appraisal and purchase of the Red Hills-
21 Flat Creek Phase IV nomination consistent
22 with the revised first appraisal value
23 contingent with the Wildlife and

1 Freshwater Fisheries Division providing
2 funding in the amount of approximately
3 1.2 million dollars.

4 MS. MCCURDY: For those looking for
5 that one, that is discussed in memo -- Tab
6 memo 5h with -- there's a map that may be
7 your easiest map.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Need a second
9 on that.

10 MR. OATES: Second.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
12 Mr. Oates.

13 All right. Any discussion or
14 questions on that? That was the one that
15 had been appraised previously that we had
16 motioned to move forward at a new
17 appraised value, and so this motion is for
18 a second -- or to move to purchase from
19 that second appraisal contingent on the
20 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division
21 providing 1.2 million dollars; is that
22 correct?

23 MS. MCCURDY: Yeah. I'm sorry.

1 Whatever -- hold on one second. If you
2 look at Tab 5a number 4, that's where the
3 language of the motion we just -- that was
4 just made by Dr. Saloom if anyone wants to
5 review that and be sure that the second is
6 correct, which I'm just not sure when --
7 when you spoke, I didn't have it in front
8 of me. I wasn't sure how you said it
9 after Dr. Saloom said it.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Let me restate
11 that. The motion is for the staff to do
12 the second appraisal to purchase the Red
13 Hills nomination consistent with the first
14 appraisal contingent upon the Wildlife and
15 Freshwater Fisheries Division providing
16 1.2 million dollars approximately for the
17 acquisition. Any questions about that?

18 Any more discussion?

19 All those in favor say aye.

20 Any opposed?

21 None opposed. The motion carries.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. HOLLOWAY: Mr. Chairman?

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

2 MR. HOLLOWAY: I'd like to move for a
3 second appraisal for the
4 Cahaba River-Shelby County-Park Peel
5 Addition move to purchase.

6 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second that.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion
8 is for a second appraisal and move to
9 purchase the Cahaba River-Shelby County-
10 Park Peel Addition; is that right?

11 MR. HOLLOWAY: That's correct.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Let me make
13 sure everybody -- we're all talking about
14 the same place. And then that was a
15 motion by Mr. Holloway and seconded by
16 Dr. McClintock.

17 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Correct.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So that is on
19 3a, 3a page 4 -- 3b page 4. I'm sorry.
20 All right. So this is the motion for a
21 second appraisal and move to purchase the
22 Cahaba River-Park Peel Addition. Any
23 questions or discussion?

1 All those in favor say aye.

2 Mr. Satterfield?

3 MR. SATTERFIELD: I noticed that this
4 is not contiguous to and I don't know how
5 far it is from the Belcher property
6 purchase. Do we know what the distance is
7 from that? Because my question is the
8 appraisal price came in at the same value
9 as the Belcher property, and I'm not --
10 I'm wondering how they relate.

11 MR. HOLLOWAY: They don't relate.

12 MR. SATTERFIELD: They don't relate.
13 But they --

14 MS. MCCURDY: I don't know that
15 they -- the Cahaba River-Shelby County-
16 Park Peel -- I'm sorry. Let me be sure if
17 we have comments that they're where the
18 court reporter can get it. Your question
19 was how does the -- how do the two
20 properties relate?

21 MR. SATTERFIELD: Well, I was just
22 wondering about the appraisal price
23 because it seems to me the appraisal price

1 for that -- for the piece -- the Park Peel
2 Addition is a little bit high.

3 MS. MCCURDY: Well, that would be --
4 that's what the appraisal came back at, so
5 that's up to the Board. This does have
6 a lot of frontage to the Cahaba River. As
7 you will see, the entire -- it's like a
8 peninsula and it is adjacent to the
9 current Forever Wild acreage and the --
10 you know, there, so it is -- you know, it
11 is -- that frontage would normally be seen
12 as valuable. But it's up to the Board. I
13 answered yes, but the appraised value is
14 from our contract appraiser. It kind of
15 is what it is. It's available to the
16 Board to take whatever action or no action
17 the Board would like to take.

18 MR. SATTERFIELD: Do we know how far
19 this --

20 MS. MCCURDY: How miles?

21 MR. SATTERFIELD: How many?

22 MS. MCCURDY: You're asking how many
23 miles on the map?

1 MR. SATTERFIELD: Yes.

2 MS. MCCURDY: That, I do not know off
3 the top of my head. If you'll give me a
4 second, we'll try to find a map that might
5 help you, but you're going to have to give
6 me a second.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: It's not close.
8 This is the Oak Mountain State Park. The
9 Belcher Addition is over on the -- in
10 Shelby County on the east side, and this
11 Cahaba River Park is over there next to
12 Bibb County on the southwest portion of
13 Shelby County.

14 MR. SATTERFIELD: And so unlike the
15 Belcher property where it is near major
16 developments in the Birmingham area, this
17 piece of property is more isolated and
18 undeveloped in an undeveloped area in
19 comparison, question mark.

20 MS. MCCURDY: It's a growing area of
21 Shelby County. I don't know if I would --
22 I mean, it's probably a little bit denser,
23 yes, next to Oak Mountain, but this is a

1 growing area of Shelby County and this
2 Cahaba River frontage is a significant
3 interest and I would say does pose a
4 danger of private acquisition at the
5 peninsula point of our holding there.

6 MR. HOLLOWAY: Mr. Chairman?

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir?

8 MR. HOLLOWAY: It's in the area of
9 Helena, Alabama, and what I'm saying is
10 the Forever Wild Board currently has
11 property at the Cahaba River Park already.
12 This is just an addition to that.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other
14 questions or discussion on this?

15 The motion on the floor is a
16 second appraisal and move to purchase on
17 the Cahaba River Park-Peel Addition.

18 All those in favor say aye.

19 Any opposed?

20 MR. SATTERFIELD: I abstain.

21 MS. MCCURDY: We still have the
22 required number of votes to proceed.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion

1 carries.

2 Thank you.

3 Dr. Powers?

4 DR. POWERS: I'd like to move for a
5 first appraisal for the Natural Bridge
6 Park.

7 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Let me catch up
9 here. First appraisal of Natural Bridge
10 by Dr. Powers. Who was the second?

11 MR. HOLLOWAY: Holloway.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway.

13 So the motion is for a first
14 appraisal on the Natural Bridge property.
15 Any discussion?

16 MR. SATTERFIELD: Question.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP:
18 Mr. Satterfield?

19 MR. SATTERFIELD: Patti, I don't know
20 how -- this is -- we've heard a proposal
21 from the Natural Bridge Park folks and the
22 legislators and the Commissioner about
23 moving the structures and who's going to

1 be responsible for that. My concern is
2 this property -- how would the appraiser
3 go about appraising that property. Will
4 he -- if he had to appraise it now with
5 those structures still in existence, would
6 he have to consider the value of those
7 structures in the purchase price even
8 though they're going to be removed? How
9 does that work?

10 MS. MCCURDY: We've encountered this
11 on other tracts, so what the appraiser --
12 I'm sorry. We've approached this -- we've
13 had structures on other tracts. The
14 appraiser initially as a first step
15 appraises the property as he appraises any
16 property. Highest and best use, that's
17 how he appraises the property. But then
18 he will separately appraise the structures
19 so that we can then back out the
20 structures from the total, what is then
21 our appraisal value that we use to discuss
22 with the landowner. Here the possibly
23 additional aspect but it would be treated

1 the same, I'm not sure how the appraiser
2 might or might not value any income that
3 is coming from the taking of admission,
4 the gift shop, any proceeds like that, but
5 what -- I'm going to use the term revenue
6 generated from the property, if that is
7 identified, it would be identified in the
8 appraisal, but it will be deducted from
9 anything that was offered to the
10 landowner. That is what led to the letter
11 we received from the representative of the
12 landowners because I was concerned that
13 they appreciate that the structures would
14 come down, so the value of the land and to
15 the program would be under that. We will
16 also inform the appraiser that this will
17 happen, this is the conditions, to see if
18 that changes. I mean, the end appraised
19 value, but I want the Board to know that,
20 you know, where we have structures on
21 other properties, we have backed that
22 value out.

23 MR. SATTERFIELD: Well, the reason I

1 ask that question is because this
2 property, as we know, was publicly
3 marketed before.

4 MS. MCCURDY: And currently is still.

5 MR. SATTERFIELD: And I don't know if
6 it's still being publicly marketed.

7 MS. MCCURDY: It is.

8 MR. SATTERFIELD: But it's got a
9 3 million dollar price on it. I can talk
10 about that without us being involved
11 because that's a public price.

12 MS. MCCURDY: Sure.

13 MR. SATTERFIELD: And for that size
14 property, that is a huge price, huge
15 premium. I don't know if we have ever
16 paid that much before because it would be
17 over \$20,000 an acre if we purchased it at
18 that publicly marketed price.

19 MS. MCCURDY: But we've never done
20 that.

21 MR. SATTERFIELD: So having said that,
22 I'm hoping, Mr. Legislator, that the folks
23 who own that property are not expecting

1 that kind of price from our process,
2 because we have a different kind of
3 process for a different kind of purpose.
4 We can't accept the structures. We can't
5 deal with those kind of things. So before
6 we embark down this path of going to the
7 expense of appraising the property, I just
8 wanted to kind of air that so that
9 everybody's on the same path of
10 understanding of what we're going to do in
11 the future once we get an appraisal back,
12 if we do. So that's the reason I ask
13 those questions.

14 MS. MCCURDY: Yes. And that's a very
15 valid point. It has been discussed with
16 Reba Hix and the representative from the
17 beginning. I can only present what has
18 been presented to me. What has been
19 presented to me that touches on the topic
20 is attached to tab -- the memo 5h. So the
21 family is fully aware, the representative
22 and I have had detailed conversations
23 about that topic, but he can come up and

1 I'll let him confirm. I mean, we have not
2 bound the family. None of us know what
3 the appraisal will show. So they're not
4 bound to accept the appraisal. You're not
5 bound to purchase the property, but there
6 have been detailed and repeated
7 discussions with the representatives of
8 the landowner from an agent standpoint and
9 then the representatives.

10 REPRESENTATIVE ESTES: Commissioner,
11 if I might make a quick -- the letter you
12 have, I think, addresses at least a
13 portion of the original question you had
14 about the understanding of the current
15 owners. They realize those structures
16 have absolutely no value to this Board, so
17 they know that's going to bring it down
18 some as well. And they are very
19 civic-minded people. And I can't speak
20 for what they would accept, but we don't
21 know what they would accept until we get
22 appraisals. So that's all I'm -- I'm
23 grateful. Hopefully, the Board is going

1 to go ahead and move forward with this
2 today so we can get the appraisal process
3 started, and if we're able to buy the
4 property, which is obviously my hope and
5 prayer we would for future generations,
6 that's outstanding. Should we not be able
7 to reach a price, we've done everything we
8 can.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

10 DR. POWERS: So that was my motivation
11 behind the motion is really just to see
12 what it would cost. It's a unique
13 property. It's scored in a couple of
14 categories and, you know, in my mind the
15 first -- what they showed us didn't even
16 enter my mind because it's not what we
17 base our decisions on so -- and I think
18 this is a prime example where just because
19 we get a first appraisal doesn't
20 necessarily mean we'll move to a second
21 appraisal because of the cost issues.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Childers?

23 MR. CHILDERS: There was mention of a

1 remote-operated gate access,
2 ingress/egress. Are we going to limit
3 public access to this piece of property?
4 I thought we owned public access to our
5 properties. And is this going to be a
6 revenue producer?

7 MS. MCCURDY: It will not be a revenue
8 producer. You can -- this Board, as part
9 of the management plan, can decide whether
10 or not they want a gate. We do have
11 gates, not this -- we've never used -- I'm
12 frankly not familiar with this type of
13 gate so we have not used that, but we have
14 certain gates that we do at times limit
15 road access to our properties. This is a
16 little different, but it is to me the same
17 concept. The Board might decide that they
18 don't think that it's an additional
19 security measure that they would want.
20 However, one of the past questions of this
21 Board dealt with security and access and
22 potential vandalism or danger to the
23 feature itself going from an attraction

1 that's manned to an unmanned -- kind of
2 like the Community Hunting Areas Doug
3 talked about, there's really not somebody
4 there. So that would be up to this Board.
5 But that was a question and response from
6 the County Commission of trying to address
7 a concern that the Board had in the past.

8 Yes, sir, Dr. McClintock?

9 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Yeah, I would just
10 add that having visited the property, I
11 think a gate is a great idea. I think
12 you'd have a huge problem if it was open
13 after hours, so to speak. You'd have to
14 have the sheriffs in there all the time.
15 But if it was just open during the
16 daytime, I think that would be very
17 controllable. It's just too prized a
18 location for people to resist going in and
19 putting graffiti on things. It is a
20 beautiful area.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Jones?

22 MR. JONES: My concern with this is
23 even though it's a -- I think it's a

1 really unique feature, I don't know that
2 this Board -- I feel like from a
3 management standpoint, it's 125 acres kind
4 of out in the middle of nowhere. When I
5 say out in the middle of nowhere, out in
6 the middle of nowhere from anything that
7 we own or operate, and so from a
8 management perspective, I have concerns
9 about how we're going to do that. And
10 historically through the years, we've
11 always tended to buy properties -- if they
12 were off in an area we weren't in, they
13 were large properties, and I just -- in my
14 opinion, I have concerns about the sheer
15 size of this one, and the fact that even
16 though it's a really cool feature, I don't
17 know that -- and I think it's going to be
18 real expensive. I think it's something
19 that we need to consider.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Saloom?

21 DR. SALOOM: Just for informational
22 purposes, do we know -- there's a gift
23 shop on this property, and do we know that

1 if this property is sold that gift shop
2 will be retained and stay open, or do we
3 have a discussion about that?

4 MS. MCCURDY: All current structures
5 would be removed. Having been on site,
6 they are -- I'm not saying they are in bad
7 shape, which is why we had concern about
8 the valuation expectations. They're not
9 in bad shape, but I think they present
10 just a potential for security issues on
11 the property, and we would not
12 programmatically be using the structures.
13 That's what led to the demolition. We
14 only do that on other property -- unless
15 the structure serves a particular purpose,
16 we will take that structure down. These
17 are well-built, so it would be an expense.

18 DR. SALOOM: One other additional
19 question. Do we know how many visitors go
20 through that area in, say, a year's time?

21 MS. MCCURDY: I'd have to turn to
22 others. I know that visitation was
23 tracked. I have talked with the owner

1 about that, but I would -- I don't know.

2 Reba, do you have any of that
3 information?

4 MS. HIX: It varies. I'm Reba Hix.
5 I'm with Southeast Commercial, and I am
6 selling the property for the Denton
7 family.

8 There has been a big upheaval
9 since COVID. Of course, people are trying
10 to be outside and outdoors, so they have
11 seen -- I had a list -- well, actually, I
12 may have it -- of the property -- I mean
13 some of the people visiting from places
14 like Jasper, Mississippi; San Diego,
15 California; Florida -- this has just been
16 in this past month -- Moundville, Alabama;
17 Arizona; Birmingham; Gainesville, Florida;
18 Florence, Alabama.

19 DR. SALOOM: What's the total?

20 MS. HIX: I'm trying to look at the
21 total. Well, they don't say how many are
22 in the groups, but there's like ten pages
23 in the month of June of visitors.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you. So
2 we had this one on the -- we've had a lot
3 of interest from the community, a lot of
4 representatives made several trips to talk
5 to the Board. Appreciate the County
6 Commissioner being here. And so I do
7 think it's a good point for us to vote
8 either to have -- to move forward with
9 appraisal on this or if there's not
10 interest in the Board, everybody -- I
11 think there's been a great deal of
12 discussion over several meetings well over
13 a year on this particular property. So
14 thank you, Dr. Powers, for making the
15 motion.

16 I'd like to call the question now
17 and let's vote on a first appraisal for
18 the Natural Bridge property. All those in
19 favor please say aye.

20 All opposed say no.

21 Let's do it by a show of hands.
22 All those in favor please raise your hand.

23 MS. MCCURDY: I see six.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All those in
2 favor raise your hand.

3 MS. MCCURDY: Up high in favor.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: One, two,
5 three, four, five, six.

6 And all those opposed? All those
7 opposed please raise your hand. One, two
8 three, four opposed.

9 All right. The motion fails. We
10 have to have nine affirmative votes to
11 move forward.

12 MS. MCCURDY: And for the public's
13 benefit, that's regardless of the number
14 in attendance. It is a requirement for
15 action to acquire a property to have a
16 three-fifths vote. So it takes nine --

17 MR. SATTERFIELD: Mr. Chairman, before
18 we leave this, is there any possibility at
19 all of this property being considered for
20 or taken into the State Parks system? I
21 think if there was a possibility for that
22 where the State would now operate it, even
23 though it's a small piece of property --

1 I've been to natural bridge formations in
2 other states where they are small pieces,
3 but they still are part of the State Parks
4 system. If you brought it in the State
5 Parks system, I think that could solve a
6 lot of the problems some of us are having
7 with this piece of property because of
8 other issues like -- as we talked about,
9 liability, vandalism, security, all of
10 those kind of things that we're depending
11 on this community to provide. Even though
12 I take it in good faith that they will do
13 their job, it's still going to be a
14 difficult property to protect and manage,
15 and that's one thing you want to be sure
16 if we -- if anybody purchases it that it
17 doesn't get desecrated because it's too
18 valuable for that. So that's the reason
19 I'm asking my question. That's the reason
20 I voted no.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I will speak on
22 behalf of Alabama State Parks as
23 Commissioner of Conservation, we had

1 considered this early on when this was
2 presented and that was not a business
3 decision for our State Parks. It would
4 not be a good business decision for us to
5 be able to acquire it and maintain it
6 long-term.

7 Thank you.

8 Any other discussion?

9 MR. CHILDERS: I just think it's a
10 reflection on the state to not be able to
11 preserve the largest natural bridge east
12 of the Rocky Mountains as some kind of
13 heritage or something for the State of
14 Alabama for the Southeast.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

16 MR. DARNALL: I'd like to make a
17 motion for first appraisal for the
18 Riverton CHA-Hurd Hollow Addition
19 property.

20 MR. SATTERFIELD: Sorry?

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion
22 is for a first appraisal for the Riverton
23 CHA-Hurd Hollow Addition. Is there a

1 second?

2 MS. MCCURDY: Mr. Satterfield, did you
3 have a question?

4 MR. SATTERFIELD: No. I just was not
5 sure I heard the nomination.

6 I'll second it.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
8 Mr. Satterfield.

9 Any discussion or questions on
10 that?

11 All those in favor of a first
12 appraisal on the Riverton CHA-Hurd Hollow
13 Addition please say aye.

14 Any opposed?

15 None opposed. The motion carries.

16 MR. OATES: Mr. Chairman?

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Oates?

18 MR. OATES: I'd like to ask that the
19 Little River Forest-Lomax Branch
20 Addition -- I guess Patti had indicated
21 it's under negotiations with Freshwater
22 Fisheries?

23 MS. MCCURDY: Let me -- yes. I'll let

1 Doug come up and speak on that. The
2 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division
3 has been in direct contact with the
4 landowner working toward closing it with
5 their own funds, but let me have Doug give
6 you a more particular update.

7 MR. DEATON: So we've negotiated a
8 price, and we're at the point now to move
9 towards closing as far as our grant
10 application initially closed sometime
11 after October 1. So there's no reason for
12 us to --

13 MR. OATES: So that's a moot point for
14 us?

15 MR. DEATON: Correct.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

17 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Yeah. Patti, I have
18 a question for you. Is there any
19 disadvantage to our doing first appraisal
20 on the Weeks Bay-Marney Addition in terms
21 of finding alternate sources of revenue to
22 make that purchase?

23 MS. MCCURDY: I wouldn't call it a

1 disadvantage other than if it's -- if we
2 get the appraisal now and it takes more
3 than 12 months to get to closing, you
4 have, you know, an out-of-date appraisal.
5 I think we can pursue the opportunities we
6 want to pursue in the moment without
7 having to have that appraisal in hand. We
8 have enough knowledge in the area to make
9 a good faith estimate on that for grant
10 application purposes. There's no
11 disadvantage other than I will just
12 caution that it might be an appraisal
13 expense now that has to be repeated
14 depending on the timing of the grant funds
15 and getting to the closing table.

16 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Then I'll hold on
17 making that.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. JONES: Mr. Chairman?

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Jones?

21 MR. JONES: I'd like to make a motion
22 for the staff to proceed with the second
23 appraisal and purchase of Autauga

1 WMA-County Road 112 Addition nomination
2 contingent upon the Wildlife and
3 Freshwater Fisheries Division providing
4 funds for its acquisition of acreage
5 equaling approximately 75 percent of the
6 total appraised value for this nomination.

7 MR. DARNALL: I'll make a second.

8 MS. MCCURDY: That is Tab a page 2.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion
10 is for a second appraisal and move to
11 purchase on the Autauga
12 WMA-County Road 112 Addition with the
13 stipulation that the Wildlife and
14 Freshwater Fisheries Division provide
15 approximately 75 percent of the cost.

16 Any discussion on that?

17 Mr. Satterfield?

18 MR. SATTERFIELD: Mr. Chairman, I
19 would like to see the second appraisal,
20 but I am concerned about committing to
21 moving on to the purchase without seeing
22 that second appraisal. We have a process.
23 We discussed that in executive committee.

1 We know how that works. I would much
2 rather see a motion to say proceed to the
3 second appraisal and then see how that
4 results and compares to the first
5 appraisal so we can see what we're really
6 dealing with in potential price and then
7 move on to purchase. I don't -- unless
8 there's some time frame issue that
9 requires us to include in the motion
10 purchase today, I'd rather see -- take
11 another -- have the opportunity to have
12 another crack at that apple on the
13 appraisal price before we move to
14 purchase. That's my only comment on this
15 particular motion the way it's worded.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So would you
17 like to make a substitute motion or
18 move --

19 MR. SATTERFIELD: I would move to
20 first appraisal without moving to
21 purchase -- however -- I mean second --
22 move to second appraisal but not include
23 in that motion the purchase -- moving on

1 to purchase until we see the results of
2 that second appraisal, however that needs
3 to be worded.

4 MS. MCCURDY: Then it would be just a
5 motion for a second appraisal, period.
6 That is the motion I would include, you
7 know, motion for second appraisal and come
8 back to the Board -- report back to the
9 Board, or something like that.

10 MR. HOLLOWAY: Mr. Chairman, I second.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I can't
12 remember what we do on substitute motions,
13 so go ahead. You have the point of order.

14 MR. CHILDERS: If there's two motions
15 on the table at the same time, we need to
16 take care of the first one first.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.

18 MR. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I'll be
19 willing to withdraw my motion if
20 Mr. Darnall is willing to withdraw his
21 second.

22 MR. DARNALL: I'll remove the second.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So Mr. Jones

1 has withdrawn his motion and Mr. Darnall
2 has withdrawn his second.

3 So now, Mr. Satterfield, would you
4 like to make a motion?

5 MR. SATTERFIELD: I make a motion we
6 move to second appraisal.

7 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So motioned by
9 Mr. Satterfield and seconded by
10 Mr. Holloway is to move for a second
11 appraisal on the Autauga
12 WMA-County Road 112 Addition and not to
13 move to purchase but just for the
14 appraisal. And we'll have that
15 information at a future meeting.

16 Any questions about the motion? I
17 want to make sure everybody's clear on
18 what we're voting on. Any discussion?

19 All those in favor say aye.

20 Any opposed?

21 None opposed. The motion carries.

22 I think I heard somebody at this
23 end of the table.

1 MR. WRIGHT: Yes, Mr. Commissioner.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

3 MR. WRIGHT: Commissioner, I'd like to
4 make a motion for second appraisal on the
5 Coldwater Mountain-Robinson Addition.

6 It's 43 acres. It will -- it's all
7 landlocked by Forever Wild property. I
8 think it would be a good purchase.

9 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second that.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion
11 by Mr. Wright, and Dr. McClintock seconded
12 that before I could for a second appraisal
13 and move to purchase on the Coldwater
14 Mountain-Robertson Addition. Any
15 questions about that?

16 All those in favor say aye.

17 Any opposed?

18 None opposed. The motion carries.

19 MR. JONES: Mr. Chairman?

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Jones?

21 MR. JONES: I'd like to make a motion
22 for staff to proceed with the second
23 appraisal and purchase of the Autauga

1 WMA-Hart Addition nomination contingent
2 upon the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries
3 Division providing funds for its
4 acquisition of acreage equaling
5 approximately 75 percent of the total
6 appraised value for the nomination.

7 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Who was the
9 second?

10 MR. HOLLOWAY: Holloway.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion
12 is for a second appraisal and move to
13 purchase on the Autauga WMA-Hart Addition,
14 motion made by Mr. Jones and seconded by
15 Mr. Holloway. Any questions on that?
16 Discussion?

17 All those in favor say aye.

18 Any opposed?

19 None opposed. The motion carries.

20 All right. Thank you-all. I see
21 no further hands. We'll move on to other
22 general discussion and miscellaneous
23 reports.

1 I will, as promised, as an update
2 as you will recall at the last meeting, we
3 had discussion about working with the
4 counties to provide a fee or payment to
5 the counties at a figure of 1.60 per acre
6 we voted and passed at the last meeting.
7 We've had discussion with a few of our
8 Board members that were not present at the
9 meeting, particularly Mr. Satterfield, and
10 then others. Our legal staff has looked
11 at the best path forward for us to work
12 with counties, working with our accounting
13 manager, accounting director for the
14 Department of Conservation, and the state
15 system on transferring funds and how it
16 would be best to do that to account for
17 the dollars, how we would transfer that to
18 the counties in the most efficient manner,
19 and the best manner to protect the Board
20 and the Department of Conservation and our
21 fiduciary responsibility with the funds.

22 We have -- just as a point of
23 information for the Board, we will work --

1 we will develop a contract, an agreement,
2 that we will do with each of the counties
3 for what they will -- cooperatively how we
4 will work on these properties that are in
5 their county and how we will transfer the
6 money, whether they'll have to register in
7 our STAARS system and do all that to
8 transfer that. So just letting you know
9 that we'll have a template that we work
10 with with the counties for them to sign
11 and that we'll sign as the -- I'll sign on
12 your behalf as the Chairman of the Forever
13 Wild Board, and then we'll handle
14 everything else that has to be discussed
15 at the meeting. We will have an agreement
16 with each of the counties on what will
17 happen, what we'll do, and what they'll do
18 moving forward. So that was probably a
19 rambling way to say what we've -- how
20 we've handled that administratively, it
21 will be burdensome the first time for us
22 to get this template and agreement
23 together with the counties, but then after

1 that in future years, it should be what I
2 have promised our staff and the
3 legislators that we would do something
4 that would not be administratively
5 burdensome over time and that would be
6 fair to the counties and so on.

7 Any questions about that?

8 MR. CHILDERS: Mr. Chairman?

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Childers?

10 MR. CHILDERS: Will this be a
11 perpetual contract? Will it be a year at
12 a time, or how is the term going to be
13 with the contract with each county?

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Our attorneys
15 will be working that out, but it will not
16 be a year to date. I anticipate it being
17 like most of our contracts where we'll
18 have the ability for one or either of the
19 parties to terminate the contract with a
20 certain amount of notice.

21 MR. CHILDERS: Okay. Thank you.

22 MR. WRIGHT: Mr. Commissioner?

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

1 MR. WRIGHT: What will be the
2 timetable for the first payment?

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: The Board had
4 motioned -- or we agreed at the last
5 meeting that that would be October 1st of
6 this year and it would be based on the
7 acreage that was owned by Forever Wild
8 Land Trust as of August 1st of this year.

9 MR. SATTERFIELD: Mr. Chairman, given
10 the close time frame on that and the short
11 time to begin to develop the template and
12 then to negotiate with the counties to
13 sign those contracts because some counties
14 may or may not want to be part of that --
15 for example, our folks in Shelby County
16 because they would rather have Forever
17 Wild land and benefits of -- economic
18 benefits of Forever Wild land not to worry
19 about the loss of, well, ad valorem tax
20 revenues, and I think that's a very wise
21 decision. I think others of our counties
22 would probably hopefully see that in the
23 same way, because Forever Wild land is for

1 recreational value and for benefit of the
2 nearby citizens and the economic money
3 that it brings in from visitors, I think,
4 in many cases more than offsets the loss
5 of tax revenue, and some of the studies
6 that we've had presented to the Board over
7 the years show that that's the case. And
8 it seems to me that we'll need more time
9 than from now till the first of October to
10 get to the point where -- and I would like
11 for the Board to have some ability to see
12 and have some input into that template. I
13 would suggest that we need to wait
14 until -- delay any payments, any
15 implementation of that time frame until
16 after we get those details worked out,
17 because, as we've discussed, I've done
18 a lot of legal research on this process
19 and that's one of the things we suggested
20 that we thought might work that would pass
21 constitutional muster. But I think
22 there's a lot of details that have to be
23 worked out, and I'd rather take a little

1 more time to do that, some ability to see
2 that product and have input into it, than
3 to rush forward with the arbitrary date
4 deadline that was set in that first
5 motion. So I don't know how we deal with
6 that. I don't know if you need a motion
7 to that effect, but that's my -- as a
8 lawyer, that's my concern about rushing
9 forward with the implementation process.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

11 MR. DARNALL: So, Bill, I understand
12 what you're talking about, but I took it
13 as the dates given in the motion were the
14 cutoff dates, the properties in the system
15 as of August the 1st and the fiscal year
16 starting October 1st. I didn't read that
17 as we were going to start writing checks
18 and that -- and I agree with you, it is
19 a -- although conceptually it's pretty
20 straightforward, it can be pretty complex,
21 and I would hope that we don't have a
22 different contract with each county but
23 it's the same -- you know, so -- but

1 the -- from a budgeting standpoint and
2 from a planning standpoint, properties in
3 the system since August 1st, this will be
4 year starting October 1st, I saw that more
5 as just parameters and not when we
6 actually write checks.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: And that's
8 correct. We don't write any checks
9 October 1st anyway. We don't get paid
10 October 1st in the state, so that is --
11 you are correct. And I have great
12 confidence in our legal section with
13 Charlanna and Juliana and the work that
14 they have already put into this and legal
15 thoughts and working through that with our
16 accounting system on how to put these
17 templates together for the counties.

18 And I agree, we're not planning to
19 have 34 separate, different contracts.
20 We'll work out a template that is --
21 captures all of that and have -- the
22 counties will have to approve it. I'm
23 sure there will be county commission

1 meetings, and it will not -- we won't be
2 writing checks October 1st or making
3 transfers October 1st through our STAARS
4 accounting system.

5 MR. SATTERFIELD: Well, will the
6 template, however it's developed, be
7 presented back to the Board to look at and
8 have the Board members' input into the
9 development of that process?

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Our next
11 meeting is in November.

12 DR. SALOOM: Mr. Chairman?

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Saloom?

14 DR. SALOOM: I would think that that
15 would be a working within the division and
16 your departments and everything. I think
17 it's kind of more micromanaging than
18 anything, so I would not be in favor of
19 having to approve a template that y'all
20 know that will be functional for the
21 division.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

23 DR. POWERS: And I totally agree. I

1 think, you know, that would be -- you
2 know, we don't need to be involved at that
3 level. I mean, if there's ever a change
4 in the rate we compensate them or
5 something like that, we would want to be
6 involved in that discussion, but...

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other
8 discussion on that?

9 Thank you.

10 You want to take it over with
11 Tab 5?

12 MS. MCCURDY: Yes. If the Board will
13 flip to Tab 5, we'll just go into usual
14 miscellaneous matters.

15 If you will -- first off, at
16 Tab 5b, this is the point at each meeting
17 where we identify the nominations that,
18 absent additional Board action, will roll
19 off of either the short list or the
20 appraised nominations list. Again, it
21 does not forever bar a property, but it
22 would require renominations or starting
23 over for a nomination. Without Board

1 action at the next meeting, your packet
2 will not have the following two tracts on
3 the short list: Natural Bridge Park and
4 Saginaw Swamp. Again, those two will roll
5 off the short list without a request from
6 the Board. So if there's nothing
7 additional on that matter -- Mr. Holloway?

8 MR. HOLLOWAY: Mr. Chairman, on the
9 Saginaw Swamp, I'd like for it to remain
10 on the list.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.

12 MS. MCCURDY: Then we'll do that
13 without -- upon Board request, it will
14 remain on the list.

15 Yes, sir?

16 MR. DARNALL: I have a question.
17 Should that not be voted on by the Board,
18 or is that just any single Board member
19 can request that it stay on?

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: It starts over,
21 but that had been -- that's what -- the
22 policy the Board voted on previously was
23 that any one Board member could ask for it

1 to stay and it would start over in the no
2 action count. And then at any time, the
3 Board -- a Board member could make a
4 motion to remove it. You don't have to
5 wait the full, entire time for it to get
6 to five again. The Board -- you could
7 make a motion to remove it at a future
8 meeting, and we could do that.

9 Yes, sir?

10 MR. DARNALL: So it goes back to the
11 beginning count of zero?

12 MS. MCCURDY: That's correct. Unless
13 you specify something different. But what
14 has been requested is for it to go back on
15 the list. But, yes, a vote of the
16 Board -- you know, full vote could remove
17 it from the list at any time.

18 Dr. Powers?

19 DR. POWERS: The last meeting, I was
20 the one that asked for Natural Bridge to
21 go on one more time so we could send the
22 county manager and everybody the message
23 that basically this is it, all that, but I

1 thought it was only just one more time I
2 could ask. I mean, I was --

3 MS. MCCURDY: You did specify --

4 DR. POWERS: I had specified just one
5 more term.

6 MS. MCCURDY: You would like to change
7 that today?

8 DR. POWERS: No, no.

9 MS. MCCURDY: All right. So absent
10 further discussion, the Saginaw Swamp will
11 be renewed. Again, that is open to
12 further vote action at a different time in
13 the future. That was just a way of sort
14 of cleaning up each meeting what we could
15 from the list.

16 MR. JONES: Can we vote on that now?

17 MS. MCCURDY: Absolutely. With a
18 motion, sure. And I would just say a
19 motion to remove from the short list. You
20 would need the nine vote.

21 MR. SATTERFIELD: Mr. Chairman, I make
22 the motion that we remove Saginaw Swamp
23 from the short list.

1 MR. JONES: Second.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion
3 is that we remove the Saginaw Swamp from
4 the short list of nominations. That
5 motion was made by Mr. Satterfield;
6 seconded by Mr. Jones.

7 MR. SATTERFIELD: And I'd like to
8 speak to my motion.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir,
10 please do.

11 MR. SATTERFIELD: We've been through
12 this Saginaw Swamp it seems for like five
13 or six years I've served on this Board.
14 It's come up before twice for a vote, we
15 move to an appraisal -- first appraisal,
16 and it was defeated in the decisive votes
17 both times. I don't --

18 Nothing has changed. The local
19 community there around the swamp has not
20 come forward with any plan to propose to
21 solve the problems with that property.
22 Shelby County has said they're willing to
23 do it, but at one time, Shelby County had

1 higher priorities, which we have really
2 been working with, like the Belcher
3 property and property that was voted on
4 today and others. This is such a low
5 priority piece of property that doesn't
6 suit, in my mind, being part of the
7 Forever Wild holdings, and that's the
8 reason I'm now urging that we remove it
9 from the list and not have to deal with it
10 anymore because it just is -- it seems to
11 me it's not a suitable Forever Wild
12 property.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other
15 discussion on that?

16 All those in favor of removing the
17 Saginaw Swamp from the short list please
18 say aye.

19 Any opposed?

20 MR. HOLLOWAY: Opposed.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: One opposed.
22 The motion carries.

23 MS. MCCURDY: Okay. If the Board

1 would now look at Tab 5c. As the Board
2 likely recalls, within the first year of
3 acquiring a property, we are required to
4 submit a management plan. Obviously, it's
5 early in the tract's life, but it is to go
6 ahead and set sort of a plan for ongoing
7 management. We try to bring these to the
8 Board a meeting in advance in case there
9 are questions or perhaps we don't have a
10 quorum or we need to make revisions,
11 whatever.

12 At this meeting, there are two
13 tracts that it's time to address
14 management plans for, one is the Red Hills
15 Complex-Parris Trust Addition in
16 Monroe County. Being an addition in
17 contiguous acreage, we recommend just
18 amending the current Red Hills Complex
19 Management Plan to specifically include
20 that tract. The second tract is the Oak
21 Mountain State Park-Belcher Addition.
22 This is, although adjacent to Oak Mountain
23 State Park, a new acquisition for this

1 program; and, therefore, we have
2 established a separate management plan in
3 conjunction with the State Parks Division.
4 And I failed to mention the Wildlife and
5 Freshwater Fisheries Division. We worked
6 with them on the Red Hills tract. But if
7 the Board has no questions or recommended,
8 suggested, requested revisions, I will
9 need a motion from the Board to approve
10 those two management plans.

11 Dr. Powers?

12 DR. POWERS: I'd like to make a motion
13 the Board approves the State Lands
14 Division proceeding with the inclusion of
15 the Red Hills Complex-Parris Trust
16 Addition into an existing management plan
17 and development of a new management plan
18 for the Oak Mountain State Park-Belcher
19 Tract Addition as set forth in the
20 memorandum dated August 4, 2022.

21 MR. DARNALL: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
23 Mr. Darnall.

1 All those in favor say aye.

2 Any opposed?

3 None opposed. The motion carries.

4 MS. MCCURDY: If the Board will now
5 look at Tab 5d. I am not going to go
6 through 5d, but what this is is annually
7 at this meeting, the August meeting, we
8 present activity reports from staff kind
9 of describing some of what they did over
10 the last year. It's obviously not the
11 full fiscal year yet ending September 30,
12 but we use this meeting to kind of give
13 you a -- reflect on what the staff has
14 worked on. It's divided. Although there
15 are -- what's represented here is the
16 State Lands Division staff. We have great
17 assistance and cooperation from Forever
18 Wild and State Parks, but this is sort of
19 my staff's report to you. And the
20 statistics that Commissioner went through
21 earlier are, you know, the result of that
22 hard work, and there's a lot of
23 administrative work that goes on that's,

1 you know, obviously not reflected in
2 that -- in those statistics. But it also
3 shows not only how much work has been
4 done, both from the Natural Heritage
5 Section and the database and the
6 information that we obtain and then
7 maintain, the administrative processing of
8 information for this Board, which is
9 extensive, it details some of the what
10 I'll call our Recreation Section. And,
11 again, this is all within -- we all work
12 together. It's all State Lands, but kind
13 of outlines the breakdown of the trails,
14 where they are, where we maintain them.
15 Some of the work that sounds routine, it
16 is routine, replacing, you know, foot
17 bridges or adding, you know, access
18 points. Whatever we've done, it's been
19 a lot of work.

20 And we do highlight separately two
21 of our facilities, the Wehle Land
22 Conservation Center and the Forever Wild
23 Field Trail Area. And that's an

1 especially unique one, I think. I think
2 that the -- the former cattle ranch in
3 Hale County, that was previously a
4 Department of Corrections property, and I
5 think that property really demonstrates
6 the efforts that we have to accomplish
7 multi-use management. We have 30 Dog
8 events, I believe, various events over the
9 last year. We have hosted Autobahn
10 events. We have had numerous youth hunts.
11 I'm very proud of the programs we have
12 that fosters youth hunting, dove and deer
13 as an example. Just a lot of different
14 activities, including some work on the
15 native grasses there. So it really runs
16 the spectrum of activities. It is a
17 unique property.

18 We have in the field every day in
19 the heat and the elements and interacting
20 with the public sometimes coming up on
21 very dangerous situations, we have our
22 Stewardship section, which is really our
23 enforcement section of law enforcement,

1 who really balance both the resource
2 protection, be it the timber or doing
3 physical work on the property, and, again,
4 just general security.

5 We also run through the forest
6 management activities over the last year.
7 We have had an up and down year. I think
8 with the market, we've had some bid
9 notices not have any bidders come back,
10 so -- but we have done a lot of good
11 things and had some good sales, so that's
12 detailed. So I would just encourage y'all
13 to take the time -- I know we're running
14 long, so I'm not going to. But it's a lot
15 of work. I stand up and talk, but it's
16 the staff who does everything and, again,
17 across the divisions. But unless there
18 are any questions, I will move on to the
19 next tab.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Jones?

21 MR. JONES: First of all, it's great
22 work, but I noticed in some of this y'all
23 are burning in the month of April. Can we

1 move that to like February? Because you
2 might potentially be damaging turkeys'
3 nests because that's a crucial time of
4 year for turkeys to be running fire
5 through a system like that. That's not
6 ideal.

7 MS. MCCURDY: Sure. And I'll be happy
8 to sit down and have our staff, if you
9 don't mind, taking some time to run
10 through the thought process and the
11 planning for when those did take place and
12 the areas in which they did. I would
13 certainly appreciate and welcome that
14 interaction. We, I believe, were taking
15 into account all factors, but there are a
16 lot of members of this Board that have a
17 lot of expertise both as private
18 landowners but also in your careers. And
19 so, yes, I would appreciate any
20 interaction one on one with our staff, our
21 Stewardship staff. So, yes, please bring
22 forward -- I'll arrange that and we'll run
23 through it.

1 MR. JONES: Thank you.

2 MS. MCCURDY: Any other comments or
3 questions?

4 Okay. The next item -- and
5 actually this will be the last thing that
6 we have to cover -- is the Forestry
7 Management Activity approval request.
8 That's Tab 5e.

9 Now, obviously, it's somewhat
10 difficult to anticipate what the timber
11 activities will be, but we do our best to
12 identify tracts that have -- for example,
13 actually have contracts in place where the
14 thinning or the cut has not been
15 completed. So I've tried to include those
16 in this memo, so we divide them in
17 thinning activities at various stages, but
18 the various thinning activities, what we
19 consider under our final harvest category.
20 We also note for the Board each time this
21 year where we anticipate needing to take
22 reforestation actions specifically. We
23 have that included. We're also -- you

1 know, we always do more flexibility if we
2 see an issue with the timber health, we
3 always have different market conditions,
4 we have hurricanes, tornadoes, just what
5 everybody else deals with, so there's some
6 flexibility. But I'll take any questions,
7 but we did include a motion. And I'm not
8 going to run through all the properties,
9 but you've got them in Tab 5e. So I'll
10 give you a second and let me know if you
11 have any questions. If not, we would like
12 a motion. We do consider this a specific
13 activity we do ask, you know, for Board
14 approval on.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Do I have a
16 motion from the Board to approve the
17 forest management activity?

18 DR. SALOOM: So moved.

19 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Moved by
21 Dr. Saloom; seconded by Dr. McClintock.

22 All right. Any questions on that?

23 All those in favor say aye.

1 Any opposed?

2 None opposed. Thank you.

3 The next order of business is to
4 approve the minutes from the May 5th Board
5 meeting. Are there any additions or
6 corrections to the minutes?

7 MR. OATES: Motion to approve.

8 DR. POWERS: Second.

9 MR. OATES: Motion by Mr. Oates;
10 second by Dr. Powers to approve the
11 minutes.

12 All those in favor say aye.

13 Any opposed?

14 None opposed.

15 The next meeting will be November
16 the 3rd at the Mecca of college football
17 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. I realize that
18 not all you find that as the Mecca.
19 However, we will be meeting there on
20 November the 3rd.

21 MS. MCCURDY: I'll be in a good mood.

22 MR. DARNALL: Mr. Chairman?

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir?

1 MR. DARNALL: I'd like to follow that
2 by saying War Eagle.

3 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I second that.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I will say
5 before we adjourn, I would like to thank
6 everybody for their work today. I think
7 that we -- you know, we've went for
8 several meetings with certain -- for
9 different reasons without much action on
10 property, but today either put in motion
11 for a second appraisal or a first
12 appraisal was put in the pipeline well
13 over 5500, almost 6,000 acres of property
14 in the state of Alabama that could be set
15 aside for the perpetual use of our
16 citizens. And thank you-all for your work
17 today.

18 I think there's somebody -- yes,
19 sir?

20 MR. WRIGHT: Can I wear my Auburn hat
21 to the next meeting?

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir.

23 So is there a motion to adjourn?

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MR. JONES: So moved.

CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All those in
favor say aye.

We are adjourned.

Thank you.

(Proceedings concluded at
12:19 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF ALABAMA

AUTAUGA COUNTY

I, Stacey L. Johnson, Certified Court Reporter and Commissioner for the State of Alabama at Large, hereby certify that on August 4, 2022, I reported the proceedings in the matter of the foregoing cause, and that pages 3 through 114 contain a true and accurate transcription of the aforementioned proceedings.

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

This the 12th day of October, 2022.

/s/Stacey L. Johnson
STACEY L. JOHNSON, CCR
Commissioner for the
State of Alabama at Large
CCR 386, Expires 9/30/2022
COMMISSION EXPIRES: 6/22/2023