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MINUTES OF THE
FOREVER WILD BOARD MEETING
Alabama Activity Center
201 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama
February 2, 2023
10:00 a.m.

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Transcript of Proceedings

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PROCEEDINGS, taken before Stacey
L. Johnson, Certified Court Reporter and
Commissioner for the State of Alabama at
the Oxford Civic Center, 201 Dexter
Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama, on the
2nd day of February, 2023, 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. James B. McClintock**
- Mr. Jack Darnall**
- Mr. Raymond B. Jones, Jr.**
- Ms. Karen Stanley**
- Dr. A.M. "Jay" Neumann, Jr.**
- Dr. John Valentine**
- Mr. Jake Harper**
- Mr. Jimmy Parnell**

* * * * *

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Well, good
2 morning, and welcome to the February 2nd
3 Forever Wild Board Meeting.

4 I'm going to call the meeting to
5 order, and as I call your name, just let
6 me know that you're present for the Record
7 and make sure we have a quorum.

8 Chris Blankenship is here.

9 Mr. Childers?

10 MR. CHILDERS: Here.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

12 MR. DARNALL: Here.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Harper?

14 MR. HARPER: Here.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

16 MR. HOLLOWAY: Here.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Jones?

18 MR. JONES: Here.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

20 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Here.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Neumann?

22 DR. NEUMANN: Here.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Rick Oates?

1 Jimmy Parnell?

2 MR. PARNELL: Here.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

4 DR. POWERS: Here.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Ms. Stanley?

6 Dr. Valentine?

7 DR. VALENTINE: Here.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Howell?

9 Dr. Saloom?

10 We do have a quorum.

11 Glad to be here at the RSA

12 Activity Center again. I appreciate them
13 letting us use this facility here in
14 Montgomery for our first meeting that's
15 always in the Montgomery area. I
16 appreciate the opportunity to meet here on
17 Dexter Avenue right here in downtown
18 Montgomery, a very nice facility, and I
19 appreciate them letting us meet.

20 We do have three new Board
21 members. I see one of our Board members
22 coming in now. Will somebody let her in
23 the back door? But we have Karen Stanley,

1 Jake Harper, and Jimmy Parnell. If you
2 don't mind, welcome to the Board, and I'll
3 just give you a couple of minutes to just
4 tell us a little bit about your background
5 and anything you want the Board to know.

6 We'll start with you, Mr. Parnell.

7 MR. PARNELL: Do we do it on the mic
8 or --

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir.

10 And for the new members, please
11 use the mic because all of our Board
12 meetings are transcribed by the court
13 reporter, and it makes it much easier for
14 her.

15 MR. PARNELL: I'm Jimmy Parnell. I
16 live in Chilton County. At home, I'm in
17 the timber and cattle business. My family
18 is there. My day job is president of Alfa
19 Insurance and Alabama Farmers Federation.
20 It's a pleasure to be here.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

22 Mr. Harper?

23 MR. HARPER: Thank you. I'm Jake

1 Harper from Camden down in Wilcox County.
2 I'm in the cattle and timber business too.
3 Education, I finished Auburn in '78. I
4 just look forward to serving on this Board
5 and learning all I can.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Glad to have
8 you.

9 And then we have -- for the
10 Record, let me reflect that Ms. Karen
11 Stanley has joined us to add to our
12 quorum. And I put you right on the spot.
13 Tell us a little bit about yourself so the
14 Board can get to know you a little bit and
15 the audience.

16 MS. STANLEY: I will.

17 Good to meet you, fellow Board
18 members. Good to meet you, audience.
19 Thanks for coming. It's always a pleasure
20 to serve the state or the city or the
21 county in any way that I can.

22 I'm Karen Stanley from Madison
23 County, Alabama. I have a lot in common

1 with some of these gentlemen. My family
2 has a cattle farm in Morgan County and --
3 but my family business is Stanley
4 Construction. We're a second-generation
5 construction company. And I also serve on
6 the Land Trust of North Alabama Board. So
7 I look forward to helping to preserve
8 space all over the state.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Well, welcome
11 to the Board. I did not realize you are
12 originally from Morgan County. Me, you,
13 and Mr. Childers all have something in
14 common.

15 MS. STANLEY: Originally from Madison.
16 We branched out into Morgan. We like it
17 just fine.

18 MR. CHILDERS: And we don't mind
19 having her as a neighbor. She's right
20 across the street from us.

21 MS. JONES: There you go.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Well, welcome
23 all three Board members. We're glad to

1 have y'all serving with us as we do this
2 important work for the State of Alabama.

3 I don't think we have any other
4 opening announcements or special guests,
5 so we'll move into the public comment
6 period. We only have a couple of people
7 so far that have signed up to speak. If
8 you would like to speak and you've not had
9 the opportunity to fill out one of the
10 green slips, please raise your hand and
11 one of our staff will get that to you.

12 Seeing none, we'll go ahead and
13 get started.

14 The first speaker is Mr. Steve
15 Northcutt on the Fowler's Cove in
16 Jackson County. That's Tab 3a.

17 MR. NORTHCUTT: I am Steve
18 Northcutt --

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I'm sorry.
20 Just a second.

21 For the new Board members, I will
22 call out the -- try and give you the page
23 number so you can find it. It's Tab 3

1 page 6. That way, you can see the piece
2 of property that the speaker is talking
3 about.

4 Give us just a second if you don't
5 mind, please, sir. We're not going to cut
6 into your three minutes.

7 MR. NORTHCUTT: I appreciate that.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Go ahead.

9 MR. NORTHCUTT: So I'm Steve Northcutt
10 from the Nature Conservancy, and I'm here
11 to speak about the Fowler's Cove.

12 The Nature Conservancy has had a
13 project in the Paint Rock River in
14 Jackson County since '01. And in '02, the
15 owner of Fowler's Cove was our first river
16 restoration project, and we've done 43
17 since then with funding from U.S. Fish and
18 Wildlife and TVA and private individuals
19 and corporations. So I've known the owner
20 of this property for over 20 years. I
21 just finished the project on his property
22 two years ago. I spoke to him last week.

23 So this property is a beautiful

1 tract. It is adjacent to a property the
2 Nature Conservancy helped acquire called
3 Jacob's Mountain. It is 11,400 acres, and
4 we contributed a million dollars towards
5 the match on that property. So this abuts
6 that property. It does have riverine
7 habitat, upland limestone boulder,
8 hardwood forest, and it would be in
9 addition to the State's holdings that I
10 think the public would fully enjoy.

11 Now, as you probably know in your
12 packet, the property would be acquired
13 with money from Pittman-Robertson, so the
14 match would be the request for the Board.
15 And as everybody on the Board knows when
16 you acquire property with federal dollars,
17 you actually deed out a portion of the
18 property to Forever Wild under a decision
19 on how you incorporate that dollar. So
20 with riverine habitat, bottomlands, and
21 upland forest, you know, you could make a
22 decision to acquire property that was
23 upland boulder forest with Forever Wild's

1 money and do it in a way that makes sense
2 to the program. But I think you would
3 find that this would be a fantastic
4 addition to Forever Wild's ownership in
5 Jackson County and very bio diverse.

6 If people don't know about the
7 Paint Rock River, it's one of the most
8 unique rivers in North America. It has 98
9 species of freshwater fish, 58 species of
10 freshwater mussels. It's actually a jewel
11 that many of the people in North Alabama
12 admire, and it's one of our biggest
13 project areas.

14 So if anybody has any questions,
15 I'll be glad to answer them.

16 Yes, ma'am?

17 MS. STANLEY: Yes, sir. The
18 Huntsville -- or the Land Trust of
19 North Alabama, as you know, also is very
20 active in the Paint Rock Preserve. I
21 would want to know is this particular
22 area -- because some of that is just for
23 research and it's not really open to the

1 public. Would this be something that is
2 open to the public or more for the
3 research? Because there is rich research
4 because of, as you mentioned, the number
5 of species and the biodiversity.

6 MR. NORTHCUTT: It would be open to
7 the public.

8 MS. STANLEY: That's wonderful.

9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Okay. Thank
11 you.

12 The next speaker is Mr. Doug
13 Morrison on the Big Canoe Creek Nature
14 Preserve. And this is not a property
15 that's under consideration. This is a
16 current property that we own, so it's not
17 going to be in your packet.

18 Yes, sir?

19 MR. MORRISON: Thank you very much.
20 Good morning. I'm Doug Morrison. I work
21 for the City of Springville as the Big
22 Canoe Creek Nature Preserve manager. I've
23 been part of the process of getting the

1 property to Forever Wild.

2 We started in 2009. It took us
3 about nine years, but in 2018, it became a
4 reality and became Forever Wild property.

5 July 2022, they hired me to be the
6 manager, so since then, I've worked with
7 Evan and Zach and Wayne to flag out some
8 trails that the city funded. We've got
9 short of three miles of trails. We had
10 some existing trails there. We're hoping
11 a grant will come through for another set
12 of trails.

13 The long-term goal, we're trying
14 to -- you know, we're -- the county is
15 working right now to help us with the
16 entrance road and the parking area. So
17 they've been real gracious with that in
18 helping to get that. Once they do, we
19 will work on the entrance gate. We've
20 already got plans drawn up for the
21 entrance gate and the signage.

22 Long-term, we want to see an open-
23 air pavilion and have the outdoor

1 classrooms. I've already been going to
2 local schools and the high school in
3 Springville and teaching them about our
4 biodiversity.

5 We've got the Canoe Creek
6 clubshell mussel in the Big Canoe Creek
7 watershed that's on the endangered
8 species. We also have the Trispot Darter
9 that's a threatened species. So I'm just
10 trying to teach the young people in our
11 community about our unique biodiversity,
12 number one, as far as the aquatic species.
13 So that's the message we want to get
14 across to the community and hopefully
15 have -- bring the classrooms to the
16 preserve and teach them more about
17 biodiversity and the state.

18 So I just wanted to introduce
19 myself. I haven't been here since they
20 hired me in July. But I really appreciate
21 the Forever Wild program and am a big
22 proponent of this program.

23 Thank you very much from the City

1 of Springville.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,
3 Mr. Morrison. I appreciate you coming and
4 introducing yourself, and I appreciate the
5 partnership that we have with the City of
6 Springville on this tract and improving
7 the public access there and making good
8 use of it.

9 Thank you so much.

10 Any questions or comments from the
11 Board?

12 All right. Thank you, sir.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Anybody else
14 that didn't get a chance?

15 All right. Thank, y'all. That
16 closes our public comment period. And I
17 think that may be the shortest one we've
18 ever had.

19 We'll now move to recess into
20 executive session. By regulation,
21 appraisal values are confidential during
22 periods of negotiation. Accordingly, in
23 order to discuss tract appraisal values,

1 the Board will need to go into recess for
2 an executive session.

3 Is there a motion for the Board to
4 now recess to attend an executive session?

5 MR. JONES: So moved.

6 DR. POWERS: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Moved by
8 Mr. Jones; seconded by Dr. Powers.

9 As I call your name, please state
10 your position on this motion to recess.
11 Those in favor please say aye. Those
12 opposed indicate by saying nay.

13 Chris Blankenship, aye.

14 Mr. Childers?

15 MR. CHILDERS: Aye.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Darnall?

17 MR. DARNALL: Aye.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Harper?

19 MR. HARPER: Aye.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

21 MR. HOLLOWAY: Aye.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Jones?

23 MR. JONES: Aye.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

2 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Aye.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Neumann?

4 DR. NEUMANN: Aye.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Parnell?

6 MR. PARNELL: Aye.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

8 DR. POWERS: Aye.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Ms. Stanley?

10 MS. STANLEY: Aye.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Valentine?

12 DR. VALENTINE: Aye.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All present
14 have indicated that they are in favor of
15 adjourning to executive session. We are
16 now in executive session. It is 10:17.
17 We should be returning in 20, 25 minutes.

18 Thank you.

19 (Recess from 10:17 a.m. to
20 11:09 a.m.)

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: We are back
22 from executive session. It is 11:09. We
23 have reconvened the meeting.

1 We are now in the -- move on to
2 our program status reports, the financial
3 data, and an overview.

4 Ms. McCurdy?

5 MS. MCCURDY: Thank you.

6 If the Board members would turn to
7 Tab 2a. And this will actually be some
8 updated information in your green folder,
9 so Tab 2a, the yellow from your green
10 folder.

11 So this is for the benefit of the
12 public. In this portion of the meeting, I
13 normally run through the status of
14 properties that have been previously
15 motioned for the Board to move into the
16 closing process. These are properties
17 that the staff is ordering environmental
18 reports, reviewing title insurance, doing
19 those general due diligence measures, but
20 if they're on this sheet, they are in some
21 form of closing process. So I usually
22 start out with the -- what would appear to
23 be anyway the account balance but run

1 through the properties that are in closing
2 so you have an idea of the funds that
3 would be available if you chose to take
4 action on any additional properties.

5 Currently as of January 31st, the
6 fund balance is just over 25 million. The
7 properties that we are working toward
8 close include the following: Autauga
9 WMA-Hart Addition, Autauga County;
10 Bon Secour River Wetlands Addition,
11 Baldwin County; Coldwater
12 Mountain-Robertson Addition, Calhoun;
13 Freedom Hills WMA-Boddie Addition, Colbert
14 County; Autauga WMA-County Road 112
15 Addition, Autauga; Cahaba
16 River-Shelby County Park Peel Addition,
17 Shelby County; Red Hills-Flat Creek
18 Phase V, Monroe County. With those
19 properties and the 15 percent of appraisal
20 value that must be transferred with each
21 acquisition or donation, those figures are
22 included. With all of that, the total
23 adjustments -- just like your checkbook,

1 what's pending -- is just over
2 4.5 million, leaving available to the
3 Board roughly 20 million dollars.

4 Any questions on those figures
5 from anybody?

6 All right. The second page is --
7 we kind of give you each time a running
8 tally of the properties that have closed
9 by fiscal year. So far this year, the
10 properties that have fully closed into the
11 program are Coldwater Mountain-McVey
12 Addition, Perdido WMA-Snowden Branch
13 Addition, and Red Hills-Flat Creek
14 Phase IV.

15 Any questions from the Board?

16 All right. Let's move to Tab 2b.
17 There's a yellow, somewhat updated sheet
18 in your green folder. Our fund that I
19 mentioned relates to the Stewardship
20 transfer, the 15 percent. This fund is
21 established in order to have money to
22 manage the properties within the program,
23 and if at any point the program is no

1 longer authorized, this would be all we
2 have to continue operating the properties
3 in the future.

4 For this fiscal year, the Board
5 had previously motioned and established
6 our approved expenditure amount. Of that
7 amount, we have so far this fiscal
8 starting out, starting October 1, have
9 spent just over \$150,000, leaving just
10 under two million available. Although, it
11 is going out the door pretty quickly with
12 the improvements that we're making on the
13 tracts and materials we're purchasing for
14 the improvements and the access and way
15 finding and everything that had been
16 previously discussed by the Board.

17 You also will see that we include
18 each time on Tab 2b and report on the net
19 assets of that fund. The net assets as of
20 December 31st, the end of the calendar
21 year, is just over 40.5 million. The
22 investments and the detail of that
23 Stewardship Fund is a little -- additional

1 information in detail is provided each
2 time on Tab 2c. That is a report provided
3 to us by the treasurer's office for each
4 meeting giving you a little more of the
5 investment detail for the Stewardship
6 Fund.

7 Any questions so far? And if I
8 miss your question, please -- or don't see
9 you raise a hand, just interrupt me.

10 If no questions, I'll move on to
11 your Tab 3a. This is a report of
12 appraised nominations. This is also an
13 item that is in your green folder. We had
14 some additional appraisals come in and so
15 we were able to update the sheet just
16 before this meeting.

17 So also for the benefit of the
18 public, I want to run through the status
19 of the appraisals that have been
20 previously motioned by the Board, and
21 those include Lillian Swamp Blackwater
22 Additions, Baldwin County; Riverton CHA,
23 or Community Hunting Area -- just an

1 acronym -- Riverton CHA-Barnett Mill
2 Hollow, Colbert; Riverton CHA-Hurd Hollow
3 Addition, Colbert; and Skyline WMA-Fowler
4 Cove Addition, Jackson County. We also
5 have appraisals in hand related to the Oak
6 Mountain State Park-Belcher Addition
7 Phase 2.

8 So those are the appraisals for
9 the different properties. There are --
10 and those are actually all the properties.
11 On occasion, we'll have a property you
12 made a motion on that we've not received
13 the appraisal back, but we're, for this
14 brief moment, caught up.

15 So any questions on that?

16 I will say that, you know, roughly
17 of the potential appraisals that have been
18 presented, you know, those amounts, you
19 know, we head toward the four million --
20 excuse me -- eight million, a little above
21 that, obviously with the transfers. But,
22 again, you have money to make motions
23 today if you choose on properties. And

1 that's the general point of all that.

2 So any questions from the Board on
3 that information so far?

4 All right. Commissioner, do you
5 want us to move on into the grant status
6 at this time?

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, please.

8 MS. MCCURDY: Also, turn to Tab 5a.
9 Now, that's going to be in your packet.
10 That's just the original memo that we sent
11 out to you.

12 Tab 5a, each meeting we update the
13 Board on staff's efforts to utilize either
14 grant funding or other leverage
15 partnership opportunities to make the
16 Board aware if we have an opportunity
17 where we're getting close to a deadline
18 date on a grant. It doesn't mean you have
19 to purchase a property by any means, but
20 we will let you know so that you realize
21 that that grant opportunity might be lost.
22 So I want to run through the various grant
23 activities. And we are continually

1 looking for ways to leverage your dollars,
2 so this is a part of that.

3 As I mentioned, the Autauga
4 WMA-Hart Addition and the Autauga
5 WMA-County Road 112 Addition are both
6 actively in our due diligence in closing
7 process. Both of those tracts benefited
8 from grant dollars that are helping us
9 leverage that funding. Both programs
10 require a minimum of a 25 percent
11 State-based match, so those would be
12 Forever Wild dollars. And both of those
13 programs -- or both of those funding
14 sources are coming from the
15 Pittman-Robertson, or PR, funding that's
16 made available through Chuck Sykes'
17 division of Wildlife and Freshwater
18 Fisheries Division, and they wanted to
19 partner with Forever Wild on those two
20 properties. So they're moving along.

21 Bon Secour River Wetlands Addition
22 is another property that is currently in
23 the closing process. We benefited from

1 National Coastal Wetlands Conservation
2 Grant Program funding on that. We were
3 only able to garner 68 percent of the --
4 utilize 68 percent of the purchase amount
5 with grant funding. Those percentages
6 will vary sometimes on the program as to
7 what's awarded.

8 The Red Hills-Flat Creek Phase V
9 Addition is also moving forward. Chuck's
10 division, again, the Wildlife Division,
11 obtained 2.55 million of U.S. Fish and
12 Wildlife Service Recovery Land Acquisition
13 and Habitat Conservation Plan Grant
14 Program funding for that. And Forever
15 Wild would be providing a match. That
16 grant award similarly covered about
17 68 percent of the purchase.

18 Moving on to the next category.
19 As far as appraised nominations,
20 properties that we have appraisals back on
21 them that present a leveraging
22 opportunity, the Skyline WMA-Fowler Cove
23 Addition has Pittman-Robertson funding

1 available that Wildlife has offered to
2 partner with Forever Wild on a
3 75/25 percent valuation partnership.

4 Moving on to short list
5 nominations, nominations that have not
6 been appraised and would have to be
7 subject to a motion for first appraisal as
8 the next step if the Board had interest.

9 The first on the list, the Dugdown
10 Mountain Corridor, that is a property that
11 the Forestry Commission is pursuing a
12 grant for. Rick Oates could not be with
13 us today or he would tell you more about
14 it. But in discussions with him, we're
15 still kind of where we are, frankly. As
16 of the last meeting, there's been no news,
17 which has not been expected quite this
18 early, as to that grant award, so we're
19 waiting to hear. Rick asked -- or stated
20 that they really are not at the point of
21 asking the Board to move forward with an
22 expensive first appraisal at this point.
23 They'd like to get a little closer and get

1 an indication of the likelihood of that
2 being awarded, to the extent you can ever,
3 you know, get a hint as to that. So he
4 said he'd like to revisit it at the May
5 meeting, so -- but I wanted you to know
6 that he has asked us just to hold on that
7 one.

8 There's the Portland Landing
9 SOA-Donald Addition, Dallas County.
10 That's another offer to partner with the
11 Wildlife section -- that split -- with PR
12 dollars. That split would be actually
13 70 percent/30 percent. The reason for
14 that is although 25 percent is the minimum
15 amount, the on-the-ground acreage split
16 for management purposes works better for
17 both divisions and for both programs at
18 that amount.

19 Finally, I just wanted to mention
20 to the Board -- and this really doesn't
21 relate to funding -- but we did receive
22 and have now moved through the agreement
23 process for some funding for the Little

1 River Canyon-Hancock/TNC Addition Tract.

2 We submitted a grant proposal to
3 the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
4 That is not a federal program. That is
5 actually a private program. But they have
6 the Cumberland Plateau/Southern
7 Appalachian Fund grant opportunity, and we
8 were awarded \$99,000 to support
9 establishing a shortleaf pine forest on
10 the Little River WMA in Cherokee County.

11 So with the grant award, it's a
12 50/50 split that our Stewardship funds
13 will provide the match for. The first
14 step, obviously, is going to be the timber
15 harvest for the removal of the existing
16 loblolly pines. That has been -- the
17 notice for bids has been issued on that
18 and those bids will be open February 7th,
19 so we're looking forward to get moving on
20 that. We'll keep the Board apprised, but
21 just to try and assist with that
22 restoration work and benefit from some
23 grant funding on that.

1 Let me pause for a second. I have
2 one more -- Commissioner, I have one more
3 item, but let me pause as to -- if there
4 are any questions so far.

5 All right. If not, what I'd like
6 to do is I'd like to ask Doug Deaton to
7 come up for a minute. We had a question
8 from the Board just wanting to get a
9 little bit of additional information
10 regarding the work we've been doing in the
11 Red Hills. You've seen several Red Hills
12 tracts. And I think that there may be
13 some future opportunities, but mainly
14 wanted to just take a pause after those
15 acquisitions and have Doug tell you a
16 little bit about what the plan was, what
17 it is, and what we hope to achieve.

18 And I'd also take this moment if
19 there's any confusion, I'm happy to
20 announce that Doug Deaton is now my
21 assistant director, back in the State
22 Lands Division. Hank Burch, my former
23 assistant director, had a wonderful

1 promotion opportunity with the Forestry
2 Commission. I'm very crushed, but I'm
3 very proud of him. That also may be why
4 Rick Oates is not here today. I just
5 thought of that. He might be scared of me
6 today. Wise move. But anyway, excited to
7 have Doug with us, and so he's crossing
8 over from Wildlife. He's going to give
9 you some Red Hills information.

10 MR. DEATON: Thank you, Patti.

11 Speaking earlier with Dr. Powers,
12 he had a question for me regarding the
13 Red Hills properties that we bought and
14 the Red Hills salamander in general and
15 what was our overall arching plan, kind of
16 what goal are we reaching to.

17 So U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
18 has set a goal to de-list the Red Hills
19 salamander species would take 50 percent
20 of the acreage across the five demes. The
21 properties we've been buying are just in
22 one deme, and so, you know, properties
23 that we acquire through willing landowners

1 that come to us that are looking to sell
2 their property. So we don't officially
3 have a plan, so to speak, of how we're
4 going to pursue all these properties. But
5 what we've been able to do within the area
6 is we've been able to acquire close to
7 13,000 acres just in one deme and slightly
8 crossing over into a second deme.

9 So the purpose for de-listing a
10 species, it benefits the public, private
11 landowners, it helps to lessen the burden
12 of incidental take for companies that are
13 doing timber harvest operations. So that
14 is one benefit. It benefits the economy.
15 The acquisition also allows us to add
16 recreation for the public, and then also
17 habitat protection is kind of our overall
18 arching goal.

19 So are there any other questions
20 regarding that?

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Just for the
22 benefit -- there are a lot of new Board
23 members that weren't here when this

1 initiative started. About when did the
2 State and the Nature Conservancy and
3 others begin -- and the Forestry
4 Association and others start this process?

5 MR. DEATON: So this process started
6 in 2010. We were able to acquire about
7 4300 acres. That was our first Section 6
8 grant we got. We got about 27 --
9 2.7 million dollars from the feds to go
10 towards the acquisition. Since that time,
11 we've had about 19, almost 20 million
12 dollars, in grant funds that have funneled
13 into the area, so it's been a great
14 opportunity for the State.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

16 DR. POWERS: So thanks a lot for
17 answering that inquiry on short notice. I
18 sent it just a couple nights ago. But I
19 asked just because we were looking at some
20 Perdido properties and the Commissioner
21 explained to us the Department's overall
22 goal, and I thought that was very useful
23 when we get to hear the overall strategy.

1 What's a deme? You said we have
2 one deme.

3 MR. DEATON: So it's the genetics of
4 the species. So they think they have --
5 that species has a unique genetic makeup,
6 making them different from the other
7 species. They're all the same, but they
8 have subsets within them.

9 DR. POWERS: So this a much larger
10 process? It will take quite some time to
11 achieve this goal?

12 MR. DEATON: That's correct. Yes,
13 sir.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,
15 Doug.

16 MR. DEATON: Thank you.

17 MS. MCCURDY: Thanks, Doug. That is a
18 very good example, you know, of providing
19 recreation from the get-go and hunting
20 opportunities but also providing the
21 conservation and economic benefit. So
22 thanks, Doug.

23 So that wraps up, I'll say, grant-

1 related information. If there are no
2 further questions, let's go on to the
3 short list, and you will turn to Tab 4 in
4 your packet. I'll give you a second to
5 get there.

6 And also let me mention for the
7 benefit of the public, when we receive a
8 nomination, that nomination comes in from
9 the public, but our first step after
10 receiving it is we send out what we call a
11 willing seller letter to be sure that the
12 landowner is okay with their property
13 being considered in this process and,
14 frankly, you know, being discussed in a
15 public forum. It doesn't obligate the
16 landowner, but it also says if we need
17 access to look at a tract, that we can
18 come on there.

19 But if we get the willing seller
20 letter back -- and only if we have a
21 signed willing seller letter -- we proceed
22 with evaluating that nomination in four
23 categories, State Parks, Wildlife

1 Management Area or SOA area, Nature
2 Preserve, and rec and any kind of rec,
3 biking, hiking, bird watching, and that
4 includes hunting too.

5 So of all of the properties that
6 have been nominated, they're scored in
7 those four categories. They have to be in
8 the top three of one of those four
9 categories competing within the North,
10 Central, and Southern Districts to make
11 our short list. So the number varies
12 every time, because a property might make
13 the short list in multiple categories.

14 But what I'd like to do is direct
15 you to Tab 4b. 4a gives you just the
16 listing of the tracts alphabetically that
17 made it. Tab 4b provides the tracts, a
18 brief explanation, and a map. So I'm
19 going to run through these -- the Board's
20 had the information, but I'm going to run
21 through them. But, again, as I do, please
22 speak up if I don't see that you have a
23 question, just interrupt me.

1 The first tract, Alligator Bayou,
2 Mobile County; Blackwater River-Bond
3 Tract, Baldwin County; Butler Foster
4 Praytor Mountains, Jefferson County;
5 Chickasaw Creek, Mobile County; Coldwater
6 Mountain-Martin Addition, Calhoun County;
7 D'Olive Bay-North Addition,
8 Baldwin County; Dugdown Mountain Corridor,
9 Cleburne County; Little River Forest-Lomax
10 Branch Addition, Escambia County. I do
11 want to pause on that one. The grant
12 award that Wildlife was hoping for I
13 believe has arrived for that tract, and so
14 that is on track to close through the
15 Wildlife Division. Although, it is still
16 a nomination because that has not closed,
17 I think that's going to be taken off the
18 list by the acquisition by Wildlife.
19 Martin Slough Tract, Hale County;
20 Oak Mountain State Park-Odess Addition,
21 Shelby County; Persimmon Knob,
22 Monroe County.

23 MS. STANLEY: Wait. Morgan County.

1 MS. MCCURDY: Oh, I'm sorry. Sorry.

2 So that's Persimmon Knob,
3 Morgan County; Portland Landing SOA --
4 that acronym, Special Opportunity Area --
5 so Portland Landing SOA-Donald Addition,
6 Dallas County; Red Hills-Blanton Addition,
7 Monroe County; and I believe that that
8 one -- Chuck, y'all are potentially
9 pursuing and there's some discussion with
10 the landowner on Blanton, so it also --
11 there's some discussion on Red Hills-
12 Blanton between Wildlife and the
13 landowner, so the Board may want to pause
14 on that one. Sipsy River Swamp-
15 Brownville Addition, and that is in
16 Tuscaloosa County and was amended. The
17 landowner originally had several parcels
18 as part of the nomination but they were
19 disconnected and had some access issues,
20 so in discussions with the landowner, they
21 removed those and allowed it to proceed
22 with just the single parcel that you see.
23 So those nominations comprise the short

1 list, and those would be the tracts that
2 if they were to progress in our process
3 would need to move for a motion for first
4 appraisal.

5 Any questions on the short list
6 list?

7 All right. Commissioner, I think
8 that's all of our usual reports and
9 updates.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you. So
11 for the benefit of the new Board members,
12 this is the portion where we move to
13 general discussion where nominations or
14 motions are generally made on particular
15 properties. I'll try and go slow, make
16 sure everybody knows what we're voting on
17 if the motions are made, and if you have
18 any questions, you know, feel free to just
19 let me know in the process.

20 Mr. Darnall?

21 MR. DARNALL: Yes, I would like to
22 make a motion that we move to purchase on
23 the Oak Mountain State Park-Belcher

1 Addition Phase II at the original
2 appraised value.

3 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second that.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: That was
5 Dr. McClintock?

6 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So motion made
8 by Mr. Darnall, seconded
9 by Dr. McClintock, to move for purchase of
10 the Oak Mountain State Park Phase II
11 Addition at the first appraised value --
12 the appraised value from the first
13 appraisal.

14 Any questions about that? Is that
15 clear? Any discussion?

16 MR. PARNELL: I would ask to vote
17 against this motion.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right. Any
19 other discussion?

20 All those in favor say aye.

21 MS. STANLEY: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.
22 Is it appropriate to offer amendment or
23 just vote no if you disagree, or is there

1 any discussion in the room?

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I go back to
3 the Robert's Rules of Order. I'm trying
4 to remember from my Baptist church deacon
5 days. I think we have to dispose of this
6 motion before --

7 MS. STANLEY: No, no. I'm sorry, sir.
8 We would have to make amendment before,
9 then you have to vote on the amendment,
10 then you go back to the main motion,
11 because if you dispose of it first,
12 there's no possibility of an amendment.

13 MR. CHILDERS: She's right.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I will look at
15 the lawyer and -- is that correct?

16 MR. CHILDERS: Do you want to amend
17 it?

18 MS. STANLEY: Mr. Chair, I just offer
19 an amendment that the offer be at
20 90 percent of the first appraisal value.

21 If there's no second, the
22 amendment dies.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion

1 is that the offer for the property be at
2 90 percent of the original appraised
3 value. Is there a second?

4 MR. CHILDERS: I'll second that
5 amendment for discussion.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
7 Mr. Childers.

8 Discussion?

9 MR. CHILDERS: I have a question as to
10 what the Forever Wild -- what will they be
11 doing with this parcel. What's the
12 intention -- the use of it, Patti?

13 MS. MCCURDY: Well, it serves as an
14 addition to Oak Mountain State Park. I'd
15 be happy, Commissioner, if you or Greg
16 Lein, who is actually director of our
17 State Parks, to discuss the larger plan
18 for the property.

19 Greg? I thought he was here. Oh,
20 there he is.

21 MR. LEIN: Good morning, Board. I'm
22 Greg Lein. I'm the State Parks director.

23 This property would be in addition

1 to the Belcher property, which has already
2 been purchased, and a larger connection to
3 the entire State Park there at Oak
4 Mountain.

5 Our property at Oak Mountain State
6 Park is utilized for a number of
7 recreational reasons. We have significant
8 trail use there, horseback riding,
9 mountain bike riding, hiking. Those are
10 the primary recreational activities. We
11 have lakes as well that get fished in,
12 people swim there. We have a golf course
13 in the main area of the park obviously and
14 the campground. This property lends
15 itself to an extension of the trail system
16 from the main area of the park. It would
17 also be utilized for the Special
18 Opportunity Area hunting program that we
19 have in the entire park system there at
20 Oak Mountain. That's basically a
21 bow-hunting program for deer hunters.

22 MR. CHILDERS: This property is
23 bounded on one side by railroad, a major

1 highway on other the side, Highway 11.
2 It's about 2,000 feet across it. I don't
3 see there'd be much use for a Special
4 Opportunity hunting over there because a
5 high-powered rifle --

6 MR. LEIN: We just bow hunt. We don't
7 high-power rifle in the park.

8 MR. CHILDERS: Is there access to the
9 other park across the railroad? Is there
10 any access to cross the railroad to the
11 rest of the park area that's already been
12 purchased?

13 MR. LEIN: Through trails, you could
14 cross the railroad and connect.

15 MR. CHILDERS: So there is a way to
16 connect?

17 MR. LEIN: Physically, yes, sir. But
18 there's not an existing trail across the
19 railroad, if that's what you're asking.

20 MR. CHILDERS: There's no highway
21 crossing the railroad track to this
22 property, right?

23 MR. LEIN: There's no right-of-way?

1 MR. CHILDERS: No highway, no road.

2 MR. LEIN: Not through the property,
3 no, sir. I believe there's a power line
4 easement -- I don't know if it's active or
5 inactive -- that crosses it.

6 MR. CHILDERS: Okay. Thank you.

7 MR. LEIN: Yes, sir.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.

9 So --

10 MS. STANLEY: I'm sorry. One more
11 question. You may have already said it.
12 But please remind us of the current
13 acreage of the park and this acreage and
14 what percentage this would add to the
15 current acreage.

16 MR. LEIN: I wouldn't be able to do
17 that math for you, but the current acreage
18 is around 1160.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: 11,000, I
20 believe.

21 MR. LEIN: 11,060 acres, I believe, a
22 portion of which is the existing Forever
23 Wild Belcher Addition. So prior to that,

1 I believe we were right at 9,960 acres is
2 my recollection.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: It would add
4 about 2 percent to the size of the park.

5 MR. LEIN: Thank you, Commissioner.

6 MS. STANLEY: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion
8 is -- any other discussion? So we're
9 going to vote on the amended motion for
10 90 percent of the first appraised value --
11 on the amendment to the motion. So all
12 those in favor of moving forward with this
13 at 90 percent -- make that -- I'm trying
14 to make that clear and make sure
15 everybody, including me, knows what we're
16 voting on -- all those in favor please
17 raise your hand, because I think this one
18 will be a hand-raising motion. So all
19 those in favor please raise your hand.

20 Two. Motion fails.

21 So we move back to the original
22 motion, which was -- from Mr. Darnall and
23 Dr. McClintock -- to move forward with

1 purchase of the Oak Mountain State Park-
2 Belcher Phase II Addition at the original
3 appraised value.

4 All those in favor please raise
5 your hand.

6 MS. MCCURDY: I think I see -- hold
7 them up high. I see seven.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I had eight.

9 MS. MCCURDY: Eight. That's why I'm a
10 lawyer.

11 MS. STANLEY: So is the number seven
12 or eight?

13 MS. MCCURDY: Put your hands back up.
14 That was my fault. I can't count, I
15 guess. One, two, three, four, five, six,
16 seven, eight.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: And all those
18 opposed?

19 Four.

20 MS. MCCURDY: One, two, three, four.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So we have to
22 have nine affirmative votes to move on
23 something. The motion fails.

1 MS. MCCURDY: And it's nine -- just
2 for the benefit of the public, it's nine
3 regardless of the number in attendance.
4 That's just -- three-fifths of the Board
5 would need to vote in the affirmative.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Other
7 discussion?

8 Mr. Jones?

9 MR. JONES: Yes, I'd like to
10 nominate -- not nominate -- but move to
11 second appraisal of the purchase -- for
12 the purchase for the Skyline WMA-Fowler
13 Cove Addition in Jackson County, Alabama.

14 MR. DARNALL: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
16 Mr. Darnall.

17 This is for a second appraisal and
18 move to purchase on the Skyline WMA-Fowler
19 Cove Addition. Any discussion or
20 questions?

21 All those in favor say aye.

22 Any opposed?

23 None opposed. The motion carries.

1 Dr. Powers?

2 DR. POWERS: I'd like to move for a
3 first appraisal on the Sipse River Swamp-
4 Brownville Addition now that the access
5 issue has been resolved.

6 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second that.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Who was the
8 second? I'm sorry.

9 DR. MCCLINTOCK: McClintock, second.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

11 So this is a move for a first
12 appraisal on the Sipse River Swamp-
13 Brownville Addition.

14 MR. CHILDERS: Question on that.

15 MS. MCCURDY: That's Tab 4b page 29.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir,
17 Mr. Childers?

18 MR. CHILDERS: I believe this is the
19 fifth time that's shown up on our books;
20 is that correct?

21 MS. MCCURDY: It has been here. We
22 went through maybe three meetings of
23 trying to work with the landowner for the

1 nomination to be reduced to the acreage
2 that was truly of use to the program, so,
3 yes, this one -- this is the final amended
4 footprint offered by the seller that was
5 attractive to us.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other
7 questions?

8 All those in favor say aye.

9 Any opposed?

10 Let's do that again. I didn't
11 hear very many voices. We need nine
12 affirmative votes.

13 All those in favor say aye.

14 Any opposed?

15 None opposed. The motion carries.

16 MS. MCCURDY: I'm not sure we had a
17 full vote on that. Can we move to yes,
18 no, abstentions on that, please.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: We'll do a
20 raised-hand vote for the first appraisal
21 on the Sipsey River-Brownville Addition.
22 All those in favor please raise your
23 hands.

1 MS. MCCURDY: I got nine.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All those
3 opposed?

4 None opposed. The motion carries.

5 Any other motions or discussion?

6 All right. Mr. Darnall?

7 MR. DARNALL: I'd like to make a
8 motion that we move forward with Riverton
9 CHA-Barnett Mill Hollow proposal for
10 second appraisal. Did I say that right?

11 MS. MCCURDY: If you'd like a motion
12 for second appraisal or a motion for --

13 MR. DARNALL: Yes, second appraisal.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Second
15 appraisal and move to purchase.

16 MR. DARNALL: Yes, second appraisal,
17 move to purchase.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: On which one?
19 I'm sorry.

20 MR. DARNALL: Riverton CHA-Barnett
21 Mill Hollow.

22 MS. MCCURDY: Barnett Mill Hollow for
23 those that might not have been able to

1 hear, so Riverton CHA-Barnett Mill Hollow.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Is there a
3 second?

4 MR. CHILDERS: Page?

5 MS. MCCURDY: That is Tab 3b page 4.

6 DR. POWERS: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
8 Dr. Powers.

9 This is for a second appraisal and
10 move to purchase on the Riverton
11 CHA-Barnett Mill Hollow in Colbert County.
12 Any questions or discussion?

13 MS. STANLEY: I have a discussion,
14 Mr. Chairman. We have two on our list
15 that have the same first name, Riverton
16 CHA, Riverton CHA. Can somebody just help
17 me?

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Sure. So this
19 is the Barnett Mill.

20 MS. STANLEY: This is the first
21 Riverton?

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, ma'am.

23 MS. STANLEY: And how is it related to

1 the second one?

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: They're both --
3 they're not really related, I don't think,
4 but they're different. They're at the
5 same -- in the same Community Hunting Area
6 but separate nominations.

7 MS. STANLEY: Okay. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So, again,
9 we're voting on a second appraisal, move
10 to purchase on the Riverton CHA-Barnett
11 Mill Addition. All those in favor say
12 aye.

13 Any opposed?

14 None opposed. The motion carries.
15 That's the Barnett Mill. Okay.

16 Mr. Darnall?

17 MR. DARNALL: I'd also like to make a
18 motion for second appraisal and move to
19 purchase on the Riverton-Hurd Hollow.

20 MR. JONES: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by
22 Mr. Jones on the Riverton CHA-Hurd Hollow
23 for the second appraisal and move to

1 purchase.

2 Any discussion?

3 All those in favor say aye.

4 Any opposed?

5 None opposed. The motion carries.

6 I think I've got all those down
7 right.

8 Any other discussion or questions?

9 All right. Thank you all.

10 We'll move into number 7,
11 miscellaneous reports.

12 MS. MCCURDY: All right. If you'll
13 turn to Tab 5a. We'll be primarily in
14 Tab 5. We've already covered Tab 5a. If
15 you'll look at Tab 5b, this is the point
16 in each meeting where I alert the Board to
17 the properties that have -- due to amount
18 of times and number of meetings, they have
19 been on either the short list or the
20 appraised nomination list with no action
21 by the Board. These properties are set to
22 disappear next time because of the length
23 of time they've been around. I'm going to

1 read those to you, and then if the
2 Board -- any Board member wants the
3 property -- the nomination to remain on
4 the list, then please speak up.

5 Without further action, the
6 following short list nominations will roll
7 off due to lack of action:

8 Chickasaw Creek Tract, Mobile County;
9 Butler Foster Praytor Mountains,
10 Jefferson County; Oak Mountain State Park-
11 Odess Addition, Shelby County;
12 Persimmon Knob, Morgan County; Portland
13 Landing SOA-Donald Addition,
14 Dallas County; Sipsey River Swamp-
15 Brownville Addition, Tuscaloosa County.
16 So those will free up space.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So action was
18 taken on the Sipsey River, so that would
19 be --

20 MS. MCCURDY: Correct. We've taken
21 action. On Sipsey, we've taken action.

22 DR. POWERS: So I would just like to
23 confirm with Parks that that addition to

1 the Oak Mountain-Odess Addition is not a
2 priority for the -- I know it's ranked
3 highly, I assume, just because of its
4 proximity to Oak Mountain, but it -- I
5 guess what's your opinion? Is it a
6 priority for your division?

7 MR. LEIN: The property has three
8 structures on it, three houses on it, so
9 that complicates it from a Forever Wild
10 standpoint. We have been in discussion
11 with the landowner. They are aware of our
12 financial circumstances, and I think that
13 if the property was going to be bought, it
14 would likely be bought by the parks
15 system. And if there is an opportunity to
16 perhaps cost share, split the property,
17 the undeveloped portion could be bought by
18 Forever Wild. If that opportunity comes
19 up in the future, we would revisit that
20 with the Board, but at this time, we
21 understand the hesitancy and the
22 complicated aspect of it with the three
23 houses on it.

1 DR. POWERS: Thank you.

2 MR. LEIN: Yes, sir.

3 MS. MCCURDY: If there are no other
4 questions, then if you will just keep
5 moving.

6 Look at Tab 5c, this is some
7 additional information requested by the
8 Board just confirming that the Sipsey
9 River tract that you moved on for first
10 appraisal, that we have been able to
11 confirm access and also trailhead -- new
12 trailhead spot. So just responding to the
13 Board we were confirming we were able to
14 tie that down.

15 Tab 5d, this is a request related
16 to our Coldwater Mountain Complex. We use
17 the word complex because it's been a
18 compilation of acquisitions over the
19 years. But we had an individual that came
20 to us who was requesting an access
21 easement. And there's a map attached that
22 you can -- up to Tab 5d, which you can
23 also look at.

1 This is a landowner who lives on
2 the property, has been accessing the
3 property fine. There's been no conflict.
4 Everything is fine. There's a partial
5 access easement in place, and then we had
6 been allowing access across the Forever
7 Wild property obviously to allow them to
8 get to their property. But at this time,
9 these individuals are looking -- have
10 their property on the market and are
11 looking to possibly sell that, and they're
12 needing to have evidence of a permanent
13 easement access in order to be able to
14 potentially sell their private property to
15 a private landowner.

16 So the request for this
17 easement follows, if you'll look at the
18 map, the path of an existing easement, and
19 so really what they're asking for is the
20 same path, which is approximately 30 feet
21 wide, and it would cover three-tenths of a
22 mile. And we have already in hand from
23 the first easement the legal description,

1 the normal survey work we would have. So
2 what --

3 We informed the landowner that if
4 this request was brought to the Board, it
5 would carry with it the requirement for
6 the landowner seeking the easement to pay
7 the expense of the appraisal, any transfer
8 of an interest of any type, and Forever
9 Wild property must be appraised and you
10 must receive the appraised value for that
11 transfer. So they've agreed to pay for
12 the appraisal cost, and then they have
13 agreed to pay the appraised value,
14 whatever is rendered by that appraisal
15 cost, as a condition to us issuing that
16 easement.

17 With any easement request -- and
18 as the Board knows for the benefit of any
19 new members -- we do see these from time
20 to time. We do seek to be a good
21 neighbor, but at the same time, we
22 evaluate each of them in light of the
23 impact to attract. Does it impede our

1 existing access in any way? Does it cause
2 an interruption to the recreation offered
3 on that tract? Is there a sensitive
4 habitat that the easement would run
5 through? And we did that same analysis on
6 this as we do on all of them, but there's
7 really little impact and it also is
8 following a path that's really already
9 been established by an existing easement.
10 It extends into their property. But we
11 bring each of these requests to the Board
12 because it is a transfer in interest. It
13 requires the same nine-member vote to
14 allow us to continue the process of tying
15 down, negotiating, and closing the
16 easement with the landowner. So, again, a
17 map is attached.

18 And I'll take any questions. I
19 will go ahead and say if there are no
20 questions because this is, you know,
21 sometimes a little bit complex, I did
22 provide to the Board in the memo a
23 potential motion that you can work from if

1 anyone would like to make a motion. But
2 I'll take any questions.

3 MR. HARPER: Did you say that is the
4 access they've been using?

5 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir.

6 MR. HARPER: I move to approve it.

7 MR. PARNELL: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Who was the
9 second?

10 Mr. Parnell. All right.

11 So motion made by Mr. Harper,
12 seconded by Mr. Parnell, to move forward
13 with the easement related to the Coldwater
14 Mountain Complex requested by Paige Martin
15 and Robert Snead.

16 Discussion?

17 Dr. Powers?

18 DR. POWERS: So when we give an
19 easement, can we put conditions on our
20 easements in the way that they're -- I'm
21 just thinking -- and not necessarily for
22 this piece of property, but if we gave an
23 easement to a property owner, the next

1 property owner when they sell it may want
2 to build an apartment complex on that and
3 that would obviously diminish our
4 property. Do we put conditions on the
5 easement that they get transferred when
6 it's sold?

7 MS. MCCURDY: Yes. The easement is
8 structured according to the need. Here,
9 it's a simple, you know, residential
10 access, and it would be worded accordingly
11 to that need. We don't give more than we
12 have to. We have in the past put
13 conditions on them before if concerned
14 about usage on some tracts, you know,
15 where we were close to hunting or we're
16 worried about other traffic coming through
17 there. This one is pretty simple. But,
18 yes, we fashion the easement to the need
19 of the use in the language of the
20 easement.

21 DR. POWERS: So it's sufficient now,
22 you think, if you use that boilerplate
23 language that, I assume, you have that

1 they couldn't really develop this property
2 around us?

3 MS. MCCURDY: The use would be -- yes,
4 I mean, I think we can -- the language we
5 would use and agree to the language of the
6 easement would prevent a large, you know,
7 use of a type that would not be conducive
8 to anything but the landowner accessing
9 the residential property.

10 MR. CHILDERS: So you're going to put
11 restrictions on that property owner's
12 property?

13 MS. MCCURDY: No, sir. The easement
14 that is granted -- I think Dr. Powers'
15 concern would be -- some easements can be
16 described to -- for a type of use that
17 would burden our property. This is a
18 simple residential landowner wanting to
19 sell his house and could be structured
20 accordingly. It's not -- it's benefiting
21 his property, not conditioning his
22 property.

23 MR. CHILDERS: And this easement goes

1 to this pink section on the map? Is that
2 what we're talking about?

3 MS. MCCURDY: Goes through, yes, sir.

4 MR. CHILDERS: Okay.

5 MS. MCCURDY: Goes through the pink.

6 MR. CHILDERS: What's the possibility
7 of that being a Forever Wild nomination?

8 MS. MCCURDY: Well, what you see in
9 red, the red square, is the Coldwater
10 Mountain Addition nomination that's
11 currently on the short list. That owner
12 has not removed the nomination. They are
13 still very interested in Forever Wild
14 acquiring the tract. But, you know, like
15 any landowner, we certainly don't prevent
16 landowners from doing this. They'll
17 consider whatever offer comes to them, and
18 I think they're, frankly, trying to better
19 position themselves for an offer that
20 might be coming to them from a private
21 entity.

22 MR. CHILDERS: So the nomination is
23 the area highlighted in red with the red

1 mark around it?

2 MS. MCCURDY: That's correct. The
3 short list.

4 MR. CHILDERS: We're on the same page.
5 Okay.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other
7 discussion?

8 All those in favor say aye.

9 Any opposed?

10 Seeing none, the motion carries.

11 MS. MCCURDY: If you'll just keep
12 going in order. Tab 5e, a similar sort of
13 request, related to our field trial area
14 in Hale County. This request actually
15 came from the Alabama Department of
16 Transportation, and they are -- if you
17 look at the map that's attached, they are
18 doing some road improvements in the area
19 and they are also -- they're coming, but
20 they're coming with a request to actually
21 purchase a small portion that you will
22 see. We have our portion, and then next
23 to us is another privately owned -- our

1 portion that ALDOT's interested in if you
2 look at the map is the red triangle.

3 So as with any request, ALDOT
4 would be responsible for the cost of any
5 appraisal work, any survey work that's
6 necessary. They're currently appraising
7 the property, and they're going to provide
8 that report to us but we don't have it in
9 hand. But the acreage is approximately
10 1.2 acres, and we have reviewed the
11 request, like others, and actually, you
12 know, we're supportive of any road
13 improvements that any county might benefit
14 from. So the staff is -- but it really
15 has no negative impact. We do review it
16 even though it's ALDOT and even though it
17 is road improvements, and there's no issue
18 with the location. But it would also
19 require the same nine-member vote of the
20 Board. I similarly presented a motion if
21 anyone would like to make a motion or
22 fashion from on your memo, but I'll take
23 any questions.

1 MR. HARPER: Question: If we don't
2 decide to do it, they could condemn it and
3 take it, couldn't they?

4 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir. The Forever
5 Wild amendment actually provides within it
6 that this -- this program has no
7 condemnation power very expressly by the
8 amendment, but it also has a section that
9 provides basically condemnation rights for
10 purposes like this. It's just, frankly,
11 most entities wanting to do it prefer to
12 come to us and ask, and, frankly, it's
13 more economical for them to go this route
14 than the legal condemnation process. The
15 amendment itself provides for the
16 condemnation ability, but generally, we've
17 always had -- everybody's come to us so
18 far asking to do it this way because it's
19 easier for them.

20 MR. HARPER: I make a motion.

21 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So Mr. Harper,
23 and it was seconded by Mr. Holloway.

1 So the motion is to -- let me make
2 sure.

3 MS. MCCURDY: I think the motion may
4 need to be --

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: This is a good
6 one that would be a good one to read out
7 of Tab 5e to make sure that it's clear for
8 the minutes what the Board's authorizing
9 us to do.

10 MR. HARPER: You want me to read that?

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir, if
12 you don't mind, that would be --

13 MR. HARPER: I make the motion that
14 the Board approves staff proceeding with
15 the sale of approximately 1.2 acres of the
16 Lawley Field Trial Area as described in
17 the memo dated February 2nd to the Alabama
18 Department of Transportation, contingent
19 upon the Department of Transportation
20 paying the appraisal cost and appraised
21 value of the acreage.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So that's the
23 motion that was seconded by Mr. Holloway.

1 Any discussion or any other
2 questions on that?

3 All those in favor say aye.

4 Any opposed?

5 None opposed. The motion carries.

6 MS. MCCURDY: All right. Tab 5f, it's
7 really not an action item. It's simply a
8 heads-up and reminder. And we will email
9 the Board. But for the -- other than the
10 new members, the rest of you, as you
11 annually do, will have to complete your
12 Statement of Economic Interest pursuant to
13 the provisions of the Alabama Ethics Law.
14 Same process. Nothing new. We're happy
15 to help any of the Board members if they
16 have any questions. The new Board members
17 will get to skip this time. But happy to
18 help any of the Board members. Again, we
19 will email you before the deadline, but I
20 wanted to go ahead and mention that while
21 I had you.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

23 DR. POWERS: Patti, you've told me

1 this before, but basically I've forgotten.
2 Some of us already do this obviously
3 because we are State employees. Do we
4 have to do a separate one?

5 MS. MCCURDY: You don't do a separate
6 one, but you note your role on this Board.

7 Any other questions? And we're
8 happy to help y'all with that as you get
9 into it.

10 The next item I have is similarly
11 not an action item but an information
12 item. You will see Tab 5g, and this one's
13 in your green folder. The amendment
14 forming the program also requires the
15 program to present an annual report that's
16 delivered to the Governor, the Lieutenant
17 Governor, and the Speaker of the House.

18 So this report is -- and it's in a
19 summary fashion -- but reports over the
20 previous fiscal year. For us, that would
21 have been October 1 of '21, running
22 through September 30 of '22. So that's
23 the period that this report covers.

1 Again, it's very much summary in nature,
2 but it reports to the legislature, it
3 confirms the Board of Trustees, whoever
4 would have served during that fiscal year,
5 so we detail that. We confirm to the --
6 per this report that we held quarterly
7 public meetings and we list where they're
8 held. We discuss again just briefly that
9 we do operate pursuant to a nomination
10 process and conduct transactions only with
11 willing sellers.

12 I think one note -- we'll include
13 just a few stats in this, and I'll make a
14 note that we checked again. And over the
15 fiscal year, the program has stayed over
16 its tenure at about 15 percent of the
17 properties nominated. The tracts
18 nominated, about 15 percent of those
19 actually move toward close, so that's just
20 an idea of that statistics. We provide
21 budget information. We detail the tract
22 acquisitions over the previous fiscal
23 year. We also detail if we utilize grant

1 funding or any leveraging, if we have
2 landowner value donations, which we do
3 have on occasion.

4 We continue the statistics noting
5 that 99 percent of the acreage is
6 available for some form of public hunting.
7 And actually more specifically within that
8 acreage, 86 percent of the program acreage
9 is actively managed as part of a WMA or an
10 SOA and that our Wildlife and Freshwater
11 Fisheries Division is managing.

12 And let's see. We run through the
13 tracts that we've adopted management
14 plans.

15 We give a list of activities, and
16 this is just a sampling. I know this
17 meeting's running long. I won't go
18 through it, but I would encourage the
19 Board to read through that. But it
20 details the type of usage that we're
21 getting. You know, we had the motion a
22 few minutes ago related to the field trial
23 area. I'll just note on that tract alone

1 in Hale County we had 21 youth hunts, we
2 had 11 days of physically disabled
3 hunting, we had 32 sporting dog field
4 trials or hunt tests.

5 And for those of you who haven't
6 been out to the field trial area, we'd
7 love to take you and let you see that. We
8 had about 1500 dogs that were on the
9 tracts for those events. Obviously those
10 dogs are brought by owners and trainers,
11 and the local area is very excited about
12 that. We had also offered daily
13 opportunity for the dogs -- trainers to
14 come and work the dogs. We had 188 usages
15 according to that. We had the Audubon, we
16 had field trips, and we were able to fold
17 into the Black Belt Birding Festival. And
18 it's also used for enforcement training
19 events. It's just a lot of varied usage.
20 It's just a tract that's a good example of
21 the various types of opportunities that
22 are spread across that. And we brought
23 about 3,750 visitors to the area that

1 probably wouldn't have come but for that
2 tract. But I'll let y'all read through
3 those.

4 I do want to thank my staff and
5 those other divisions of Wildlife and
6 State Parks for all that they do.

7 MR. HOLLOWAY: Mr. Chairman?

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir,
9 Mr. Holloway?

10 MR. HOLLOWAY: If I can make a comment
11 on the annual report. I had an
12 opportunity to review the report prior to
13 us calling the meeting to order, and in
14 review of it, the report is very detailed
15 and very good. I think that you and the
16 staff did a wonderful job putting the
17 report together.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, sir.
20 The staff -- I take no credit. The staff
21 does a good job of detailing the
22 activities throughout the year, and I
23 appreciate the work that they do. And I'm

1 glad we have that requirement to provide
2 us the legislature so that we do have this
3 pretty succinct annual report to discuss
4 their activities and the work that goes on
5 on the properties and the value of these
6 Forever Wild properties to the economy and
7 recreational value in the state. So thank
8 you.

9 Any questions on the annual
10 report? Any comments?

11 The next item is approval of the
12 meeting minutes from the November 3rd
13 meeting in Tuscaloosa. Is there a motion
14 that we accept the minutes?

15 MR. JONES: So moved.

16 MR. CHILDERS: Second.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Moved by
18 Mr. Jones and seconded by
19 Mr. Childers.

20 Any corrections? Additions?
21 Changes?

22 MR. HOLLOWAY: Yes, sir.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir,

1 Mr. Holloway?

2 MR. HOLLOWAY: I think that's -- item
3 13 line 23, you have Autobahn, like in
4 Germany. It should be Audubon,
5 A-U-D-U-B-O-N.

6 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Oh, I see.
7 That's on page 13 line 13. The Autobahn
8 Society should be Audubon, like the birds.
9 Thank you for catching that.

10 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, thank you.

11 MR. CHILDERS: He's been assigned to
12 do that every meeting.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: That's right.
14 That's a good Board member.

15 MS. MCCURDY: I'm glad somebody is.
16 We sincerely appreciate it.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other
18 additions or corrections or changes?

19 Let's vote on the minutes approval
20 as amended. All those in favor say aye.

21 Any opposed?

22 None opposed. The motion carries.

23 And thank you, Mr. Holloway.

1 The next item of business is that
2 our next meeting will be May the 4th at
3 Lake Guntersville State Park as we try and
4 move this around the state some. I hope
5 that you'll spend a little time at our
6 park either before or after the meeting
7 and enjoy some of the outdoor recreational
8 opportunities around Lake Guntersville.
9 It should be spectacularly beautiful in
10 May, so I'm looking forward to the
11 meeting.

12 MS. MCCURDY: And we'll send out
13 information to the Board as far as, you
14 know, traveling, reservations, et cetera,
15 as we get closer.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right. So
17 with that, is there a motion to adjourn?

18 MR. CHILDERS: So moved.

19 MR. JONES: Second.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All those in
21 favor say aye.

22 Any opposed?

23 None opposed. We are adjourned.

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Thank you.

(Proceedings concluded at
12:09 p.m.)

