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MINUTES OF THE
FOREVER WILD BOARD MEETING
Coastal Alabama Community College
L.D. Owen Performing Arts Center
1900 Highway 31 South
Bay Minette, Alabama
May 5, 2022
10:00 a.m.

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Transcript of Proceedings

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PROCEEDINGS, taken before Stacey
L. Johnson, Certified Court Reporter and
Commissioner for the State of Alabama at
Coastal Alabama Community College,
L.D. Owen Performing Arts Center,
1900 Highway 31 South, Bay Minette,
Alabama, on the 5th day of May, 2022,
commencing at 10:00 a.m.

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BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioner Chris Blankenship, Chairman
Mr. James "Mickey" Childers
Mr. Reginald N. Holloway
Dr. Sean P. Powers
Dr. John Valentine
Mr. David Wright
Mr. Rick Oates
Dr. Heather Howell
Dr. James McClintock
Mr. Jack Darnall

* * * * *

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Well, good
2 morning, everybody, and welcome to the
3 quarterly meeting of the Forever Wild Land
4 Trust Board. I'm Chris Blankenship, the
5 Commissioner of the Department of
6 Conservation and the Chairman of the
7 Forever Wild Board, and I'm excited to be
8 here in Bay Minette today.

9 Let me call the roll and make sure
10 we have a quorum, and then I'm going to
11 recognize Dr. Craig Pouncey to make some
12 opening comments. If you are here, please
13 indicate that when I call your name.

14 Chris Blankenship, here.

15 Mickey Childers?

16 MR. CHILDERS: Here.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Jack Darnall?

18 MR. DARNALL: Here.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

20 MR. HOLLOWAY: Here.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Howell?

22 DR. HOWELL: Here.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

1 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Here.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Rick Oates?

3 MR. OATES: Here.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

5 DR. POWERS: Here.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Valentine?

7 DR. VALENTINE: Here.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

9 MR. WRIGHT: Here.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Raymond Jones,
11 Dr. Neumann, Dr. Saloom, Mr. Satterfield,
12 and Dr. Sims are not present. That gives
13 us ten. We do have a quorum.

14 I would like to say how much I
15 appreciate Coastal Alabama Community
16 College for hosting us here. It is
17 definitely very difficult for me not to
18 call this Faulkner State Community College
19 after growing up in Mobile. When I was on
20 the Scholars' Bowl team in high school,
21 this is where we had all of our Scholars'
22 Bowl matches was over here. And many of
23 you know, I started my career as a

1 Conservation Enforcement Officer and
2 attended the police academy here at
3 Coastal Alabama Community College about
4 28 years ago. I have a great picture of
5 me and my daughter that I was holding in
6 the lobby when she was about four months
7 old when I graduated, and both of us were
8 a lot smaller then than we are now. But
9 it kind of brings back memories. When I
10 turned onto the road to come back here, it
11 brought back a lot of memories from
12 28 years ago. So very, very glad to be
13 here in South Alabama and thank you so
14 much for hosting us.

15 Dr. Pouncey, would you like to
16 make a couple of opening comments?

17 DR. POUNCEY: Thank you very much.

18 We just want to welcome you on
19 behalf of Chancellor Jimmy Baker. We
20 understand the important work that you do.

21 I'm kind of an old, grounded
22 country boy myself, and fortunately
23 because of cooperation over my entire

1 career with the Lands Division, we've been
2 able to help Alabama out a great deal.

3 I remember the first time I went
4 to the State Department in 2003 -- and I
5 typically stayed on the two-lane farmer
6 market roads and helped people that didn't
7 have resources -- and we had gone through
8 two back-to-back years of proration and,
9 therefore, Franklin County was up there
10 totally broke. Well, nobody at the State
11 Department knew anything about
12 16th Sections Land, but I knew a little
13 bit about timber coming from
14 Crenshaw County where I currently have a
15 farm. But anyway, we bailed that school
16 system out with that sale of that timber.
17 Now, it hadn't been cut in 40 years and it
18 was -- but, hey, we got 1.2 million
19 dollars out of it, and we kept that school
20 system afloat.

21 The second thing I remember,
22 people in your position have to make
23 tough, tough decisions. Oftentimes, those

1 decisions don't occur without controversy.
2 I was in Hale County one night and the
3 superintendent, Ms. Osie Pickens, had to
4 make a tough decision. There was a public
5 meeting about the closure of Sunshine High
6 School, and so, you know how people were
7 all fired up about that, closing our
8 community school, this and that. Osie did
9 what she had to do and that allowed her to
10 move that school system forward and build
11 a new tech center. One of our Board
12 members stood up in front of her and spoke
13 on her behalf, said, people, this isn't
14 about turning the power off tomorrow. The
15 sign of a great society is when older men
16 plant trees from which they will never
17 enjoy the shade. That's what y'all do.
18 Your actions every day are to provide for
19 the next generation.

20 I'm so pleased here at Coastal
21 because we have an instructor, Schuyler
22 Huff -- and I know y'all have got a lot to
23 do, but I'm so excited. He's formed a

1 partnership with West Alabama and Coastal
2 Community College, and he's got student
3 interns that have an eradication program
4 this summer for invasive species and feral
5 hogs. And I just wanted Schuyler to come
6 up and tell y'all about it just a minute.

7 MR. HUFF: Thank you, Dr. Pouncey.
8 Good morning, Board.

9 So here in the United States,
10 invasive species are affecting our
11 country, so those affect human health,
12 they affect natural resources, and even
13 affect our environment. It costs the
14 United States over 100 million dollars
15 yearly. Here locally, we're working with
16 the feral swine and Cogon grass, which we
17 have here. So what the interns do is they
18 go out and they're working with boots on
19 the ground spraying Cogon grass and
20 setting up traps, trapping pigs. And in
21 addition, we're also working with those
22 landowners, giving them education and
23 helping them with forest management and

1 even those non-timber forest products.
2 We're also helping those landowners with
3 education and soil health and even
4 pollinators, because pollinators are some
5 of the most important assets on Earth.
6 And that's what we're doing here, not just
7 this summer. We've been doing that the
8 last three years in partnership with the
9 University of West Alabama. So I thank
10 you all for what y'all are doing and
11 continue to do.

12 DR. POUNCEY: Thank y'all for being
13 here, and if there's any way we can help
14 out, we'll be glad to. Mr. Huff needs to
15 go back. He's giving a final exam this
16 morning.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Well, before
18 you go, Mr. Huff, I just want to tell you
19 thank you for coming, thank you for what
20 you're doing on the invasive species and
21 working with students from West Alabama
22 and from Coastal Community College. I
23 know you've got to give a final exam, but

1 any of these guys in the green shirts
2 would love to talk to your students about
3 coming to work for us, so we --

4 MR. HUFF: We have one right there.
5 Raise your hand. One of our former
6 students right there.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: That's great.
8 So we have gotten one.

9 MS. MCCURDY: He's mine.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: We would love
11 to be able to take some of your students
12 and put them to work from now on. So
13 thank you so much for what you do and
14 thank you for coming today.

15 Thank you, Dr. Pouncey, for
16 hosting us here.

17 Now we'll move into the public
18 comments. We only have a few speakers
19 today, but please still limit your
20 comments to three minutes, if at all
21 possible. And I may give a little leeway
22 today since we have so few speakers, but
23 just be respectful, please, of everybody's

1 time.

2 The first speaker is Chad
3 Scroggins with Shelby County on the Peel
4 property Tab 4b page 11, 4B page 11. Give
5 everybody just a second.

6 All right, sir. Thank you.

7 MR. SCROGGINS: Thank you all for
8 letting me be here today. My name is Chad
9 Scroggins. I'm the county manager in
10 Shelby County.

11 This piece of property, not
12 knowing exactly what you're looking at,
13 but this piece of property is directly
14 adjacent to Cahaba River Park. Cahaba
15 River Park is a joint project that Forever
16 Wild has invested in and purchased
17 approximately 1400 acres that is added to
18 the 400 acres that Shelby County owns
19 along the Cahaba River. The Cahaba River
20 in that particular area is where we see
21 the confluence of creeks that are coming
22 out of Jefferson County and more developed
23 land. It's a great place to recreate

1 today. Shelby County has invested about
2 \$600,000 recently in improving the road
3 and access there. We do all of the
4 maintenance associated with Cahaba River
5 Park. Since the ribbon cutting, we've
6 added additional trails through the RTP
7 program all to Cahaba River Park.

8 But this particular property is
9 the tip of the boot per se, and it is --
10 basically, you have to come through the
11 Forever Wild property to get to this tip.
12 And the property owner does that. He does
13 that during hunting season. But we are
14 concerned that he might sell it to someone
15 who may want to access it more, maybe
16 potentially want to develop this
17 particular tip. We believe that that
18 additional river frontage would be, you
19 know, well used by canoeists and others
20 who might want to hike and go out and see
21 this extremely good opportunity for
22 outdoor recreation. We've developed this
23 part to allow people to have an

1 opportunity to actually stick their toes
2 into the Cahaba River.

3 As you know, there's many, many
4 species and a lot of diversity that is
5 there in the Cahaba River and not found
6 anywhere else in the U.S. We believe that
7 if you stick your toes in that river, you
8 might want to protect it and want to
9 preserve and conserve it.

10 So as this progresses, we would
11 like you to know that Shelby County will
12 take over or handle all expenses that are
13 associated with maintenance like we've
14 done with other properties in
15 Shelby County. I also want you to know
16 that we're very thankful for your
17 investment in Shelby County recently, the
18 Belcher property that's adjacent to Oak
19 Mountain State Park, and certainly this
20 area here at Cahaba River Park. We also
21 want you to know that if -- you know,
22 we've seen the letters from the legislator
23 talking about returning property taxes and

1 things of that nature. Shelby County is
2 not a part of that. We know the
3 investment that you make creates sales tax
4 generation when people come. We
5 understand that creates lodging tax
6 generation when people come and stay and
7 look at these properties. So we are fully
8 behind you. We thank you for every dime
9 that you invest in Shelby County, and we
10 would ask that you would consider
11 progressing this particular piece of
12 property because of its location.

13 Thank you for your time.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any questions
15 for Chad?

16 Dr. Powers?

17 DR. POWERS: So is that road access to
18 the river from there, or can you only
19 approach the property on canoe or boat
20 from the river side?

21 MR. SCROGGINS: So the Cahaba River
22 Park property itself and the Forever Wild
23 property, there is road access. As a

1 matter of fact, that was the 600,000 that
2 we just improved that. It was originally
3 a dirt road and then gravel. We --
4 actually, it's a paved road now. It's
5 County Road 251. This particular parcel
6 there is a gravel road. You can kind of
7 see a bold line coming through from the
8 Forever Wild and Cahaba River Park, but
9 then it kind of -- it becomes like a pig
10 trail more or less on the map. There's a
11 gate there prohibiting motorized access,
12 but there is a road all the way to the
13 river. It splits as it comes into the
14 property, and there's a road there. We
15 would improve that to a level that people
16 could certainly hike and bike. And really
17 if you want to extend motorized at that
18 point, we can make that happen.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you. I
20 do want to give you credit while you're
21 here. There are several people that
22 attended the Belcher celebration in
23 Birmingham from the Board, but I want to

1 always thank Shelby County for being such
2 a good partner. They provided shuttle
3 buses that would get us from the church
4 parking lot into the property so that we
5 could get the amount -- the best amount of
6 people in there with the least amount of
7 impact to the property from vehicular
8 traffic. So thank you always for being
9 such a good partner. And we didn't call
10 and ask for that. I think they called and
11 told us they could do that for us, which
12 is -- that's totally -- that's a totally
13 different level of commitment than saying
14 yes when they actually pick up the phone
15 and call and see a need. So thank you,
16 Chad and Shelby County, for all of your
17 support.

18 MR. SCROGGINS: And anything that
19 Forever Wild Board or Department of
20 Conservation needs, we're here to help.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: The next
22 speaker is Ms. Charmaine White on the
23 Belcher tract Phase II. This is not -- it

1 has been nominated but has not yet been
2 scored and available for the Board to
3 consider at this meeting. The nomination
4 was received too close to the meeting to
5 finish that up. So you don't have
6 anything in your packet about it, but it's
7 adjacent to the Belcher property that was
8 just acquired.

9 MS. WHITE: So today I just want to
10 speak in support of the acquisition
11 because, of course, it's not in your
12 packet today.

13 So this will be a 276-acre tract
14 owned by EBSCO Industries. EBSCO realizes
15 that the property's scenic and
16 recreational value is very great and that
17 we need to protect it from development.
18 So protection of this tract is critical to
19 protection of the viewshed of the King's
20 Chair Overlook, which is one of the most
21 popular hiking destinations at Oak
22 Mountain State Park. And inclusion of
23 this property into Oak Mountain State Park

1 would be casting a legacy for both EBSCO
2 and Forever Wild. So once it is in your
3 packet, please be sure to give it great
4 consideration.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,
7 Charmaine.

8 The next speaker is Mr. Steve
9 Northcutt, also with the Nature
10 Conservancy, to talk about the Red Hills
11 Flat Creek -- the two phases, IV and V.
12 Phase IV is Tab 3b page 5 in your packet,
13 3b page 5, and Phase V is 4B page 27. So
14 3b 5, 4B 27. And since Charmaine --
15 you've asked for six minutes because
16 you're speaking on two properties. Since
17 Charmaine didn't use all her time, I'll
18 give you a little leeway. How about that?

19 MR. NORTHCUTT: I'll try to be brief,
20 but I want to make sure I'm clear on
21 what -- so the Red Hills is a project area
22 that the Board has spent considerable
23 capital on. If you go back to 2007, the

1 Nature Conservancy started looking at this
2 area with the Department of Conservation &
3 Natural Resources thinking about is there
4 a way we can work together to buy
5 properties here. So the first maybe 44-,
6 4800 acres of the property, the Nature
7 Conservancy acquired and sold off in
8 phases to Forever Wild. So we've got a
9 stake in this area, and it's important to
10 us and I think it's important to the
11 citizens of Alabama.

12 What's interesting about this area
13 is that Red Hills salamander, the key
14 species that kind of has triggered federal
15 investment here, is a threatened and
16 endangered species. This animal only
17 occurs in a handful of sites in Alabama.
18 Nowhere else on Earth. And the reason
19 that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife is in charge
20 of enforcing the Endangered Species Act,
21 they're so interested in this area, it's
22 not only just the salamander, but this
23 area has a very unique topography,

1 geography. It has these steep ravines.
2 There's more -- in terms of hardwood,
3 there's more oak species in the Red Hills
4 than the entire Great Smoky Mountains
5 National Park.

6 Traditionally, we've been upland
7 longleaf pine. And there's still quite a
8 bit of natural longleaf in the area, great
9 for outdoor enthusiasts for hiking, nature
10 photography, excellent hunting for deer
11 and turkey, great hiking trails.

12 The Flat Creek designation is part
13 of a Strategic Habitat Unit, an SHU, the
14 USGS and Fish & Wildlife have designated
15 it because of rare mussels. So I wanted
16 to speak a bit about that and mention that
17 over the series of years since 2008, U.S.
18 Fish & Wildlife has provided over
19 15 million dollars for land acquisition
20 through two programs, Section 6 Recovery
21 and through HCP, Habitat Conservation
22 Plan, which is a designation that a
23 private landowner, usually timber

1 companies, would enter into with U.S. Fish
2 & Wildlife and that would allow them not
3 to be penalized for taking a species like
4 Red Hills salamander if they agree to
5 protect these intact slopes. The
6 salamanders will burrow into these slope
7 habitats. They need to have good canopy
8 covers so that you have moisture and
9 shade. And so they basically ask them not
10 to harvest timber in these slope areas.
11 So if they enter into that HCP, later on
12 it allows U.S. Fish & Wildlife to provide
13 funding through that HCP land acquisition
14 pot. So in a way, it's helped acquire
15 property because you've leveraged your
16 money, I think about 15 million dollars
17 from U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and I don't
18 know if it's exactly right but I think
19 maybe 10 or 11 million dollars of State
20 match.

21 So having said that, I've got two
22 requests for you to consider. The first
23 is what we call Flat Creek Phase IV, and

1 that's a 760-acre parcel that you'll see
2 that's -- at the last Board meeting, you
3 indicated that you wanted a first
4 appraisal -- excuse me -- a second
5 appraisal. That second appraisal has been
6 done. Excuse me. Let me back up. The
7 first appraisal has been done on that
8 property, and today, I would ask you to
9 consider a second appraisal and close
10 because the Department was able to with
11 three days' notice write a grant to get
12 what we call reverted funds.

13 When the properties across the
14 United States are trying to be acquired
15 with Fish & Wildlife money, some of them
16 failed. The landowners changed their
17 mind, the appraisals don't come in where
18 they ought to, so the money is reverted
19 back to U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and they'll
20 give you a very quick turnaround if you
21 have a ready-to-go project -- you know,
22 they kind of -- you have something you
23 could do. And Doug Deaton and the

1 Department in like two days wrote a grant
2 request, and he got 1.2 million dollars.
3 So that money could be used for the
4 760-acre parcel. So, again, without
5 confusing you, I would ask today to
6 consider a second appraisal and close
7 using those grant funds that have been
8 awarded for Phase IV.

9 Now, the other request that I
10 would like the Board to consider is to the
11 south of this property is what you call
12 Phase V, and that's the end of the
13 property ownership in this larger block
14 that is owned by Conservation Resources.
15 That's the landowner -- the patient
16 landowner that's held these properties
17 over the years as you've been able to buy
18 these properties in sizes that usually met
19 grant funds. So that property, I would
20 ask the Board to consider a first
21 appraisal on so that it would be in line
22 for grant funds that Doug has already
23 requested from U.S. Fish & Wildlife. And

1 as you can hear, there is a tremendous
2 track record of Fish & Wildlife invested
3 in this area. And so today, I'm asking
4 you to consider those two.

5 Again, I'll go back over. The
6 760 acres would be a motion to get a
7 second appraisal and close, Phase V. The
8 1720 acres would be a motion for a first
9 appraisal with expectation and hope that
10 you would be getting grant funds this
11 summer. It depends on when they announce,
12 but he's already requested that funding.
13 And after all that if you have any
14 questions, I'll be glad to answer them.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any questions
16 for Steve?

17 Thank you, sir.

18 That's all the green slips I have
19 filled out for people to speak, so unless
20 I see a hand that somebody didn't get a
21 chance -- got here late and didn't get a
22 chance to fill that out, that will
23 conclude our public comment period.

1 All right. Thank you.

2 Now it's the time that we
3 generally move into executive session to
4 discuss tract appraisal values. By
5 regulation, appraised values are
6 confidential during periods of
7 negotiation. Accordingly, in order to
8 discuss tract appraisal values, the Board
9 will need to go into recess for an
10 executive session.

11 Is there a motion for the Board to
12 now recess to attend an executive session?

13 DR. POWERS: So moved.

14 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers made
16 the motion. I think that was Mr. Holloway
17 that seconded.

18 MR. HOLLOWAY: No, Dr. McClintock.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Oh,
20 Dr. McClintock. Thank you.

21 As I call your name, please state
22 your position on the motion to recess.

23 Those in favor, please say aye. And if

1 you are opposed, please indicate by saying
2 nay.

3 Chris Blankenship, aye.

4 Mr. Childers?

5 MR. CHILDERS: Aye.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

7 MR. DARNALL: Aye.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

9 MR. HOLLOWAY: Aye.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Howell?

11 DR. HOWELL: Aye.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

13 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Aye.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Oates?

15 MR. OATES: Aye.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

17 DR. POWERS: Aye.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Valentine?

19 DR. VALENTINE: Aye.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

21 MR. WRIGHT: Aye.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All are in
23 favor. We will now be in recess for

1 executive session. It is 10:22. We hope
2 to return in 25 minutes.

3 MS. MCCURDY: Members, please grab
4 your packets. And it's a little bit of a
5 walk, but it's a very nice room. The
6 restrooms are in the other building, so
7 just look for staff along the way.

8 (Recess from 10:23 a.m. to
9 10:45 a.m.)

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I have
11 everybody back. We are back out of
12 executive session and have returned to the
13 normal meeting at 10:45. I would like to
14 commend the Board. Y'all have become very
15 efficient at the executive session. We're
16 doing this stuff faster than I ever
17 remember, so thank y'all for your work.

18 The next part of the program is
19 the program status report, and I think
20 that is you, Ms. McCurdy.

21 MS. MCCURDY: It is. And,
22 Commissioner, I just want to take a second
23 to follow up on Dr. Pouncey's remarks. I

1 wanted to highlight that the green shirt
2 he references is one of our State Lands
3 Division staff members, and it's Tom King.
4 Tom, wave. Tom is embarrassed now. At
5 least I'm not making you sing or anything.
6 But Tom is our newest Conservation
7 Enforcement Officer. He's been doing a
8 great job and is really a great example of
9 the fine young men and women that the
10 college produces. So I just wanted to
11 recognize Tom and also claim him as State
12 Lands Division.

13 So I'll move into the program
14 status report. If the Board will be sure
15 that you have from your green folder the
16 Tab 2a. It will be the slightly yellow
17 page of paper. This financial overview is
18 what I do each meeting for the Board and
19 for the public to detail the properties we
20 have in closing and also to -- in part to
21 get to the amount of money that is
22 currently available for Board action. So
23 I'm going to run through the properties

1 that we actively have in closing and give
2 you your total, and I also want to update
3 you on a couple of declined offers since
4 our last meeting.

5 So we have the Red Hills-Parris
6 Trust Addition. Actually, that one is
7 scheduled to close Monday, so that should
8 be on the closed page at our next meeting.
9 And also the Styx River Wetlands tract in
10 Baldwin County is very close to closing
11 also. The other properties that are in
12 the closing process but not quite as fully
13 baked as those two transactions include
14 the Bon Secour River Wetlands Addition in
15 Baldwin County, Coldwater Mountain-McVey
16 Addition, Calhoun County.

17 And to update the Board, after --
18 I appreciate the Board's patience in
19 allowing staff to continue discussions
20 with that landowner. They did end up
21 accepting the offer and agreed to move
22 forward in that process, so thank you for
23 your patience on that one. Also, the

1 D'Olive Bay Addition at Baldwin County.

2 We have a cash balance in the
3 account of about 19.4 million, but once I
4 subtract those obligations -- because
5 those are tracts the Board said to go get
6 unless we run into difficulty -- the
7 resulting amount of the unencumbered
8 balance available for the Board is just at
9 about 18 million. And you are within your
10 statutory budget spending authority, so no
11 issue there.

12 I will now mention you will see
13 two additions on the next page as to the
14 listing of this fiscal year
15 Closed/Declined properties, so I'm going
16 to run through those.

17 The Cedar Creek Addition, after a
18 pretty good period of delay, we were
19 informed by the landowner they were not
20 going to proceed with that transaction.
21 They felt that they could obtain a premium
22 on the private market above the appraised
23 value which we were able to offer.

1 Next, the Coldwater Mountain-
2 Carroll Addition, that one has closed.

3 Hollins WMA Addition is another
4 property that, after some delay, the
5 landowner informed us that they would not
6 be proceeding. They too felt that the
7 appraised value did not match their
8 opportunities that might be available in
9 the future.

10 We have closed Oak Mountain State
11 Park-Belcher Lake Addition, and we have
12 closed Thigpen Hill Option A Phase II also
13 in this fiscal year.

14 So that is an update as to all of
15 the properties that the Board had motioned
16 for us to proceed -- to try to proceed to
17 closing on. Any questions from the Board
18 on those tracts or those figures?

19 Yes, sir, Dr. Powers?

20 DR. POWERS: I'm still learning a
21 little bit, I think, about everything. So
22 one final question.

23 So the constitutional amendment

1 says that we have to go with the appraised
2 value, right? We have no -- if someone
3 says they think it's worth more and we
4 really wanted the property, we really
5 can't do anything?

6 MS. MCCURDY: The constitutional
7 provision actually does provide a super
8 majority opportunity if the Board so
9 chooses. The Board has never in the
10 history of the program chosen to take
11 advantage of that. So it does require
12 more votes, but there is some flexibility
13 in the amendment that you could take
14 advantage of if you ever desired to do so.

15 Any additional questions?

16 All right. I will now move to
17 Tab 2b also in your green folder, slightly
18 updated. This is the Stewardship Fund
19 account that we update the Board on. The
20 Board has given us previously authority to
21 spend up to 1.5 million dollars. We
22 currently still have a good bit of money
23 reflected. Actually, 1.3 million.

1 However, there's some work we cannot --
2 well, we do not do during hunting season
3 and turkey. As you know, we just
4 concluded turkey season, so there will be
5 a flurry of work.

6 We also had to have a glitch
7 corrected as to the authority within --
8 it's a State's -- State processing. But
9 anyway, we were just able to get that
10 corrected, so that held up a few
11 purchases. But they're all loaded now and
12 so you will see a decline at the next
13 meeting, but we are fine for this fiscal
14 year. We haven't identified any emergency
15 or unforeseen significant need that we
16 don't think we'll be able to accomplish
17 with this amount in this fiscal year.

18 You will also see at the bottom of
19 Tab 2b the balances as of the net assets.
20 We usually give you the close of the
21 fiscal year, and then the most recent
22 update we have, as you'll see in Tab 2c,
23 that the treasurer's office prepares for

1 us on net value right now, the market
2 value of those funds, and the current is
3 over about 45.6 million. So that is
4 still -- the management of that is still
5 going very well as the Board can see.

6 Any questions on Stewardship,
7 either 2b or 2c?

8 All right. Then, we'll move to
9 Tab 3a. This is the report of tracts that
10 have -- we have received appraisals on,
11 and there is also an update in your green
12 folder for these tracts. So I will run
13 down these -- the ones we have received
14 appraisals on and then also update the
15 Board as to the status of some appraisals
16 that have been motioned for but we do not
17 have back in hand yet.

18 The appraisals that we have are
19 the Freedom Hills WMA-Boddie Addition,
20 Colbert County; Perdido WMA-Snowden Branch
21 Addition, Baldwin County; Red Hills-Flat
22 Creek Phase IV, Monroe County. We also
23 literally after we left the office

1 yesterday to come down to set up for the
2 meeting did receive in the appraisal for
3 the Turkey Creek Nature Preserve-Parker
4 Addition. The staff has not had time to
5 fully review that appraisal. It is in.
6 It would be, therefore, available to the
7 Board. The Board could proceed, but I
8 will tell you if we after review found
9 anything we needed to correct in the
10 appraisal, we would need to come back to
11 the Board. But the good news is we do
12 have that one in hand. We are still
13 waiting on -- it's been initiated but
14 we've not yet received the appraisal for
15 the Coldwater Mountain-Robertson Addition,
16 but we should have that for the next
17 meeting for the Board. That reflects the
18 status of all the tracts for which you
19 motioned for a first appraisal.

20 I do want to provide an update
21 that you will see as to an appraisal that
22 our Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries
23 Division, Chuck Sykes' division, proceeded

1 with obtaining Yellow Book appraisals as
2 was determined to be required in
3 connection with both the Cahaba
4 WMA-Falling Rock Addition and the Sam R.
5 Murphy WMA-Cantrell Mill Creek tract. So
6 we do have appraisals in that was done by
7 one of the Department's appraisers, and we
8 have reviewed those. They would be ready
9 if the Board chose to take action, but a
10 motion would require either adoption of
11 this appraisal or obtaining our own
12 appraisal. But if the Board has any
13 interest when we get in the general
14 discussion portion, I will be happy to
15 walk you through that, but that was
16 another kind of latecomer that we were
17 able to get reflected in your green folder
18 but that is, as it's done from time to
19 time, an appraisal that we do not pay for
20 but could adopt if you choose.

21 With all of that, I guess I didn't
22 do the exact math on this, but you are
23 coming up on and just exceeding about over

1 3 million dollars worth of in-hand
2 appraisals. But this is the time where I
3 can tell you you actually do have more
4 money than you have appraisals sitting on
5 that sheet, so I guess that's good news.
6 But that is the detail for the financial
7 information and the appraised nomination
8 overview. Let me stop there to see if
9 anyone has any questions.

10 MR. CHILDERS: Patti?

11 MS. MCCURDY: Oh, I'm sorry. Yes,
12 sir, Mr. Childers?

13 MR. CHILDERS: On the Wildlife &
14 Freshwater Fisheries request or appraisal,
15 that's saying that that's the same as a
16 second appraisal that we would do?

17 MS. MCCURDY: No, sir. We could
18 adopt -- it could be adopted as our first
19 appraisal, so it would save that step. So
20 you'll see those tracts reflected in
21 Tab 4b because they're still short list
22 nominations, but we could adopt them --
23 you could adopt that appraisal as our

1 first appraisal as a motion for staff to
2 proceed with the second appraisal and
3 proceed to purchase. It's just a little
4 wordier motion that you could skip
5 basically to the motion to purchase.

6 MR. CHILDERS: Or we could proceed and
7 accept that appraisal and accept the
8 purchase?

9 MS. MCCURDY: Not the purchase. All
10 you would be doing would be counting it as
11 a first appraisal.

12 MR. CHILDERS: Okay. Thank you.

13 MS. MCCURDY: But I can help any of
14 y'all with that if you desire to do that
15 in the general discussion motion portion.

16 Any additional questions?

17 Yes, sir, Dr. Powers?

18 DR. POWERS: And this might be more of
19 a question when you get to the grants
20 discussion. Do you have an idea from
21 Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries how --
22 when do they need us to make a decision
23 before they would jeopardize the

1 75 percent?

2 MS. MCCURDY: I do have some idea, but
3 let's run through that when we get to the
4 grants because I'll also give you
5 deadlines on all the grant opportunities
6 at that time. That is a great question,
7 though.

8 Any additional questions?

9 Okay. So if you will move into
10 Tab 5a. There is a supplemental Tab 5a in
11 your green folder, so if you could pull
12 that out. And, Keith, I'm going to get
13 you -- Gauldin -- why don't you come on up
14 here and just sit here because if we do
15 have a question -- or you do whatever --
16 if there is a question, I'll have you
17 right here.

18 MR. GAULDIN: Sure.

19 MS. MCCURDY: Okay. So I'm going to
20 work through Tab 5a. That is the Grant
21 Status Report. That's where we try to
22 update the Board on the progress towards
23 closing on any tracts that do have grant

1 funds or applications for grants we have
2 filed but have not heard back on. I try
3 to organize them in this by the stage,
4 whether they're in close, they're
5 appraised, or they're a short list
6 nomination.

7 All right. Of the tracts that
8 require no additional Board action but are
9 just an update of where we are using grant
10 funds, both the Bon Secour River Wetlands
11 Addition and the D'Olive Bay Addition and
12 the Styx River Wetlands is in some form of
13 closing process because you approved them
14 for acquisition. The Cedar Creek SOA was
15 a 75/25 split opportunity offered by
16 Wildlife, but, again, the owner has
17 removed that tract from further
18 consideration so that's no longer an
19 opportunity. But the Bon Secour River
20 Wetlands, the D'Olive Bay Addition, and
21 the Styx River Wetlands, all three tracts
22 are benefiting from awards that staff was
23 able to obtain under the National Coastal

1 Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. We
2 each year evaluate those opportunities and
3 apply where we think we have tracts that
4 meet those grant program requirements.

5 Under Appraised Nominations With
6 Grant Awards, we have the Red Hills-Flat
7 Creek Phase IV, and that is an opportunity
8 for Recovery Land Acquisition, or RLA, and
9 Habitat Conservation Plan, HCP, grant
10 funding. The program requires at a
11 minimum a 75 percent State-based match,
12 which is provided as -- Forever Wild uses
13 its funding to buy acreage that is titled
14 to the program. The Wildlife & Freshwater
15 Fisheries Division will then use grant
16 proceeds to purchase and title to their
17 division their acreage. On this one, due
18 to conditions on the ground, staff is
19 recommending what works out to be about
20 76 percent -- excuse me -- 20 -- I'm
21 getting my math backwards -- 26 percent
22 commitment by Forever Wild because it
23 helps us with the boundary lines and so

1 that's why it's slightly over, but it's
2 approximately 26 percent. That funding is
3 anticipated and is in hand and so it can
4 move on to closing now.

5 We then move into -- I'm sorry.
6 Let me back up. Let me stop on each one.
7 So on that grant opportunity, getting to
8 Dr. Powers' question, it's certainly ready
9 for a motion because we have the grant
10 funds and we have the grant award. Keith,
11 is there a date specific that the tract
12 would physically need to be through the
13 closing process and done so that we do not
14 endanger losing that money?

15 MR. GAULDIN: I would refer that to
16 Doug.

17 MS. MCCURDY: I'll let Doug Deaton
18 give us that answer. Doug, come up here
19 if you would in case I need you again.
20 Right now, we're on Red Hills Phase IV.

21 MR. DEATON: Okay. The grant ends in
22 2024, December 2024.

23 MS. MCCURDY: So we'd have to be fully

1 through our closing process by that time.
2 Doug, why don't you sit down in case Keith
3 or I need you again. I just like ordering
4 them around.

5 All right. We're now moving into
6 the grant opportunities or leveraging
7 opportunities of short list nominations.
8 So this will pull in the supplemental
9 Tab 5a that was in your green folder. So
10 the ones you have seen previously where
11 Wildlife has offered to utilize its
12 Pittman-Robertson funds to partner with
13 us, an approximately 75/25 percent split,
14 again, we would have title to our
15 25 percent; Wildlife would have title to
16 their 75 percent using their Pittman-
17 Robertson funds. These percentages could
18 shift a hair. Obviously, we do not have
19 appraisals back. Sometimes the appraisals
20 we can't do a simple math equation of
21 acreage into value because of either road
22 frontage or timber or something that might
23 make acres a little more valuable, but for

1 purposes right now, we're presuming a
2 75/25 percent split on these.

3 Now, the Cahaba WMA-Falling Rock
4 Addition is one of the ten-year lease
5 opportunities. That will be 75/25 because
6 we would just be splitting the lease
7 payment. And if anyone has any questions,
8 we can come back to that.

9 The Portland Landing
10 SOA-Donald Addition, that would also be an
11 approximate 75/25 percent split. That
12 would be a purchase, so we would be
13 talking about, you know, titled acreage in
14 that transaction.

15 Red Hills-Flat Creek Phase IV,
16 again, due to ground conditions, we
17 currently think that may be closer to
18 26 percent, but regardless, approximately
19 75/25 percent split. Now, this one
20 involves RLA and HCP grant funding, but it
21 would be the same structure as far as
22 titling of acreage.

23 Then we have the Sam R. Murphy

1 WMA-Cantrell Mill Creek. That is another
2 ten-year lease opportunity. That would be
3 an exact 75/25 percent split because that
4 is simply of the lease payment.

5 If you will now go to your
6 supplemental information, your Tab 5a that
7 was in your green folder. After we mailed
8 the packet once Wildlife had a chance to
9 review the current status of available
10 funds, they were able to offer some
11 additional partnership opportunities with
12 their Pittman-Robertson funding applicable
13 to the Autauga WMA-Hart Addition and the
14 Autauga WMA-County Road 112 Addition.
15 Again, those are anticipated to be a
16 75/25 percent split.

17 Staff did a map that is attached
18 to what was in your green folder 5a. We
19 did one map just to illustrate how those
20 two tracts fit together and how the
21 proposed split would fit together.
22 However, Wildlife has made this
23 partnership offer without making it

1 contingent on the Board acquiring both
2 tracts. So it's -- you could move on one,
3 you could move on both, you could move on
4 none, but I thought it might be helpful to
5 see what the interaction of those two
6 nominations would result in since they are
7 adjacent.

8 So I know I skipped ahead a bit.
9 I want to now back up and let's run
10 through as to each of those deadlines that
11 would be applicable as to each. So I'm
12 going to ask Keith and Doug for help here.
13 As to Pittman -- I'm going to ask y'all a
14 question, and there may not be a simple
15 answer. As to the current PR
16 opportunities that I just ran through,
17 would they all have the same critical date
18 as far as closing, or do we need to look
19 at different dates? And when you answer
20 me, come to the microphone. And for the
21 court reporter, Doug Deaton again.

22 MR. DEATON: Do you want me to go
23 through them all?

1 MS. MCCURDY: If your answer is
2 different, yes; if the answer is the same,
3 we'll do PR first and then go through
4 RLA/HCP later.

5 MR. DEATON: To update the date I
6 mentioned earlier about December 2024,
7 it's actually February 2024. That's for
8 the Red Hills-Flat Creek Phase IV.

9 For the Pittman-Robertson tracts,
10 we're willing -- that we're an interested
11 partner with, we would submit the
12 application, but I believe we need to
13 commit those funds this FY; is that -- so
14 for this FY, we would need to commit those
15 funds. So by August, we would need to
16 commit the funds, and from that point,
17 we'd have a year to close.

18 MS. MCCURDY: And then -- so that
19 answer -- the only one, Doug, I need you
20 to clarify -- it's the only one that might
21 be different. I just want to be sure --
22 is we talked before about the appraised
23 nomination, the Red Hills-Flat Creek

1 Phase IV. We have the short list
2 nomination that is Phase V and is the
3 RCA/HCP. Is that date -- what would that
4 date be for Phase V?

5 MR. DEATON: We're still waiting on
6 that grant award, so they would notify us.
7 I believe the date is July 29th is when
8 they're going to make the pre-award, and
9 then 120 days after that -- so the grant
10 that I applied for, we would need to close
11 it out by December 31, 2024, if awarded
12 the grant.

13 MS. MCCURDY: And I'll do a better job
14 next time of being sure I have the PR
15 dates down.

16 Any questions on any of the grant
17 opportunities?

18 MR. CHILDERS: Patti?

19 MS. MCCURDY: I'm sorry. Go ahead.
20 Yes, sir?

21 MR. CHILDERS: On the white sheet 5a
22 in our green packet, the Autauga-Hart
23 Addition, the Autauga-County Road, you

1 show a map. I'm looking at the map. What
2 part of that is Forever Wild and what part
3 is Fisheries?

4 MS. MCCURDY: On this map of the two
5 nominations, the nominations are outlined
6 in red, and then the sort of orange-ish --
7 reddish orange-ish color would be Forever
8 Wild and the green would be Wildlife &
9 Freshwater Fisheries.

10 MR. CHILDERS: So roughly one-third
11 Forever Wild; two-thirds Fisheries?

12 MS. MCCURDY: It's closer to a fourth,
13 closer to 75/25, 75 Wildlife and 25
14 Forever Wild.

15 MR. CHILDERS: Okay.

16 MS. MCCURDY: Any additional
17 questions?

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

19 MS. MCCURDY: Dr. Powers?

20 DR. POWERS: So which ones have this
21 fiscal year as the...

22 MS. MCCURDY: It would be the Pittman-
23 Robertson opportunities. I mean, I will

1 tell you which ones, but let me turn to my
2 folks. Is that correct, Doug, that we
3 would need a commitment from the Board --
4 they would not have to close by August
5 1st, but you would need a commitment? I
6 mean, you tell me. What stage of close
7 does it need to be in by the October -- I
8 say October 1st -- August?

9 MR. DEATON: We would have to obligate
10 the funds this fiscal year, so it wouldn't
11 have to close this fiscal year but having
12 the Board's support allows us to go
13 through the proper steps of the appraisal
14 and we can submit the grant application
15 and have it obligated and then close
16 within a year's time from date.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: On which
18 properties?

19 MS. MCCURDY: So the Board -- it would
20 either be this meeting or the August
21 meeting, and so I'll run --

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: No, no, no.
23 Doug, which properties?

1 MR. DEATON: The Autauga tracts, both
2 of those tracts.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Okay. And the
4 leased property? And the two with the
5 lease?

6 MR. DEATON: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Those four are
8 what we're talking about?

9 MR. DEATON: Yes.

10 MS. MCCURDY: And I believe too the
11 Donald Addition?

12 MR. GAULDIN: Yeah, anything that
13 deals with PR.

14 MS. MCCURDY: That's why I was going
15 to run through the memo. So if you'll
16 look at -- in addition to the Autauga
17 tracts, if you'll look at your packet 5a,
18 the PR would apply to the Cahaba WMA, it
19 would apply to number 2, the Portland
20 Landing SOA Addition, the Sam R. Murphy,
21 and then again the two Autaugas. And give
22 us one second to be sure I haven't said
23 anything wrong. Hold on.

1 Okay. We think we're together at
2 least over here for the most.

3 Yes, sir, Dr. Powers?

4 DR. POWERS: So a follow-up. So you
5 said that you have to obligate or they
6 have to be sure, so where -- what does
7 that translate to us? Because it seems
8 like August might be too late if you need
9 it --

10 MS. MCCURDY: Well, I don't know that
11 it's too late, but, for example, this so
12 rarely happens with this Board but I mean
13 there's always the possibility that we
14 don't have a quorum for some reason, you
15 know, something happens. That's only
16 happened three times in the history of the
17 program, but I bring that up. So that is
18 why we often do like, you know, to be a
19 meeting ahead of things to, you know,
20 account for that. But I think we could --
21 I mean, Doug, they could -- motion to
22 proceed with purchase at the August
23 meeting would be sufficient? Yes. It's

1 just at the August meeting, we have to
2 have a quorum and the votes, you know, to
3 secure that.

4 DR. POWERS: But the Autauga
5 properties haven't even had a first
6 appraisal, right, so you would need some
7 action on them at this meeting; is that
8 correct?

9 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, that would help.
10 But, of course, I will tell you that --
11 and also the Donald -- the Portland
12 SOA-Donald Addition has not had a first
13 appraisal yet. But hold on one second
14 because I want to be sure.

15 Yeah. So it would be helpful if
16 you think you might want to move forward
17 to have the first appraisal, you know, at
18 this meeting so we can get started on
19 that.

20 DR. POWERS: For which ones?

21 MS. MCCURDY: For any of the PR. That
22 would be the two leases, the Autauga
23 tracts, and the Portland

1 SOA-Donald Addition.

2 MR. DARNALL: So -- I apologize, but I
3 want to be clear. The obligation is the
4 Board approving it and that starts the
5 meter on the obligation so that the
6 appraisals -- and we have to close within
7 a year of the obligation. So that's --
8 and we have the next meeting for this
9 Board to obligate Forever Wild funds.

10 MS. MCCURDY: You would have --

11 MR. DARNALL: I can appreciate the one
12 meeting ahead, but I mean --

13 MS. MCCURDY: You would be -- it would
14 be timely.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.

16 MS. MCCURDY: Any additional questions
17 on that?

18 Okay. What we'll move to next is
19 the -- we'll run through the short -- the
20 tracts that have made the short list. So
21 if you will turn in your packet to Tab 4.
22 And I usually -- the short list tracts,
23 Tab 4a simply is the listing

1 alphabetically. That first page of Tab 4a
2 is the listing. Tab 4b provides a brief
3 description of each short list tract as
4 well as an attached map. So I'm going to
5 run through Tab 4b so that if you have a
6 question, I've got the description and the
7 map on hand; but that means I'll be
8 looking down, so if you have a question,
9 please just call out my name and if I
10 don't see you raise your hand.

11 All right. The first tract is
12 Alligator Bayou. That's approximately
13 383 acres in Mobile County; we have the
14 Autauga WMA-County Road 112, 2200 acres in
15 Autauga County; Autauga WMA-Hart Addition,
16 that's approximately 80 acres,
17 Autauga County; we have the Butler Foster-
18 Praytor Mountains nomination,
19 approximately 939 acres in
20 Jefferson County.

21 I will note on this tract, as you
22 know, although it involves only one
23 landowner, the nomination itself by that

1 landowner covers several different
2 parcels. We had engaged in discussions
3 with the landowner about the possibility
4 of reducing the number of parcels and
5 possibly getting down to just a larger
6 parcel. However, which is fully their
7 right, the landowner wishes for the
8 nomination to remain to contain the
9 multiple parcels, and so that's where we
10 are. We were not able to reduce the
11 footprint of that nomination.

12 Next, the Cahaba River
13 Shelby County-Peel Park Addition,
14 110 acres approximately in Shelby County.
15 You will have in your folder a letter of
16 support from the County, in addition to
17 comments made today. That was your green
18 folder, Tab 8a if you'd like to refer to
19 it, but it tracks with the comments you
20 heard today.

21 Cahaba WMA-Falling Rock Addition,
22 that's again Bibb and Shelby Counties and
23 is approximately 2,324 acres. That

1 nomination involves a ten-year lease as
2 opposed to a fee simple opportunity.

3 We have D'Olive Bay Addition,
4 approximately 23 acres in Baldwin County.
5 And I will say on this one, the City of
6 Spanish Fort has indicated a willingness
7 to provide support for that tract, maybe
8 some management assistance. We've asked
9 for some additional information from the
10 City. Once I receive that, I will pass it
11 along to the Board.

12 Little River Forest-Lomax Branch
13 Addition, 39 acres, Escambia County;
14 Natural Bridge Park, approximately
15 149 acres, Winston County; Oak Mountain
16 State Park-Odess Addition, approximately
17 81 acres in Shelby County; Persimmon Knob,
18 approximately 854 acres, Morgan County;
19 Portland Landing SOA-Donald Addition --
20 approximately 154 acres that would be
21 Forever Wild's ownership. Total area is
22 approximately 516 acres -- Red Hills-Flat
23 Creek Phase V, approximately 1728 acres in

1 Monroe County. Forever Wild's acquisition
2 would be approximately 453 acres.

3 Riverton CHA -- that's Community Hunting
4 Area. So Riverton CHA-Hurd Hollow
5 Addition, approximately 235 acres,
6 Colbert County; Saginaw Swamp,
7 approximately 160 acres in Shelby County;
8 Sam R. Murphy WMA-Cantrell Mill Creek, and
9 that's covering Lamar and Marion Counties;
10 Sipsey River Swamp-Brownville Addition --
11 hold on one second on this one. I wanted
12 to double check that acreage. The reason
13 why on this one -- this is also a tract we
14 had mentioned to the Board at previous
15 meetings efforts by staff to reduce
16 multiple-parcel nominations down to what's
17 most critical for program purposes. And
18 this landowner actually has agreed to
19 reduce it, so although you've seen this
20 before, the map you see reflects the
21 single parcel that is now part of the
22 nomination. And with the subtraction of
23 the other parcel, we're down to

1 approximately 1,212 acres, and that's all
2 in Tuscaloosa County.

3 We then have the Weeks Bay
4 Reserve-Marney Addition, approximately
5 14 acres in Baldwin County. I did want to
6 provide an update to the Board. As we
7 have mentioned in past meetings, we
8 considered this tract to be potentially
9 eligible for some federal funding through
10 NOAA under their PAC grant. That's
11 Procurement and Acquisition Grant Program.
12 However, for this past cycle, at least for
13 the money in the program right now, we had
14 other more physical infrastructure needs
15 that we had to submit so we didn't feel we
16 could really move this one forward at this
17 time. I think there's still potential in
18 the future, but I had mentioned the
19 possibility of the submission during the
20 month of February but we did not, and I
21 wanted to update the Board why. I'm still
22 hopeful in the future. And there may be
23 money added to that grant program, so

1 we'll keep an eye on that but I don't have
2 a current line on grant funding for that
3 one.

4 So those are the tracts that are
5 available to the Board for action on the
6 motion for first appraisal, and we can
7 discuss that in the general discussion
8 agenda item. But are there any questions
9 that you'd like for me to cover at this
10 time?

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.
12 Thank you.

13 MS. MCCURDY: Commissioner, I'll turn
14 it back to you for general discussion.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.
16 Thank you for the updates and for the
17 short list nomination run-through.

18 We're now moving into general
19 discussion. This is the part of the
20 meeting where Board members generally will
21 make motions, if they so desire, for first
22 or second appraisals, and so I will open
23 the floor up for any general discussion.

1 Mr. Holloway I think has --

2 MR. HOLLOWAY: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway.
4 All right.

5 MR. HOLLOWAY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like
6 to make a motion to move for a first
7 appraisal for the Cahaba
8 River-Shelby County Park Peel Addition.

9 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second that.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion
11 was made by Mr. Holloway and seconded by
12 Dr. McClintock to move for a first
13 appraisal on the Cahaba River-Shelby Park
14 Peel Addition, 110 acres in Shelby County.
15 Any discussion on that? Any questions?

16 MR. DARNALL: I have a question. Can
17 you show me which tab that is? I made
18 meticulous notes but I --

19 MS. MCCURDY: It's Tab 4a page 11.

20 MR. DARNALL: 4a page 11.

21 MS. MCCURDY: 4b.

22 MR. DARNALL: 4b page 11. All right.

23 No questions.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other
2 questions?

3 All those in favor of moving for a
4 first appraisal on the Cahaba River Park-
5 Peel Addition, please say aye.

6 Any opposed?

7 None opposed. The motion carries.

8 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Mr. Commissioner, Jim
9 McClintock.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes,
11 Dr. McClintock?

12 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'd like to make a
13 second appraisal request for the
14 Red Hills-Flat Creek Phase IV property.

15 MR. DARNALL: I'll second that.

16 MS. MCCURDY: And that would be also
17 second appraisal proceed to purchase.

18 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Correct.

19 MR. DARNALL: I'll second.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So
21 Dr. McClintock has made the motion.
22 Seconded by Mr. Darnall.

23 MS. MCCURDY: And that's Tab 3b

1 page 5.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So that is the
3 motion for second appraisal and move to
4 purchase on the Red Hills Phase IV
5 Addition. Any questions on this?

6 All those in favor say aye.

7 Any opposed?

8 None opposed. The motion carries.

9 MR. OATES: Commissioner, I'd like to
10 move for a first appraisal on the Red
11 Hills-Flat Creek Phase V.

12 MS. MCCURDY: That's Tab 4b page 27 if
13 anyone needs it.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Is there a
15 second?

16 MR. DARNALL: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded again
18 by Mr. Darnall. So that is a motion for a
19 first appraisal on the Red Hills Phase V.
20 Any questions on that?

21 All those in favor say aye.

22 Any opposed?

23 None opposed. The motion carries.

1 Thank you.

2 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Mr. Commissioner, Jim
3 McClintock again. I'd like to make a
4 second appraisal and proceed to purchase
5 on the Turkey Creek Nature Park-Parker
6 Addition pending satisfactory review of
7 the recent appraisal.

8 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Motion by
10 Dr. McClintock and seconded by
11 Mr. Holloway for a second appraisal and
12 move to purchase on the Turkey Creek
13 Nature Preserve-Parker Addition contingent
14 on staff approving the first appraisal and
15 that it's in the proper form. Does
16 that -- everybody understand the motion?
17 Any discussion on that?

18 MR. CHILDERS: Tab and page?

19 MS. MCCURDY: I'm sorry. That would
20 be Tab 4b -- excuse me -- Tab -- well,
21 actually it's under 3b page 6.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All those in
23 favor say aye.

1 Any opposed?

2 None opposed. The motion carries.

3 Just as a reminder, we do only
4 have ten members here today, so if you're
5 voting for something, please answer
6 affirmatively so I can make sure that I
7 feel comfortable we've gotten the nine
8 votes.

9 MS. MCCURDY: And I'm keeping an eye
10 down here, so if I'm not sure I've seen
11 you, I'll have to call you out.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

13 All right. Motion carries.

14 Dr. Powers?

15 DR. POWERS: I'd like to motion for a
16 second appraisal and proceed to purchase
17 for the Perdido WMA-Snowden Branch
18 Addition.

19 DR. VALENTINE: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers has
21 made the motion. Seconded by
22 Dr. Valentine for a second appraisal and
23 move to purchase on the Perdido

1 WMA-Snowden Branch Addition, 620 acres.

2 Any questions on that?

3 All those in favor say aye.

4 Any opposed?

5 None opposed. The motion carries.

6 DR. POWERS: Chris?

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

8 Sorry.

9 DR. POWERS: One more. I'd like to
10 make a motion for first appraisal for the
11 Autauga WMA-Hart Addition and if I can the
12 County Road 112.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Let's do those
14 as separate motions, if you don't mind.
15 That just makes it cleaner for the court
16 reporter and for the Record.

17 DR. POWERS: So the Autauga WMA-Hart
18 Addition.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Is there a
20 second?

21 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
23 Mr. Holloway. And that is for a first

1 appraisal on the Autauga WMA-Hart
2 Addition. Any questions?

3 MR. DARNALL: I do.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

5 MR. DARNALL: So I want to make sure I
6 understand this. This is for a ten-year
7 lease; is that correct?

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: No, sir. This
9 is for the one that is acquisition.

10 MR. DARNALL: Acquisition. Thank you.

11 MS. MCCURDY: And it's attached to --
12 you see the clear map of them both -- the
13 Tab 5a, the short Tab 5a that was in your
14 green folder.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

16 MR. WRIGHT: Can I just ask a
17 question?

18 MS. MCCURDY: Can you speak into your
19 microphone? I'm sorry.

20 MR. WRIGHT: Could I ask the question
21 is the large portion here a corporate
22 landowner?

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: A core?

1 MR. WRIGHT: Corporate.

2 MS. MCCURDY: Corporate landowner.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Deaton's
4 indicating yes.

5 MS. MCCURDY: Yes.

6 MR. WRIGHT: I gotcha. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other
8 questions on that one?

9 So this is the Hart Addition, the
10 smaller piece that we're going to be
11 voting on now. Make sure everybody's
12 good.

13 All right. Those in favor of
14 moving for a first appraisal on the
15 Autauga-Hart Addition say aye.

16 Any opposed?

17 None opposed. The motion carries.

18 Dr. Powers?

19 DR. POWERS: I'd like to motion for a
20 first appraisal on the Autauga
21 WMA-County Road 112 Addition.

22 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second that.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by

1 Dr. McClintock. So it is to move for a
2 first appraisal on the Autauga County Road
3 112 Addition. That's the larger parcel.

4 All those in favor of that say
5 aye.

6 Any opposed?

7 None opposed. The motion carries.

8 Give me just a second, please.

9 Let me catch up on my notes. Even though
10 we have a court reporter, I like to have
11 my own notes. All right.

12 MR. OATES: Commissioner, I'd like to
13 move for a first appraisal on Little River
14 Forest-Lomax Branch Addition.

15 MS. MCCURDY: And that tract is Tab 4b
16 page 17.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Is there a
18 second?

19 I'll second that, Blankenship.

20 MR. DARNALL: 4b page 17?

21 MS. MCCURDY: Correct.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: That is the one
23 that isn't in holding and --

1 MS. MCCURDY: If you'll refer to the
2 map, which is the -- the map is page 18 of
3 2b. It may visually help. And just one
4 second.

5 Doug was letting me know that
6 Wildlife has been successful in securing a
7 purchase option, is that correct, on that
8 tract that just came through for them. So
9 if that follows through to the end, it
10 looks like that will be taken care of by
11 Wildlife.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: On the Lomax
13 Addition-Little River?

14 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Okay.

16 MR. OATES: Do I need to rescind my
17 motion at this time, or do we...

18 MS. MCCURDY: I mean --

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I would
20 entertain the idea of rescinding that
21 motion until we get some more information
22 before the next meeting.

23 MR. OATES: So done, sir.

1 MS. MCCURDY: And I believe that one,
2 with the landowner willing, should move on
3 forward, and the only issue would be a
4 landowner issue. One second.

5 MR. DEATON: If the Board would like
6 to partner with us as far as the match
7 goes, we would welcome that.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Let's discuss
9 that, if it's okay with the Board, at the
10 next meeting since it's only 39 acres.
11 It's a very small parcel that may make
12 dividing that more complicated for us to
13 talk about right here. So let's hold that
14 one if it's okay with you, Mr. Oates.
15 Sorry.

16 MR. OATES: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.
18 Thank you.

19 All right. Any other discussion?

20 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I have a question
21 about the Oak Mountain State Park-Odess
22 Addition. It's my understanding
23 State Parks has looked at that and doesn't

1 seem terribly excited about purchasing it.
2 Is that your understanding as well?

3 MS. MCCURDY: I will let Commissioner
4 interject also on that one.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Sure. We have
6 looked at the parcel adjacent to the
7 Belcher property in Oak Mountain State
8 Park, and although it is a beautiful piece
9 of property, for the cost it didn't fit in
10 as well maybe with some other
11 opportunities we may have --

12 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Okay. I agree.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: -- in the near
14 future.

15 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Thank you.

16 MR. OATES: Commissioner, I'll make
17 one more. I might need Patti's help on
18 this. The Sam R. Murphy WMA-Cantrell Mill
19 Creek, exactly how does that motion need
20 to be phrased, Patti?

21 MS. MCCURDY: Hold on one second.
22 Give me a second. I jotted something down
23 in case it was needed to find where --

1 Okay. To remind the Board -- oh,
2 and also, let me get you to the tab and
3 page. That's the Sam R. Murphy WMA. That
4 is Tab 4b page 33. To remind the Board,
5 that is the ten-year lease opportunity --
6 one of them -- that's been offered at
7 75/25 percent. Forever Wild would be
8 sharing in the cost of the lease at a rate
9 of 25 percent of the lease. So the reason
10 this motion may need to be a little
11 different is actually not because -- a
12 little different because of the lease, but
13 we have an appraisal that Wildlife paid
14 for with its own funds that the Board can
15 adopt. So what you would need to do is
16 make -- move to adopt the appraisal
17 provided by Wildlife as the Board's first
18 appraisal. So you're adopting the
19 appraisal provided by Wildlife as a first
20 appraisal and moving for staff to proceed
21 with a second appraisal and enter a
22 ten-year lease and close on that.

23 MR. OATES: What she said.

1 MS. MCCURDY: So let me -- I'll repeat
2 it. Let me break down the steps. You
3 got it?

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I got it.

5 MS. MCCURDY: Okay. You're a fast
6 writer. That's why we have you up there.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion
8 by Mr. Oates is to adopt the Wildlife &
9 Freshwater Fisheries appraisal on the
10 Samuel R. Murphy WMA-Cantrell Mill Creek
11 lease and then to move to a second
12 appraisal and move to complete the lease.
13 Is there a second on that?

14 DR. POWERS: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
16 Dr. Powers.

17 Any discussion?

18 MR. DARNALL: I do --

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

20 MR. DARNALL: -- so I left my mic on.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Sure.

22 MR. DARNALL: So this is just a
23 ten-year lease, correct?

1 MS. MCCURDY: That's all the land --

2 MR. DARNALL: And I'm sorry. That's
3 the chopped-up thing I'm looking at here;
4 is that right?

5 MS. MCCURDY: That's correct. The
6 landowner -- previously at the Board's
7 request, staff did check again with the
8 landowner, but ten years is as long as
9 they're willing to go with this
10 opportunity.

11 MR. DARNALL: And I want to make sure
12 I understood the motion. The motion was
13 to adopt the first appraisal and go to a
14 second appraisal and close?

15 MS. MCCURDY: Yes.

16 MR. DARNALL: Okay.

17 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Can I ask a question?
18 Is there a -- at the end of the ten-year
19 period, is there an option for first
20 purchase or something like that? I mean,
21 are they going to sell this land
22 eventually -- is that the idea -- or are
23 they going to lease it forever? What

1 is -- in your estimate, what is the
2 purpose of this?

3 MS. MCCURDY: Yeah. I don't think --
4 at this time, all the landowner is
5 agreeing to do is to allow a lease with a
6 ten-year term. There's not currently an
7 offer of a provision to purchase now. The
8 opportunity, like any other tract, you
9 know, might be there at that time, but
10 there's no guarantee associated with this
11 lease transaction.

12 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Okay. Thank you.

13 MR. DARNALL: So I'm probably going to
14 show how naive I am in saying this. I
15 mean, a ten-year lease to me kind of flies
16 in the face of the term forever. And I
17 realize it's an opportunity to get a lot
18 of acreage at a very low cost, but
19 that's -- you know, maybe because I'm not
20 educated enough, that's my fundamental
21 objection to something other than a very
22 long-term lease.

23 MS. MCCURDY: And the only discussions

1 we've had previously -- and you -- and
2 your point is certainly well-taken. This
3 is as -- I think it's just another tool in
4 the toolbox to try to overcome the loss of
5 acreage from having the voluntary WMA
6 program, and that's really why Wildlife
7 brought it forward, although it is a very
8 different transaction than the Board has
9 heard about previously. But, yes, it is
10 different from our fee simple
11 acquisitions. I will pause to see if --
12 Keith, if you're going to say anything,
13 come to the microphone.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: This is Keith
15 Gauldin with the Wildlife & Freshwater
16 Fisheries Division.

17 MR. GAULDIN: With Wildlife section,
18 we have about 780,000 acres within our
19 Wildlife Management Area System. And of
20 that 780,000 acres that we have, about
21 33 -- well, just about 34,000 that we have
22 is leased, and that's been a contractual
23 lease with these landowners. Of that

1 33,000 or 34,000, 10,000 of that's in
2 public ownership, either Alabama Forestry
3 Commission or other agencies such as that
4 that have worked with us through the
5 years. We grade roads, we mark
6 boundaries, we just provide security of
7 the property just for that lease. We
8 don't provide any consideration, nor the
9 private landowners. We have 23,628 acres
10 in private ownership that we have
11 contractual leases. They haven't provided
12 any consideration, no funds for those
13 leases. We just grade roads, provide
14 security, and mark boundaries as well.
15 And doing that through the years, we
16 have -- if we take the Sam R. Murphy and
17 Cahaba River-Falling Rock Addition out,
18 there's only five -- well, 5700 acres left
19 in private ownership and smaller parcels
20 that we have throughout the state in these
21 WMAs. So we're not really setting a
22 precedent of wanting to get more property
23 leased with WMAs. It's just this Sam R.

1 Murphy Management Area has been around
2 since 1967. It was named the Lamarion
3 Management Area. Then in 1998, it got
4 changed to Sam Murphy. And they've been a
5 great mentor that's provided hunting
6 opportunities for the hunters in those
7 local areas, and some folks travel to that
8 area just to hunt that area. So it's
9 really a long-term partner for us that's
10 provided hunting opportunities for hunters
11 in that area and it's been a part of the
12 Wildlife Management Area System for quite
13 some time. We just -- we've lost Boykin
14 Wildlife Management Area, we've lost
15 Scotch in Southwest Alabama, and we don't
16 want Sam Murphy to be the -- one of the
17 big ones that we lose. So we'd like to
18 provide some type of consideration in the
19 form of a ten-year lease so we can secure
20 that lease for ten more years.

21 MR. CHILDERS: Mr. Chairman?

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall
23 still has the...

1 MR. DARNALL: So if I understand you
2 correctly, this land has, quote/unquote,
3 been under your control since the '50s.
4 It's not in addition to what you do. It's
5 just you're trying to maintain control of
6 what you've had for a long time?

7 MR. GAULDIN: Yes, sir, just the
8 hunting the programs. The Sam Murphy
9 family, they've been doing the timber
10 management. We've just been allowed to
11 have the hunting programs in that area.
12 And Ogden, the small portion that's in
13 that grouping, is the same. They've just
14 been a smaller unit of the Sam R. Murphy
15 Wildlife Management Area.

16 MR. CHILDERS: Mr. Chairman?

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Childers?

18 MR. CHILDERS: Question: You
19 mentioned, I believe, 738,000 total acres;
20 is that correct?

21 MR. GAULDIN: Close. It's 780,000,
22 yes, sir.

23 MR. CHILDERS: Of that 780-, how much

1 of that does Forever Wild have on a
2 ten-year lease?

3 MR. GAULDIN: None at this time.

4 MR. CHILDERS: None. So this is --

5 MR. GAULDIN: Well --

6 MS. MCCURDY: None of this acreage --
7 Forever Wild currently only has two leases
8 that were done -- I'm going to mess this
9 up -- I think '08/'09, '09 possibly. One
10 of them is tied to the Cahaba WMA, but
11 those were long-term recreational leases
12 that basically were 90-plus years -- 96,
13 98 years -- that have been taken off
14 since, I guess, 2009. They were, you
15 know, 90-plus-year leases. So there are
16 leases, but we have not previously done a
17 ten year. The only leases we have done
18 are the two long-term leases, one Cahaba
19 WMA and the other Mulberry Fork.

20 MR. CHILDERS: So is this lease
21 contingent on us partnering, or is this
22 just a request?

23 MR. GAULDIN: Just a request.

1 MR. CHILDERS: Just a request. You'd
2 lease the land regardless of whether we
3 pay for it?

4 MR. GAULDIN: We'd like to provide
5 some type of consideration for pulling the
6 property out of the Wildlife Management
7 System.

8 DR. VALENTINE: But if I understand
9 what we have in the data --

10 MS. MCCURDY: Excuse me.
11 Dr. Valentine, it's hard to hear out here.

12 DR. VALENTINE: So if I understand
13 what we have here in the charts and the
14 data, this is really only costing Forever
15 Wild about a third of what the overall
16 lease is for the ten years; is that
17 correct?

18 MS. MCCURDY: It's about a fourth,
19 25 percent.

20 DR. VALENTINE: All right.

21 MS. MCCURDY: Of course -- let me
22 correct that because it is the 25 percent,
23 but we have the 15 percent Stewardship

1 transfer that we'd have to make for our
2 25 percent.

3 DR. VALENTINE: That's where I came up
4 with the third.

5 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall and
7 then Dr. Powers.

8 MR. DARNALL: So our obligation is
9 786,000, or is it 25 percent of 786-?

10 MR. GAULDIN: It's 225-.

11 MR. DARNALL: Oh, okay. I'm sorry.
12 It's right there in front of me. I
13 apologize.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

15 DR. POWERS: So the answer you just
16 gave is different than the impression that
17 Chuck Sykes gave us when he came to us,
18 which is there was no other money for the
19 match source. That was the impetus of
20 this ask was that he couldn't identify --
21 I mean, there was no other money
22 identified as the match.

23 MR. GAULDIN: So the way we're funded,

1 we operate out of hunting license dollars
2 we typically use as our State match
3 portion, and we utilize those PR dollars.
4 We have to match one-quarter of our State
5 dollars or our hunting license dollars and
6 three-quarters of that Pittman-Robertson
7 dollars. We only have so much money in
8 our hunting license fees, so that was the
9 purpose of trying to partner with
10 Forever Wild to utilize those Forever Wild
11 funds in the State match portion to
12 satisfy the use of PR or PR moneys to
13 utilize to make this lease go through.

14 DR. POWERS: So I guess getting back
15 to the question, I mean, does -- do you
16 really have funds for -- if Forever Wild
17 didn't provide the match funds, I mean,
18 would this rank, I guess, high enough in
19 your division's priorities where, you
20 know, you wouldn't have the --

21 MR. GAULDIN: It would be very tight
22 to do a ten-year projection on that.

23 DR. POWERS: So one unrelated question

1 to that. Commissioner?

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Go ahead. You
3 still have the mic, yes, sir.

4 DR. POWERS: So now that you're
5 leasing this and giving the owner actual
6 cash, are you still anticipating that you
7 would have maintenance and all of those
8 other responsibilities, or would there be
9 some savings because now we're paying the
10 owner and now the owner has some
11 responsibilities?

12 MR. GAULDIN: We only have three staff
13 members there, so it's not a large amount
14 of upkeep on that property. I don't
15 foresee us changing our plan. We grade
16 roads, clean up trash, and mark
17 boundaries. The same things as the past
18 years. Basically, you know, what it would
19 be if we wouldn't take ownership in
20 leasing this property, it would be taken
21 away like Boykin and Scotch and leased out
22 to private hunting clubs in a sense. It
23 would be the same thing if we don't do

1 that.

2 DR. POWERS: One more question,
3 Commissioner.

4 So the Stewardship funds, Patti,
5 would they -- after the end of the
6 ten years, what happens to those? Do they
7 stay, or do we return those Stewardship
8 funds to the --

9 MS. MCCURDY: They would stay. I
10 don't think we have any language --
11 although, the logic -- I understand the
12 logic -- I don't think we have any
13 language to move. I've never looked at
14 that, so let me say that. But off the top
15 of my head, I don't know that we have a
16 mechanism to move it -- you know, move it
17 back. Now, you know, I believe that
18 Wildlife has indicated a willingness -- I
19 believe, Keith -- to carry the expense, so
20 I'm not sure it would be that much of an
21 expenditure from the Stewardship transfer,
22 but I don't know -- I wouldn't know how to
23 get it back but I could look into that.

1 MR. GAULDIN: Yeah, being only
2 Stewardship-wise and those related funds,
3 if a road culvert were to blow out on a
4 road, that's the type of repairs we would
5 make. So it wouldn't be an exorbitant
6 amount of funds to satisfy those
7 requirements.

8 MR. CHILDERS: Mr. Chairman?

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir.

10 MR. CHILDERS: Just exactly what would
11 be the benefit of Forever Wild partnering
12 in this? What would be the benefit from
13 it?

14 MR. GAULDIN: Providing hunting for a
15 lot of individuals that utilize Sam R.
16 Murphy as their primary hunting
17 designation.

18 MR. CHILDERS: Would it be under the
19 auspices of the Federal Wildlife Act?

20 MS. MCCURDY: I think you said
21 federal. It would not be. It would be --

22 MR. CHILDERS: Forever Wild and State
23 Wildlife & Fisheries. I'm sorry.

1 MR. GAULDIN: Yeah, the partnership's
2 between Forever Wild and Wildlife &
3 Freshwater Fisheries.

4 MR. CHILDERS: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Well, we've had
6 a good discussion on this. Since there's
7 ten of us and we've had some discussion,
8 there may be some affirmative votes and
9 some that may not be affirmative. I would
10 like to do this one by a show of hands, if
11 that's okay, for the Samuel R. Murphy WMA
12 to adopt the Wildlife & Freshwater
13 Fisheries first appraisal and then move to
14 a second appraisal and then have the staff
15 execute the lease.

16 All those in favor, please raise
17 your hand.

18 MS. MCCURDY: Give me just a second.
19 One, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right. All
21 those opposed?

22 MS. MCCURDY: Two.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Motion fails.

1 Thank you.

2 All right. Any other -- anything
3 else?

4 All right. Thank you all very
5 much for the discussion and the motions.
6 We'll move into the miscellaneous reports,
7 Tab 5. Are you taking care of that?

8 MS. MCCURDY: I am. So if you'll turn
9 to Tab 5, Tab 5b in your packet. And I'm
10 sorry. Give me one second. I'm going to
11 get my pages. Okay. Tab 5b, this is the
12 point of the meeting in which we bring up
13 under our process any tracts that will --
14 are due to -- based on a number of
15 meetings without Board action of some type
16 or request to move forward are going to
17 roll off of either the appraised
18 nominations list or the short list. For
19 this meeting, we have just one tract. It
20 is a short list nomination. It's the
21 Natural Bridge Park in Winston County.
22 And if you need a tab and page, that's 4B
23 page 19. That one is scheduled to roll

1 off. If a Board member would like to keep
2 it on, it just takes a Board member's
3 request pursuant to the process you
4 previously adopted.

5 Dr. Powers?

6 DR. POWERS: So I would like to keep
7 this one on with a question for you. Is
8 there any way we can be notified, because
9 we had lots of discussions with this
10 request with the local county or town
11 encouraging them to come up with a plan
12 for this property. Can we -- I'd like to
13 keep it on with the idea that your
14 division would send them a letter just
15 saying, by the way, this is the -- this is
16 it, so if you have a plan, you need to
17 present it by the next meeting.

18 MS. MCCURDY: We'll be happy to
19 send -- keep it on and send a letter.

20 Is there anything else -- since a
21 letter will be going out, anything else
22 additional a Board member would like in
23 that letter? If not, we'll proceed with

1 Dr. Powers' suggestion.

2 All right. Oh, yes, sir.

3 MR. DARNALL: So I have a question
4 about that because I know we talked about
5 keeping properties on the list. So each
6 meeting, we can continue to add a property
7 ad infinitum, or is it a onetime request?
8 Or is it in the form of a motion, or is it
9 just one Board member can request that?

10 MS. MCCURDY: The process that was
11 previously adopted did not require like a
12 certain number vote. It was simply on the
13 request of a Board member. So your
14 opportunity to do it is only -- like
15 today, if Dr. Powers had not made the
16 request today, he could not come up at the
17 next meeting and go, gosh, I didn't
18 realize that was rolling off, can I stick
19 it back on. It would have to be
20 renominated and have to go through the
21 whole process. So that's how it works.
22 The Board request has to be at the
23 applicable meeting, which for Natural

1 Bridge Park is today. It would then
2 normally stay on the short list. It
3 starts new. It starts at zero on the no
4 Board action count, unless the landowner
5 removes it. So it would stay on the short
6 list.

7 MR. DARNALL: So next month, the next
8 Board meeting, it starts with a count of
9 zero because of that?

10 MS. MCCURDY: That's correct. Now,
11 you can -- Dr. Powers, if you would like
12 to handle it otherwise and just give them
13 one more meeting, we can do that. This is
14 simply a process which the Board reached
15 by agreement. So you can certainly make a
16 different request, I believe, Dr. Powers,
17 without any --

18 DR. POWERS: Yes, I guess my intention
19 was not to start the count all over again.
20 It was just to notify them in case -- that
21 they have one chance and -- you know. And
22 to be honest, I'm not sure they can get
23 everything together in that time. I would

1 just want to notify them that they have
2 one more chance. But if my only option is
3 to start the clock again, then I would
4 withdraw my suggestion. I don't want to
5 start the clock again.

6 MS. MCCURDY: I think you can do it.
7 Again, this is an informal sort of
8 courtesy that's allowed for the Board. It
9 used to be that they would remain on
10 indefinitely as long as the landowner was
11 still a willing seller. So this is a
12 less -- no matter what you do, it's a less
13 drastic measure than -- well, it's less
14 drastic. It's still a helpful
15 administrative matter more so than in the
16 past. So I would just like to say if any
17 Board member has a different request, I
18 will -- we will carry it -- we will note
19 it for one more time as a courtesy to them
20 to be sure they've had time to present a
21 plan, and then we'll remove it.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.
23 Thank you.

1 MS. MCCURDY: Okay. The next item is
2 Tab 5c. As the Board likely recalls for
3 each acquisition that we make, we are by
4 the law required to develop a management
5 plan within a year of a tract acquisition.
6 We do do our best to -- again, this is
7 something we do try to get to you a
8 meeting in advance. But the only one we
9 have this time would be to add the
10 Coldwater Mountain Forever Wild
11 Complex-Carroll Addition, Calhoun County,
12 to the existing Coldwater Complex
13 Management Plan. This was a -- you know,
14 a tract within that complex, and so we
15 would just add it to the existing
16 management plan. There was a draft plan
17 attached for your review. If you are
18 ready to approve this addition to that
19 management plan, there is a motion in your
20 memo provided you're prepared to do that.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

22 MR. WRIGHT: I would like to make the
23 motion to the -- for the Board to approve

1 the State Lands Division proceeding with
2 the inclusion of the Coldwater Forever
3 Wild Complex-Carroll Addition into the
4 existing management plan as set forth in
5 the memorandum dated May 5, 2022.

6 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
8 Mr. Holloway.

9 All those in favor say aye.

10 Any opposed?

11 None opposed. The motion carries.

12 Thank you, sir.

13 MS. MCCURDY: All right. The next two
14 items are somewhat administrative in
15 nature that we cover generally every May.
16 This is something -- we have certain
17 things we do at different meetings. This
18 is generally at our May meeting.

19 The first is we each May ask for
20 the Board's approval to make a transfer.
21 This year, the request is the continuing
22 rate amount of \$900,000 to the State Lands
23 Division to cover administrative support

1 provided this fiscal year. We make this
2 motion to cover the fiscal year that we're
3 in. We do that partially to see if
4 there's any reason to change that amount,
5 but also, it's just a timing thing that we
6 do this time each year.

7 So this 900,000 reflects our
8 management of now about 285,000 acres
9 almost. And we have provided, to give
10 some context, a breakdown attached to
11 this -- I'm sorry. It's Tab 5d. I don't
12 think I said that. Tab 5d -- I use merely
13 for context because I can give you a
14 closed-out fiscal year for context. But
15 attached is a breakdown by category of the
16 expenditures and the reimbursements,
17 including the approval, you know, for the
18 900,000 and still shows a remaining
19 balance that isn't fully covered by our
20 division, but we're honored and, you know,
21 pleased to help and work with this
22 program. It's a great joy of our staff.
23 But I do need a motion. This is not an

1 automatic administrative thing that we
2 move money to ourselves.

3 So I wanted to answer any
4 questions the Board has. If there are no
5 questions, there is a motion in the memo,
6 but I don't want to shortchange
7 discussion. It is something we do every
8 year, so I also don't want to belabor it
9 if there are no questions.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

11 MR. HOLLOWAY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like
12 to move that the Board approve the State
13 Lands Division staff to proceed with the
14 requested administrative transfer in the
15 amount of \$900,000 for fiscal year 2022
16 for administrative support provided by the
17 State Lands Division.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right. Is
19 there a second?

20 MR. OATES: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
22 Mr. Oates.

23 Any discussion?

1 All those in favor say aye.

2 Any opposed?

3 None opposed. The motion carries.

4 MS. MCCURDY: I want to thank the
5 Board and thank my staff for the hard
6 work -- I stand up here. They do all the
7 work.

8 Now we move to Tab 5e. And each
9 May, I also tell you this. For the
10 Stewardship Fund, the spending authority
11 granted by this Board, what we discussed
12 earlier during the financial report, that
13 1.5 million, by the provisions of the law
14 forming program, the Board has to move in
15 advance of a fiscal year to set the
16 spending authority for the upcoming fiscal
17 year. So it's a little hard to predict
18 that sometimes, but by law, we have to do
19 that to have the Board's spending
20 authority. The way the amendment was
21 originally drafted, it was -- there was a
22 determination that would need to be made
23 by the Commissioner if it was demonstrated

1 that interest income off of the -- off the
2 Stewardship Fund would be insufficient for
3 the upcoming fiscal year to fund the land
4 management needs for the program.

5 Obviously, we're having a great management
6 of those funds as we see each time in the
7 report from the treasurer, but the
8 management model is not to produce
9 Stewardship -- excuse me -- produce
10 income -- interest income, it's to
11 increase the asset value of that fund.

12 And so as you will see in Tab 5e,
13 Commissioner Blankenship, in consultation
14 with staff, you know, made a
15 determination -- although we don't know
16 the exact -- obviously, we couldn't know
17 the exact amount of interest income that
18 we will have, it would not be sufficient
19 to cover the Stewardship needs for the
20 upcoming year. So you will see attached
21 to our memo as tab -- as Exhibit A the
22 official determination that Commissioner
23 Blankenship has to make. One thing that

1 is different this year -- so up to this
2 point, it's the same discussion we have
3 every year -- Commissioner Blankenship
4 mentioned at the last meeting that -- and
5 I'll let him speak to this -- but he had
6 asked staff to perform a little more
7 programmatic analysis in addition to our
8 fairly standard 1.5 million request of
9 what it might take to accomplish certain
10 actions. And, Commissioner, I'll let you
11 go back to that.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you. As
13 we have discussed maybe at the last
14 meeting or two, the Innovation Commission
15 has really looked at some opportunities in
16 Alabama to help us to grow as a state.
17 One of those is taking advantage of our
18 outdoor recreational opportunities to
19 attract companies and gig workers or, you
20 know, people that can work from home and
21 to really use that as one of the tools to
22 help grow the economy in the state.

23 As part of that, we see a need in

1 the Department that we have opportunity to
2 make enhancements to trails in our state
3 parks, to have amenities at the trail
4 heads, to have better way finding signage,
5 to make the properties much more user
6 friendly and more available for people to
7 enjoy the properties in the Department.
8 We are making substantial investments in
9 the rest of our properties in the
10 Department of Conservation, so I had asked
11 the staff to look at our Forever Wild
12 properties and, you know, all of the
13 several hundred miles of trails we have,
14 the trail access, the way finding signage,
15 you know, whether the -- how the kiosks
16 look, you know, do we need to expand
17 parking lots, are there places that we're
18 having a lot of usage that we don't have
19 enough parking, you know, that that's
20 limiting the amount of people that can use
21 our facilities.

22 So the staff did a good
23 assessment, and in Exhibit C in that memo

1 as they looked at some of the different
2 properties adjacent or close to our 220
3 miles of trails and made suggestions that
4 you can see we need parking area kiosk
5 replacements at most -- a lot of those
6 properties, you know, better signage so
7 the people don't -- you know, have good
8 comfort on the trails, existing parking
9 area improvements -- and I won't read
10 those off. You can see them there -- and
11 then new parking area construction. You
12 know, we have several trails and several
13 pieces of property that didn't have good,
14 safe public access.

15 And so what I'm asking -- what we
16 are proposing here is that we add \$600,000
17 into our normal request for us to make --
18 to be good stewards of the property that
19 you have already purchased to allow better
20 public access for those. And I'll be glad
21 to take any questions on that. So this
22 would just be on the Forever Wild
23 properties. The Department's making

1 additional investments in other
2 Department-owned properties.

3 MS. MCCURDY: And it's something as
4 simple as -- you know, for example, you
5 mentioned kiosks. It's not just that
6 they're aged and maybe need to be
7 replaced. It's sort of re-envisioning the
8 design of those to better serve the public
9 just as one example. So some of these are
10 state -- everywhere is statewide
11 improvements where you see the itemized
12 for access to, you know, primarily parking
13 lot trail heads. We try to list what we
14 see is the priority.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

16 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I really like the
17 concept of making the public lands that we
18 already have more accessible, more usable,
19 but I have one question. If we are going
20 to spend \$600,000 extra on doing this,
21 somebody's got to spend it. Are we going
22 to hire more personnel, or are we doing --
23 how are we expending that money?

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: That's a very
2 good question. We will do it with a
3 combination of our staff, and there's some
4 places I think that we'll contract. Like
5 with the parking lots and some of those
6 things, we'll contract out the
7 construction of those.

8 MS. MCCURDY: And I will give you an
9 example. Because of -- I have a great
10 staff that's very skilled. We would try
11 to do some work ourselves to save money.
12 But an effort like this will require
13 some -- which is fine -- you know, some
14 contract help or, you know, some
15 innovative ways because it is an extra
16 load for the staff. There's no question.

17 MR. WRIGHT: Are you going to have one
18 person overseeing these, or is it going to
19 be a community effort within the people
20 you already have?

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: It will be -- I
22 would imagine it will be managed out of
23 the Montgomery office, but then the

1 persons that are over those particular
2 Forever Wild tracts in the district
3 regions around the state will be likely
4 coordinating the work that's done there.

5 MS. MCCURDY: But there would be
6 high-level coordination amongst the
7 division, you know, directors, but the --
8 you know, the field staff in each will be
9 directed to implement it, the ones that
10 are more familiar with the tracts,
11 although there will be some effort of
12 working together, you know, to get it done
13 in combination with contractors. So you
14 might have a group of our own folks
15 getting it done quicker, or maybe we can't
16 get a contractor in an area and they may
17 need to team up and work together in
18 another area.

19 MR. WRIGHT: I think anytime we can it
20 better accessible to the public, that's
21 what we need to do.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

23 MR. DARNALL: Yeah. So let me start

1 by saying I support this. But as
2 Dr. Valentine will tell you, it's a crazy
3 world, and what you think something costs
4 today, costs 25 percent more tomorrow.
5 And so I would -- all I would suggest is
6 that there be an interim report to where
7 if the 600,000 is not enough, we don't
8 abandon the concept of doing what you're
9 saying just because we didn't estimate
10 enough the first time. So I don't know if
11 we need to change that in the motion, but
12 that's just my -- it's just hard to
13 predict --

14 MS. MCCURDY: Yes. And I will tell
15 you --

16 MR. DARNALL: -- the cost of something
17 tomorrow.

18 MS. MCCURDY: I will tell you two
19 things. We do need to round up somewhat,
20 but there is no question, having gone
21 through a home renovation myself, you
22 never know. So that is a valid question.
23 The only problem, though, is that if you

1 do have that concern, that amount would
2 have to be established now because we're
3 required to do it in advance of the fiscal
4 year, which is difficult.

5 DR. VALENTINE: Is this a onetime
6 allocation, or is this every year from now
7 on?

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the question
9 was was this as a onetime allocation, or
10 is this something to happen every year
11 from now on. My goal was for us to look
12 at the low-hanging fruit and do the things
13 this next year as we look at, you know,
14 maybe some proposals for restroom
15 facilities or maybe something that's more
16 substantial down the road. I don't see
17 this as a -- I guess I can answer that two
18 ways. I don't see this as onetime
19 request, but I think there may be some
20 other things that we see from the public
21 that would make these places even more
22 accessible but I don't see this as a long-
23 term addition. I think this gets us to a

1 place where we can really then assess the
2 usage and what we need to do after this
3 year.

4 MS. MCCURDY: And it could be a
5 tract-focused request the Board has an
6 interest in one year. It could be
7 different things. But this focus is more
8 programmatic statewide, sort of base-level
9 access usage upgrades.

10 MR. DARNALL: Okay. So you know
11 18 months is a long time, and in the
12 developed world in the construction
13 industry, we're pricing things at today's
14 dollars and we're suggesting to our
15 clients that they carry 1 to 2 percent per
16 month as escalation just to cover
17 themselves and that's -- that direction is
18 worth what you pay for it, which was a
19 doughnut today. But it is real, and just
20 please don't -- if you rounded it up that
21 much, I think that's great. If you
22 didn't, I would ask that we round it up
23 the appropriate amount.

1 MS. MCCURDY: And I would -- you know,
2 Commissioner, I'll pull you into this
3 discussion. And believe me, I appreciate
4 the concern, and I don't want to hotbox
5 the Board on a different amount or a
6 higher amount. I'm just saying I also
7 don't want to mislead, but that decision
8 really needs to be made now.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So after the
10 discussion, the motion I think has --
11 2.1 million is what we're asking to put
12 into the budget for that. I guess I
13 would -- if you're talking about 2 percent
14 for 18 months, that's 36 percent, so you
15 increase that 600- by a third. So instead
16 of 2.1 maybe make it 2.3 million or
17 2.4 million as the cap. Would that be --
18 I mean, we would need a motion. But I
19 guess that's what I'm thinking after
20 listening to some of the conversation.

21 MS. MCCURDY: And there is a motion in
22 the memo, but now you'd have to -- again,
23 I left it where -- I said in the memo an

1 amount needs to be inserted. But I don't
2 mean to cut off questions.

3 Dr. Valentine?

4 DR. VALENTINE: Yeah. I'm just -- to
5 the Commissioner, we're sending out bids
6 regularly. We're getting a bid or no bids
7 because the fees are coming in at like
8 300 percent above architect renderings
9 right now, so it's a tough time to do it
10 but it could also backfire and a recession
11 may come along and may go the other way.
12 But I think it's -- I think I'd rather see
13 you err on the side of caution and take on
14 the priorities and fix them, and then we
15 can talk again next year.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: That sounds
17 good. I thank you for that. I guess we
18 need a motion from somebody because I
19 don't want to make the motion myself since
20 we're the one administering that. But,
21 you know, if we did that as 2.5 million
22 dollars in that draft motion, I think that
23 would give us the leeway we need to be

1 able to -- otherwise, other than that with
2 the state purchasing stuff that goes on,
3 it would probably be bleeding into the
4 next year anyway. So I think that would
5 be sufficient.

6 Mr. Darnall?

7 MS. MCCURDY: And that's page 2 of the
8 motion with the amount, page 2 of 5e.

9 MR. DARNALL: Yeah. So I'd like to
10 make a motion for the Board to authorize
11 the ADCNR, after exhausting available
12 interest income from the Stewardship
13 Account, to expend funds from the corpus
14 of the Stewardship Account up to an amount
15 that, when added to the available interest
16 income, does not exceed 2.5 million
17 dollars for fiscal year 2023.

18 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
20 Mr. Holloway.

21 Any more discussion on that? So
22 it's the -- that we would be able to
23 expend up to 2 and a half million dollars

1 from the Stewardship Account in 2023.

2 MS. MCCURDY: And, Commissioner, I
3 would suggest this motion be by a show of
4 hands or something identifying to be sure
5 that we have the votes.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All those in
7 favor, please raise your hand. I see --

8 MS. MCCURDY: It's unanimous.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Unanimous.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. MCCURDY: Thank you. I'm sorry
12 for that, but the auditors thank me every
13 year for doing that so I like to keep them
14 happy.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.
16 Thank you. Thank you all. Good
17 discussion.

18 MS. MCCURDY: And so that's our only
19 action items. I would -- before I throw
20 it back to the Commissioner, just an
21 update because they did ask me to update
22 the Board. We do continue in discussions
23 with CRATA. We have met with them again,

1 but they are -- although working on some
2 additional requests to include some
3 additional trails at Yates Lake, they are
4 still asking us to hold on any further
5 discussion regarding the acre parcel and
6 the potential tower placement. So that's
7 still on hold, but they wanted me to let
8 you know that. And I wanted you to know
9 that we're still in ongoing discussions
10 with them.

11 Commissioner, other than that, I
12 think you have an item, but I think -- I'm
13 looking at staff. Did I miss anything
14 anybody's aware of?

15 Okay.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you. On
17 Tab 5g in your -- it came in the green
18 folder today, just to give a little
19 background on this item. The Forever Wild
20 program has been wildly popular over
21 the -- since its inception in 1992. I
22 think that the Board has done great work.
23 I'm very excited when I go around the

1 state to see the properties that the Board
2 has acquired and how we've opened that up
3 for public access. It's probably the best
4 program I think in -- ever created in
5 state government just the way that it
6 works and the transparency of it. Even
7 though sometimes it's a little slow for my
8 taste, it is done very aboveboard and it's
9 a very good program.

10 The only criticism that I have
11 heard since I've been Commissioner and
12 before about the program is that taking
13 some of the properties out of the -- off
14 the tax rolls in some of the rural
15 counties has -- they feel has a negative
16 impact to those counties. This was an
17 issue that I know has been dealt with with
18 the Board long before I was Commissioner
19 starting with, I think, some comments at
20 the Board or business of the Board by
21 Coosa County commissioners in the past and
22 others really asking for the Board not to
23 participate in their county because of

1 impacts. We have worked over the time
2 that -- just in the time I can speak of
3 that I've been Commissioner since 2017,
4 there have been eight pieces of
5 legislation that has been introduced or
6 working through the Legislature to require
7 the Board to compensate the counties in
8 some way. You know, there are multiple
9 different ideas in that legislation, but
10 there's been eight pieces of legislation.

11 This past session, the legislation
12 passed -- a constitutional amendment
13 passed the House, and on the last day of
14 the session was poised to pass the Senate
15 that would require us to, as we did some
16 work, carbon credit work, to provide that
17 money to the county where the property was
18 located as opposed to the State's General
19 Fund.

20 Before it has been limited to just
21 a few counties that this was an issue for.
22 I would say that it has gone from just
23 being one or two counties to most of the

1 counties where Forever Wild owns property.
2 It is a concern for them. I did hear from
3 Shelby County today that it is not a
4 concern of theirs, but I think they are by
5 far the exception to the other counties.
6 And, again, I know Chad left. I do
7 appreciate our partnership with
8 Shelby County.

9 I was -- that night or the --
10 towards the end of the session, instead of
11 just having one constitutional amendment
12 that would cause us to do something if it
13 was passed by the Legislature, there were
14 multiple other counties that were standing
15 in line to have local constitutional
16 amendments in their counties and then
17 other counties that were looking at the
18 next legislative session and the next
19 legislative session to do something for
20 their counties, and I saw that as a real
21 danger to the program, especially since
22 the program has to be reauthorized every
23 20 years and we're ten years away from

1 reauthorization. I would -- I think there
2 is a real concern that if there are
3 constitutional amendments on the ballot at
4 every election to move to do something
5 with Forever Wild that it creates a
6 fatigue for the program and could
7 jeopardize our reauthorization in 2032.

8 So saying all of that, I met with
9 leadership in the Senate and several
10 senators on that last night, and I made a
11 commitment to them that if -- that I could
12 bring to the Board an opportunity that I
13 think would have the biggest impact to
14 protect the Forever Wild program while
15 providing some compensation to the
16 counties that feel like they have -- that
17 the Forever Wild ownership in their county
18 is a detriment to them. And I do see some
19 of their issues.

20 You know, in Jackson County where
21 we have the Walls of Jericho, the counties
22 and the rescue squads up there, they spend
23 a lot of time and effort, you know, having

1 to rescue people from the walls or, you
2 know, if people are injured, you know,
3 it's difficult to get down there, you
4 know, maintaining the roads within the --
5 the county roads that go to and from.

6 If you've been to our -- the
7 southern terminus of the Pinhoti Trail,
8 our Forever Wild property in Coosa County,
9 the road going in there is in very rough
10 shape and needs a lot of maintenance
11 leading in and out, and a lot of that is
12 caused by the traffic of the people coming
13 in and out to the property. So I see
14 issues. I see the county's point in some
15 places. Others not -- maybe not quite so
16 much.

17 But in order to protect the long-
18 term viability of the program, I said that
19 I would bring to the Board a proposal
20 where we would compensate the counties in
21 some fair fashion with the least
22 administrative burden possible on our
23 staff to get over this one issue that

1 continues to dog the program, or really
2 the only issue that continues to be a
3 negative towards the program as far as I
4 know.

5 So that kind of gives you the
6 background of where we are today. The
7 legislative -- the people that we met with
8 agreed not to pass that constitutional
9 amendment on the last day and give the
10 Board a chance to provide some action.
11 And if the Board declines to provide the
12 action, there was a commitment from the
13 leadership in the Legislature that this
14 would be an issue that would come back and
15 that they would pass -- work to pass some
16 legislation that would do something very
17 similar to what's being proposed today,
18 but instead of it being done by policy of
19 the Board that can be amended or changed
20 if circumstances change or for whatever
21 reason, it would be in legislation that
22 would bind the Board with very little say
23 of the Board for future actions. And so I

1 just wanted to give a full background on
2 how we got here to the proposal that we're
3 making -- that I'm going to be making
4 today.

5 To get to the part of what we
6 think is fair, we have primarily -- Ed
7 Poolos, our Deputy Commissioner -- we
8 don't have a property tax accountant and
9 somebody that's -- that does this every
10 day, so Ed worked with the Department of
11 Revenue and others that have a good
12 knowledge of that, and we looked at
13 multiple opportunities of what we thought
14 was fair. They are -- just as a -- to do
15 the -- go through the calculation of how
16 we get to the amount per acre that I'm
17 going to propose is that there are -- each
18 piece -- each parcel that is designated
19 current use timberland is either good,
20 average, poor, or nonproductive, and there
21 is an amount that goes with each of those.
22 Since Forever Wild -- since our main
23 purpose is not for timber management,

1 our -- the property that you acquire has a
2 lot of other reasons or different reasons.
3 Timber may be one of them -- but all of
4 the land that Forever Wild has titled is
5 not in areas that would be considered
6 good, and some of it is in poor. And so
7 we chose the average, the average
8 productive rating.

9 Then we looked at the millage
10 rates. You know, over 67 counties, there
11 are different rates for each county.
12 There are school systems within those
13 counties and there are -- and those school
14 systems have different rates within the
15 counties, and so as we worked to try and
16 find what we thought was fair, we just --
17 we averaged the 67 county -- the mills for
18 the 67 counties and then also averaged the
19 school systems within the counties and
20 then averaged that to come up with -- 26
21 and a half mills is what we felt like is a
22 fair amount of compensation for the
23 counties. So when you use the \$605

1 productivity rate and then the timberland
2 use value, the 10 percent of appraised
3 value for that times the millage rate, it
4 ends up at \$1.60 per acre. And so with
5 our current amount of acres that we own,
6 not what's included in leases -- because
7 in those leases, those landowners are
8 already paying the property taxes, so we
9 backed out any property that was not
10 titled to the Alabama Trust Fund on behalf
11 of Forever Wild -- that comes out at \$1.60
12 an acre to about \$357,000 annually that
13 this would -- compensation would be to the
14 counties. So I understand this is a --
15 you know, we've talked about this for a
16 long time as an issue, but this is the
17 first time that we've really talked about
18 the brass tacks of it, and so I would like
19 to open it up for further discussion or
20 conversation.

21 Mr. Darnall?

22 MR. DARNALL: So probably the most
23 exciting Board meeting I've ever been to

1 for Forever Wild Land Trust, so, you know,
2 my -- my personal opinion is -- and I have
3 talked to my senator and my
4 representative -- is that this is
5 something that the Forever Wild Land Trust
6 Board needs to seriously consider doing,
7 and I'm inclined to make the motion to do
8 so. And I can -- I'm not a -- I don't run
9 a county, so I cannot appreciate the lack
10 of funds or the need for funds that each
11 county needs, but in principle, I think
12 this is fair. And so if -- and I trust
13 you and the Deputy that y'all have come up
14 with a fair system.

15 I really like the concept of us
16 taking the initiative to do it -- and
17 nothing against politicians -- but as
18 opposed to somebody that's running for
19 office grabbing a popular topic and, you
20 know, going to beat back and -- you know,
21 whoever, Big Brother, to do that, and I
22 like that. And I think that -- you know,
23 I realize every dollar that we spend not

1 buying land flies against our mission, but
2 I also don't want to do anything that
3 creates a situation that they throw the
4 baby out with the bath water. So I -- if
5 this was my trust, that's what I would do,
6 but I'm only one of ten votes.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir.

8 Mr. Wright?

9 MR. WRIGHT: I'm from one of those
10 rural counties, and I support this
11 wholeheartedly. I agree with everything
12 that Jack said. But I only found out
13 about this on Tuesday afternoon, and,
14 y'all, there's a can of worms before us.
15 I'm all for that can of worms, but I would
16 like just a little bit of time to look and
17 see what's in that can of worms.

18 So I would like to ask the
19 Board that -- I don't know what kind of
20 motion or whatever -- to table it until
21 next meeting, but I am all for the motion,
22 just not today. I want to look in the can
23 of worms. And that's all I have to say

1 about it. And I do take this job
2 seriously, and I will look into that can
3 of worms.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Go ahead,
5 Mr. Oates.

6 MR. OATES: You know, I've talked
7 about this in the past, and I've also
8 talked to several legislators about it.

9 MS. MCCURDY: It's a little hard to
10 hear you, Mr. Oates.

11 MR. OATES: Sorry. I've talked to
12 several legislators about it, and I feel
13 that it is something that we need to
14 address. And as you mentioned, there is
15 going to be a special session soon in
16 probably July or August, and I'm afraid
17 that they will try and pass some
18 legislation in that special session.
19 That's not really easy to do as you know,
20 but I think they will try to do it in that
21 special session if we don't act so I would
22 support moving forward with it quickly.

23 MS. MCCURDY: And we lost the last

1 part of your comment.

2 MR. OATES: I said I would support
3 moving forward with it quickly.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: One thing about
5 doing it by policy if we do it today is if
6 we want to come back in August, I mean,
7 it's not, you know, binding for life. If
8 we find some unintended consequence or
9 something that needs to be tweaked on
10 that, we can do that when we come back in
11 August because we wouldn't be -- with what
12 I'm proposing, we would not be making any
13 contributions to the counties until far
14 after that August meeting so we would have
15 the ability to, I would say, fix anything
16 that we see as a -- that comes up as an
17 issue between now and the next meeting.

18 MR. CHILDERS: Did I miss the motion?

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: No, sir, I have
20 not made it yet. I was opening it up for
21 comments. I guess I could have made the
22 motion first.

23 MR. CHILDERS: I guess we need a

1 motion to discuss it, right?

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Sure. I can do
3 that. So I will make the motion since I
4 am the one that committed to bringing this
5 to the Board.

6 I make a motion for the Board to
7 adopt the following policy: Beginning
8 with the 2023 fiscal year, in an effort to
9 cooperate with local county governments,
10 the Forever Wild Land Trust will make an
11 annual payment to each county where
12 Forever Wild lands are located pursuant to
13 the authority vested in the Board by
14 Section 5(k)(2) of Amendment 543. The
15 amount of the annual payment shall be
16 \$1.60 per acre in each such county. The
17 Lands staff are instructed to calculate
18 the acreage assessed in the name of the
19 State for the Forever Wild Land Trust in
20 each county as of August 1st of each year.
21 So that's the motion.

22 Do I have a second?

23 MR. DARNALL: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
2 Mr. Darnall.

3 Now, then, any other discussion?

4 MR. CHILDERS: I have a question.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Childers
6 and then Mr. Holloway.

7 MR. CHILDERS: The letter from Senator
8 Chambliss, I believe, indicated a carbon
9 credit proposal. Was this researched
10 before we decided or landed on this system
11 as ad valorem tax to be paid? Is there a
12 possibility that that could be pursued
13 through Forever Wild's carbon credits
14 versus ad valorem taxes?

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Well, I will
16 say this. We are not -- I'm not proposing
17 that we reimburse the county for any lost
18 ad valorem taxes. I'm proposing we make a
19 contribution at \$1.60 per acre to those
20 counties. But to answer the first part of
21 the question, we did extensively look at
22 the carbon credits. We are exploring that
23 as a department. And it is a very

1 volatile and new market, and we could have
2 done something related to that, but I
3 think it would not get to the issue.
4 This, I think, addresses the long-term
5 issue of viability of the program. I
6 think if we had done what was in the
7 carbon credit legislation, I don't think
8 there would have been much, if any,
9 revenue realized for those counties and
10 we'd be right back where we are talking
11 about this. I think this fixes it and the
12 issue for long-term. That was -- that's
13 why we --

14 MS. MCCURDY: And to clarify just a
15 little in addition that may be part of
16 your question. This is something that the
17 Board can do by motion. The Board cannot
18 redirect where revenue off the property
19 goes. So the Board would not have the
20 power by motion to redirect proceeds from
21 the General Fund to the counties. So
22 there's nothing this Board could vote on
23 to get any carbon credit or anything else

1 to the counties.

2 MR. CHILDERS: I'm in full support of
3 supporting these counties. This is based
4 on ad valorem taxes. It's based on
5 current use property values. Those values
6 change periodically. Is there any
7 provision made here to escalate it as
8 those change, or would that have to come
9 back before the Board as an amendment or a
10 change to our motion if this is approved?

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: What I've
12 proposed here has -- is as a set dollar
13 figure. If the value changes in the
14 future, it would come back to the Board
15 for additional action, just like we do a
16 lot of the other memos in 5. It would be
17 a --

18 MR. CHILDERS: It would have to be
19 reevaluated?

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir.

21 MR. CHILDERS: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

23 Oh, I'm sorry. Mr. Holloway first.

1 MR. HOLLOWAY: Actually, I got the
2 question answered by that gentleman there.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.
4 Dr. Powers?

5 DR. POWERS: So I support this. It
6 seems like a very pragmatic approach to
7 the only problem we face. I also agree
8 that, you know, the fact that we set the
9 policy means we can revisit it at either
10 the August meeting or later. So I think
11 those are both good points. My only
12 question is is can we use Stewardship
13 funds to pay this as opposed to taking
14 dollars away.

15 MS. MCCURDY: We could not. By the
16 wording of the amendment of forming a
17 program, it's very specific on the uses of
18 the Stewardship Fund. And we did look
19 into that in detail to see if we could
20 give the Board options, but that is not an
21 option available to the Board even by your
22 motion.

23 DR. POWERS: So is there a way to

1 change that or that would kick in a whole
2 'nother process?

3 MS. MCCURDY: It's similar to the
4 other question on carbon credit revenue.
5 It would take a constitutional amendment
6 to change that.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

8 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Yeah, I support this
9 as well. I think it's probably fiscally
10 and politically prudent to do this.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other --
12 Jack?

13 MR. DARNALL: So this is kind of a
14 clarifying point, and I -- is there a way
15 for us to proceed with this motion and
16 allow the staff -- the professional staff
17 to continue to validate this motion and do
18 the final approval in August? And I say
19 that only because we've got very, very
20 experienced Board members that aren't
21 here, and you've got some very
22 inexperienced Board members that are here.
23 So I mean, I just -- and I'm not trying to

1 kick the can down the road. I do think
2 it's important to send a signal to the
3 Legislature that we're serious about that,
4 but if that's dodging the bullet or
5 kicking the can, then I'm not for that.
6 That's more of a procedural question.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I would say
8 that if we pass this motion, then we can
9 still revisit those same things in August
10 if there's -- if we see -- we will have
11 the staff evaluate it, and if we see
12 issues -- and I think there may be
13 suggestions from others on how to make
14 this work better -- I'm committing to the
15 Board to bring that back in August for us
16 to make sure this works as seamlessly as
17 possible with as least administrative
18 burden on the staff to get this done.

19 MS. MCCURDY: And I think to
20 complicate it, we don't know when the
21 legislative session may go in. That's not
22 something we would know right now.

23 DR. VALENTINE: So, Commissioner,

1 knowing some of these guys, it's probably
2 a good idea to do some due diligence
3 between now and the special session to
4 make sure they're on board, because when I
5 look at the distribution of funds, it's
6 kind of the counties who need it less who
7 are getting the most here, and I could see
8 Senator Singleton, for example, noticing
9 that right away. So I think doing some
10 homework before the special session with
11 these guys -- because I'm a little worried
12 about that.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Sure.

14 Understood.

15 MS. MCCURDY: I would throw in -- and
16 I will commend Deputy Commissioner Poolos
17 who has been working hard on that, trying
18 to give them information, and what's here
19 is a per-acre, you know, figure. So it is
20 going to vary, but it varies by the
21 acreage. I didn't mean to interrupt you,
22 Commissioner. I'm just going to be
23 honest. I'm not sure -- I would need some

1 additional assistance certainly working
2 with Deputy Commissioner to know what more
3 to look at.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I don't think
5 the question was what to look at. It was
6 just that we -- if there are -- if you see
7 any administrative problems with this how
8 to bring --

9 MS. MCCURDY: Oh, I'm sorry.

10 MR. CHILDERS: I'm not doing this, but
11 I'm asking. If we table this to our next
12 meeting, this motion, we put the motion in
13 action but we table it to give our other
14 Board members an opportunity for input --
15 we've already got one letter from a member
16 that's not here to -- is that right? Do
17 we not have a --

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir.

19 MR. CHILDERS: -- that had a request.
20 If we table, would that satisfy the
21 Legislature?

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I can't speak
23 for the Legislature, but I can tell you my

1 sense is that it would not. And I think
2 if they have a special session or the
3 opportunity to do something before we meet
4 again in August, it's a real possibility
5 that they would act legislatively. And
6 that's just my opinion. I don't have
7 anything definitive on that, but that's
8 just from the multiple conversations I had
9 throughout this whole process.

10 I think Dr. Howell had her hand
11 up.

12 DR. HOWELL: I was wondering how sure
13 we can be the counties will be satisfied
14 with that raise.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: The question is
16 would the counties be satisfied. And that
17 is a good question. There are a lot of
18 counties, and we have not met with all of
19 them individually but this does get to the
20 heart of the questions that they've had.
21 And I think that it meets the objectives
22 to provide some compensation back to the
23 counties for what they're missing. And I

1 think it's fair. I really think it's
2 fair. That's the -- if I can say anything
3 about how we've calculated it, I think
4 it's fair to us, I think it's fair to
5 them. I don't think it weighs on one side
6 or the other, and I think it's very
7 logical and -- and just to be able to
8 explain that to the counties and to the
9 legislative members.

10 Yes, sir?

11 MR. DARNALL: So I mean, personally,
12 I'm comfortable with the motion going
13 forward with what you said about, hey, if
14 we get down the road and realize there's a
15 better way to do this, we can always bring
16 it up. I'm very satisfied and comfortable
17 and trusting with that direction. And I
18 also -- but to Dr. Valentine's comments,
19 it's not our job to make up funding for
20 every county that doesn't have enough
21 money. Our job is to make positive
22 moves to protect the integrity of Forever
23 Wild moving forward forever and trust that

1 the Legislature will see our actions in
2 the light that they're done and take that
3 into consideration. So if
4 Jefferson County is not satisfied, as long
5 as the Legislature is, satisfied, you
6 know, we're just doing our part to provide
7 a solution for what people may perceive as
8 taking money from them.

9 And so, again, I would encourage
10 us to pass it and then to -- you know, and
11 then as other people -- I mean, let me say
12 this. If I don't show up to the meeting,
13 I don't get a vote. I understand that.
14 But that way, we can continue discussion,
15 you know, and things like that, and so
16 that's -- I appreciate you saying what you
17 did. I think this is a good move. I
18 think this would -- if we approve it, I
19 think it sends a very positive signal to
20 the authorities in Montgomery that
21 actually can do something that we're
22 trying to move in a direction that is
23 appropriate.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Wright?

2 MR. WRIGHT: I agree with everything
3 that's been said here this morning about
4 this, but I am from one of those rural
5 counties and what just come up, would the
6 counties be satisfied since -- I mean, I
7 like what the Shelby County man said this
8 morning. And it's definitely an asset for
9 Forever Wild to have this property in
10 Shelby County. But, y'all, when I said
11 something about that can of worms, I'm
12 coming from one of those rural counties,
13 and I see something there that may not be
14 kosher with particularly my county.

15 This letter that was dated by the
16 senator was April 26th. That's nine days
17 ago from today. I as a Board member found
18 out about it Tuesday afternoon. So I want
19 time to look into that can. So if we can
20 figure how we could change this thing in
21 August -- if we pass it today to satisfy
22 the Legislature, no problem. But can we
23 actually change it in August if we -- if I

1 find something in that can of worms?

2 That's my question.

3 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, you're voting a
4 motion today. Any motion you make can be
5 changed by subsequent motion, same
6 process, assuming a quorum was here, yes.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So if it's --
8 we've had good discussion on this. I
9 don't want to cut us short if anybody's
10 got a burning -- something burning they've
11 got to say, but if not, I would like to
12 call the question and let's vote on the
13 motion. We'll do this one by a show of
14 hands as well, please, because I want to
15 make sure that we have -- since we only
16 have ten members here, I want to make sure
17 that we have enough affirmative votes or
18 not.

19 So all those in favor of the
20 motion, please raise their hand.

21 All right. All those opposed?

22 Nine to one. Motion carries nine
23 to one.

1 I don't have any -- any other
2 miscellaneous reports or anything else on
3 that?

4 MS. MCCURDY: No.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: The next order
6 of business is the approval of the
7 February 3rd minutes. Is there anybody
8 that has any corrections or changes to the
9 minutes?

10 MR. DARNALL: I make a motion we
11 approve them.

12 MR. OATES: Second.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I'll give
14 Mr. Darnall credit for the motion and
15 Mr. Oates credit for the second.

16 No other corrections. All those
17 in favor of approving the minutes from the
18 February 3rd meeting say aye.

19 Any opposed?

20 None opposed. The motion carries.

21 The next meeting will be August
22 the 4th in Oxford, Alabama. The mayor of
23 Oxford, Mayor Craft, is a great supporter

1 of the Department of Conservation and
2 State Parks and the Forever Wild program,
3 and so I'm excited to take the meeting to
4 his city. I think that you will like
5 hearing from him and his vision on outdoor
6 recreation and how he's taking Choccolocco
7 Park in Oxford in combination with Chehaw
8 State Park and the other things they're
9 trying to do there to help grow their
10 economy in Oxford. So I'm hopeful that as
11 we have these partnerships with different
12 people around the state, we can continue
13 to have meetings in places where those
14 folks can come share some of their vision
15 and opportunity with the Board.

16 So with that, if there's no other
17 business, I'd entertain a motion to
18 adjourn.

19 MR. WRIGHT: So moved.

20 MR. DARNALL: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I'll give
22 Mr. Wright the motion to adjourn and
23 Mr. Darnall the second.

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All those in favor say aye.

We are adjourned. Thank you all.

(Proceedings concluded at

12:44 p.m.)

