

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23

MINUTES OF THE  
FOREVER WILD LAND TRUST BOARD MEETING  
COASTAL ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE-ATMORE CAMPUS  
CONFERENCE AND EDUCATION CENTER  
6574 ALABAMA HIGHWAY 21  
ATMORE, ALABAMA

AUGUST 7, 2025  
10:00 a.m.

\*\*\*\*\*  
ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT  
\*\*\*\*\*

Court Reporter, Jamie McCracken, ACCR #451

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23

Mr. Christopher M. Blankenship

Mr. James "Mickey" Childers

Mr. Jake Harper

Mr. Harris

Dr. Brian R. Keener

Dr. James McClintock

Dr. A. M. "Jay" Neumann, Junior

Mr. Rick Oates

Mr. Jimmy Parnell

Dr. Sean Powers

Ms. Karen Stanley

Mr. Mark Tuggle

Dr. John Valentine

I N D E X

1

2 Board meeting called to order.....4

3 Roll call.....4

4 Greetings from Mr. Lanier.....6

5 Public speakers.....11

6 Break into Executive Session.....52

7 Board meeting resumed.....52

8 Reports from Ms. McCurdy.....54

9 General discussion.....67

10 Miscellaneous reports.....79

11 Recognized Dr. Powers.....118

12 Board meeting adjourned.....121

13 Court Reporter Certificate.....122

\*\*\*\*\*

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

1 (WHEREUPON, the Forever Wild Land  
2 Trust Board meeting was called to  
3 order and proceedings commenced at  
4 10:00 a.m.)

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Good  
6 morning. Welcome to the August 7th  
7 Forever Wild Board meeting. I'm going  
8 to call the roll, establish a quorum.  
9 As your name is called, please speak so  
10 I can mark you down.

11 Christopher Blankenship, here.

12 Mr. Childers.

13 MR. CHILDERS: Here.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Zach  
15 Conlon.

16 (No response.)

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Harper.

18 MR. HARPER: Here.

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Harris.

20 MR. HARRIS: Here.

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Keener.

22 DR. KEENER: Here.

23 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

1 McClintock.

2 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Here.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

4 Neumann.

5 DR. NEUMANN: Here.

6 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Oates.

7 MR. OATES: Here.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers.

9 DR. POWERS: Here.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Ms.

11 Stanley.

12 (No response.)

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Tuggle.

14 MR. TUGGLE: Here.

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

16 Valentine.

17 DR. VALENTINE: Here.

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

19 Parnell.

20 MR. PARNELL: Here.

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Howell.

22 (No response.)

23 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: We do have

1 a quorum.

2 I would like to, at this time --  
3 there he is -- recognize David Lanier,  
4 of Coastal Alabama Community College, to  
5 come up and say a few words of welcome;  
6 this is their facility. Thank you so  
7 much for letting us be here. This is a  
8 very nice -- very nice place.

9 MR. LANIER: Thank you so much. Do I  
10 need a microphone? Can you hear me?  
11 I'm going to stand over here 'cause I  
12 don't want to have my back to the Board  
13 and everything. Welcome to Coastal  
14 Alabama Community College, the Atmore  
15 location. We are the third largest  
16 community college in the State of  
17 Alabama for enrollment. We're the  
18 largest community college, as far as  
19 land mass goes. If you know where  
20 Gilbertown is -- and if you don't,  
21 that's fine, when I first got hired, I  
22 didn't know where it was at either --  
23 but if you go to Thomasville, about an

1 hour, that is our northern most campus;  
2 and then if you go down south to Gulf  
3 Shores, that is our southern most  
4 campus.

5 I started out my career when I  
6 graduated from Auburn University. I  
7 joined the military. I was a classroom  
8 teacher and I was agriculture science,  
9 back then we called them ag' teachers.  
10 And so I was a big advocate when they  
11 started Forever Wild, so I want to thank  
12 you for that.

13 When I taught summer education  
14 courses and everything like that, I  
15 always told them, I think it's wonderful  
16 what you've done for the State of  
17 Alabama, so, you know, thank you for  
18 that.

19 Now, like I said, welcome to the  
20 Atmore Campus. I want to put a little  
21 plug in for dual enrollment. So, if you  
22 have a son or daughter or a grandson,  
23 granddaughter, nephew, niece, relative,

1 friend, if they're in grades ten through  
2 twelve, they can come to college  
3 absolutely free. It is free for them.  
4 We have consistently, this past May,  
5 awarded seniors their Associate's Degree  
6 before they got their high school  
7 diploma and it's cost the parents zero.  
8 Our Governor, Kay Ivey, she started out  
9 as a classroom teacher in Wilcox County  
10 and she's been a huge proponent for dual  
11 enrollment. And it has been  
12 extraordinary what she's done for the --  
13 for the State. So, I encourage you to  
14 -- you know, hopefully it's through  
15 Coastal but, if not, a community college  
16 across the State of Alabama because it  
17 is absolutely free.

18 We have the -- Coastal has the  
19 number one nursing program in the State  
20 of Alabama.

21 We have a lot of academic and  
22 technical programs here. And these  
23 businesses reach out to us, constantly,

1           for our -- like our machine tooling,  
2           we've got Industry Partners coming in.  
3           We've got airbrush. We have an aviation  
4           program. So they're -- they're reaching  
5           out and they want these -- they want  
6           these students who have gotten their  
7           Associate's or gotten their skills. And  
8           while it's free, while it's free, you  
9           can't beat it. Once they graduate, you  
10          know, if they don't have a scholarship,  
11          it's gonna come out of mom and dad's  
12          pocket.

13                 But, once again, welcome here. If  
14          you need me during your meeting or  
15          whatever like that, I gave my  
16          information contact to Ms. Atchison  
17          (phonetic), she can get in touch with  
18          me. Like I said, this is our newest  
19          building on campus, we are excited. You  
20          are welcome to use it any time, as best  
21          you want to.

22                 And we have another  
23          three-million-dollar renovation that's

1 going on in another building, so if you  
2 hear some beeping and stuff, that's just  
3 the construction equipment running. But  
4 we're adding sciences and biology, in  
5 addition to our nursing lab.

6 But, once again, welcome to Coastal  
7 Alabama Community College. I am  
8 thrilled to have you here. And thank  
9 you and I hope you enjoy your meeting.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.  
11 Thank you for that information, that's  
12 good to know about the dual enrollment.  
13 I wish I would have known that before I  
14 paid for my kids' tuition, that would  
15 have been great.

16 So we'll start the meeting with our  
17 public comment. We do have quite a few  
18 speakers today so just remember there's  
19 a three-minute time limit. You'll see  
20 the timer there on the stand. Will you  
21 please come to the microphone when I  
22 call your name. Give me just a minute  
23 for the -- I will mention to the Board

1 members where the property is in the  
2 book that you're going to speak on so  
3 they'll have a chance to find it and  
4 then I'll give you, kind of, the go  
5 ahead to speak. Please speak into the  
6 microphone because we do have a court  
7 reporter that's taking down the  
8 information to make sure she is able to  
9 hear well. And if she can't, she'll  
10 speak up and tell you to hold that  
11 microphone a little bit closer or slow  
12 down or whatever it is that she needs to  
13 be able to get the minutes for the  
14 meeting.

15 So the first speaker is Ms. Rusha  
16 Smith to speak on the Sipsey Kellytown  
17 Tract. It's tab 4-B, page 21; 4-B, page  
18 21. And I think you also received a  
19 packet.

20 MS. MCCURDY: It's the green folder  
21 and that would be A and B, a bound  
22 binder in your green folder that was  
23 provided.

1 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Ms. Smith.

2 MS. SMITH: Commissioner Blankenship  
3 and other Forever Wild Board members,  
4 good morning. Again, my name is Rusha  
5 Smith and I'm the Executive Director of  
6 Freshwater Land Trust. And we have  
7 nominated a property that is owned by  
8 the Westervelt Company and it is known  
9 as the Sipsev River Swamp Kellytown  
10 Addition in Tuscaloosa County. And I  
11 will briefly give an introduction and  
12 then Jonathan Lowery, who's the Vice  
13 President of Sustainability and  
14 Government Relations from Westervelt,  
15 will also provide some specifics about  
16 this property nomination.

17 Thank you for letting us have the  
18 opportunity to speak to you this  
19 morning.

20 And, also, thank you to the Coastal  
21 Alabama Community College for making  
22 their facility available.

23 So, very briefly, I'm gonna tell you

1           who we are and why we're here and why we  
2           think this property is important to  
3           protect and why we felt the need to  
4           nominate it.

5                     Freshwater Land Trust is a  
6           non-advocacy nonprofit based in  
7           Birmingham. We've been around for  
8           almost 30 years. And our mission is to  
9           conserve and steward environmentally  
10          significant property throughout Central  
11          Alabama, which includes Tuscaloosa  
12          County.

13                    To date, we have protected over  
14          12,000 acres in 14 counties throughout  
15          Central Alabama. And we, also, as an  
16          aside, built out what is known as the  
17          Red Rock Trail System in Jefferson  
18          County.

19                    Our focus, particularly in  
20          conservation, is on the importance of  
21          water quality and the protection of  
22          watersheds, with an emphasis on  
23          strategic habitat units, or SHUs, like

1 the Sipse. We have had a longstanding  
2 partnership with Westervelt. In fact,  
3 we have nine conversation easements on  
4 Westervelt mitigation banks that curves  
5 almost 3,500 acres, including an  
6 existing 840-acre mitigation bank, which  
7 is contiguous to this property, and  
8 Jonathan will talk a little bit more  
9 about that.

10 Why we think this property's  
11 important: It's a  
12 thousand-and-fifty-two acres that fills  
13 a gap between existing Forever Wild  
14 property that already is over 7,000  
15 acres, that's been protected by Forever  
16 Wild, known as the Sipse Complex. It  
17 provides, like I said, a continuous  
18 access to existing parcels. It helps  
19 conserve the Sipse. And it provides  
20 additional access to Spurline Road,  
21 which is a public road. It will help  
22 with all of the activities that already  
23 go on, on this property.

1           And then I would also mention that  
2           we've included five letters of support  
3           in this packet. And I do think, while  
4           we're just here about this, these simple  
5           transactions today, we may be coming  
6           back to you because there are additional  
7           future opportunities for conservation  
8           along the Sipsev and we think this is a  
9           great way to start those efforts.

10           Thank you.

11           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
12           Rusha.

13           The next speaker is Jonathan Lowery  
14           on that same tract.

15           MR. LOWERY: Good morning,  
16           Commissioner and Forever Wild Board. I  
17           appreciate the opportunity to be here  
18           talking about this tract nomination and  
19           representing the Westervelt Company.  
20           And I also would like to thank the  
21           nominating entity, Forever -- Freshwater  
22           Land Trust, for working with Westervelt  
23           through this process.

1           Just a little, quick context about  
2           Westervelt Company just to let you know  
3           who we are and what we're about. We've  
4           been around a long time, founded in  
5           1884, still privately held under our  
6           fifth generation of family leadership.  
7           We've been headquartered in Tuscaloosa  
8           for nearly 1-- years. We're probably  
9           one of the largest private landowners in  
10          the State. We currently have about  
11          650,000 acres of dual certified,  
12          sustainably managed, working forest in  
13          six Southern states; and there's just  
14          over 400,000 acres that are in Alabama.  
15          Own and operate two saw mills producing  
16          five to six-hundred-million board feet  
17          sustainably sourced for all the Southern  
18          Yellow Pine products. And, as Rusha  
19          mentioned, we also have ecological  
20          services business that does -- provides  
21          compensatory mitigation credits.

22                 So, in a nutshell, we -- we're proud  
23                 to be stewards of the lands, what we

1           consider ourselves. We're proud to be a  
2           big part of the landscape in Alabama.

3           So the tract here, again, we're here  
4           to talk about is the Kellytown Tract we  
5           call it, just over a thousand acres  
6           worth of forest land in Tuscaloosa  
7           County, within the Sipsey River's  
8           Strategic Habitat Unit. Currently the  
9           tract is about -- it's a mixture of  
10          planted pine, various stages, about 63  
11          percent of the area is that; balances of  
12          mixed-bottom and hardwood and mixed  
13          hardwood pine strands, some of which are  
14          in streamside nature zones. It really  
15          does fit like a glove with the existing  
16          Sipsey River Complex, South Zone. And,  
17          if added, would amount to approximately  
18          30 percent increase to that, that south  
19          zone.

20          Westervelt's owned this tract for  
21          nearly 50 years. And we've managed it  
22          sustainably for timber production and  
23          recreational purposes during that time.

1           We're excited to be here. We're excited  
2           about this opportunity to expand the  
3           Forever Wild system and, really, open  
4           the door for, potentially, some  
5           additional conservation measures down  
6           the Sipsey.

7           The Forever Wild project on the  
8           Sipsey has been hugely successful and,  
9           really, a great resource for the public  
10          and for -- for conservation. And we --  
11          we see this opportunity as adding to  
12          that, in addition to our mitigation  
13          planning downstream and across. And,  
14          hopefully, there will be some other  
15          opportunities for some conservation  
16          easements we're looking at to conserve  
17          more of this special watershed.

18          So, thanks again for your time. I  
19          appreciate the opportunity. And I'll  
20          entertain any questions.

21          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
22          questions?

23                           (No response.)

1           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
2           sir.

3           DR. MCCLINTOCK: I have a quick  
4           question. 63 percent of pine, mixed  
5           pine, is any of it Longleaf?

6           MR. LOWERY: No, it is -- it's all  
7           Loblolly. It's flat and it's -- it's  
8           wet. This is a -- you know, a lot of  
9           it's in the floodplain of the Sipsey, so  
10          not on this tract. Further up, upstream  
11          on another tract of forest where it's in  
12          the hills -- we have some scenic  
13          hills -- we do have Longleaf there,  
14          which is actually adjacent to the Sipsey  
15          North.

16          DR. MCCLINTOCK: Thank you.

17          MR. LOWERY: We can talk about that  
18          too.

19          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
20          sir.

21                 Our next speaker is Mr. Michael  
22                 Currey, to talk about quail?

23                 MR. CURREY: Yeah.

1                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: From  
2                   Seminole, Alabama. I was in Seminole,  
3                   Alabama, yesterday.

4                   MS. MCCURDY: And just a reminder to  
5                   the Board members, be sure, if you  
6                   speak, your mic is on and that you have  
7                   it close to you.

8                   MR. CURREY: Yeah, thanks -- thank  
9                   you, guys. So I -- I'm actually gonna  
10                  speak on an opportunity that -- that  
11                  I've experienced at the (UNINTELLIGIBLE)  
12                  Ranch. Again, it's that main group  
13                  that's out there that are unbelievable.  
14                  I represent a couple of different  
15                  birddog clubs that have utilized that  
16                  space. And we've -- we've had folks  
17                  from all over the country, as far north  
18                  as North Dakota, as far east as  
19                  Pennsylvania, and as far south as Miami,  
20                  as far west as California out there, and  
21                  they love it. It's awesome. You guys  
22                  made a great investment in that  
23                  particular property.

1           The opportunity to let us speak to  
2           you in this (UNINTELLIGIBLE) public  
3           forum but I'm here anyway, is, there  
4           seems to be a disconnect with the  
5           property use and stakeholders. And from  
6           the -- I think it's from the area that  
7           there's ample opportunity to -- we have  
8           a small group activity, something that  
9           can combine the public to the land  
10          and -- you know, and help -- not help  
11          but have the land where we can actually  
12          use it. The Perdido Tract that's right  
13          down the road here -- I'm sorry -- or  
14          the Lillian Tract you guys just  
15          purchased on the Red River's a great  
16          example. You can't -- There's no,  
17          really, rules, nothing exists yet. And  
18          that puts people like myself, with my  
19          dogs out there, at peril with deer  
20          hunters or something else that may be  
21          going on that I'm not aware of. Or it  
22          could be I'm breaking the law but I  
23          don't know I'm breaking the law. So, if

1           there's any opportunity, you know,  
2           published online or off-line, something  
3           we can get with the Board or what have  
4           you, that we can have a small group  
5           activity of stakeholders to encourage  
6           rule changes, opportunities for events,  
7           bring the public in to these different  
8           new awesome properties that you have  
9           invested in, we can invest back with  
10          bringing people from around the country,  
11          bringing people across state lines,  
12          bringing out of town -- all of those  
13          from out-of-state, into our state and  
14          into these small, economically depressed  
15          communities. I think it's also -- is  
16          advantageous.

17                 That's all I have left. I have a  
18                 minute and six seconds if anyone has any  
19                 questions on that.

20                 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I will say  
21                 that I'll introduce you to Patti  
22                 McCurdy, the Lands Director, who their  
23                 division oversees the Forever Wild Field

1 Trial Area in the Lillian Swamp.

2 If there is somebody you can put him  
3 in touch with to give his input on,  
4 access some ideas that they have?

5 MS. MCCURDY: Yes. Sure. And you can  
6 talk with me and my two enforcement,  
7 Jeremy Doss, about whatever specific  
8 activities --

9 MR. CURREY: You guys are awesome;  
10 however, the new tracts over -- not the  
11 Lillian Swamp though, the tract that's  
12 between 90 and on the Perdido River.  
13 And -- And then what's really confusing  
14 is that sometimes Freshwater's  
15 responsible for something; and then  
16 State Lands is responsible for  
17 something; and then someone else is  
18 responsible for something. There's no  
19 cohesion and it's difficult to, kind of,  
20 manage that --

21 MS. MCCURDY: Absolutely. We have all  
22 the -- all divisions are present here  
23 and so we will be happy to talk with you

1           about your ideas that will bring people  
2           to the tract. Okay. Thanks.

3           MR. CURREY: Thank you, guys.

4           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes.

5           The next speakers is Jesslan Wilson  
6           on the Cooper Branch Tract, tab 5-C in  
7           the green folder; tab 5-C. It's 5-C and  
8           then, also, tab 3 is also the tab there,  
9           page 4; tab 3, page 4, and then 5-C. I  
10          hope that's not confusing, we have a  
11          couple of places. There is some  
12          supplemental information provided.

13          All right. Go ahead.

14          MS. WILSON: Good morning, everyone.  
15          My name is Jesslan Wilson and I'm the  
16          Deputy County Manager for Shelby County.  
17          And, on behalf of the Shelby County  
18          Commission, I wanted to express our  
19          support for the nomination of the Cooper  
20          Branch Tract. This is a beautiful piece  
21          of property directly located south of  
22          Oak Mountain State Park. In fact,  
23          potentially where the residential

1 structure is on the property, you can  
2 see King's Chair from Oak Mountain State  
3 Park. So it's on the ridge directly  
4 south of where the King's Chair lookout  
5 is.

6 The County Commission is excited and  
7 supports this nomination, and not only  
8 as an opportunity for our partner,  
9 Shelby County, but really an asset to  
10 our State. We really think that this  
11 would be an asset to our State. And to  
12 support that commitment, the County  
13 Commission has committed to purchasing  
14 62 acres, that outline in green on the  
15 map there, that would include the  
16 residential structure that I talked  
17 about previously, as well as the road  
18 leading to the public access of the  
19 property.

20 And on this property, the County  
21 would utilize that residential structure  
22 as a caretaker house so that we could  
23 directly have a presence within the park

1 day one that it opens, as well as  
2 develop parking lots, pavilions, and  
3 restroom facilities, much like the  
4 County did at the Belcher -- at the  
5 Belcher Tract that Forever Wild was  
6 instrumental in getting established at  
7 Oak Mountain State Park. So we are  
8 really excited about this property.  
9 Again, it is beautiful. The sloped  
10 elevation we really think is the highest  
11 and best use for the property.

12 And I'm happy to take any questions.  
13 Thank you so much for your time.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes, ma'am.

15 MS. MCCURDY: I was just going to  
16 clarify for the Board, the map mentioned  
17 in the green, is the map attached to the  
18 tab 5-C map. So I just wanted to --  
19 that was a new joint proposal that came  
20 to us just recently, so that's why that  
21 map is -- the one that she's referencing  
22 is the current.

23 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

1           The next speaker is Jerry Joe Ingram  
2           on the same property, Cooper Branch.

3           MR. INGRAM: Thank you, Commissioner  
4           and Board members. I will not take up  
5           much of your time. Anything I said  
6           would be, pretty much, repetitive of  
7           what Ms. Wilson said.

8           I think one of great things for  
9           Forever Wild, whenever you can leverage  
10          assets, whether it's through the  
11          Division of Wildlife or Freshwater  
12          Fisheries leveraging the  
13          Pittman-Robertson Fund or if you have a  
14          local government entity like this that's  
15          willing to put some hard assets and some  
16          skin in the game, it's just a great way  
17          for this Board to leverage assets. And  
18          it gets your maintenance level down when  
19          you've got a partner like this that's  
20          gonna do all the -- you know, all the  
21          grunt work and, you know, help with  
22          local management in a place like this,  
23          so.

1           You know, I represent the landowner  
2 here on behalf of that, so if y'all have  
3 any questions but I think Ms. Wilson  
4 covered it pretty well.

5           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

6           MR. TUGGLE: Question. Who is the  
7 landowner?

8           MR. INGRAM: Actually, it's private --  
9 a private individual, his name is Donnie  
10 Gravley. He lives in Alabama.

11          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
12 sir.

13          The next speaker is Keith Tassin on  
14 the Dugdown Corridor, Cleburne County  
15 Tract, that's tab 3-B, page 5; 3-B, page  
16 5.

17          Good morning.

18          MR. TASSIN: Good morning. I hope  
19 everyone's doing well. I'm here today  
20 -- Keith Tassin, Deputy State Director  
21 for Nature Conservancy. I spoke on this  
22 tract two meetings ago, it was moved to  
23 first appraisal. Today I'm seeking a

1 second appraisal and purchase motion.  
2 These -- This nomination is five -- five  
3 tracts in one nomination that would  
4 really fill in the gaps of the Dugdown  
5 Corridor -- Dugdown Mountain Corridor  
6 Phase One and Phase Two combinations.  
7 And two meetings ago there was an  
8 overview map that showed all of that;  
9 I'm not sure if you still have all of  
10 that in there. But you can see how this  
11 combination fits and fills in those gaps  
12 as the projects move forward.

13 Any questions?

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
15 questions?

16 (No response.)

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
18 sir.

19 MR. TASSIN: Thank you.

20 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The next  
21 speaker is Mr. Brooks Knapp on the  
22 Double Oak Tract, 4-B, page 9.

23 MS. MCCURDY: And you also have tab

1 8-A from your green folder, that was  
2 some last minute correspondence, and it  
3 will be in your green folder.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Go ahead.

5 MR. KNAPP: I'm Brooks Knapp from  
6 EBSCO Industries. I'm here to represent  
7 the owner of Double Oak Tract. I  
8 appreciate the Forever Wild Land Trust  
9 for considering our nomination. We also  
10 appreciate -- We also appreciate Shelby  
11 County for their willingness to invest  
12 in this Double Oak Tract. It's  
13 approximately 900 acres, give or take,  
14 on Double Oak Mountain. Shelby County's  
15 gonna make a nice investment and  
16 maintenance commitment in the property.  
17 And Jesslan will talk more about that in  
18 a moment.

19 So, any questions?

20 (No response.)

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
22 sir.

23 The next speaker is Ms. Jesslan

1 Wilson to speak on this tract.

2 MS. WILSON: Hello, again. So, this  
3 solo tract is unique to Shelby County  
4 for a couple of reasons. The primary  
5 reason being that it's adjacent --  
6 directly adjacent to an existing park,  
7 Double Oak Park, located between 41 and  
8 43, off Highway 280. And the reason  
9 that this is unique is because of this  
10 location is that on day one -- and given  
11 our great relationship with the  
12 landowner -- this could be open to  
13 residents and visitors. There's already  
14 existing pathways from its previous  
15 uses, as well as potential to expand the  
16 existing trail system there. And  
17 because it's already -- it would be a  
18 part of an already existing park, we  
19 already have existing assets like  
20 pavilion, parking lot, restroom  
21 facilities, trailhead that are already  
22 in use, as well as a caretaker house  
23 that we expect to be finished by the end

1 of this fall. So this would really be  
2 able to expand the park to double its  
3 size, to be an assets to be used by  
4 residents and visitors alike.

5 The County Commission, because they  
6 see this as such a unique opportunity,  
7 has committed to invest 25 percent of  
8 the appraised value of this park as a  
9 financial commitment to the Forever Wild  
10 Board for the purchase of this property.  
11 So I'm happy to answer additional  
12 questions.

13 Yes, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers.

15 DR. POWERS: So how much traffic does  
16 the existing park get?

17 MS. WILSON: That's a great question.  
18 And, unfortunately, I don't have an  
19 exact number but it is very popular.  
20 That's the reason that we're building a  
21 caretaker house there is to help with  
22 the tract, they can do maintenance for  
23 the property. We currently have trail

1 systems. And I actually asked our  
2 co-developer what the current number is  
3 because we've been developing trails on  
4 the property. But it's very highly  
5 used. We expect this to further expand  
6 the use and the accessibility of the  
7 property.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.  
9 Thank you very much.

10 The next speaker is Jonathan Goode  
11 to talk about an upcoming nomination.  
12 So you won't have any information on  
13 this; this is an upcoming nomination.

14 MR. GOODE: Good morning. Thank y'all  
15 for letting me present. My name is  
16 Jonathan Goode, I'm a real estate broker  
17 with Farm and Forest Brokers. And we  
18 recently listed 1,233 acres in Cherokee  
19 County. This property has about two  
20 miles of frontage on the East Fork of  
21 the Little River. And it -- currently  
22 it adjoins what's currently held by the  
23 Little River National Preserve. So this

1 is a beautiful property. It's got a  
2 twelve-acre private lake. It's a really  
3 unique property that has been conserved  
4 by a conservation easement, so it's all  
5 -- the whole property's already in a  
6 conservation easement. And the family  
7 that owns it is ready to transition. I  
8 think this would be a great addition to  
9 what the State already owns there.

10 So, the staff is processing it.

11 It's not in your notebook today. But we  
12 anticipate it being on your shortlist at  
13 the next meeting.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
15 sir. Look forward to seeing that.

16 The next speaker is Mr. Steve  
17 Northcutt on the Turkey Creek-Red Hollow  
18 Road Addition, tab 3-B, page 8; 3-B,  
19 page 8.

20 MR. NORTHCUTT: Good morning, Board.  
21 I'm here to talk about Turkey Creek-Red  
22 Hollow Road Addition. And in  
23 anticipation of the Board meeting today,

1 I went back and looked at the history of  
2 the acquisitions at Turkey Creek.  
3 Turkey Creek is located in Pinson, which  
4 is about 24 miles north of Birmingham.  
5 And if you look at protected areas,  
6 public lands, and recreational sites, we  
7 have very little. You have Oak  
8 Mountain; you have Cahaba Park in Shelby  
9 County; you have a lot of protected land  
10 south of Birmingham. But this is what I  
11 would consider an underserved area. And  
12 so I went back and looked; the first  
13 acquisition was in December of '04;  
14 another acquisition in '05; and then  
15 there's a big gap until 2022.

16 This particular property, 245 acres,  
17 was nominated a few years back, first  
18 appraisal, second appraisal approved and  
19 an offer was made to the family. But  
20 the family had various members  
21 throughout different states and they had  
22 different expectations of the value of  
23 the property. And so the way the Nature

1            Conservancy got involved in this project  
2            is, Jefferson County Greenways, who  
3            manages Turkey Creek, came to us and  
4            said, Look, the family has gone to  
5            court, they've elected an agent through  
6            the family. And the court is to decide  
7            what's the fair value of the property.  
8            And so we think there's a chance to get  
9            this property back into conservation.  
10           And we need someone from the Nature  
11           Conservancy to step up and make a quick  
12           acquisition and hold it, with the hopes  
13           that the Board will feel like it's a  
14           nice addition to Turkey Creek. So we  
15           were able to do so. And it took a  
16           while. And the family members, I think,  
17           they have still mixed feelings of value.  
18           But we were able to acquire the  
19           property. And we're offering it as a,  
20           kind of, first appraisal today. I'm  
21           hoping that the Board will consider  
22           doing a second appraisal and closing the  
23           property.

1           And if you look at the map, there's  
2           another tract, it's the Bell Tract, it's  
3           about an 80-acre tract, to look at its  
4           connectivity to all these properties, it  
5           really would round out the preserve.  
6           This property we have would give you  
7           another access point to a southern -- to  
8           the road itself, a southern road; it's a  
9           paved road to improve your access to the  
10          property. You would add additional  
11          hardwood pine forest to it. And it  
12          would be great for hiking, bird  
13          watching, and mountain biking.

14                 This is one of the few properties  
15                 that I can remember that's been  
16                 nominated in support of the Nature  
17                 Preserve. You have a lot WMA  
18                 properties, additions to State parks and  
19                 other things. But I was real proud to  
20                 see that this area would be considered a  
21                 nature preserve so that you have low  
22                 impact recreational use. You have a lot  
23                 of swimming; you have a lot of bird

1 watching, hiking. And I'm hoping that  
2 the Board would consider an acquisition.  
3 Thank you. Any questions?

4 (No response.)

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
6 sir.

7 The next speaker is Charles Yeager  
8 on the same property, as well as the  
9 Bell Addition of Turkey Creek. Those  
10 are tab 3-B, page 7 and 8.

11 Good to see you, Charles. Good  
12 morning.

13 MR. YEAGER: Good morning and thank  
14 you so much. So I am the Director of  
15 Land Water Conservation for Jefferson  
16 County Greenways. I've been in that  
17 role now for a little over a year, as  
18 well as the manager of the Turkey Creek  
19 Addition for about twelve years. So,  
20 over that time, I've watched Turkey  
21 Creek grow tremendously in use,  
22 visitation, and access to some  
23 incredible resources. But really that

1 road has -- has outgrown the size of the  
2 space. We just do not have the capacity  
3 for the number of visitors that are  
4 coming out every day, especially this  
5 time of year, but, you know, certainly  
6 in the spring and fall when folks love  
7 to get out and hike. And these two  
8 properties, the Red Oak-Hollow Road  
9 Addition and the Bell Tract represent a  
10 critical opportunity for us to be able  
11 to meet the need and demands for our  
12 visitors and the opportunities for them  
13 to get out and enjoy some really  
14 beautiful, undisturbed tracts of land.  
15 These are -- These are -- for the most  
16 part, are really healthy forest,  
17 beautiful rock outcrops, longleaf pine  
18 on the ridgetops and shortleaf pine.  
19 There's also strong potential for there  
20 to be (UNINTELLIGIBLE) these properties.

21 We've also worked with our -- our  
22 local mountain bike club. They did a  
23 preliminary map a few years ago on

1 potential trails here and we saw a  
2 potential for over twelve miles of trail  
3 to be added. And it also brings up the  
4 opportunity to utilize property that  
5 Forever Wild's already purchased on that  
6 side of the road. It's really not quite  
7 large enough physically to kind of make  
8 sense, quite yet, to open up to the  
9 public. But once these additions were  
10 -- are added, hopefully, they will  
11 present an opportunity for us to create  
12 a new trailhead and new access to that  
13 whole, kind of, area on that side of the  
14 road.

15 I wanna also just publicly thank  
16 Steve Northcutt, Keith Tassin, the  
17 Nature Conservancy for stepping in and  
18 helping out with the acquisition of the  
19 Red Hollow Road Addition. You know,  
20 it's an avenue, complexities with the  
21 Shepherd (phonetic) family which, you  
22 know, I do not believe that this would  
23 have gotten anywhere without their work

1           and their support and their realization  
2           of how important this -- these -- these  
3           properties are, so. Thank you.

4           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
5           sir.

6           The next speaker is Rick Swagler on  
7           the Bell Addition to Turkey Creek, same  
8           property.

9           MR. SWAGLER: Thank you. I appreciate  
10          the opportunity to speak to you this  
11          morning. I'm Rick Swagler. My sister  
12          and five cousins and I own the Bell  
13          Tract. And best we can tell, our  
14          grandfather bought it in the early part  
15          of the twentieth century. It's been  
16          largely untouched, I believe, since  
17          then. I remember as a boy back when  
18          people would go for a Sunday drive in  
19          the afternoon. And I remember my  
20          grandfather saying, I'm gonna ride out  
21          to places called "parts unknown."  
22          "Parts unknown" is the Bell Addition.  
23          And it was wilderness back then; in

1           spite of being fairly close to  
2           Birmingham, it was wilderness.

3                   And when I was on the property last  
4           year, it struck me that it's wilderness.  
5           And that's why our family believes that  
6           the best use for this property is for it  
7           to be part of the Forever Wild Land  
8           Trust preserving it so that other people  
9           can experience wilderness and other  
10          people can see what we love about "parts  
11          unknown." I'd be happy to take any  
12          questions you might have.

13                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
14          sir.

15                   MR. SWAGLER: Thank you very much.

16                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Our next  
17          speaker is Robbie Roberts on the same  
18          property.

19                   MR. ROBERTS: Hi. Good morning. My  
20          name's Robbie Roberts. I am the Mayor  
21          of the City of Pinson, which is where  
22          the tracts are located. I also serve as  
23          a member of the Jefferson County

1           Greenways Commission. I want to bring  
2           greetings from the citizens of Pinson.  
3           Let you folks know that, while the  
4           community would like to come down here,  
5           I'm, basically, the best that you get  
6           this morning.

7           The -- I came this morning to  
8           emphasize the importance of the park to  
9           our community and to let you know that  
10          it's so important, that the City Seal of  
11          the City of Pinson actually features the  
12          Turkey Creek Falls, which passes through  
13          the current preserve there on it. So,  
14          again, this is something that means a  
15          lot to the folks and it has ever since  
16          the beginning of our City 21 years ago.

17          I wanted to let you know about some  
18          of the reasons why this park is  
19          important. Some, of course, is the  
20          environmental protection that's up  
21          there, that's offered by -- I think the  
22          previous gentleman just mentioned. It's  
23          amazing when you step off into that

1           area. I tell visitors the -- that go to  
2           the park, I say, Once you step into the  
3           preserve, you're gonna feel like you've  
4           just been transported into another part  
5           of the world because it is so preserved,  
6           it -- it's a throw back in time up  
7           there. So that's something that's very,  
8           very important.

9           The park has historical  
10          significance. The City of Pinson  
11          probably would not even be incorporated  
12          at this time had it not been for the  
13          efforts, at one point, through the  
14          County Commission to locate a jail out  
15          there on the park where the park now is.  
16          This caused the citizens to uproar and  
17          they said, Wait a minute; this needs to  
18          be preserved for future generations.  
19          And, as a result, the jail was not  
20          constructed there and the park has  
21          become a key feature to the City since.

22          The -- This preserve provides  
23          educational opportunities for our school

1 children throughout the county and  
2 surrounding areas for people to come in  
3 and to be able to see something like  
4 this. It's not just something that is  
5 used by the Pinson schools but it's also  
6 by other schools.

7 It has a significant impact on our  
8 local economy. People come in, they  
9 enjoy the park. They go back out, they  
10 do a little shopping. They do -- They  
11 eat at our restaurants and stuff. So,  
12 again, it's something that's a big plus  
13 to our businesses that are outside of  
14 the park.

15 I want you to know the commitment  
16 that the City has towards this project.  
17 We make a significant financial  
18 contribution every year directly to the  
19 Jefferson County Greenways and, also, in  
20 kind, assistance through use of our  
21 security and our -- the law enforcement  
22 personnel. They come in and help  
23 protect the park. When they have

1 special events and things up there, we  
2 bring in extra security. So, again,  
3 it's heavily supported. Our -- The  
4 Greenways Commission has full use of the  
5 City vehicle out there to be able help  
6 out and also for the other public works  
7 equipment that they might need, from  
8 time to time.

9 Again, I appreciate your time and  
10 hope you'll seriously consider this  
11 addition today.

12 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
13 Mayor, for making the trip down I-65.

14 Mr. Childers.

15 MR. CHILDERS: On the map there's a  
16 lot of property adjacent to this  
17 property. How many acres does Forever  
18 Wild already own there?

19 MS. MCCURDY: We're gonna say about  
20 460 acres, roughly.

21 MR. CHILDERS: Well, there's more than  
22 460 acres.

23 MS. MCCURDY: Okay.

1 MR. CHILDERS: I'm counting several  
2 80-acre tracts in there.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: We'll find  
4 out.

5 MS. MCCURDY: I'm sure Charles knows.

6 CHARLES: 680.

7 MS. MCCURDY: 680.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: 680. Thank  
9 you, Charles.

10 All right. Our next speaker is Leah  
11 Davis on the same tract, Red Hollow-Bell  
12 Tract.

13 MS. DAVIS: Good morning. My name is  
14 Leah Davis. I serve as the External  
15 Affairs Director of Jefferson County  
16 Greenways. And, as so many speakers  
17 before me have already talked about, the  
18 partnership that we have with Forever  
19 Wild and the partnership with State  
20 Lands, I just wanted to you let you know  
21 about the investment that we have put  
22 into Turkey Creek as an organization and  
23 how that investment will continue.

1                   We have an M-O-U with the State  
2                   Lands Division that ensures that we go  
3                   above and beyond to manage this land.  
4                   And that includes, since April of 2023,  
5                   we have invested over one-million  
6                   dollars into Turkey Creek, that includes  
7                   personnel; that includes resources; all  
8                   -- all the management that goes into  
9                   managing the creek and the trails for  
10                  public use. For comparison, before  
11                  April 2023, only about \$75,000 a year  
12                  was put into Turkey Creek.

13                 So, with that 130,000 visitors that  
14                 we have a year, we surely punch above  
15                 our weight and make sure that these --  
16                 that this space is accessible for the  
17                 public.

18                 So, Red Hollow-Bell Tract Additions,  
19                 they will be no exception to land and  
20                 services that we provide. And Charles  
21                 has already mapped out the conservation  
22                 and land management plans. And we are  
23                 just so excited. Thank you so much for

1 your consideration.

2 Any questions for me?

3 (No response.)

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

5 The last speaker is Mr. Jeff  
6 Dominick to discuss a -- it's not a  
7 particular property, it is tab 5-H in  
8 your folder, tab 5-H, and on a cell  
9 tower.

10 MS. MCCURDY: It would have been in  
11 your green folder if you haven't  
12 combined your materials.

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

14 MR. DOMINICK: I'm Jeff Dominick, I'm  
15 the President of Geonet Services. We  
16 are a subcontractor (UNINTELLIGIBLE)  
17 cell tower company. Cell towers leased  
18 out to the carriers. Geonet requested  
19 approval to lease a quarter of an acre  
20 there. If you have that map, it's  
21 adjacent to Highway 63 -- 263 for the  
22 construction of a cell tower.

23 This would be a long-term lease. We

1 haven't gotten into the leasing details  
2 yet with Patti but, typically, would  
3 result in one or two million dollars of  
4 revenue (UNINTELLIGIBLE) current lease.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
6 questions?

7 MS. MCCURDY: Commissioner, I would  
8 say, the -- you know, we -- I have it on  
9 this lands reports, section two, if  
10 anyone has any questions.

11 MR. DOMINICK: This location was -- I  
12 mean, this -- y'all own all the property  
13 in that area, it's all Forever Wild.  
14 And this specific spot shows minimal  
15 impact. It's adjacent to the highway to  
16 the west and then the private properties  
17 to the north, so it would be a quarter  
18 of an acre in the corner there.

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
20 Thank you, sir.

21 That is the end of our public  
22 comment period. Now we will be in --  
23 this is generally the time in the

1 meeting where we adjourn for Executive  
2 Session to discuss appraised values. By  
3 regulation, appraisal values are  
4 confidential during various  
5 negotiations. Accordingly, in order to  
6 discuss the tract appraisal values, the  
7 Board will need to go into recess for an  
8 Executive Session.

9 Is there a motion for the Board to  
10 now recess to attend the Executive  
11 Session?

12 MR. OATES: So moved.

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Moved by  
14 Mr. Oates.

15 DR. NEUMANN: Second.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
17 Dr. Neumann.

18 As I call your name, please state  
19 your position for the recess -- on this  
20 motion to recess. Those in favor, say  
21 aye; those opposed say negative.

22 Mr. Blankenship, aye.

23 Mr. Childers.

1 MR. CHILDERS: Aye.

2 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Harper.

3 MR. HARPER: Aye.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Harris.

5 MR. HARRIS: Aye.

6 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Keener.

7 DR. KEENER: Aye.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

9 McClintock.

10 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Aye.

11 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

12 Neumann.

13 DR. NEUMANN: Aye.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Oates.

15 MR. OATES: Aye.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers.

17 DR. POWERS: Aye.

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Tuggle.

19 MR. TUGGLE: Aye.

20 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

21 Valentine.

22 DR. VALENTINE: Aye.

23 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

1 Parnell.

2 MR. PARNELL: Aye.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All are in  
4 favor. We are now recessed for  
5 Executive Session.

6 It is 10:44. We will return in  
7 approximately 20 minutes. Thank you.

8 (Recess for Executive Session at 10:44  
9 a.m.)

10 (Board meeting resumed at 11:08  
11 a.m.)

12 (Ms. Karen Stanley is now present  
13 for the second half of the Board  
14 meeting.)

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
16 We are back from the Executive Session.  
17 It is 11:08 and we are back in full  
18 session.

19 I also want to note, for the court  
20 reporter, that Ms. Stanley has joined us  
21 and so she's in attendance here for the  
22 rest of the meeting.

23 Good to see you, ma'am.

1                   We'll pick back up. I think the  
2                   next order of business is -- begins with  
3                   number 5 on the agenda with financial  
4                   data.

5                   Ms. McCurdy.

6                   MS. MCCURDY: All right. All right.  
7                   Sorry. They don't let me work computers  
8                   or microphones too often, so. All  
9                   right. So, for the benefit of the  
10                  public, this is the point of the meeting  
11                  where I run through with the Board  
12                  various financial reports and just other  
13                  information related to the tracts.

14                 So I'm going to start with tab 2-A,  
15                 your green folder, tab 2-A. And I'm  
16                 going to run through for the Board  
17                 reminder and a little bit of an update  
18                 of the tracts that we're currently  
19                 working on to get to closing, based on  
20                 motions made by the Board. The tracts  
21                 that are currently in some form of the  
22                 closing process include:

23                 The West Fowl River Tract. We are

1 still -- nothing is wrong but we are  
2 still doing some survey work that has  
3 become a little complicated but we are  
4 making progress on that one.

5 Freedom Hills WMA-Sugar Camp Branch  
6 Addition. I believe that we're closing  
7 on that one, it's set -- I want to say  
8 it's August 20th, but it will be coming  
9 up here shortly.

10 And the Beaverdam Swamp-Lowe  
11 Addition. Again, that was a hundred  
12 percent donation, acreage donation, by  
13 the landowner and also the offer by the  
14 landowner to cover our steward -- 15  
15 percent stewardship transfer, which goes  
16 with donations, just like any other  
17 tract.

18 Davidson Creek Tract and the Dugdown  
19 Mountain Corridor, I see that I left out  
20 Phase One, but that was the Phase One  
21 that was the subject of the first award  
22 that the Forestry Commission was able to  
23 secure for the U.S. Forest Service and,

1 of course, the Forest Legacy Program.

2 So taking all of those into account,  
3 and then, as I said, that the checks, I  
4 haven't -- they haven't cashed yet but  
5 I've got a report -- and taking in the  
6 current balance, there is an  
7 unencumbered balance of approximately 38  
8 million.

9 You will see attached to your -- in  
10 your folder -- excuse me -- from your  
11 packet, the second page of tab 2-A,  
12 which runs through the tracts that have  
13 either had acreage closed or had offers  
14 declined by the landowner.

15 Tab 2-B is the detailed information  
16 related to the Stewardship Fund, the  
17 fund from which we manage tracts and  
18 make enhancements on the tracts. And,  
19 currently, so far in this fiscal year,  
20 we still have 1.3 million remaining.  
21 This is the time of year, as we approach  
22 the end of some purchasing cutoffs, that  
23 we see a lot of the transactions go

1 through. But we are fine on that. I  
2 appreciate the Board's prior approval  
3 for that expenditure.

4 You will see, also, in tab C, that  
5 is the current report that we received  
6 from the State Treasurer's Office. I  
7 want to thank them, again. They've  
8 prepared this report which has the  
9 detailed information related to the  
10 investment performance of the  
11 Stewardship balance corpus. And so you  
12 will see that the current net assets, as  
13 of June 30, is just over 51 million,  
14 increasing from the last report we had  
15 at our May meeting. So that is a brief  
16 overview of the type of financial  
17 information that is in your packet.

18 Are there any questions on any of  
19 those reports?

20 (No response.)

21 MS. MCCURDY: All right. Well, then  
22 let's move to tab 3-A. Once again,  
23 looking in your folder, there's sort of

1 a yellow page, it contains the updated  
2 information available to the Board.  
3 Now, this is when I run through for the  
4 public's benefit -- I'm sorry -- the  
5 appraisals. Any appraisal that's  
6 motioned by the Board, I report to the  
7 Board the status of that appraisal  
8 process. So I want to run through that  
9 today.

10 The appraisals that we have in-hand  
11 motioned by the Board that would be  
12 available for further action, if desired  
13 by the Board, include: Coon Gulf-Craze  
14 Bend Addition; Cooper Branch Tract;  
15 Dugdown Corridor-Cleburne County Tract;  
16 Graham Bayou Tract; Turkey Creek Nature  
17 Preserve-Bell Addition; and Turkey Creek  
18 Nature Preserve-Red Hollow Road  
19 Addition.

20 Now, we do have an additional  
21 appraisal, it was not motioned by the  
22 Board. You were well aware of the  
23 activity but it was not motioned by the

1 Board but it has been completed, and  
2 that was for the Dugdown Corridor Phase  
3 Two Tract. And that is the tract known  
4 as Dugdown -- this can get a little  
5 confusing -- that's the Dugdown Phase  
6 Two, that is the second award that the  
7 Forestry Commission received through the  
8 Forest Legacy Program, the U.S. Forest  
9 Service Program. And that appraisal has  
10 also been returned.

11 I -- To give a rough idea of the --  
12 you're in the mid-twenty-millions on  
13 appraisals and costs of Forever Wild  
14 based on what you have in-hand.

15 Is there any question -- any  
16 questions from the Board on that?

17 (No response.)

18 MS. MCCURDY: All right. If there are  
19 no questions on the appraised  
20 nominations, then I'm going to move on,  
21 as we always do, to your tab 5-A and  
22 give just a brief update on grant  
23 activity.

1           For the public, this -- the Board  
2           has charged my staff with trying to  
3           identify opportunities to leverage their  
4           dollars or to leverage management cost  
5           through either donations through grant  
6           programs, just any opportunities that we  
7           can identify. So I run through this  
8           portion of the meeting, the status of  
9           those potential opportunities. So we do  
10          have in closing, as I mentioned already,  
11          the Dugdown Mountain Corridor Phase One,  
12          that's a 75/25 approximate split given  
13          to Forever Wild providing the required  
14          State based match of its acquisition.  
15          That one is in closing.

16                 You have on your shortlist, but also  
17                 with an appraisal provided by the  
18                 Forestry Commission, the Dugdown  
19                 Corridor Phase Two Tract, a similar  
20                 75/25 split with Forever Wild serving as  
21                 the State based required match for that  
22                 grant program. Those are all ones  
23                 related to acquisition.

1           In relation to the land management  
2           on our tracts, we have partnered with  
3           the Alabama Forestry Foundation for the  
4           submittal that they made relating to  
5           obtaining the grant award through the  
6           National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
7           under the Longleaf Landscape Grant  
8           Program. We had thought we would have  
9           the award announcement by now but we  
10          still do not. But that would be a 50/50  
11          cost share on that. If the grant was  
12          fully successful, that work would extend  
13          across Coosa WMA, Autauga WMA, and the  
14          Gothard-AWF Yates Lake Tract, that WMA.  
15          But we'll keep you posted.

16                 The grant that -- a similar National  
17                 Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant,  
18                 under their Cumberland Plateau-Southern  
19                 Appalachian Fund, we did receive the  
20                 grant, State Lands did from National  
21                 Fish and Wildlife Foundation and that is  
22                 being used to support establishment of  
23                 the shortleaf pine forest at the Little

1 River Canyon Hancock TNC Addition Tract.  
2 And that's been well underway. We  
3 completed the harvest and the herbicide  
4 application. A prescribed burn will  
5 come at the point in about two to three  
6 years, depending on the seedlings'  
7 growth.

8 And then we are completing, here  
9 shortly, two educational kiosks that are  
10 going to go on that tract that will talk  
11 about that shortleaf pine forest and the  
12 prescribed burns, just the general  
13 information for the public to explain,  
14 kind of, why we do what we do from Land  
15 Management standpoint.

16 And then, finally, I'm excited we  
17 had a pretty good meeting at the end of  
18 July for the GOMESA Grant that Governor  
19 Ivey provided benefitting the  
20 Mobile-Tensaw Delta Bartram Canoe Trail  
21 and also the Perdido River Canoe Trails.  
22 Some of the those improvements will be  
23 occurring on Forever Wild tracts. We



1 the constitutional amendment established  
2 for Forever Wild acquisitions. And  
3 that's State park additions; WMA, or SOA  
4 now, additions; nature preserve or  
5 recreation areas. There's four, and  
6 each tract is scored in all four  
7 categories, they compete -- I'm sorry --  
8 Northern, Central, and Southern  
9 District. And a tract has to obtain a  
10 top three finish competing in their  
11 district in at least one of those four  
12 categories to make the shortlist. Now,  
13 several tracts that have attributes that  
14 have scored highly in more than one  
15 category, so you may see them have more  
16 than one category score. But whatever  
17 the top three in the four categories, in  
18 those three districts, make the  
19 shortlist. So, as I do at each meeting,  
20 I'm just going to briefly run through  
21 those. And just stop me if you have a  
22 question. And, again, speak up, I may  
23 not see your hand.

1           So, shortlist tracts: We have Bay  
2           Log Creek Tract, Dale County; the  
3           Certain Tract-Sunset Cove Addition;  
4           DeSoto State Park-Oakhill Road Northeast  
5           Addition; Double Oak Tract, Shelby  
6           County; Dugdown Corridor Phase Two;  
7           Dunnavant Valley Oaks, Jefferson and  
8           Shelby Counties on that one, it crosses  
9           the line; Fillmore Drive Tract, Mobile  
10          County; Freedom Hills WMA-Heard  
11          Addition, Colbert County; Riverton CHA,  
12          that's a community hunting area  
13          abbreviation, so Riverton CHA-Rose Trail  
14          Addition; and the Sipse River  
15          Swamp-Kellytown Addition.

16                 Any questions from the Board on the  
17                 shortlist nominations?

18                         (No response.)

19           MS. MCCURDY: All right. Well,  
20           Commissioner, if there is no -- there  
21           are questions, so far, then I think we  
22           can move on into general discussion.  
23           Just a reminder to the Board members, so

1           you can hear each other and the public  
2           can hear you, please be sure your mic is  
3           turned on and you're speaking into it.  
4           It takes me a minute -- I'm sorry -- but  
5           I'll turn it over to you, Commissioner.

6           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

7           Before we start the general  
8           discussion, I do want to make two  
9           announcements:

10           Ed Poolos, our Deputy Commissioner,  
11           who many of your are used to seeing at  
12           these meetings for the last eight years,  
13           is now the Director of the Alabama  
14           Department of Environmental Management,  
15           so he has moved over there and begun his  
16           role in his new place of service in the  
17           State.

18           And Charlanna Skaggs, our General  
19           Counsel, has been promoted to Deputy  
20           Commissioner for the Department of  
21           Conservation and Natural Resources.

22           So, Charlanna, thank you for  
23           agreeing to take on that new role and I

1 look forward to working with you in your  
2 new position.

3 And, with that, we've got some other  
4 staff changes that we're working on. As  
5 many of you know, Chuck Sykes, our  
6 Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries  
7 Director that you are used to seeing at  
8 this meeting, Chuck took a position with  
9 a National Organization and we are in  
10 the process of filling his position.

11 And then Scott Bannon, the Director  
12 over Marine Resources Division, has also  
13 retired and taken another job in the  
14 Coastal Community and we will be filling  
15 his position here very shortly. So  
16 you'll see some new faces at these  
17 meetings, hopefully, by the November  
18 meeting. So, thank you.

19 So, with that, we'll open it up.  
20 And, general discussion, this is the  
21 part of the meeting where Board members  
22 usually make motions for first or second  
23 appraisals on pieces of property. And

1 I'll open up the floor now for any Board  
2 member to make a motion.

3 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Commissioner  
4 Blankenship.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
6 McClintock.

7 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Yes. I'd like to  
8 suggest that we do the first nomination  
9 for the Sipsey River Swamp-Kellytown  
10 Addition.

11 MR. OATES: Second that.

12 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
13 Mr. Oates.

14 MS. MCCURDY: And we do need first  
15 appraisal.

16 BOARD MEMBER: Would you repeat that,  
17 now?

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Sure. So  
19 the motion is for a first appraisal on  
20 the Sipsey River Swamp-Kellytown  
21 Addition; motion for a first appraisal  
22 made by Dr. McClintock, seconded by Mr.  
23 Oates. Any questions or discussion on

1           that?

2                   (No response.)

3           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All those  
4           in favor, please raise your hand.

5                   (Board members comply.)

6           MS. MCCURDY: Okay. Y'all keep them  
7           up. I'm going to count. One, two,  
8           three, four, five, six, seven, eight,  
9           nine. Okay. Nine, so the motion  
10          passes.

11          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All those  
12          opposed?

13          MS. MCCURDY: I see two hands on  
14          opposed.

15          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
16          Motion carries.

17          DR. POWERS: Commissioner.

18          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers.

19          DR. POWERS: I'd like to make a motion  
20          for a second appraisal and move to  
21          purchase for Dugdown Corridor Phase Two.

22          MR. TUGGLE: Second.

23          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.

1           Let me catch up on that one.

2           MS. MCCURDY:   And while the  
3           Commissioner is flipping on that, we  
4           would normally, also, make that  
5           contingent upon the use of the AFC's  
6           grant.

7           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:   So this one  
8           is a little bit -- this is a little bit  
9           different since we did not --

10          MS. MCCURDY:   I'm sorry.   You're  
11          right.

12          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:   -- ask for  
13          the appraisal --

14          MS. MCCURDY:   Yes, you're --

15          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:   -- the  
16          motion needs to include, if it's okay  
17          with you, an acceptance of the appraisal  
18          -- yellow book appraisal that was  
19          provided by the Forestry Commission.  
20          And then move for a second appraisal and  
21          purchase, contingent on the 75 percent  
22          grant money.   That is very confusing.

23          MS. MCCURDY:   And for the Board,

1           again, since we did not do the  
2           appraisal, you are adopting the first  
3           appraisal provided by the Alabama  
4           Forestry Commission, and doing the  
5           second on Forever Wild acreage and  
6           proceeding to purchase; so that's the  
7           long, long, long explanation.

8           DR. POWERS: And since the -- the  
9           first appraisal is that higher number --  
10          not high but it's good for the --

11          MS. MCCURDY: It was done pursuant to  
12          the grant -- federal grant process.

13          DR. POWERS: So would you like me to  
14          re-state the motion?

15          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Please.

16          DR. POWERS: So, my motion is to move  
17          to accept the appraisal for the Dugdown  
18          Corridor Phase Two and move for a second  
19          appraisal and purchase, contingent on  
20          the delivery -- the award of 75 percent  
21          -- approximately 75 percent of the grant  
22          funding listed, and move to purchase.

23          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Is there a

1 second?

2 MR. TUGGLE: Second.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
4 Mr. Tuggle. I will do my best to  
5 rephrase that for the Board to make sure  
6 that you know what we are voting on.  
7 So, the motion is to adopt or accept the  
8 first appraisal for the Dugdown Corridor  
9 Phase Two that was provided by the  
10 Forestry Commission, the yellow book  
11 appraisal, that they had done. And then  
12 move for a second appraisal and move to  
13 purchase, contingent on the awarding of  
14 approximately 75 percent of the funds  
15 from a Forest Legacy Grant.

16 Is that very close to what you made?

17 DR. POWERS: I couldn't have said it  
18 better myself.

19 MS. MCCURDY: You've got to love the  
20 lawyers.

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Is there  
22 any question -- any discussion or  
23 questions?

1 (No response.)

2 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All those  
3 in favor, please raise your hand.

4 (Board members comply.)

5 MS. MCCURDY: Y'all keep them up,  
6 please. That looks unanimous; is that  
7 correct? One, two, three, four, five,  
8 six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven,  
9 twelve.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Motion  
11 carries. Thank you.

12 DR. NEUMANN: Commissioner  
13 Blankenship.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
15 Neumann.

16 DR. NEUMANN: I'd like to make a  
17 motion to do a second appraisal, move to  
18 purchase of the Graham Bayou Tract.

19 MR. CHILDERS: I can't hear, Patti.

20 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Sure. The  
21 Motion was for a second appraisal and  
22 move to purchase on the Graham Bayou  
23 Tract.

1 MS. MCCURDY: And that one is tab 3-B,  
2 page 6.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Is there a  
4 second? Second?

5 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second it.

6 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
7 McClintock. All right. So the motion  
8 is for a second appraisal and move to  
9 purchase the Graham Bayou Tract in  
10 Baldwin County. All those in favor,  
11 please raise your hand.

12 (Board members comply.)

13 MS. MCCURDY: One, two, three -- I'm  
14 sorry -- one, two, three, four, five,  
15 six, seven, eight, nine -- keep them up,  
16 please. I'm going to try them again,  
17 making sure. One, two, three, four,  
18 five, six, seven, eight, nine. Nine, so  
19 it carries.

20 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All those  
21 opposed?

22 MS. MCCURDY: Three opposed.

23 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.

1 Motion carried.

2 DR. KEENER: Mr. Commissioner.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir,  
4 Dr. Keener.

5 DR. KEENER: I'd like to make a motion  
6 for a second appraisal and purchase for  
7 Red Hollow Road Addition.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
9 So the motion is for a second appraisal  
10 and move to purchase on the Red Hollow  
11 Road Addition at Turkey Creek Nature  
12 Preserve. Is there a second?

13 MR. TUGGLE: Second.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
15 Mr. Tuggle.

16 Any questions or comments on that?

17 (No response.)

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
19 All those in favor, please raise your  
20 hand.

21 (Board members comply.)

22 MS. MCCURDY: I get eleven.

23 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Motion

1 carried.

2 MS. MCCURDY: Thanks.

3 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Commissioner.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
5 McClintock.

6 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Yeah, I'd like to go  
7 ahead and make a second appraisal and  
8 purchase on the Turkey Creek Bell  
9 Addition.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
11 So the motion is for a second appraisal  
12 and move to purchase on the Turkey Creek  
13 Nature Preserve Bell Addition. That  
14 motion was made by Dr. McClintock. Is  
15 there a second?

16 DR. KEENER: Second.

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
18 Dr. Keener.

19 Any questions?

20 (No response.)

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
22 All those in favor, please raise your  
23 hand.

1 (Board members comply.)

2 MS. MCCURDY: We have ten.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.

4 Motion carries.

5 Dr. Powers.

6 DR. POWERS: I'd like to make a motion  
7 for a first appraisal for the Double Oak  
8 Tract.

9 MS. MCCURDY: And that is tab 4-B,  
10 page 9.

11 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Double Oak  
12 Tract, first appraisal.

13 Is there a second?

14 MR. HARRIS: Second.

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
16 Mr. Harris.

17 Thank you, Mr. Harris.

18 So, the motion is for a first  
19 appraisal on the Double Oak Tract in  
20 Shelby County. Motion made by Dr.  
21 Powers, seconded by Mr. Harris. Any  
22 questions?

23 (No response.)

1           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All those  
2           in favor, please raise your hand.

3           MS. MCCURDY: Only eight,  
4           Commissioner.

5           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
6           Motion fails.

7           Anything else?

8           DR. MCCLINTOCK: I've got one more.

9           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
10          McClintock.

11          DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'd like to propose a  
12          first appraisal for DeSoto State Park,  
13          Oakhill Road Addition.

14          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
15          So, Dr. McClintock has made a motion for  
16          the first appraisal on the DeSoto State  
17          Park Oakhill Road Addition. Is there a  
18          second?

19          MR. TUGGLE: Second.

20          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
21          Mr. Tuggle. Is there any questions,  
22          discussion?

23          (No response.)

1           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All those  
2 in favor, please raise your hand.

3           MS. MCCURDY: I get ten, Commissioner.

4           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
5 Motion carried.

6           Give me just a second to catch up  
7 here.

8           All right. Thank you all very much.  
9 We now move to the miscellaneous reports  
10 in tab 5.

11           Ms. McCurdy.

12           MS. MCCURDY: Thank you. Okay. In  
13 tab 5 there are just various matters  
14 that either I want to bring to the  
15 Board's attention or I might need a  
16 motion on.

17           So we've already covered 5-A.

18           5-B we do not have any tracts that  
19 are on the shortlist or appraised  
20 nomination list so long that they're  
21 going to roll off, so we don't have to  
22 deal with that.

23           We have discussed 5-C.

1           So I think we are at -- back to 5-D  
2           -- I'm sorry -- 5-D. 5-D is a naming  
3           request. We bring naming requests for  
4           things on tracts to the Board. We've  
5           had a request from the Southeastern  
6           Alabama Mountain Bikers related to our  
7           Dothan Trail Park Tract. I was sad to  
8           report this but one of their members, a  
9           Mr. Kenny Long (sic), passed away when  
10          he was riding his mountain bike and  
11          enjoying the trails at the Dothan park.  
12          And so the -- Southeastern would like to  
13          erect some signage in his memory,  
14          placing signage -- and I have given you  
15          pictures of what the signage would look  
16          like -- at the beginning and the end of  
17          the connector trail. And then, also,  
18          naming it for -- And I said Mr. Long  
19          died. I'm sorry. Mr. Long is doing  
20          well and has made the request -- I  
21          apologize -- but for Mark Brooks. And  
22          you've got pictures of what the signage  
23          would look like at the beginning and the

1 end of that connector trail. It's a  
2 short portion of the trail. And then at  
3 the actual spot on the trail where Mr.  
4 Brooks passed away, they would also like  
5 to put a sign specifically in his memory  
6 and the date of his passing, which you  
7 have.

8 So I wanted to bring that request to  
9 the Board. If you would like to take  
10 any action on that, I would need a  
11 motion. I included a sample motion. I  
12 know this is a little different. And so  
13 if anyone has any interest, I will need  
14 a motion from the Board; if not, we can  
15 move to our next item.

16 MR. TUGGLE: So moved.

17 MS. MCCURDY: Would you read -- I'm  
18 going to need you to actually make the  
19 motion.

20 MR. TUGGLE: I make a motion  
21 authorizing staff to coordinate with the  
22 Southeastern Alabama Mountain Bikers  
23 regarding erecting the requested signage

1           honoring Mr. Brooks in substantially the  
2           same form as set forth in the memo dated  
3           August 7, 2025.

4           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So, you've  
5           heard the motion; is there a second?

6           DR. KEENER: Second.

7           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
8           Dr. Keener.

9           Dr. Powers.

10          DR. POWERS: So, I -- Just a question:  
11          Does Forever Wild or the Conservation  
12          Department have a policy on when they  
13          name things after folks?

14          MS. MCCURDY: For Forever Wild, I  
15          simply bring them all to the Board for  
16          discussion. And so there's no policy on  
17          whether you can or you can't. We look  
18          at each request individually but I do  
19          bring it to the Board for a vote.

20          DR. POWERS: And the Conservation  
21          Department?

22          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: We don't  
23          have a written policy.

1 DR. POWERS: Okay. And we've done  
2 this before?

3 MS. MCCURDY: We have. I can't  
4 remember if there's been a memorial but  
5 we have -- we have named entire tracts.  
6 I mean, as an example, the, you know,  
7 Gothard AWF Yates Lake Tract. I mean,  
8 we have named tracts, we have named  
9 segments of trails. We probably have  
10 done this before, I'm just not sure I  
11 remember. But the naming concept has  
12 been brought up for discussion in the  
13 past on, you know, occasions -- certain  
14 occasions in the past.

15 DR. POWERS: And we maintain -- do we  
16 maintain the signs? I mean, are they --

17 MS. MCCURDY: They will maintain the  
18 signs. And we're not responsible for  
19 them. If something happens to one and  
20 they want it replaced, they would  
21 replace the sign.

22 DR. POWERS: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So you've

1 heard the motion on placement of signs  
2 on the Dothan trail. All those in  
3 favor, please see aye.

4 (Group response: "Aye".)

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
6 opposed?

7 (No response.)

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Motion  
9 carries.

10 MS. MCCURDY: Thank you. All right.  
11 We would now move to your tab 5-E. And  
12 tab 5 -- this is our -- in certain  
13 meetings, we do certain things each  
14 year. In August, I bring to you what we  
15 call the staff activity reports. They  
16 are not full fiscal year reports because  
17 our fiscal year runs October 1 to  
18 September 30. But it is to give you an  
19 idea of what's going on, on the tract,  
20 the type of work. I struggle every year  
21 because I can't really divide up the  
22 information. It's a lot to just put in  
23 one. But it is also a little difficult

1 to divide.

2 So the reports you'll see this year  
3 represent what I'm going to call some of  
4 our field operations, our field land  
5 management activities, that includes the  
6 work we do on tracts such as the  
7 prescribed burns, it would include trail  
8 maintenance, it would, also, just  
9 anything recreation related. And so  
10 you've got that report.

11 You have -- And I'll just run  
12 through those as I go. But I divided  
13 them basically into field, and then our  
14 two facilities, and the Natural Heritage  
15 Section activities, and our forest  
16 management activities. So, I know we  
17 had a lot of speakers today and running  
18 long. We've got a couple of Board  
19 members with some time constraints so I  
20 don't want to overdo it.

21 But the first one is your  
22 Stewardship Land Management report,  
23 which includes, again, all the

1           prescribed burns. And I just want to  
2           note that, so far this year, we have  
3           burned approximately 7,808 acres across  
4           the State. And we -- our land  
5           management includes herbicide and other  
6           mechanical operations trying to ensure  
7           that invasive species are managed. We  
8           can't really totally eradicate them but  
9           we do a lot of work on cogon grass, for  
10          example.

11                 To aid in our hunting programs,  
12           whether they are youth or physically  
13           disabled or just any of the other  
14           programs for hunting, we're doing  
15           supplemental planning, we're doing  
16           various --

17                 I'm sorry.

18                 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I had a question  
19           about the hunting programs for kids. Do  
20           they get firearm safety training as part  
21           of that or do they bring a permit or  
22           how -- how do we control their knowledge  
23           of firearms?

1 MS. MCCURDY: There is training.  
2 There is a safety session before each  
3 hunt.

4 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Okay.

5 MS. MCCURDY: And, you know, depending  
6 on age and activity, the appropriate  
7 license.

8 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Okay. Great. Thank  
9 you.

10 MS. MCCURDY: So, again, we are doing  
11 the -- just what any landowner would do  
12 to improve their hunting opportunities  
13 but we're doing it for the public in  
14 various programs. We're always trying  
15 to keep an eye on our marked boundaries,  
16 do they need to be updated; does  
17 painting need to be done. There's,  
18 obviously, a good bit of roadwork,  
19 gravel replacement, the trailhead  
20 access. We do that -- the same group is  
21 constantly working on managing our  
22 almost 400 miles of trail that vary  
23 between canoeing and hiking and biking

1           and horseback riding, multiuse trails.  
2           So my guys are, you know, looking at  
3           those at all times. And then just  
4           general trail maintenance, going through  
5           the trail, where do we need signage; do  
6           we have a crossing point that needs to  
7           be improved to help the hike-ability of  
8           the trail -- I'm not sure that's a word,  
9           may have made up one.

10                   And then we're also -- you know,  
11           we're managing hogs. We are helping  
12           evaluate and then oversee requests for  
13           research on the tracts and to be sure  
14           there's not any damage to the tract, not  
15           an imposition or something that is a  
16           hindrance to the public use, be it  
17           recreation, be it hunting. What time of  
18           the year is it; we may not want people  
19           doing it that time of year. So, our  
20           field group is doing all that.

21                   And so I wanted to note that, in  
22           addition, they're also doing various  
23           patrols for safety. The public safety

1           and enjoyment, I mean, just whether a  
2           family can safely enjoy being on the  
3           side of the -- one of the waterways that  
4           run through our tracts without illicit  
5           activity. There's a lot of drug  
6           activity crossover. My guys deal with  
7           having some homeless encampments on  
8           tracts; they are not much fun to deal  
9           with. And then just your general law  
10          enforcement. My Conservation  
11          Enforcement Officers are APOSTC  
12          certified, so they are just like any  
13          other enforcement officer and have the  
14          same the power. And so they are working  
15          on public safety and they're enforcing  
16          hunting and fishing regulations. But  
17          they are also included -- just to give  
18          you an idea of how they all interact,  
19          also with our evaluation and the Natural  
20          Heritage function on our tracts, the  
21          various degrees that they have: the  
22          biology degrees, the forestry degrees,  
23          of course, forester certifications. And

1           so they're my -- they really are my go  
2           do everything crew. And they'll be on a  
3           tractor. We've got a lot of equipment  
4           operators that are helping but they're  
5           jumping on those tractors as well. And  
6           so, again, I won't go through all  
7           aspects but it's very impressive what  
8           has happened this year and the work  
9           that's been done.

10           You will next see a report that sort  
11           of details the Natural Heritage  
12           sections. Again, it's hard to tease it  
13           out. But I highlight the Natural  
14           Heritage section database that they  
15           maintain. That database currently has  
16           over 2,700 users. It has over  
17           eight-million records in the database.  
18           They provide -- and Ashley helps me so  
19           much to get ready for these meetings,  
20           really also coordinates, to a large  
21           degree, and assists with  
22           department-wide, the GIS efforts and  
23           support and how those GIS tools are

1           used, from mapping and just general  
2           tract information and how we obtain it  
3           and retain it. And Ashley serves as the  
4           Commissioner's proxy on the State GIS  
5           Executive Council.

6                   And then you'll just see the  
7           Heritage Group, also, Ashley and her  
8           folks, they help with so much of the  
9           administrative with evaluating of tracts  
10          that go with the seller letters,  
11          coordinating scoring, a lot of ongoing  
12          work with that.

13                   You'll see a report about --  
14          specifically, about the field trial  
15          area. So much going on there, I think  
16          I'll focus on that when we're at our  
17          November meeting. But I do want to say  
18          in that one tract the balance of what we  
19          do and my staff manages, we had 34 dog  
20          sporting events; 11 scheduled physically  
21          disabled deer hunts; 11 youth deer  
22          hunts; 6 youth duck hunts; 2 youth dove  
23          hunts. We have had -- participated in

1           many birding events from the Alabama  
2           Black Belt Birding Festival. We've  
3           hosted, I think, it's three Audubon  
4           Society field-trips. I just say all  
5           that to say, with all the horseback  
6           riding and everything else we've got  
7           going on, that management. But I'll  
8           highlight the field trial area when  
9           we're there in November.

10           We then included a report from our  
11           Wehle Land Conservation Center. Similar  
12           to the field trial areas --

13           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Before you  
14           move to the Wehle, let me mention one  
15           thing on the miscellaneous activities on  
16           the GIS side. We have a very capable  
17           GIS staff at the Department of  
18           Conservation and Natural Resources,  
19           primarily the staff is Ashley Peters,  
20           that does a lot, her and her folks with  
21           her do a lot of the work. But they were  
22           recognized nationally for a couple of  
23           different things that they've done

1           recently. And I just wanted to take  
2           just a minute, all the stuff that goes  
3           in your packets, all the maps and all  
4           the work that goes on, that's just a  
5           small part of what they do. But the  
6           State Wildlife Action Plan and the GIS  
7           work associated with that, received a  
8           national award from Esri this year. So  
9           I just wanted to commend you on that and  
10          thank you for going to all those GIS  
11          meetings and representing me so I don't  
12          have to go. I am very thankful for your  
13          work.

14                 MS. MCCURDY: So, the Wehle Land  
15          Conservation Center, very similar to the  
16          field trial area, it operates as a  
17          partnership between my State Lands  
18          Division and Forever Wild. Some of that  
19          acreage actually is owned by State Lands  
20          due to the structures that are on the  
21          properties and the responsibility for  
22          that, managed by the State Lands  
23          Division's responsibility. But I'm

1 really proud of the Wehle Center. It is  
2 there in Bullock County, right on the  
3 Bullock/Barbour area. And I'm really  
4 proud of the work that occurs at that  
5 facility in that rural area serving --  
6 really focused on the youth there. We  
7 do many things there but, I guess, I'm  
8 really, really proud of the events, the  
9 hunting, the fishing events, the summer  
10 day-camps, the work that we do that we  
11 work in coordination with Auburn  
12 University's Natural History Museum.  
13 And I serve on the Bullock County  
14 Tourism Council. And just to tell you  
15 all the thanks that we get for  
16 recognizing that area, holding events in  
17 that area, they really are very  
18 thankful. And it takes a lot of work to  
19 get the school involvement in that area.  
20 And we've been real successful in that.  
21 So I would just encourage you with the  
22 -- all of those events, that is an area  
23 that appreciates being seen by this

1           program.

2           We've had improvements there for  
3           use: We've had grills going in;  
4           electric hookups at camp sites, various  
5           improvements for users. It gets used a  
6           lot. Also for the horseback trails that  
7           are on property and the overnight use  
8           there when the horse groups come and  
9           stay overnight, we have some facilities  
10          to do so.

11          I will not go through this but you  
12          will see next a separate report, which  
13          is our forest management activities  
14          report. I always separate this one out.  
15          Again, there's a lot of coordination of  
16          work. But I try to detail and give an  
17          update on activities that we have  
18          conducted: the harvest, the thinnings,  
19          the reforestation, and an update on some  
20          of the activities we bid out. We  
21          attempted to do but did not receive bids  
22          and so we are still working on getting  
23          those done and trying to figure out how

1 to structure the opportunity where we  
2 will get more bids. So I just wanted --  
3 this is an update on what we discussed  
4 trying to do, the year that we're in.

5 So, I want to -- I guess, at this  
6 time -- Let me just ask my staff, I  
7 can't think -- I mean, I won't go  
8 through individually. This doesn't even  
9 reflect administratively the work that  
10 our legal section does, that Charlanna  
11 and Jennifer have helped with, but my  
12 Assistant Director, Doug Deaton, does;  
13 all the administrative work Ashley does;  
14 and the behind the scenes like Wendy  
15 Newman, who's my paralegal, and how much  
16 paper she pushes for this program is  
17 kind of stunning. So I'm leaving people  
18 out but I -- will my staff just stand --  
19 try not to drop all your paper -- but my  
20 foresters and everybody, if you work for  
21 me, please stand.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. MCCURDY: So I really do want to

1           thank them. And, also, let me say the  
2           work that we do is absolutely assisted  
3           by our Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries  
4           Division, they're very active on the  
5           ground; and the work we do in  
6           coordination with our State Parks  
7           Division. Not as much with Marine  
8           Resources but their officers help us  
9           too, if we need help, everybody pulls  
10          together and I appreciate that. And I  
11          appreciate the Commissioner's support  
12          for my staff.

13                 So our next -- the next memo is  
14                 really more for Board information, 5-F.  
15                 And it's just the quarterly update that  
16                 we provide on the feral swine mitigation  
17                 efforts. You can read through that and  
18                 see the reports broken up, as always. I  
19                 guess the one difference, as we're  
20                 continuing to work with the contractors,  
21                 you know, we were concentrating with  
22                 them on a few properties to start with  
23                 to kind of get that working

1 relationship, be sure we knew it was  
2 working how we wanted it to, the  
3 contractors have now moved, also, onto  
4 active work on Red Hills and Jacinto  
5 Port. So, I guess, that's the only real  
6 change.

7 If you could look at tab 5-G. I  
8 want to focus, for a minute, on looking  
9 forward. I gave you activity reports,  
10 sort of, to date on what we've been  
11 doing. I want to give the Board an  
12 overview of the forest management  
13 activities that we are looking to try to  
14 accomplish this fiscal -- upcoming  
15 fiscal year. Each year I bring this  
16 forward. This is something that I do  
17 ask for the Board's approval for and we  
18 will update you along the way. And  
19 depending on things like the Southern  
20 Pine Beetle, we may have to shift our  
21 focus. But let me run through. We're  
22 looking to do thinnings and, again, they  
23 are detailed on your tab 5-G, at

1           Autauga; Barbour; Coosa; Freedom Hills;  
2           Gothard-Yates Lake WMA; Martin-Skyline  
3           WMA -- most of these are WMAs -- the  
4           Lauderdale WMA; Little River State  
5           Forest Addition; Lowndes WMA; Old  
6           Cahawba Tract; Portland Landing SOA; Red  
7           Hills WMA; Shelby County Park; Thigpen  
8           Hill SOA; Turkey Creek Nature Preserve;  
9           Uchee Creek; and then final harvest at  
10          Coosa; Gothard-Yates; Freedom Hills;  
11          Portland Landing; Riggins Tract in  
12          Lowndes County; Riverton CHA; Thigpen  
13          Hill; and Turkey Creek Nature Preserve.

14                 We're also expecting to do  
15          reforestation work at Lauderdale WMA.  
16          So, due to, really, having to fully  
17          develop the plans and other conditions,  
18          weather, fields, et cetera, we generally  
19          ask for a fairly broad motion and just  
20          assure the Board that we will update you  
21          along the way. But if the Board's  
22          comfortable with that being our plan for  
23          the upcoming fiscal, I would need a

1 motion and I proposed one.

2 MR. TUGGLE: May I ask a question.

3 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir.

4 MR. TUGGLE: So, on the first  
5 thinnings, what kind of a basal area and  
6 how aggressive are they thinning these  
7 tracts?

8 MS. MCCURDY: It will depend,  
9 somewhat, on the tract and the usage and  
10 the type of recreational usage and the  
11 wildlife habitat aspect combined with  
12 the recreational usage. But I'll be  
13 happy to, you know, have any -- have one  
14 of my foresters come up, if you've got a  
15 question on a specific tract or if there  
16 is a generality. It's hard to do a  
17 generality but --

18 MR. TUGGLE: I don't have a specific  
19 question but I would -- you know,  
20 there's -- if it's -- if there's any  
21 residual prairie that has been planted  
22 on Forever Wild land, if you would open  
23 them up and thin them aggressively, we

1           can potentially turn that seed bank on  
2           -- there's native grown seeds and  
3           grasses at the seed bank. And it would  
4           be really nice to see them thinned  
5           aggressively and see that litter,  
6           basically, come out of the ground.

7           MS. MCCURDY: Right. And we are, that  
8           is an aspect that we look at, you'll see  
9           that work. I know the field trial area  
10          would be a very good example of where  
11          we're -- but we look at -- and that's  
12          why I can't give you an exact, it really  
13          does depend on what we're trying to open  
14          up, for what purpose. But, again, I'm  
15          happy to connect you with a foresters.  
16          I'll have one of them come up and give  
17          you a little more information.

18          MR. TUGGLE: No, I'll catch them later  
19          on.

20          MS. MCCURDY: Okay.

21          MR. TUGGLE: But I just -- I think at  
22          this point on Forever Wild land that we  
23          should be pretty aggressive with our

1           thinnings. I don't think -- you know, I  
2           love cutting the timber, I'm a timber  
3           hog, I'll admit it. But I'm more  
4           interested on Forever Wild lands for  
5           aesthetics, recreation, and wildlife  
6           habitat that, that is aggressively  
7           thinning those pines.

8           MS. MCCURDY: Right. And we're  
9           looking at all -- we're looking at the  
10          recreation, we look at the habitat, and  
11          we're looking at the health. And with  
12          Forever Wild, for the benefit of the  
13          public, the timber that is harvested and  
14          any revenue from that, goes back to the  
15          general fund. But this Board has always  
16          looked at it from a management  
17          standpoint, not from a revenue  
18          standpoint, although, money's not a bad  
19          thing but that's not what we focus on.

20                 Ms. Stanley, did you have a  
21                 question?

22                 MS. STANLEY: Yes. Yes, I have a  
23                 question. I just want to understand --

1 I appreciate the work that's gone into  
2 the plan. And my question is, could you  
3 help me understand where in the  
4 financial information, under what line  
5 item, and what is the expected total  
6 amount and budget authority for this.  
7 This all sounds like a good idea. And  
8 how does it impact us financially?

9 MS. MCCURDY: All of the forestry work  
10 that we do would be out of the  
11 Stewardship account, so that will be  
12 under tab 2 --

13 MS. STANLEY: Two, page three?

14 MS. MCCURDY: Tab -- Well, it's 2-B.

15 MS. STANLEY: 2-B?

16 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, ma'am.

17 MS. STANLEY: I'm there.

18 MS. MCCURDY: And then, for example,  
19 it could be contractor work, because we  
20 have had to contract for a certain type  
21 of spraying for our seedlings, or it  
22 could be a purchase of a different type.  
23 So the exact line item -- I'm sorry, I'm

1 working with one hand today.

2 MS. STANLEY: So is it within this  
3 1.658-million in Stewardship Fund --

4 MS. MCCURDY: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: It's in  
6 there --

7 MS. STANLEY: Well, that's the past  
8 figure; it would be something that like  
9 in the future but less than the budgeted  
10 authority, I'd just like for that to be  
11 said for the record.

12 MS. MCCURDY: Yes. We have, so far,  
13 have never had to come back and ask for  
14 additional funds to manage, even with  
15 the Pine Beetle, we have focused in  
16 enough, generally, for the needed  
17 activities. Now, it's shifted more into  
18 the Pine Beetle tracts and those  
19 activities than what we had planned.  
20 But, yes, it is a Stewardship funded  
21 activity, we count that in. Actually,  
22 when we make our request for how much  
23 money we need, we have a separate page

1           that breaks out, for example,  
2           reforestation expense, for the Board.  
3           But it's included all in. We don't --  
4           This is not separate funds, so you're  
5           covered and we're good working within  
6           the financial report.

7           MS. STANLEY: Thank you.

8           MR. CHILDERS: Patti, any income from  
9           thinning or timber sales goes in the  
10          State General Fund, right?

11          MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir.

12          MR. CHILDERS: So we don't get that  
13          money.

14          MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir. And that's  
15          what I was saying before, the Board has  
16          never -- I mean, again, money is nice  
17          but this Board has never focused on  
18          revenue generation, they have focused on  
19          the purposes of the tract and the  
20          habitat and recreation aspects.

21          MR. PARNELL: Commissioner.

22          COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.  
23          Parnell.

1 MR. PARNELL: I'd like to make a  
2 motion to implement or to continue, as  
3 applicable, forest management activities  
4 for the fiscal year '26, as described in  
5 the memo dated August the 7th of '25.

6 DR. POWERS: Second.

7 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Motion by  
8 Mr. Parnell, seconded by many but I will  
9 credit that to Dr. Powers since this is  
10 his last meeting as the second. So all  
11 those in favor of the State Lands  
12 Division implementing this forest  
13 management plan, please say aye.

14 (Group response: Aye.)

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
16 opposed?

17 (No response.)

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: None  
19 opposed. Motion carries.

20 Thank you, sirs.

21 MS. MCCURDY: Thank you for your  
22 support.

23 MR. HARPER: Miss Patti, one question

1           before you leave that. I noticed  
2           Barbour WMA, you put a tract up for bid  
3           and no bids, is that -- that's pretty  
4           rare; isn't it, nobody bids on any --

5           MS. MCCURDY: It's been much better  
6           lately but, no, we do have -- we do  
7           have, every now and then -- I won't say  
8           it's all the time but we had a period of  
9           time where we had quite a problem with  
10          getting no bids. But it's been better  
11          lately. That one, we thought we would  
12          have a bid, we had work going on in the  
13          area, but we're trying again on that one  
14          but it does happen.

15          MR. SANDY HARRIS: The mill closing at  
16          Cedar Spring --

17          MR. HARPER: Yes, southwest --

18          MR. SANDY HARRIS: -- was the main  
19          cause of that.

20          MR. HARPER: Yeah.

21          MR. SANDY HARRIS: Yes, sir. We're  
22          hoping that we can do that one again  
23          next fall and the conditions will be

1 better in order to be able to sell it.

2 MR. HARPER: I figured the closing of  
3 the mill had a lot to do with it.

4 MR. SANDY HARRIS: That's correct.

5 MS. MCCURDY: That was Sandy Harris,  
6 who's one of my foresters. Galen Grider  
7 helps me, and -- where's Noah -- Noah  
8 Runyan helps, and that's in addition to  
9 the other certified foresters I have,  
10 Brandon Hunnicutt and Griff Johnson.  
11 So, thank y'all.

12 Okay. Any additional questions?

13 (No response.)

14 MS. MCCURDY: All right. So let's  
15 move to tab 5-H. We did have a speaker  
16 today, Mr. Dominick. Any time I receive  
17 a request from the public, I do present  
18 it to the Board for consideration and  
19 the staff goes through its normal  
20 process of evaluating, you know,  
21 whatever the request may be, if it's the  
22 signage one we focused on earlier or  
23 this one. So, your tab 5-H describes

1           the Tillman infrastructure request to  
2           have a long-term lease on a portion of  
3           the Thigpen Hill Phase One Tract. And  
4           your memo has a map that my staff made  
5           showing you the Forever Wild acreage,  
6           the usage part of it is SOA, part of it  
7           is recreation.

8                     And then the request that actually  
9           came from Mr. Dominick with Geonet on  
10          behalf of Tillman infrastructure. They  
11          are requesting to -- for the Board to  
12          consider placing a quarter acre on a  
13          term that is a five-year initial term  
14          and then would propose 16, five-year  
15          renewal period. So that's known as a  
16          long-term lease. Due to the nature of  
17          -- the competitive nature of the  
18          acreage, the term of the lease, et  
19          cetera, the potential amount of value on  
20          that, this would be one that the Board  
21          would have to, ultimately, offer out  
22          through our competitive bid process that  
23          my State Lands manages -- well, other

1 agencies as well. So, what I would like  
2 to do -- and because it's competitive,  
3 Tillman might not end up being  
4 successful being the one entering that  
5 transaction, even if you're okay with  
6 it. So this is a little different  
7 animal than what we've discussed in the  
8 past.

9 But what I wanted to bring up today,  
10 as I noted in the memo, is some feedback  
11 from the Board. We would require, if  
12 this went forward in some form, that the  
13 due -- any due diligence cost associated  
14 with it to get it to the competitive bid  
15 process, the appraisal, the survey,  
16 would be born by Tillman. Tillman says  
17 they understand that. They agree to  
18 that. They also understand it would  
19 have to be competitively bid and they  
20 might not be the one that would end up  
21 with the opportunity. But if the Board  
22 wants to move forward with this possible  
23 long-term lease, the value of which the

1 rate on that would be determined by an  
2 appraisal process -- you see offer made  
3 but, just like everything else, that  
4 would have to be appraised -- I would  
5 like -- because of the staff time and  
6 the expense that would incur, some  
7 expense, to see if there is a potential  
8 for this by Tillman, I would like the  
9 Board's feedback. I do need a motion of  
10 some sort if you want us, the staff, to  
11 continue these discussions, seeing if we  
12 can get this under lease. Revenue from  
13 this, because of the nature of this  
14 transaction, would come back into your  
15 Forever Wild Trust Account. But I'd  
16 like some feedback whether you'd like to  
17 continue, you want more time to think  
18 about it. You don't have to do anything  
19 today. But if you want staff actively  
20 working on this, then I'm going to need  
21 some form of motion. And I've given a  
22 couple of examples within a nutshell,  
23 either with us -- you're good with us

1 continuing those discussions,  
2 potentially Tillman engaging in the due  
3 diligence cost, the staff time  
4 associated with coming back to the Board  
5 with what the lease would look like,  
6 what the amount would be. Or if you  
7 wanted to go all the way to the end,  
8 I've given you a motion that would take  
9 you all the way to just us doing this,  
10 which would involve some discretion  
11 exercised by the Commissioner, as  
12 Chairman, reviewing the lease terms,  
13 reviewing the competitive notice, and  
14 being okay with the ultimate structure  
15 of the transaction. So, that's a lot.  
16 And if y'all want to dive into it,  
17 that's the request that's been made.

18 Yes, sir, Mr. Parnell.

19 MR. PARNELL: Patti, have you gone  
20 through this before or is this a first  
21 or -- it sounds like a first, from here.

22 MS. MCCURDY: It's a little different.  
23 We have talked in the past with another

1           -- and they're still interested in this,  
2           you are going to see this come back --  
3           going through the necessary competitive  
4           process to lease -- it's basically  
5           rights offshore for oyster aquaculture.  
6           The Board talked about it but really  
7           didn't move forward. That would  
8           similarly require a competitive. I do  
9           think this would be the first  
10          competitive process that we've gone  
11          through. What you are normally seeing  
12          are people who come and ask for land  
13          swaps, they work a little different;  
14          right-of-ways to their property, or  
15          water run, they need some acreage; they  
16          really were not of this nature.

17                 I do -- This is what -- with my  
18          Lands -- and with my State Lands hat on,  
19          we administer the Land Sales and Leasing  
20          Act and other competitive process for  
21          other State agencies. So that aspect is  
22          not what we do. But the Board has not  
23          really done that yet. It's just this

1 time it would require an additional  
2 step.

3 MR. PARNELL: I would make the motion  
4 that the staff continue the due  
5 diligence and report back to this Board  
6 after some due diligence.

7 MR. CHILDERS: So, this is first --  
8 Question.

9 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir.

10 MR. CHILDERS: So this is the first  
11 cell tower we've ever done, this bid,  
12 right?

13 MS. MCCURDY: First cell tower.

14 MR. CHILDERS: First time?

15 MS. MCCURDY: That we have bid out.  
16 We have other tracts that have cell  
17 tower inholdings. I don't require -- We  
18 could have acquired a tract that had one  
19 on it, but I don't remember -- remember  
20 that, I think most of them are  
21 inholdings. But we have not done this  
22 before for us to take the affirmative  
23 step to bring that type of transaction,

1 we have not.

2 MR. CHILDERS: Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.

4 So I have a motion by Mr. Parnell,  
5 seconded -- I drew a total blank --

6 MR. HARPER: Harper.

7 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Harper.

8 Thank you, Mr. Harper. I've got too  
9 many things on my mind. I apologize  
10 profusely. We've only served together  
11 for five years on the Board.

12 MS. MCCURDY: Little more caffeine and  
13 I'll get him another Mountain Dew.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I was  
15 rolling through all the names in my head  
16 and it would not come out. I apologize.  
17 So the motion has been made by Mr.  
18 Parnell and seconded by Mr. Harper for  
19 the staff to continue to work on this  
20 and bring back information to the Board  
21 at the future.

22 Any other questions about that? Is  
23 that clear?

1 (No response.)

2 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.

3 All those in favor, say aye.

4 (Group response: Aye.)

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any

6 opposed?

7 BOARD MEMBER: Nay.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.

9 One opposed, motion carries.

10 MS. MCCURDY: Two opposed.

11 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Two

12 opposed. All right. Let's raise hands.

13 So this is -- Well, this is not -- this

14 is just a -- Motion carries. All right.

15 MS. MCCURDY: All right.

16 Commissioner, let me double check my

17 list, speaking of probably needing more

18 caffeine. Okay. I think --

19 Commissioner, I believe -- I am going to

20 turn to my staff and pause for a second.

21 Commissioner, I think that's all,

22 unless there are any more questions on

23 anything.

1 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Perfect.

2 So the next order of business is to  
3 approve the minutes from the May first  
4 (sic) meeting, tab six. Is there a  
5 motion to approve the minutes?

6 MR. HARRIS: So moved.

7 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Harris.

8 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second.

9 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
10 Dr. McClintock. Any changes,  
11 corrections, additions to the minutes?

12 (No response.)

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All right.  
14 All those in favor of approving the  
15 minutes from the May 1, 2025, meeting,  
16 please say aye.

17 (Group response: Aye.)

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
19 opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Motion  
22 carries.

23 The next meeting will be November

1           6th at the M. Barnett Lawley Forever  
2           Wild Field Trial area in Hale County.  
3           Surely by then they will be finished  
4           paving and have all the other worked  
5           out; that was the problem this time  
6           because of the weather and some other  
7           things, they didn't have -- the paving  
8           was not going to be finished in time for  
9           this meeting. So we'll have our meeting  
10          there in November. Weather should be  
11          nice, maybe we can roll the doors up and  
12          just have a fine meeting in the new  
13          event space. I'm very much looking  
14          forward to getting that open.

15                 So, at this time I would like to ask  
16                 Dr. Sean Powers to join me up front.

17                 Dr. Powers and I have been friends for  
18                 a very long time. And when we got the  
19                 letter that he was being appointed to  
20                 the Forever Wild Board to be a member  
21                 back in 2019, I was very, very happy for  
22                 that. I had no idea that it was coming,  
23                 the letter, but I have thoroughly

1           enjoyed working with you for many years  
2           on the marine science side, and over the  
3           last six years on the Forever Wild  
4           Board. I think there's been a lot of  
5           good work that's taken place. You were  
6           a very good Board member, very prepared,  
7           always asked great questions and had  
8           good insight on things. And I am surely  
9           going to miss you on the Board.

10           When we were talking about this was  
11           his last meeting and we were getting a  
12           certificate, I said, there's no way it's  
13           been six years already. But it has. I  
14           actually went back and looked it up  
15           because I didn't believe that, I didn't  
16           think it had been that long. But I  
17           certainly appreciate serving with you in  
18           this capacity. Thank you so much for  
19           your diligent work on the Board and the  
20           good things that have happened over the  
21           last six years. And, hopefully, we'll  
22           be able to work -- continue to work  
23           together on many facets for years to

1           come.

2                   Thank you so much.

3                   (Applause.)

4           DR. POWERS:   And I did tell Chris when  
5 he asked what I thought about it, I get  
6 -- I'm fortunate, I guess, to be asked  
7 to do a lot of service work, what us  
8 academics call it, within the State or  
9 if people ask you to do it. And I'm  
10 fortunate to help with some federal  
11 fisheries management work. But I told  
12 Chris, this is the most rewarding thing  
13 I've done. A lot of times you don't  
14 think -- all the years of service I've  
15 done probably hasn't amounted to  
16 anything but paperwork on a shelf but  
17 this -- this means a lot. It's a  
18 wonderful program. Patti's staff is  
19 exceptional. So, thank you.

20           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
21 sir.

22                   (Applause.)

23           COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And Dr.

1 Charlie Martin from the University of  
2 South Alabama has been appointed to fill  
3 this role and he'll be at the meetings  
4 beginning in November, so there will be  
5 some continuity from the University of  
6 South Alabama and geographically in  
7 Southern Alabama. I'm happy to have him  
8 onboard.

9 Is there anything else anything  
10 else? Anything else?

11 (No response.)

12 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I'll  
13 entertain a motion to adjourn.

14 BOARD MEMBER: So moved.

15 DR. POWERS: Second.

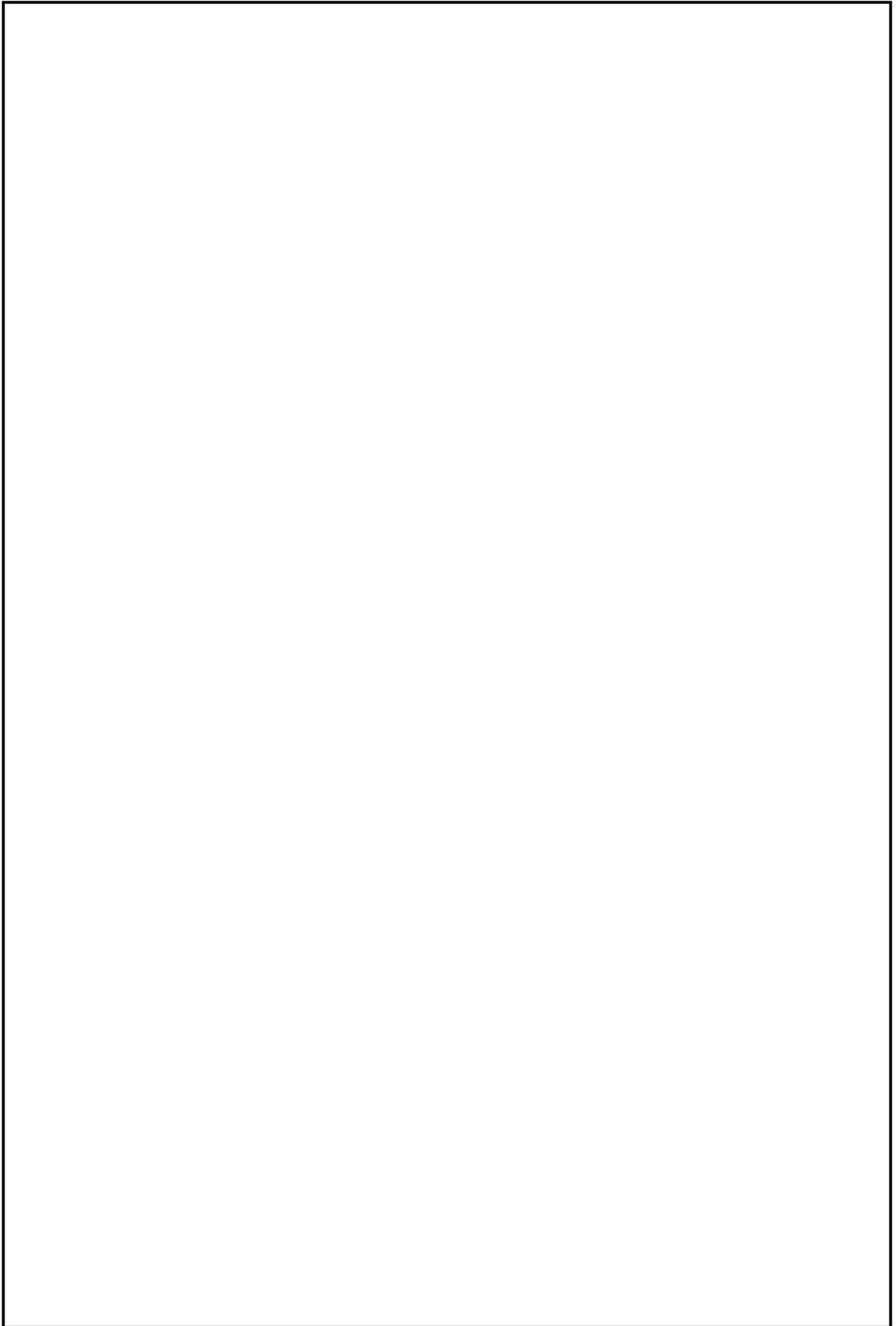
16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So moved.  
17 All those in favor, say aye.

18 (Group response: Aye.)

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: We are  
20 adjourned. Thank you all.

21 (WHEREUPON, the above and foregoing  
22 Board meeting was concluded at 12:13  
23 p.m.)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23



## C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ALABAMA

COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY

I hereby certify that the above proceedings were taken down by me and transcribed by me using computer-aided transcription and that the above is a true and correct transcript of said proceedings to the best of my abilities.

I further certify that I am neither of kin nor of counsel to any of the parties nor in any way financially interested in the outcome of this case.

I further certify that I am duly licensed by the Alabama Board of Court Reporting as a Certified Court Reporter as evidenced by the CCR number following my name found below.

So certified this 24th day of September, 2025.

/s/Jamie McCracken  
Jamie McCracken, CCR#451