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THE FOREVER WILD  
LAND TRUST BOARD MEETING  
TROY UNIVERSITY OF MONTGOMERY  
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025  
10:00 a.m.

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

PROCEEDINGS TAKEN BEFORE: JAMIE MCCRACKEN  
Certified Court Reporter  
State of Alabama  
ACCR #451

1 BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

2 COMMISSIONER CHRIS BLANKENSHIP

3 MR. JAMES "MICKEY" CHILDERS

4 MR. ZACH CONLON

5 MR. THOMAS HARRIS

6 MR. JAKE HARPER

7 DR. HEATHER HOWELL

8 DR. BRIAN KEENER

9 DR. JAMES B. MCCLINTOCK

10 DR. A. M. "JAY" NEUMANN, JR.

11 MR. RICK OATES

12 MR. JIMMY PARNELL

13 DR. SEAN POWERS

14 MS. KAREN STANLEY

15 MR. MARK M. TUGGLE

16 DR. JOHN VALENTINE

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

5  
6 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Good  
7 morning and welcome to the February 6th  
8 Forever Wild Land Trust Board meeting.  
9 I'm glad to be here on the campus of  
10 Troy University Montgomery. Let me  
11 call the role, make sure we have a  
12 quorum, and then we'll continue with  
13 the meeting. When I say your name, if  
14 you're here, please indicate that.  
15 Chris Blankenship is here.

16 Mr. Childers.

17 MR. CHILDERS: Here.

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.  
19 Conlon.

20 MR. CONLON: Here.

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.  
22 Harris.

23 MR. HARRIS: Here.

1 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

2 Howell.

3 DR. HOWELL: Here.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

5 Keener.

6 DR. KEENER: Here.

7 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

8 McClintock.

9 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Here.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

11 Neumann.

12 DR. NEUMANN: Here.

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

14 Oates.

15 MR. OATES: Here.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

17 Parnell.

18 MR. PARNELL: Here.

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

20 Powers.

21 DR. POWERS: Here.

22 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

23 Valentine.

1 DR. VALENTINE: Here.

2 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.  
3 Harper.

4 MR. HARPER: Here.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.  
6 Tuggle.

7 MR. TUGGLE: Here.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Ms.  
9 Stanley.

10 (No response).

11 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: We  
12 almost have 100 percent attendance  
13 today. So glad to see everybody here  
14 with us. We do have a quorum.

15 I'd like to express my  
16 appreciation to Vice Chancellor William  
17 Filmore. I was looking to see if  
18 William happened to be here. I know  
19 the Legislature is in session, and he  
20 is probably at the State House. But  
21 appreciate him helping line this up.

22 Is there anybody here from Troy  
23 that wanted to welcome?

1 All right. I'm excited to add  
2 another campus to our meeting  
3 locations. We're trying to see some  
4 different areas of higher education  
5 around the State and see the facilities  
6 that they have to offer and appreciate  
7 the chance to be here at Troy  
8 Montgomery.

9 We do have three new Board  
10 members: We have Zach Conlon from the  
11 Athens area. Glad to have Zach with  
12 us. He represents the Northern  
13 District. We have Thomas Harris from  
14 Hope Hull that is here representing the  
15 Southern District. And then we have  
16 Mark Tuggle from Alexander City,  
17 representing the Central District.

18 We will miss the work of the  
19 other three Board members that rolled  
20 off: Dr. Saloom, Raymond Jones, and  
21 Jack Darnall. We appreciate their good  
22 work on the Board. Looking forward to  
23 working with the new Board members.

1           I don't think we have any other  
2           special guests that are here that have  
3           been indicated.

4           For the new Board members, we  
5           will -- I will -- we'll have this time  
6           of public comment and then we'll spend  
7           some time, more than likely, in  
8           Executive Session to discuss  
9           appraisals. And then we'll come back  
10          in the room. And I'll go -- try and go  
11          slow this morning to make sure that  
12          everybody has the opportunity to, as  
13          public -- as the public speakers come  
14          up, I'll indicate in the -- in your  
15          packet what page the properties are  
16          where they will be speaking on so you  
17          can -- give you time to flip to those  
18          so that you'll be able to follow along  
19          with the speakers. And feel free to  
20          ask any questions of the speakers after  
21          they finish with their three minutes.

22                   At this time, we will begin our  
23                   public comments. Reminder, it's a

1 three-minute time limit on that so that  
2 we have -- everybody has an opportunity  
3 to speak. And our first speaker will  
4 be Regina Aycock with the Sugar Camp  
5 Branch Addition, page -- tab 3-B, page  
6 3; 3-B, page 3.

7 And if you will speak -- you've  
8 been here before --

9 MS. AYCOCK: I have.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: -- if  
11 you'll just speak into the microphone  
12 so that the court reporter will be able  
13 to capture --

14 MS. AYCOCK: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: --  
16 all of the comments.

17 And the same thing with the  
18 Board members, if you'll please use  
19 your microphone so that the court  
20 reporter can hear your comments.

21 MS. AYCOCK: Is it on now? Is  
22 it on?

23 Good morning. Thank you for

1           allowing me to be here. My name is  
2           Regina Enlow Aycock. I'm from Muscle  
3           Shoals, Alabama. I live in Colbert  
4           County, and I'm here to represent the  
5           240-acre tract in Cherokee; it's  
6           referred to as the Sugar Camp Branch.  
7           You should have a pretty comprehensive  
8           packet on it.

9                         Last Board meeting, I had  
10           nominated this property for sale back  
11           in the summer of 2024. And the Board  
12           was good enough to approve the first  
13           appraisal on it at the last meeting. I  
14           don't know if you've had the  
15           opportunity to review that appraisal.  
16           But the reason I'm here today is to ask  
17           the Board for your consideration in a  
18           second appraisal and, hopefully, we can  
19           proceed with State of Alabama making a  
20           purchase.

21                        So, I'm here with Mr. Mark  
22           Pruitt. If you've got any questions,  
23           I'm available, he's available. And I'd

1           like to thank you for any  
2           consideration.

3                    COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
4           you, ma'am.

5                    MS. AYCOCK: You're welcome.

6                    COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Our  
7           next speaker is Ms. Leslie Gahagan,  
8           good friend from South Alabama here  
9           today to talk about the Graham Creek  
10          Tract; that is tab 4-B, page 17.

11                   MR. PARNELL: Commissioner,  
12          before they start, I'm not sure the mic  
13          is on.

14                   MR. CHILDERS: Yeah, I can't  
15          hear either.

16                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Okay.  
17          Thank you.

18                   MS. MCCURDY: I think it got --  
19          Can y'all hear me? Okay. Well, the  
20          green light is on so we've got a mic  
21          problem.

22                   MS. AYCOCK: I cut it off when I  
23          -- when I stepped away, I cut it off.

1 MS. MCCURDY: Okay. But they're  
2 telling me they can't hear me still.  
3 Are y'all still having trouble or y'all  
4 can hear?

5 BOARD MEMBER: We can hear the  
6 Commissioner on the mic but --

7 MS. MCCURDY: But not me. Okay.  
8 So, we've got a mic problem, so --  
9 Actually, I know Leslie well enough to  
10 know she can speak loud but give us a  
11 minute.

12 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: While  
13 they're getting that fixed, this is the  
14 Graham Bayou Tract, tab 4-B, page 17;  
15 4-B, page 17.

16 (Off the record briefly.)

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: If  
18 you'll just speak directly into it, I  
19 think that'll be fine.

20 MS. GAHAGAN: Is this okay? Can  
21 you hear me? Good morning. I'm Leslie  
22 Gahagan. I'm the Natural Resources  
23 Director from the City of Foley. The

1 City owns the adjacent parcel to the  
2 Graham Bayou Tract, we manage it as the  
3 Graham Creek Nature Preserve. The City  
4 wanted to share its support for Forever  
5 Wild acquisition of this property.

6 Basically, we've been managing Graham  
7 Creek for 18 years where we do  
8 everything from prescribed fire to  
9 invasive control to restoration work.

10 We've been working with the  
11 Forestry Commission, as well as the  
12 Department of Conservation to also have  
13 a lot of public access. We have public  
14 education programs events and  
15 recreation, including tournaments that  
16 bring in very large economic dollars to  
17 the State of Alabama. Currently we're  
18 preparing for about 2,200 archers from  
19 around the world to descend upon Foley  
20 in two weeks where they're there for a  
21 week spending lots of funds and  
22 enjoying that partnership of recreation  
23 and conservation.

1                   So, the City just wanted you to  
2                   be aware that we would be welcome to  
3                   manage that property in conjunction  
4                   with our existing preserve. And if you  
5                   have any questions, I'm here to answer  
6                   them.

7                   Yes, sir?

8                   DR. MCCLINTOCK: One of the  
9                   issues that was brought up is access to  
10                  the property.

11                  MS. GAHAGAN: So, the north half  
12                  of the property is off of Wolf Bay  
13                  Drive, which is a publicly maintained  
14                  road. The southern tract has no  
15                  access. It is connected to our  
16                  preserve but it has no other access,  
17                  other than that.

18                  DR. MCCLINTOCK: Thank you.

19                  COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
20                  you, Leslie.

21                  The next speaker is Chandlar  
22                  Graham on the Davidson Creek  
23                  nomination; that's tab 3-B, page 2;

1 3-B, page 2.

2 MS. MCCURDY: There's also a tab  
3 5-C memo, I don't know if you'll need  
4 it but tab 5-C in addition to that.

5 MR. GRAHAM: Thank y'all. Good  
6 morning. I'm Chandler Graham. I  
7 represent the landowners here in this  
8 transaction. I just want to thank the  
9 Board for their patience with this  
10 process, as it has been long and a  
11 little bit drawn out due to the  
12 sellers. But where we are today, the  
13 sellers are willing to move forward  
14 with the initial offer that was made.  
15 There was some talk about a timber  
16 reservation on this tract, that has  
17 been removed from the table. They're  
18 excited about the possibility of  
19 completing this with y'all as it was  
20 originally structured.

21 So, if there are any questions,  
22 I'm happy to answer them. You know,  
23 this is a fantastic property for the

1 program. And nothing on the property  
2 has changed, just -- you know, it's all  
3 been internal. So, thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
5 you, sir.

6 The next speaker is Chad Hoffman  
7 on the same property, the Davidson  
8 Creek Tract.

9 MR. HOFFMAN: What's being  
10 passed around is just some information  
11 that I hope will be helpful during the  
12 Executive Session for the Davidson  
13 Creek Tract.

14 So, I've spoken about the  
15 Davidson Creek Tract before. I've had  
16 the excellent opportunity to visit the  
17 tract with Chandler and with Dr.  
18 McClintock. I have paddled through  
19 that section of Hatchet Creek, which at  
20 that -- at that section at Hatchet  
21 Creek, you get a unique area where  
22 Socapatoy Creek is draining in, as well  
23 as Davidson Creek, as well as Jacks

1 Creek.

2 So, it really makes for a  
3 special area that feels completely  
4 remote and wild.

5 I would like to point out that  
6 there are already over 11,500 acres of  
7 Forever Wild property in Coosa County  
8 and this tract will take it to over  
9 13,000 acres, all of which would be  
10 less than ten miles apart from each  
11 other, which I think is a pretty  
12 fantastic thing to consider. When you  
13 look at this area that is, thankfully,  
14 pretty well protected from development  
15 but it is encroaching, this is, I  
16 think, a tract that is very much worth  
17 considering to protect for the amount  
18 of diverse species that are out there.  
19 And what -- what a special place it has  
20 to offer, not just as habitat but for  
21 recreation for people that enjoy  
22 spending their time at these Forever  
23 Wild properties.

1           So, what I've provided on this  
2 paper is not just my thoughts or  
3 feelings about this property. But I've  
4 tried to share some input from what I  
5 think we would consider some of the  
6 brightest scientists that are employed  
7 by the Federal Government and the State  
8 of Alabama.

9           So, Hatchet Creek, the entire  
10 watershed, which includes this tract of  
11 property, has been designated as a  
12 strategic habitat unit by the Alabama  
13 Rivers and Streams Network. That's a  
14 coalition made up of folks from Alabama  
15 Department of Conservation and Natural  
16 Resources, US Fish and Wildlife, and  
17 USGS.

18           So, they've designated this as a  
19 strategic habitat unit, meaning that  
20 there are species that are endemic to  
21 just the Coosa River Watershed or just  
22 to the Southeast. And -- And they've  
23 selected it as a priority watershed to

1 focus activities for management,  
2 recovery, restoration, and populations  
3 of rare fishes, muscles, snails, and  
4 cray and crawfishes.

5 So, I would like for all of  
6 y'all to consider that when you're  
7 making your decision on whether or not  
8 this property should make into the  
9 Forever Wild Program because I think  
10 it's one that would be very special and  
11 one that the rest of Alabama would be  
12 thankful for to have it as part of the  
13 Forever Wild portfolio.

14 So, thank you for your time.

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
16 you, Chad.

17 The next speaker is Doug  
18 Morrison, it's, really, just a general  
19 update on the Big Canoe Creek Nature  
20 Preserve that is one of our Forever  
21 Wild properties and is managed, a lot,  
22 with the help of the City of  
23 Springville.

1                   Go ahead, Doug. Good to see you  
2                   again.

3                   MR. MORRISON: Good to see you  
4                   again. Thanks for having me. I'm Doug  
5                   Morrison, manager of Big Canoe Creek  
6                   Nature Preserve. I just wanted to give  
7                   you guys an update. We just celebrated  
8                   our one-year anniversary on February  
9                   3rd. We're going to have a get-  
10                  together on February 22nd at the  
11                  preserve to celebrate that.

12                  I wanted to bring you up-to-date  
13                  on an ADECA grant we had applied for,  
14                  for the Recreational Trails Program to  
15                  build an open-air pavilion for  
16                  educational classes to use. This  
17                  application has been approved by ADECA  
18                  and then forwarded to the Federal  
19                  Highway Administration for their  
20                  approval, so we're just waiting on  
21                  that. I just wanted to bring you guys  
22                  up-to-date on that.

23                  Also, I want to introduce you to

1 Mayor Thomas for the City of  
2 Springville.

3 MAYOR THOMAS: Good morning.

4 I'm here this morning just express  
5 appreciation for what this Board, this  
6 group, has done for the City of  
7 Springville. I know that we all  
8 consider our communities to be special  
9 and Springville's no different. But  
10 what we've done partnering together has  
11 made Springville even more special.

12 It's become a regional attraction  
13 already. It's only going to grow from  
14 here. As Doug pointed out, we're only  
15 one year in to opening.

16 I should also express, I guess,  
17 an apology on behalf of Springville  
18 that it took so long to get this going.  
19 Y'all made the decision, I think, what,  
20 back in 2009? But it wasn't until 2020  
21 that we actually got the effort and  
22 momentum going to make the improvements  
23 to get it done.

1           I'll leave you with this, I just  
2           want to plant a seed. This is not  
3           really expected to be anybody's radar;  
4           however, I've already spoken some  
5           representatives from the Power Company  
6           who own quite a bit of -- well, some of  
7           the most beautiful property around  
8           Springville.

9           So, far their answer is no. But  
10          I told them it's not their last no  
11          because it's not my last ask. But  
12          adjoining the nature preserve is a  
13          couple of thousand acres of beautiful  
14          property through Washington Valley.

15          So, if you have any influence  
16          with the Power Company, Public Service  
17          Commission, whatever the local  
18          pressures can be brought to bear,  
19          that's just something that I've got in  
20          the back of mind that I'm trying to  
21          bring to the forefront of others minds  
22          about the future, what we might be able  
23          to do.

1                   So, again, I just wanted to be  
2                   here to say thank you, appreciate it  
3                   very much. I look forward to even  
4                   greater opportunities for growing  
5                   conservation at the Big Canoe Creek  
6                   Nature Preserve. Thank y'all.

7                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
8                   you, Mayor. I enjoyed the -- attending  
9                   the ribbon cutting up there last year,  
10                  that was a wildly successful attendance  
11                  at that event. There were people,  
12                  filled up the whole entire parking  
13                  area, the side streets, out on the main  
14                  highway. It was unbelievable the  
15                  amount of people that cared about the  
16                  preserve and that attended that,  
17                  including former Commissioner that many  
18                  of you know, Barnett Lawley.  
19                  Commissioner Lawley was in attendance,  
20                  it was good to see him.

21                  MAYOR THOMAS: It exceeded  
22                  everyone's expectations. It was  
23                  fantastic. And we're already, you

1 know, filling up the parking lot on  
2 beautiful days.

3 So, it's only going to grow  
4 more.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:  
6 Wonderful. Thank you for the  
7 partnership.

8 The next speaker is Mr. Jerry  
9 Joe Ingram on the Cooper Branch, tab  
10 4-B, page 9; 4-B, page 9, Cooper  
11 Branch.

12 Morning, Jerry Joe.

13 MR. INGRAM: Morning,  
14 Commissioner Blankenship and Board  
15 members. Thank y'all giving the  
16 opportunity. You know, on the Cooper  
17 Branch Tract, we do have a  
18 representative today from the City of  
19 Pelham. I was hoping he would go  
20 first. But he made the trip up here  
21 and we've had Dr. Howell and Dr.  
22 McClintock look at the property.  
23 There's -- There's obviously, you know,

1 from an ecological and, I guess,  
2 preservation standpoint, these mountain  
3 hilltops on these tracts do have some  
4 endangered plants, some rare plants and  
5 stuff. And it's a pretty delicate  
6 ecosystem. Dr. Howell was pointing out  
7 that some of these spots, you know,  
8 these mountain rock-top deals, if they  
9 ever -- that ever gets disturbed, a lot  
10 of that habitat would be gone forever.

11 So, it kind of meets, you know,  
12 some preservation goals, I think, that  
13 this Board is -- is -- you know, is  
14 part of y'all's, you know -- I guess  
15 y'all's job description.

16 The other thing, you know, the  
17 City of Pelham, they think enough about  
18 projects like this as economic  
19 development that they're willing to  
20 take, you know, 900 acres out of the  
21 City of Pelham that they -- you know,  
22 they could one day, probably, be  
23 developed into houses all that; they

1           could bring, you know, a lot of money  
2           in ad valorem taxes back.

3                     And they see this, you know, as  
4           -- you know, as with the Oak Mountain  
5           State Park being in their, you know,  
6           deal too, that they really see this as  
7           economic development. So, they're  
8           willing to take, you know, 900 acres of  
9           their city limits and -- and, you know,  
10          put it into something that -- you know,  
11          it's not going to generate any, you  
12          know, property tax but they see it as  
13          bringing in economic development. And  
14          -- you know, and also a service to the  
15          community.

16                    A lot of us, you know, grew up  
17          on farms and have had the -- you know,  
18          a lot of opportunities to enjoy the  
19          outdoors. But a lot of people that  
20          live in these big urban areas, this is  
21          a big outlet for them to get out into  
22          nature.

23                    So, you know, that's the only

1           thing we're bringing up.

2                   The other -- The other thing, I  
3           know y'all -- y'all have to -- you look  
4           at all these -- this property in these  
5           packets and you're -- you're listening  
6           to us. So, we're getting a little  
7           snapshot of what y'all are trying to  
8           make decisions on whether to make the  
9           decision to -- to do an appraisal or a  
10          purchase. You know, with all  
11          properties, this has got some little  
12          out-parcels in it.

13                   And so, my -- my thing would be,  
14          you know, if -- if y'all were to make a  
15          motion on something like this to -- to  
16          have an appraisal done, you know, maybe  
17          attached to that motion that you would  
18          have a little due diligence period in  
19          there.

20                   We've got an updated abstract on  
21          the property, it's only a year old. We  
22          could get information like that to  
23          Patti and her crew. And if there's any

1 other red flags that show up on there,  
2 you know, you can always get out of a  
3 deal like that but at least do some  
4 kind of preliminary due diligence  
5 before you go all in and have an  
6 appraisal done.

7 So, that's -- That's about all I  
8 got. Do y'all have any questions?  
9 I'll be glad to answer.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
11 you, Jerry Joe.

12 I think Mr. Michael Simon with  
13 the City of Pelham on the same  
14 property. Good to see you, sir.

15 MR. SIMON: Thank you. Thank  
16 you for allowing the public to speak on  
17 such an important subject. Michael  
18 Simon, I'm the Economic Development  
19 Director with the City of Pelham, and I  
20 also happen to be a resident of Pelham  
21 in a neighborhood adjacent to the  
22 Cooper Branch property.

23 There is plenty of opportunity

1           for development but this is something I  
2           think that is very special to our  
3           community and the area. It's in Shelby  
4           County. Shelby County has been a great  
5           and very progressive county upon  
6           creating more trails and more nature  
7           areas for its residents. This is no  
8           exception. It's a -- It's a beautiful  
9           piece of property.

10           I -- I had an opportunity to  
11           ride through with Jerry just last week.  
12           And between the ridges and the area  
13           around it, it's is just -- it's just  
14           fabulous: The views, the opportunity  
15           to get into nature. Again, as Jerry  
16           mentioned, Pelham has Oak Mountain  
17           State Park. But in this particular  
18           area of Pelham, we don't have --  
19           certainly not such a large tract to --  
20           to be engaged with. I would just  
21           simply say that as an advocate both as  
22           the economic director and as a  
23           resident, I -- I would strongly suggest

1 and certainly appreciate your  
2 consideration for the property.

3 Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
5 you, sir.

6 The next speaker is Mr. Keith  
7 Tassin on the Dugdown Corridor,  
8 Cleburne County Tract, 4-B, page 11;  
9 4-B, page 11, Dugdown Corridor,  
10 Cleburne County Tract.

11 MR. TASSIN: Morning. So, it's  
12 my understanding these tracts came up  
13 at the last meeting, there was a little  
14 confusion. I think there is also a --  
15 in your packet, a Dugdown Corridor  
16 overview map.

17 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, there is.  
18 And that would be in your tab 5, and if  
19 you'll go to tab 5-D, it's a little --  
20 it's shown on your shortlist nomination  
21 but you have a broader view, if you  
22 would like it, more pulled out in your  
23 tab 5-D.

1           MR. TASSIN:  So, we have worked  
2           -- we have worked with Weyerhaeuser  
3           Corporation, which owns these parcels  
4           to -- to nominate a subset of their  
5           ownership in that area that fit like  
6           perfect puzzle pieces; it's all that  
7           other conservation work that is going  
8           on at Dugdown.  So, what -- I'm here  
9           today to seek a motion for a first  
10          appraisal to try to move that process  
11          forwards -- forward with the other  
12          conservation projects that are going on  
13          in that area.

14                 Some of you are familiar with  
15          the Dugdown.  It's been a real priority  
16          for the Nature Conservancy and other  
17          partners, primarily on the Georgia  
18          side, for years.  There's a real  
19          opportunity to connect this corridor --  
20          forest of corridor from the northern  
21          end of the Talladega National Forest,  
22          all the way over to the Sheffield  
23          Paulding WMA over in Georgia.  The

1 Georgia DNR and other partners have  
2 been really involved on the Georgia  
3 side where they have been able to  
4 conserve thousands of acres on that  
5 side.

6 The recent tract that was  
7 approved that Forestry Commission and  
8 Forever Wild was purchasing on the  
9 state line is continuous with protected  
10 property on the Georgia side as well.

11 So, this -- these -- these  
12 parcels, along with the other  
13 conservancy work will create that  
14 corridor from the Talladega, well into  
15 Georgia.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: What  
17 did you say, Weyerhaeuser is the --

18 MR. TASSIN: Weyerhaeuser --

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: --  
20 the landowner?

21 MR. TASSIN: Weyerhaeuser is the  
22 landowner. They own lots of other --  
23 They own -- They own a large acreage in

1           that area but we were able to work with  
2           them to carve out these pieces that we  
3           think are critical to this part of the  
4           corridor.

5                     MR. HARPER:  You are speaking on  
6           all three tracts?

7                     MR. TASSIN:  So, there's five --  
8           five tracts there within this  
9           nomination.

10                    COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:  So,  
11           just -- Let me help orient, especially  
12           our new Board members because the --  
13           some of you are familiar with work  
14           that's taking place here.  And it is  
15           confusing to have three different  
16           nominations prior to this.

17                    So, the area on -- if you're  
18           looking at the map on 5-D, okay, the  
19           map on 5-D, the hatched area that's  
20           outlined in red with the red hatch,  
21           that is property that the Board has  
22           already motioned to acquire, in  
23           conjunction with the Forestry

1 Commission with a Forest Legacy Grant  
2 that they've received. And that is in  
3 the closing process.

4 The area in the yellow, kind of  
5 a mustard yellow color, that is a  
6 nomination that we have recently  
7 received and that is for another Forest  
8 Legacy Grant through the Forestry  
9 Commission that will be forthcoming, I  
10 guess, in the -- very soon in the -- on  
11 the short list.

12 MS. MCCURDY: Yeah. We, on the  
13 27th, received the willing seller  
14 letter.

15 And so, we will now have it in  
16 our process and would expect it to  
17 appear on the short list in May, based  
18 on the grant funding available, it  
19 should short list.

20 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
21 right. Thank you.

22 So, that's the yellow area. The  
23 area that Mr. Tassin is talking about

1 is all -- is the other areas that are  
2 outlined in red that don't have the  
3 hatch; that is the property that he's  
4 here to speak on.

5 MR. TASSIN: So, that -- those  
6 tracts are going to close up the gaps  
7 remaining if those other -- those other  
8 tracts are purchased, along with some  
9 conservation occurring in that area as  
10 well.

11 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I  
12 want to make sure for the new Board  
13 members that -- are there any questions  
14 on that before -- I just want to make  
15 sure everybody knows what he's speaking  
16 on and what the --

17 MR. CHILDERS: I've got a  
18 question on that yellow area. There's  
19 a lot of area there, does that come  
20 under one grant, the whole area, the  
21 yellow?

22 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I'll  
23 let Mr. Oates speak on that.

1 Mr. Oates.

2 MR. OATES: Yes. All of that is  
3 spread out across that area but it's  
4 all one -- one grant, I believe all  
5 owned by one -- one person or one --  
6 one entity. It's a retirement fund, I  
7 think, that owns it all and they --  
8 they have to sell it at some point in  
9 the near future, and it's -- so, it is  
10 all kind of scattered there.

11 But, yes, that's all one -- one  
12 grant.

13 MR. HARPER: Is this  
14 Weyerhaeuser too?

15 MR. OATES: No, it's -- it's a  
16 retirement fund from the State of Maine  
17 I -- No?

18 MS. MCCURDY: And I will note  
19 for the Board that my staff and Mr.  
20 Oates' staff have been working together  
21 on the up -- the one we just -- the  
22 phase two that we just got the willing  
23 seller letter on, to begin looking at

1           what would be a proposed split map for  
2           the Board so you would be able to see.  
3           It would be similar to phase one,  
4           approximate, probably 75/25; we're  
5           working through all that.

6                        So, Forever Wild would not be  
7           titled to all the acreage, just,  
8           roughly, 25 percent of the value but  
9           we're working -- our staffs are working  
10          together on that now.

11                      MR. CHILDERS: I was just  
12          comparing the yellow to some of this  
13          other and thinking about the acreage  
14          and the cost, and we may not have  
15          enough money in our treasury to buy  
16          that.

17                      COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And  
18          that'll be a good -- you know, when we  
19          -- when it -- if it shows back up in  
20          May as a short list item, I think we'll  
21          have much more information, then, on  
22          that.

23                      Thank you, Keith.

1 MR. TASSIN: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The  
3 next speaker is Brandon Grisaffi. Did  
4 I do okay on that?

5 All right. Thank you.

6 Brandon Grisaffi on the Turkey  
7 Creek Nature Preserve - Red Hollow Road  
8 Tract, 4-B, page 23; 4-B, page 23.  
9 Give everybody just a second to get  
10 back to that one, 4-B, 23.

11 MR. GRISAFFI: Thank you,  
12 Commissioner and Board members for  
13 letting me speak today. My name is  
14 Brandon Grisaffi and I'm the park  
15 manager at Turkey Creek Nature  
16 Preserve. We're up from Pinson, just  
17 north of Birmingham, beautiful Forever  
18 Wild tract. If you're not familiar  
19 with it, it's 655 acres and we're  
20 managed by the Jefferson County  
21 Greenways. The Red Hollow Road Tract  
22 is directly adjacent to the existing  
23 preserve and would make for a seamless

1 addition to our property.

2 At Turkey Creek, we offer the  
3 community a beautiful and natural space  
4 that's safe, clean, and -- and free to  
5 the community around it. Last year we  
6 had over 140,000 visitors come through  
7 our gate. They come hike, swim, fish,  
8 sometimes just hang out. We have 23  
9 different schools and community groups  
10 bringing over 720 people to the creek  
11 for dynamic education programs.

12 Over the last year or so, we've  
13 improved security and safety with an  
14 increased staff presence at the  
15 Preserve and new security cameras.  
16 We've added a modern, functional office  
17 space for our growing staff. We've  
18 refinished park benches and tables  
19 throughout; upgraded our greenhouse;  
20 and, of course, we've done all this  
21 while keeping the park and the trails  
22 clean and safe.

23 This year we're going to be

1 adding a new bioswale to improve water  
2 runoff by the creek. We're going to be  
3 installing new durable trash cans,  
4 benches and tables throughout the whole  
5 park, and adding hammock stands along  
6 the creek. I say all this to say that  
7 this is what we're doing with property  
8 we have, and the Red Hollow Road Tract  
9 would fall under the same management.

10 We're going to continue to be a  
11 beloved green space for the community  
12 and the State. And, with the addition  
13 of this land tract, we're hoping to  
14 make it even bigger and better.

15 Thank y'all.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
17 you, sir.

18 The next speaker is Mr. Charles  
19 Yeager on the same tract.

20 Good morning, Charles. Good to  
21 see you.

22 MR. YEAGER: Good morning.  
23 Thank you, Commissioner. And thank

1           you, Board. Welcome, new Board  
2           members. I appreciate you guys giving  
3           me a little -- a moment here to speak.

4                        So, my name's Charles Yeager. I  
5           am the Director of Land and Water  
6           Conservation for the Jefferson County  
7           Greenways. And I want to thank  
8           Brandon. Brandon is -- has taken over  
9           my old role. I was the Preserve  
10          manager at Turkey Creek for about  
11          12-and-a-half years and used to come up  
12          and -- and give updates, just like  
13          Brandon just did.

14                      I also want to introduce a few  
15          other folks that -- that we have with  
16          our group that are here today. We  
17          have: Fran Marks, who's our  
18          superintendent, he oversees our  
19          maintenance and operations team; our  
20          Director of External Affairs, Leah; and  
21          our interim Executive Director, Janet  
22          Simpson. We -- We have a really great  
23          team.

1                   We are now managing Turkey Creek  
2                   Nature Preserve, Ruffner, and Red  
3                   Mountain. Over ten years, I -- I came  
4                   before this Board with a nomination  
5                   that -- for the Shepherd-Family  
6                   Addition, it was a little over 240-acre  
7                   addition to the Turkey Creek Nature  
8                   Preserve. Really moved swiftly through  
9                   the process. And the Board did make an  
10                  offer to the family. There was 16  
11                  family members attached to the tract.  
12                  And some -- some disagreements between  
13                  those family members ended up leading  
14                  to the collapse of that project and,  
15                  unfortunately, it didn't move forward.

16                  And, honestly, didn't really see  
17                  light at the end of the tunnel for it,  
18                  up until last year, when some situate  
19                  -- the situation with the family kind  
20                  of changed and they needed to sell the  
21                  property quickly. They reached out to  
22                  me and the Nature Conservancy of  
23                  Alabama saw this -- how important this

1 tract was as an addition to Turkey  
2 Creek and they stepped up and -- and  
3 they purchased the property.

4 And they -- they were able to  
5 work through, kind of, those challenges  
6 with the family to make it possible for  
7 this situation to completely change.

8 And so, now it's -- it's -- it's  
9 been nominated as the Turkey Creek  
10 Nature Preserve, TCNP, Red Hollow Road  
11 Addition. This is an incredible tract.  
12 It's -- has big, open hardwood forest  
13 in the valley and these -- these, kind  
14 of, stunning ridge tops with -- with  
15 longleaf pine, montane longleaf pine  
16 and shortleaf pine with big, long  
17 stretches of rock outcrops. It's big,  
18 diverse, healthy forest. This has got  
19 exactly what we want to see. And it is  
20 -- it presents a really great  
21 opportunity to protect the watershed,  
22 as well, further protections for the  
23 watershed that -- that includes over

1           ten -- or has -- we have ten  
2           threatened, endangered imperiled  
3           species in the watershed.

4                     Turkey Creek is -- is one of the  
5           most heavily used Forever Wild sites.  
6           We have over 140,000 people that are  
7           coming out every year. It's a fairly  
8           small, condensed tract. And one of the  
9           biggest things that we have people ask  
10          for is more opportunities for  
11          recreation, for trails. And this --  
12          this site will provide that. We --  
13          We've already looked at a conceptual  
14          plan for over 12 miles of trail for the  
15          site. We really see this as a pivotal  
16          opportunity in a -- in a very highly  
17          populated area to be able to expand the  
18          preserve.

19                    I really want to thank -- take a  
20          moment and thank the -- the Nature  
21          Conservancy, Steve and -- and Keith for  
22          -- for -- for making this huge effort  
23          to -- to work with the family and --

1 and -- and get this acquisition. And  
2 to be able to nominate it to you guys  
3 today as -- as what I think is going to  
4 be an important tract in Turkey Creek.

5 I also want to mention that we  
6 have made -- already made an investment  
7 in this. We want to share that -- show  
8 that investment, that we're going to be  
9 invested in managing this property in  
10 the future. We went on and did a first  
11 appraisal -- or did an appraisal that I  
12 think, hopefully, will work as a first  
13 appraisal to save the costs for the  
14 Forever Wild Board. And -- And that  
15 was actually dated for April of last  
16 year.

17 So, it's -- it's kind of a --  
18 timeline's a little short, but it's  
19 there, and it's -- hopefully, will help  
20 this process. I don't know if it will.

21 MS. MCCURDY: Yeah. There --  
22 You'll -- You have a memo in your  
23 packet, tab 5, that references the

1 appraisal that was provided. I think  
2 our next speaker may be talking about  
3 that. So...

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
5 you.

6 MR. YEAGER: We're available for  
7 questions if you guys have any  
8 questions.

9 MR. HARPER: The family's out of  
10 it now; the Nature Conservancy owns it  
11 all?

12 MR. YEAGER: It's a complete  
13 change of ownership.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
15 you, sir.

16 All right. Next speaker on the  
17 same property is Steve Northcutt from  
18 the Nature Conservancy.

19 Steve.

20 MR. NORTHCUTT: I'm Steve  
21 Northcutt, I'm the Director of  
22 Protection for the Nature Conservancy.  
23 And I know you've heard from two

1 speakers, I'm not going to take a lot  
2 of time on this property. But  
3 Jefferson County Greenways came to us  
4 and asked us if we can step up and  
5 acquire this property. We knew that it  
6 was a property that the Forever Wild  
7 Board had tried to acquire. And we've  
8 dealt with a lot of properties where  
9 you had heirs that lived in different  
10 parts of the State and they all had  
11 different expectations of value of the  
12 property and they just could not agree  
13 on the appraised value that was offered  
14 to them.

15 I've worked on a property before  
16 where some of the heirs lived in Hawaii  
17 and their expectation of property  
18 values for Hawaii did not meet the  
19 property around Little River Canyon.

20 So, anyway, they asked us if we  
21 could step up and acquire the property.  
22 It was listed by a realtor. We did  
23 have to go through the courts because

1 the family had to have the judge decide  
2 how this property would be sold.

3 And so, it did make it a little  
4 bit easier because, instead of having  
5 16 family members all haggle over the  
6 price, the judge made the decision on  
7 this.

8 So, we've acquired the property.  
9 We hope the Board considers this an  
10 asset and would consider purchasing it.  
11 And we're glad to be a party to this.

12 Any questions?

13 MR. HARPER: One question on the  
14 access; can they access it from Highway  
15 79?

16 MR. NORTHCUTT: The access is  
17 from Red Hollow Road, which is just off  
18 79. It's kind of confusing on the map.  
19 Actually there's -- there's property  
20 that's on both sides of Red Hollow  
21 Road.

22 So, there's a -- there's a road  
23 -- good access. And I'll just tell

1           you, as you go up Red Hollow Road, you  
2           see homes; you see cattle ranches.  
3           This would be a real nice property not  
4           to be developed and be part of the  
5           preserve. So, I think it'd be a  
6           property you'd be proud to have as part  
7           of the preserve.

8                        COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
9           you, sir.

10                       I did fail to notice that Ms.  
11           Stanley arrived.

12                       MS. STANLEY: Good morning.

13                       COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I'm  
14           glad to have you here, ma'am.

15                       We do have 100 percent  
16           attendance today for our Forever Wild  
17           Board, glad to see all of our members  
18           here today. Thank you very much.

19                       The next speaker is Mr. Chad  
20           Scroggins on -- it's actually tab 5-K,  
21           it was in your green folder. It is a  
22           potential tract in Shelby County. It  
23           is not -- has not -- It was, I guess,

1 recent -- If it's not in your packet in  
2 the shortlist, then it will -- tab 5-K  
3 has the information that Mr. Scroggins  
4 will be speak on.

5 Go ahead, Chad. Good to see you  
6 this morning.

7 MR. SCROGGINS: Yes. Thank you,  
8 Commissioner.

9 I appreciate the opportunity to  
10 speak on this particular tract. My  
11 name's Chad Scroggins, I'm the County  
12 Manager for Shelby County. For the new  
13 Board members, we have a longstanding  
14 relationship with the Forever Wild  
15 Board. We have a joint park, it --  
16 called Cahaba River Park, it's 1,951  
17 acres on the west side of our county.

18 We also have partnered with the  
19 State Parks on the Belcher access at  
20 Oak Mountain State Park, building a  
21 road and bathrooms and -- and the  
22 parking lot there.

23 This particular tract that we're

1 here to talk about today is -- there's  
2 really -- the idea of doing phase one  
3 as 789 acre purchase that would be  
4 offered by EBSCO. It is directly  
5 adjacent to Double Oak Park, which is a  
6 Shelby County park.

7 So, it would be the -- give us  
8 the opportunity to partner again.  
9 Double Oak Park is a purchase and  
10 investment of Shelby County to the tune  
11 of about eight-and-a-half million  
12 dollars that we've already used of our  
13 own money. What we're looking at is  
14 adding this 789 acres to the -- the 817  
15 acres of Double Oak Park. It is ridge  
16 top at the end of the Appalachian Trail  
17 and it's also -- Appalachian Mountains.  
18 It's also in a highly -- there's a lot  
19 of development demand around it.

20 So, it gives the opportunity to  
21 protect those ridge tops and kind of  
22 protect some sedimentation flows that  
23 are coming off the tops of the ridge.

1           The one thing that's unique  
2           about this is that we literally could  
3           remove three gates, and it would open  
4           up trails that are already existing,  
5           double track trails, on the property to  
6           the 29 miles of trails that we have on  
7           our current 817 acres.

8           So, it -- it's -- the  
9           opportunity to be ready for public use  
10          would be almost immediate. We already  
11          have restrooms and -- and pavilions and  
12          parking lots on our property that's  
13          directly adjacent. So, the access is  
14          already there through trails up to this  
15          particular piece.

16          The Shelby County Commission  
17          would offer 25 percent of the purchase  
18          price to partner with you all, which is  
19          something unique we've not done before.  
20          But it is that important to us that we  
21          would partner with you and -- and --  
22          financially and then also take over  
23          maintenance like we have done with

1 Cahaba River Parks. I appreciate the  
2 opportunity. You'll see more about  
3 this at the May meeting.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
5 you, Chad. I appreciate the  
6 partnership that we have with Shelby  
7 County on that.

8 Yes, sir, Mr. Childers.

9 MR. CHILDERS: We're looking at  
10 a map and do I understand the green,  
11 light green portion is what you're  
12 addressing?

13 MR. SCROGGINS: Yes, sir. The  
14 pink --

15 MR. CHILDERS: And these --  
16 these other areas adjacent to that are  
17 already under somebody's purview.

18 MR. SCROGGINS: The -- The pink  
19 that's just to the left is the current  
20 807 acres, plus the 10 of Dunnavant  
21 Valley Park, this is the 817 that the  
22 County owns. The greenish-gray color  
23 is what we're talking about, the 789

1           acres.

2                     The blue that's come in there,  
3           that would, maybe, be something that we  
4           can look at years down the line.

5                     And then the kind of  
6           yellowish-brown color is owned by the  
7           Freshwater Land Trust.

8                     MR. CHILDERS: All right. What  
9           about that phase two; who owns it?

10                    MR. SCROGGINS: EBSCO, the same  
11           owner. The same owner that we  
12           purchased ours from as well.

13                    MR. CHILDERS: Thank you.

14                    MR. SCROGGINS: Yes, sir. Thank  
15           you.

16                    COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
17           you, Chad.

18                    And our last speaker is Mr.  
19           Brooks Knapp on the same potential  
20           nomination.

21                    Good to see you again this  
22           morning, Brooks.

23                    MR. KNAPP: Thank you,

1 Commissioner. I'm Brooks Knapp, I'm  
2 with EBSCO Industries. I just wanted  
3 to let everyone know that we are on  
4 board with Shelby County and Forever  
5 Wild to do this project in phases or as  
6 a whole. We're still talking about it.  
7 We're looking to nominate it in -- for  
8 the May meeting.

9 MR. CHILDERS: That's the  
10 portion of the 1,500-acres-plus?

11 MR. KNAPP: Well, it's the -- we  
12 own everything across the top, the  
13 1,500 and the 789. In this phase, the  
14 789 is what we're going to nominate or  
15 something thereabouts, we're still  
16 putting the final number on it.

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
18 you, sir.

19 MR. KNAPP: Thank y'all.

20 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: That  
21 is the end of all of the green slips I  
22 have. Is there anybody that wanted to  
23 speak that didn't have a chance to

1 speak? Let me get somebody to get you  
2 a green slip. So, we can get your name  
3 on there for the record.

4 Thank you. Kyle Lybarger is  
5 going to speak on the Morgan Hollow  
6 Tract, that is 3-B; Morgan Hollow  
7 Tract, 3-B, page 4; 3-B, page 4. All  
8 right.

9 Thank you, sir. Go ahead.

10 MR. LYBARGER: So, last year --  
11 or, I guess, a year-and-a-half ago we  
12 set out to start protecting some  
13 federally endangered plant populations  
14 in Alabama. And we wanted to start in  
15 an area that is really  
16 under-appreciated. And we started in  
17 the Moulton Valley.

18 And so, this is an area  
19 sandwiched between the Cumberland  
20 Plateau and the Tennessee Valley.

21 So, you have tons of TVA  
22 property in the Tennessee Valley and  
23 you have Bankhead National Forest on

1 the Cumberland Plateau. But there is,  
2 out of 420,000 acres in the Moulton  
3 Valley, there's 2 -- there's only 200  
4 acres of grasslands preserved at  
5 Prairie Grove Glades.

6 So, 200 acres of public land  
7 across 420,000 acres. So, it's really  
8 unrepresented habitat.

9 And so, we focused on federally  
10 endangered leaf prairie clover and  
11 we've acquired -- three of those  
12 populations have protected, two or  
13 three other populations, and there's  
14 eight populations in the entire State.  
15 Those eight populations were found on  
16 only two properties, one of them having  
17 seven of them. And it's this property  
18 that we have presented to you today.  
19 The largest population in the State is  
20 in the middle of this property and it's  
21 larger and has more plants than all the  
22 other populations combined. It's a  
23 really important area.

1                   Historically -- Oh. I should  
2                   also say, we met with TVA last week.  
3                   There are some power line corridors  
4                   through there.

5                   And so, we're going to be  
6                   partnering with them to help manage  
7                   some of these populations that are on  
8                   some private properties surrounding it.

9                   But this area has really great  
10                  historical significance. I found out a  
11                  few weeks ago there's petroglyphs on  
12                  this property on sandstone bluffs, up  
13                  closer to the Cumberland -- or on the  
14                  Cumberland Plateau. And there's a ton  
15                  of Indian -- or Native American traces,  
16                  you know, Buffalo Traces through this  
17                  property: The High Town Path; the  
18                  Warriors Path. And this also -- you  
19                  know, there's actually two or three  
20                  other ones I won't list. But this area  
21                  is actually the Tennessee Divide where  
22                  two watersheds separate.

23                  So, at -- you know, the

1 Cumberland Plateau all flows into Black  
2 Warrior and everything below it flows  
3 into the Tennessee River. But tons of  
4 historical significance, lots of plant  
5 diversity. Hundreds of species here  
6 that are super important for our State,  
7 not including Alabama larkspur, which  
8 is almost endemic to Alabama, I  
9 believe. And when you see this place,  
10 if you got our brochure from a few  
11 meetings ago, it look unlike anything  
12 you -- you would see anywhere else in  
13 Alabama, just tons of color and,  
14 really, a real special property. But  
15 that's all I've got. Thank y'all.

16 MR. CHILDERS: Question: There  
17 is a blue line that indicates National  
18 Forest Service. And part of that  
19 parcel you're representing lays south  
20 of that line; what significance is  
21 that?

22 MR. LYBARGER: That's -- I think  
23 that's just across the road.

1 MS. MCCURDY: I think I can --  
2 That is -- That's the Federal  
3 acquisition boundary. It just means  
4 that, that could -- it could -- it  
5 falls within an area that's been  
6 approved Federally, you know, for the  
7 Forest Service to acquire property;  
8 that's all it means. But it is part of  
9 their acquisition boundary.

10 MR. CHILDERS: But the Forest  
11 Service already has significant  
12 acquisition below that line.

13 MS. MCCURDY: Correct. Right.

14 MR. CHILDERS: Thank you.

15 MR. LYBARGER: I'd like to say,  
16 though, that is a totally different  
17 habitat from this area. This is all  
18 Moulton Valley, which is -- there's  
19 nothing like that within the National  
20 Forest there. So, it's completely  
21 different plant species.

22 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
23 you, sir.

1 All right. Thank you for all  
2 our public speakers this morning.

3 By regulation, appraisal values  
4 are confidential during periods of  
5 negotiation. Accordingly, in order to  
6 discuss the tract appraisal values, the  
7 Board would need to go into recess for  
8 an Executive session.

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

12 MR. CHILDERS: So moved.

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.  
14 Childers I've heard as making the  
15 motion. Is there a second?

16 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Second.

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: It's  
18 seconded by Dr. McClintock.

19 As I call your name, please  
20 state your position on the motion to  
21 recess. Those in favor, please say  
22 "yes" or "aye," and those opposed,  
23 please say no.

1 Chris Blankenship, yes. Mr.

2 Childers.

3 MR. CHILDERS: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

5 Conlon.

6 MR. CONLON: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

8 Harris.

9 MR. HARRIS: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

11 Howell.

12 DR. HOWELL: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

14 Keener.

15 DR. KEENER: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

17 McClintock.

18 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Yes.

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

20 Neumann.

21 DR. NEUMANN: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

23 Oates.

1 MR. OATES: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

3 Parnell.

4 MR. PARNELL: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

6 Powers.

7 DR. POWERS: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.

9 Valentine.

10 DR. VALENTINE: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

12 Harper.

13 MR. HARPER: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Ms.

15 Stanley.

16 MS. STANLEY: Yes.

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.

18 Tuggle.

19 MR. TUGGLE: Aye.

20 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All

21 are in favor.

22 We are now in recess for an

23 Executive Session. It is 10:46. We

1 hope to return in about 20 minutes.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. MCCURDY: And, so, would the  
4 Board members just grab your packets  
5 and then staff will direct you to the  
6 room.

7 (The Board is in recess for  
8 Executive session at 10:46  
9 a.m.)

10 (Board meeting resumed at  
11 11:15 a.m.)

12 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: We  
13 are back from Executive Session. It is  
14 11:15. We'll pick back up with our  
15 regular meeting.

16 We are now, for the new members,  
17 it's tab -- the program status report  
18 will be tabs 2 and tab 3, and some  
19 grant status information from tab 5.  
20 Ms. McCurdy will share all those.

21 MS. MCCURDY: Just get ready to  
22 flip pages, your favorite. This is  
23 like your workout part of the meeting.

1 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:

2 She'll tell you where to turn.

3 MS. MCCURDY: All right. And  
4 also I'm looking down. So, if at any  
5 point, you can't hear me or you have a  
6 question and I didn't see you, please  
7 speak up.

8 So, for the Board members, we're  
9 going to start tab 2-A. This is would  
10 be the one from your green folder, the  
11 sort of yellow colored one. This has  
12 somewhat updated information that we're  
13 able to run based on having now passed  
14 the end of the month.

15 So, this is the portion of the  
16 meeting that, for the benefit of the  
17 public and also the Board, I run  
18 through our balance but also factor  
19 into that, just like your checkbook,  
20 the checks that you want me to write to  
21 try to potentially purchase properties.

22 So, any one that you had  
23 previously motioned for me to work on,

1 is reflected, just to be sure that  
2 we're conservatively figuring the money  
3 you have available as an unencumbered  
4 balance to work with.

5 So, if you take into account the  
6 following properties, which were at  
7 some point motioned for us to proceed  
8 toward purchase, if we could, those  
9 properties include: Bon Secour River  
10 Wetlands Addition; Freedom Hills  
11 WMA-Sutton Hill Addition; West Fowl  
12 River Tract; we had the Davidson Creek  
13 Tract.

14 So, it's still reflected on  
15 here; Dugdown Mountain Corridor, this  
16 is the Dugdown with the grant funds  
17 that AFC secured at 75/25 split; and  
18 then the Red Hills Section 23. With  
19 all of those properties, potential  
20 properties, taken into account, you  
21 have an unencumbered balance just over  
22 \$31 million.

23 If there are no questions on

1           that, I will note on the second page of  
2           tab 2-A, we will run through any -- as  
3           to any property that had been on two,  
4           the front page, what happened to it,  
5           whether we closed it; the offer ended  
6           up being declined; or for some reason  
7           we were not able to get it to purchase  
8           and it is no longer in a process. As  
9           we started a new fiscal year, right  
10          now, all we've got is to update you  
11          that the Upper Delta WMA-Stiggins Lake  
12          Addition, which was a prior motion,  
13          that offer was declined by the  
14          landowner.

15                 And, so, we have several of the  
16          -- a couple of the properties that are  
17          very close to closing. So, you will  
18          see more properties on that when we are  
19          back in May but, right now, that, for  
20          this fiscal year, is all we have.

21                 Tab 2-B reflects our running  
22          count to the Board of the Stewardship  
23          Fund. We had been authorized by the

1 Board to spend up to an amount equal to  
2 \$3 million through the Stewardship  
3 Fund. And, for the benefit of the  
4 public, each time the Board purchases a  
5 property or even accepts a donation of  
6 a property, that property, 15 percent  
7 of the appraised value for that  
8 property is transferred into our  
9 Stewardship account to help that  
10 property, sort of, carry its weight in  
11 the long term maintenance of the  
12 properties that the Program has.

13 And so, that means the Board, in  
14 addition to actually paying for the  
15 property, actually acquire a property,  
16 has to have enough money to also  
17 transfer that 15 percent.

18 So, as we stand, again, we're  
19 kind of early in this fiscal year, we  
20 still have, of that \$3 million -- now  
21 this would be a little behind because  
22 every day stuff is clearing -- but  
23 still about \$2.6 million available for

1           our use as needed for management of the  
2           tracts.

3                   Tab -- At the bottom of tab 2-B  
4           and as you move to 2-C, as we've  
5           discussed before, this fund is managed  
6           for net asset value. You will see in  
7           tab C a report that very much  
8           appreciate that our State Treasurer  
9           provides for you for each quarterly  
10          meeting. It gives you some detailed  
11          information as to the current  
12          investments within that -- within our  
13          Stewardship Fund dollars. And as of  
14          December 30, the net value was just  
15          over 49 -- \$49 million.

16                   If there are no questions on  
17          Stewardship report, I'm going to  
18          continue on. We are now in tab 3. And  
19          I would ask you to look at tab 3-A.  
20          Again, pull the one you have in your  
21          green folder, the yellow in color  
22          pages, has some updated information.

23                   So, in tab 3 we present and

1 remind the public of the properties  
2 that have previously had a motion for  
3 an appraisal that this Board has made.  
4 And so, I report each time, either  
5 they're back, they're not back; where  
6 we are on them.

7 So, I'm going to run through  
8 those now.

9 The properties that have  
10 returned appraisals are: Davidson  
11 Creek Tract, Coosa County; Freedom  
12 Hills WMA-Sugar Camp Branch Addition,  
13 Colbert; Morgan Hollow, Lawrence  
14 County. Again, thinking of cash  
15 available, we kind of run through that  
16 because, also, you can keep that in  
17 mind into any future motions you might  
18 want to make. And then we have been  
19 delivered, as we've discussed before,  
20 not an appraisal that you motioned but  
21 an appraisal that was provided on the  
22 Turkey Creek Nature Preserve-Red Hollow  
23 Road Addition; that's not anything that

1 the staff does anything with other than  
2 review, unless otherwise motioned by  
3 this Board but it is something I have  
4 in hand, so I mention that.

5 If there are no questions as to  
6 the tracts that currently sit on our  
7 appraised nominations list, we will  
8 move into where we talk about grant  
9 opportunities. But I'm going to pause  
10 just a second to see if anybody had  
11 anything or, Commissioner, you had  
12 anything before I roll into grant  
13 status.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:  
15 Anybody?

16 DR. POWERS: One.

17 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir, Dr.  
18 Powers.

19 DR. POWERS: So, just  
20 clarification. So, the Davidson Creek  
21 Tract is -- even though it's -- still  
22 needs a motion, it's deducted already  
23 from our balance?

1 MS. MCCURDY: I did because that  
2 was a prior property. So, you're  
3 really seeing it in two places. Yes,  
4 it's already taken into consideration.  
5 And tab 5-C is the memo that I did.  
6 And, just to clarify on this one and  
7 the motion that we would need in the  
8 general discussion session -- section  
9 of the agenda or agenda item, if you  
10 want to proceed. But because that  
11 offer was initially rejected, I would  
12 not move forward without a brand new  
13 motion now from the Board. We would  
14 begin again.

15 DR. POWERS: But the balance is  
16 calculated as if we've moved forward.

17 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, that is  
18 correct, because of your prior motion.

19 All right. Any additional  
20 questions before we move into grant  
21 status?

22 All right. Then if you'll turn  
23 to tab 5-A in your packet. This is the

1           portion of the meeting where each time  
2           I just update the Board on where we  
3           are, either as the grant opportunities  
4           that we have secured; grant  
5           opportunities connected with a  
6           nomination, that if the Board is  
7           interested in, I want you to know it  
8           would go toward reducing the cost in  
9           some instances of those transactions.

10                   And so, I want to run through.  
11           The staff is always looking for grant  
12           opportunities, either in connection  
13           with potential acquisition to give you  
14           that option or in connection with, sort  
15           of, mitigating the cost of managing the  
16           tracts.

17                   So, I'll run through those now,  
18           again, tab 5-A. As you have heard  
19           before, we have two tracts that are in  
20           closing -- excuse me, three tracts now  
21           that are in the closing process that  
22           have benefited from grant funding: The  
23           Bon Secour River Wetlands Addition, we

1 had a National Coastal Wetlands  
2 Conservation Grant Program award that  
3 contributed to approximately 69 percent  
4 of the acquisition cost but also gave  
5 us some money for fire-lane  
6 installation, some initial prescribed  
7 burning, and some trail development  
8 that would lessen the money that we  
9 would pull from the Stewardship Fund.  
10 And that property is just in the  
11 closing process.

12 Similarly we have the Red  
13 Hills-Section 23 Addition. That was an  
14 opportunity that Chuck Sykes, through  
15 his Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries  
16 Division offered to utilize their  
17 Pittman-Robertson funding on a 75/25  
18 split of that property; they used the  
19 grant funding for the 75 percent. The  
20 Board's expenditure for a 25 percent  
21 value constitutes the required  
22 State-base match that Chuck has to have  
23 to access those Federal funds. Without

1 Forever Wild's dollar, Chuck would not  
2 be able utilize his Pittman-Robertson  
3 funding.

4 Dugdown Mountain Corridor,  
5 similarly, another grant opportunity  
6 but this was an award secured by the  
7 Alabama Forestry Commission. It  
8 provided a similar 75/25 approximate  
9 structure by which Forever Wild has  
10 titled the 25 percent and the Forestry  
11 Commission uses the grant funding to  
12 acquire a title to approximately the 75  
13 remaining percent. Again, without  
14 Forever Wild's dollar as a State-base  
15 match, Mr. Oates would not have been  
16 able to accept that grant opportunity.

17 So, all those are in closing.

18 Of the -- the rest  
19 opportunities, right now, are really  
20 just an update on dollars related more  
21 to management or additional  
22 recreational opportunities. We  
23 continue work on Little River Canyon.

1           That was the National Fish and Wildlife  
2           Foundation, Cumberland Plateau -- I  
3           never can say that -- Southern  
4           Appalachian Fund Grant. We were not  
5           able, due to weather, to conduct the  
6           burn we had hoped to back right after  
7           our last meeting but I think it will be  
8           underway here shortly and I still think  
9           we are on track for the planting work  
10          to begin in March or April. We are  
11          continuing work on the utilizing the  
12          GOMESA, Gulf of Mexico Energy Security  
13          Act funding that, Commissioner, working  
14          with the Governor, was able to obtain  
15          and to improve our access on the  
16          Mobile-Tensaw Delta Bartram Canoe Trail  
17          and also the Perdido River Canoe Trail.  
18          And some of those structure  
19          improvements, some new structure, some  
20          enhancements of existing structures,  
21          some of those do fall on Forever Wild  
22          properties.

23                   So, we're excited to get that

1 moving. We are anticipating that we'll  
2 be able to put bids -- go out for bids  
3 for the construction contractor,  
4 hopefully, in April.

5 So, hopefully, by May, I'll have  
6 a further update on that. But those  
7 are the current leveraging  
8 opportunities or grant funding  
9 opportunities that we're working on.  
10 If there are any questions on that,  
11 I'll take those now.

12 If not, we will move on to tab  
13 4. Let me pause there for a second.

14 All right. So, if the Board  
15 would now turn to tab 4 and turn to tab  
16 4-A. This is the portion of the  
17 meeting that I review for the public  
18 and also be sure we are reviewing for  
19 the Board the nominations that have  
20 made it through our scoring process and  
21 scored well enough to earn a spot on  
22 what we call the shortlist; that is the  
23 priority listing as it's referred to

1           under Amendment 543. Each nomination  
2           that we get in from the public, we  
3           first get a willing seller letter to  
4           confirm that landowner is okay with  
5           their property being discussed in  
6           public and being part of this process  
7           and being scored.

8                       Once we have that in hand, they  
9           are scored in four categories: Nature  
10          preserve; recreation, that could be  
11          anything from hiking, biking, to  
12          hunting or bird watching, basically any  
13          form of recreation; then, as an  
14          addition to or a new wildlife  
15          management area or special opportunity  
16          area that is specifically managed in  
17          those two hunting programs; or an  
18          addition to or a new State park.

19                      So, those are the four  
20          categories. The nominations, once  
21          scored, then compete in our three  
22          districts: The Northern, Central, and  
23          Southern districts. And they have to

1 score in the top three ranking in at  
2 least one of those categories to make  
3 it onto our shortlist within their  
4 district. Some tracts have attributes  
5 that mean they score in more than one  
6 category so we always have a varying  
7 number of tracts on the shortlist. But  
8 I want to run through those now.

9 As usual, kind of keep the  
10 meeting moving, I am going to briefly  
11 reference those tracts. And you just  
12 flip with me tab in 4-B. And, again,  
13 if you have a question, speak up, I may  
14 not see your hand.

15 So, the tracts that have scored  
16 and made it onto the shortlist include  
17 the following: Beaverdam Swamp-Lowe  
18 Addition. I will note on this one that  
19 the landowner has offered this tract as  
20 a donation to the Program and have also  
21 offered to further contribute 15  
22 percent of the appraised value to carry  
23 on into the Stewardship Fund. I will

1 say that we will have to -- the staff  
2 will take its own appraisal action to  
3 gain that valuation to get that 15  
4 percent figure.

5 So, that would be off of our  
6 work with the appraiser. But the land,  
7 itself, would be donated and then 15  
8 percent of the appraised value.

9 Next tract, Bennett Creek Tract.

10 MS. STANLEY: Excuse me, Ms.  
11 Patti.

12 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, Ms. Stanley.

13 MS. STANLEY: This tract has  
14 been on for four meetings; if we take  
15 no action, it drops off. Can you tell  
16 us what is taking so long with this  
17 particular one?

18 MS. MCCURDY: Oh, I think it's  
19 just the Board. The count, for the  
20 benefit of the public, we do keep a  
21 count because this is a living,  
22 competitive list, and we want to be  
23 sure properties have the opportunity to

1 get on. We keep track of whether or  
2 not there is Board action at a meeting.

3 So, if we go a certain number of  
4 meetings without Board action, meaning  
5 you have not motioned to move forward  
6 with the property, maybe a first  
7 appraisal, or maybe you have something  
8 you want the staff to investigate, that  
9 sort of -- that slows it down. This  
10 tract has really not -- the Bennett  
11 Creek Tract has not really experienced  
12 any problems. I think it's really been  
13 more the Board not making a motion and  
14 the fact that we have not had  
15 cooperation from the landowner where I  
16 can give you a more clear answer on  
17 this tract. We have an access concern.  
18 The best we can determine, there's  
19 about a 20-foot gap of us having actual  
20 public access, again, not just for  
21 staff to be able to get on it but  
22 public access.

23 So, the delay on our end has

1 really been from the landowner. And  
2 then, obviously, the Board has been  
3 hesitant to make a motion on this  
4 because we have access concerns.

5 So, it's been a combination of  
6 the two. We are continually assured by  
7 the landowner that there is access and  
8 they're going to give it to us; we have  
9 not received it. So...

10 MS. STANLEY: And I would point  
11 out for the benefit of the public, it  
12 was first brought up in 2017.

13 MS. MCCURDY: And what you'll  
14 see on that, the reason you see that --  
15 the '17 date -- I'm sorry. Now I see  
16 your -- the length of time question  
17 better. Nominations, because this is a  
18 competitive list, they can come on and  
19 come off. If a landowner, by their own  
20 accord, does not pull the nomination,  
21 then it can pop back on. It doesn't  
22 start anew. We keep the count going,  
23 okay. It was a while before this one

1           rolled on to begin with. We have kept  
2           count. We do keep count. It doesn't  
3           roll off and start over. But, yes, it  
4           is possible if the landowner has not  
5           pulled the nomination and, until it  
6           runs its course, if it pops on and off  
7           due to the lack of higher scoring  
8           nominations, you would -- you could see  
9           one last that long.

10                   MS. STANLEY: Thank you.

11                   MS. MCCURDY: After the Bennett  
12           Creek Tract, we next have Coon  
13           Gulf-Craze Bend Addition, that's in  
14           Jackson County. I think I failed to  
15           say the counties, I will pick up doing  
16           that.

17                   Next we have Cooper Branch  
18           Tract, Shelby County; Dugdown Corridor,  
19           Cleburne County Tract. And this is the  
20           one that would be 100 percent Forever  
21           Wild acquisition since there is no  
22           grant funding on that; Dunnavant Valley  
23           Oaks, crosses both Shelby County and

1           Jefferson Counties; Freedom Hills  
2           WMA-Heard Addition, Colbert County;  
3           Graham Bayou Tract, Baldwin County;  
4           this is a tract -- I always note if  
5           we've had specific offer of more than  
6           just support but actual assistance --  
7           and you heard the speaker earlier, the  
8           City of Foley has the adjacent Graham  
9           Creek Nature Preserve, has offered to  
10          incorporate that into the overall  
11          management of their tract; Mount Vernon  
12          Tract, Mobile County; Turkey Creek  
13          Nature Preserve-Bell Addition,  
14          Jefferson County.

15                 And I will say, if motions are  
16          made, heads up, we do have two Turkey  
17          Creek Nature Preserve nominations. So,  
18          we'll be careful each time, if there is  
19          a motion, which one we're speaking on.  
20          Turkey Creek Nature Preserve-Red Hollow  
21          Road Addition; Weeks Bay Reserve-Holley  
22          Addition in Baldwin County; and Weeks  
23          Bay Reserve-White Addition in Baldwin

1 County. Those had been -- Both of  
2 those Weeks Bay Tracts had been tracts  
3 we had -- sometimes we'll be able to  
4 access some grant funding on through  
5 NOAA, we have not been able to access  
6 or secure any grant funding on either  
7 one of those. Just for those who've  
8 been on the Board, we have had, in the  
9 past, some but we have not been able to  
10 secure that on either of those.

11 So, Commissioner, that, unless  
12 there are questions, runs through my  
13 usual reports. And so, we would go to  
14 general discussion, unless you have  
15 something.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
17 questions about that?

18 Dr. Powers.

19 DR. POWERS: So, you're not --  
20 for the Weeks Bay one, I think y'all  
21 pretty much exhausted all of the -- I  
22 mean, if --

23 MS. MCCURDY: We have.

1 DR. POWERS: -- if we want it,  
2 it's going to be totally us; it's just  
3 the Fed programs just aren't that  
4 interested.

5 MS. MCCURDY: And it's, too,  
6 sometimes a priority in how we -- you  
7 know, what we access the funds for and  
8 have the numbers on; sometimes, you  
9 know, we've bought -- used some for,  
10 like, facility upgrades for solar  
11 panels and different things, HVC  
12 repairs.

13 So, there just hasn't been  
14 enough money in the Program for us to  
15 be able to secure that.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
17 right. Thank you.

18 So, this is the part of the  
19 meeting, called general discussion.  
20 This is where motions are generally  
21 made for first or second appraisals on  
22 property. For the benefit of the new  
23 members, I will -- and the court

1 reporter -- I will try and go extremely  
2 slow on that today to make everybody  
3 feels comfortable and understands what  
4 we're voting on. And if you're unsure  
5 of something, since this is a long  
6 table and everybody's beside me, just  
7 speak up if you have a question. I  
8 want to make sure everybody is  
9 comfortable in the actions that we take  
10 of the Board.

11 So, at this point, I will  
12 entertain any motions that people may  
13 have on any of these.

14 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Commissioner  
15 Blankenship.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
17 McClintock.

18 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I motion for  
19 the Board to approve staff proceeding  
20 with a second appraisal and purchase of  
21 the original Davidson Creek Tract as  
22 described in the memo dated February 6,  
23 2025.

1 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
2 right. Is there a second?

3 DR. POWERS: Second.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: It's  
5 seconded by Dr. Powers.

6 So, this is a motion for a  
7 second appraisal and move to purchase  
8 on the original Davidson Creek  
9 nomination.

10 Any questions or discussion on  
11 that?

12 MS. STANLEY: Yes, sir, I have a  
13 question.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes,  
15 ma'am.

16 MS. STANLEY: Just trying to get  
17 an idea of context. I see that this is  
18 Coosa County. I see this is Davidson  
19 Creek Tract, it's 2,103 acres; what is  
20 the other acreage that we have in Coosa  
21 County? Is this really needed for  
22 preservation or is there already a lot  
23 of preservation there?

1                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I  
2                   think we have -- off the top of my  
3                   head, I can't tell you how many acres  
4                   we have there. I think it was  
5                   mentioned in the -- earlier, somewhere  
6                   between 10 and 11,000 acres that we  
7                   have in Coosa County, that is a part of  
8                   our wildlife management area there,  
9                   some of it is along Hatchet Creek.  
10                  Whether we need that or not, I guess,  
11                  is a decision for the Board.

12                 MS. STANLEY: Gotcha.

13                 MS. MCCURDY: Did you see part  
14                 of that, to the far left, in yellow.

15                 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.  
16                 Parnell.

17                 MR. PARNELL: A lot of the  
18                 citizens of Coosa County would tell me  
19                 and have told me that Forever Wild owns  
20                 too much of Coosa County already.

21                 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
22                 other questions or discussion?

23                                 (No response).

1                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:  So,  
2                   the motion is for a second appraisal  
3                   and move to purchase on the Davidson  
4                   Creek Tract.  All those in favor,  
5                   please raise your hand.

6                   MS. MCCURDY:  If y'all would,  
7                   keep your hands up, Ashley's going to  
8                   help me since we're spread out.

9                   So, I see, one, two, three,  
10                  four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.  
11                  But please keep your hands up.

12                  Ashley, is that nine?  Nine  
13                  affirmative, Commissioner.

14                  COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:  All  
15                  those opposed?

16                  MS. MCCURDY:  Opposed:  One,  
17                  two, three, four, five.

18                  COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:  
19                  Motion carries.  Thank you.

20                  DR. KEENER:  Are you ready for  
21                  another motion?

22                  COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:  Yes,  
23                  sir.

1 DR. KEENER: I would like to  
2 make a motion for a second appraisal  
3 and purchase for the Morgan Hollow  
4 Tract.

5 MR. TUGGLE: Second.

6 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: It's  
7 seconded by -- So, the motion was made  
8 by Dr. Keener for a second appraisal  
9 and move to purchase on the Morgan  
10 Hollow Tract. Seconded by Mr. Tuggle,  
11 one of our new Board members. I think  
12 this may be Dr. Keener's first motion,  
13 as well. So...

14 Is there any question or  
15 discussion on that tract?

16 (No response).

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
18 those in favor, please raise your hand.

19 MS. MCCURDY: Thirteen,  
20 Commissioner.

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
22 those opposed?

23 (No response).

1 MS. MCCURDY: No hands were  
2 raised.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
4 right. Motion carries.

5 MR. CONLON: Commissioner, I'd  
6 like to make a motion on the Beaverdam  
7 Creek, accepting the donation of  
8 Beaverdam Swamp on the condition that  
9 the landowner also contributes  
10 approximately 15 percent of the  
11 appraised value towards the stewardship  
12 transfer.

13 MS. MCCURDY: And that's the  
14 Beaverdam Swamp Lowe Addition, for all,  
15 that's tab 4-B, page 3.

16 MR. HARPER: I second it.

17 BOARD MEMBER: And I'd like some  
18 discussion on that. Can we put in that  
19 motion that we will have another  
20 appraisal; you know, we discussed that  
21 earlier, not the fellow that already  
22 appraised it.

23 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP:

1           That's a different property. This one  
2           does not have an appraisal already.  
3           We'll have to have an -- have to do an  
4           appraisal on this one to set the value  
5           of the property so they can set the 15  
6           percent for the Stewardship Fund.

7                   MS. MCCURDY: Just in fairness  
8           to the landowner, we were provided an  
9           appraisal, but it was not one that we  
10          could utilize.

11                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Thank  
12          you for that clarification.

13                   So, the motion was made by Mr.  
14          Conlon and seconded by Mr. Harper to  
15          accept the donation of the Beaverdam  
16          Swamp property with the understanding  
17          that we would have an appraisal done  
18          and the landowner would provide 15  
19          percent of the appraised value into the  
20          Stewardship Fund. Is that the -- Does  
21          that sound -- Everybody clear on that?  
22          That's the motion. All right. All  
23          those in favor, please raise your hand.

1 (Board members raising  
2 hands).

3 MS. MCCURDY: That's unanimous,  
4 Commissioner.

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
6 right. The motion carries. Thank you.

7 DR. KEENER: Commissioner.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
9 Keener.

10 DR. KEENER: I would like to  
11 make a motion for a first approval of  
12 the Turkey Creek Nature Preserve-Red  
13 Hollow Road Addition.

14 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second  
15 that.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
17 right. So, the motion was made by Dr.  
18 Keener, seconded by Dr. McClintock, for  
19 a first appraisal on the Turkey Creek  
20 Nature Preserve-Red Hollow Road  
21 Addition. Any questions or discussion  
22 on that motion for a first appraisal?

23 MS. STANLEY: Yes, sir. I

1           wasn't quite sure why this one is  
2           coming before us because it's already  
3           under conservation. What do we add to  
4           the picture if we purchase this  
5           property?

6                        COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: That  
7           is a valid point.

8                        MS. STANLEY: For Board debate,  
9           I'm, you know --

10                      COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes,  
11           ma'am. That is a valid point. It is  
12           -- Whether the Board decides if they  
13           want to own it or somebody else own it.

14                      DR. KEENER: Can I speak to  
15           that?

16                      COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes,  
17           sir, Dr. Keener.

18                      DR. KEENER: The Nature  
19           Conservancy purchases land and they  
20           have money tied up in this. I think  
21           they would like to get their money out  
22           so they can purchase another tract,  
23           perhaps, for conservation.

1 MS. STANLEY: So, was the point  
2 to make this expedient for the family  
3 and they really wanted us to buy it all  
4 along; was that the point?

5 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I  
6 don't know if that was the point but  
7 that has happened multiple times in the  
8 past where a land trust or a group like  
9 that will acquire the property and then  
10 bring it to the Board for ultimate  
11 ownership and long term protection.

12 Yes, ma'am.

13 MS. MCCURDY: And in this  
14 situation, this had previously -- it  
15 may predate everyone on this Board --  
16 but it was the Turkey Creek Nature  
17 Preserve Shepherd Addition. It was  
18 something the Board tried to get; could  
19 not. I think the Nature Conservancy  
20 stepped in to assist the family and  
21 then get it to a point where they could  
22 acquire it to make it a potential  
23 addition to Turkey Creek Nature

1 Preserve.

2 And I think the question to the  
3 Nature Conservancy, I think they would  
4 -- the reason they have nominated it,  
5 is to benefit the Preserve but, also,  
6 not to be the long term landowner and  
7 manager there. But it's up to this  
8 Board whether to then bring it into  
9 Forever Wild.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
11 Powers.

12 DR. POWERS: Yeah, just to kind  
13 of echo what Chris said, I mean, our  
14 experience with the Nature Conservancy  
15 has been -- well, at least my opinion,  
16 they're very good and they'll use those  
17 funds when they're freed up to purchase  
18 another acquisition.

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
20 other comments or questions?

21 Dr. Neumann.

22 DR. NEUMANN: Yeah. For the  
23 Nature Conservancy, I think they try to

1 protect these pieces --

2 MS. MCCURDY: I'm sorry. Speak  
3 into the microphone, Dr. Neumann.

4 DR. NEUMANN: Yeah. So, I think  
5 the Nature Conservancy is doing it for  
6 the right reasons to get it so we can  
7 protect it forever.

8 MS. MCCURDY: Was there a  
9 question on this end?

10 BOARD MEMBER: Can't hear.

11 MS. MCCURDY: Oh, I'm sorry. I  
12 cannot hear.

13 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: He  
14 just said that the Nature Conservancy  
15 has done that in the past and they were  
16 trying to protect those type things for  
17 the right reasons.

18 DR. NEUMANN: Yes, sir.

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So,  
20 the motion is for a first appraisal on  
21 the Turkey Creek Nature Preserve-Red  
22 Hollow Road Addition, first appraisal.  
23 All those in favor, please raise your

1 hand.

2 MS. MCCURDY: If y'all could  
3 keep them up just a minute.

4 Commissioner, we have 13  
5 affirmative.

6 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
7 "no"?

8 MS. MCCURDY: We have two "nos."

9 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
10 right. The motion carries. Thank you.

11 DR. HOWELL: Mr. Commissioner.

12 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
13 Howell.

14 DR. HOWELL: I would like to  
15 make a motion for a first appraisal for  
16 the Cooper Branch Tract.

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
18 Howell has made a motion for a first  
19 appraisal for the Cooper Branch Tract  
20 in Shelby County; is there a second?

21 MS. MCCURDY: And that's tab  
22 4-B, page 9. I see a couple of people

23 --

1 MR. CONLON: I'll second.

2 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: It's  
3 seconded by Mr. Conlon. Any  
4 discussion, questions on that tract?

5 (No response).

6 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
7 those in favor of a first appraisal on  
8 the Cooper Branch Tract, please raise  
9 your hand.

10 MS. MCCURDY: Nine,  
11 Commissioner.

12 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
13 opposed?

14 MS. MCCURDY: Three.

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The  
16 motion carries.

17 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Commissioner  
18 Blankenship.

19 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
20 McClintock.

21 MS. MCCURDY: Speak into the  
22 microphone if you could, Dr.  
23 McClintock, thanks.

1 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'd like to do  
2 the Turkey Creek Nature Preserve but  
3 the smaller Bell Tract this time.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So,  
5 that's for a first appraisal on the  
6 Turkey Creek Nature Preserve-Bell  
7 Tract?

8 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Correct.

9 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The  
10 80 acres?

11 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Correct.

12 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Is  
13 there a second?

14 DR. NEUMANN: I'll second.

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
16 Neumann, thank you. So, this is for a  
17 first appraisal on the Turkey Creek  
18 Nature Preserve-Bell Tract, is there  
19 any questions or discussion on that?

20 (No response).

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

23 MS. MCCURDY: Thirteen.

1 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: And  
2 any opposed?

3 MS. MCCURDY: We have one.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The  
5 motion carries.

6 Dr. Neumann.

7 DR. NEUMANN: Yes, I'd like to  
8 make a motion to the Board to proceed  
9 with the first appraisal for the Graham  
10 Bayou Tract.

11 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So,  
12 that's a motion by Dr. Neumann for a  
13 first appraisal on the Graham Bayou  
14 Tract. Is there a second?

15 MR. TUGGLE: Second.

16 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: It's  
17 seconded by Mr. Tuggle. Thank you.

18 Any discussion on that?

19 (No response).

20 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
21 those in favor for a first appraisal on  
22 the Graham Bayou Tract, please raise  
23 your hand.

1 MS. MCCURDY: Thirteen.

2 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
3 those opposed?

4 (No response).

5 MS. MCCURDY: I don't see any  
6 hands.

7 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
8 right. The motion carries.

9 MS. STANLEY: Commissioner.

10 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Yes,  
11 ma'am, Ms. Stanley.

12 MS. STANLEY: I move to first  
13 appraisal for Dugdown Corridor,  
14 Cleburne County, noting the very high  
15 scores, NP, recreation, and WMA.

16 DR. KEENER: I second that,  
17 Commissioner.

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Dr.  
19 Keener.

20 So, the motion was made by Ms.  
21 Stanley and seconded by Dr. Keener for  
22 a first appraisal on the Dugdown  
23 Mountain, Cleburne County Addition.

1 Any questions on that while we're  
2 talking about it, since there were a  
3 couple of those on that map, let me  
4 make sure, any questions on that,  
5 everybody?

6 All right. All those in favor  
7 of a first appraisal on the Dugdown  
8 Mountain, Cleburne County Addition,  
9 please raise your hand.

10 (Board members raising  
11 hands).

12 MS. MCCURDY: Fourteen,  
13 Commissioner.

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
15 opposed?

16 (No response).

17 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The  
18 motion carries.

19 MR. CHILDERS: Mr. Chairman.

20 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.  
21 Childers.

22 MR. CHILDERS: I'd to make a  
23 motion for first appraisal on the Coon

1 Gulf-Craze Bend Addition, 80 acres.

2 DR. HOWELL: Second.

3 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
4 right. The motion was made by Mr.  
5 Childers, seconded by Dr. Howell for a  
6 first appraisal on the Coon Gulf-Craze  
7 Bend Addition. Any discussion or  
8 questions on that?

9 All those in favor for the first  
10 appraisal on the Coon Gulf-Craze Bend  
11 Addition, please raise your hand.

12 (Board members raising  
13 hands).

14 MS. MCCURDY: Fourteen.

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
16 those opposed?

17 (No response).

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The  
19 motion carries. Anybody else? I  
20 rarely make a motion, however --

21 MS. MCCURDY: This is rare.

22 Wow. He caught the fever today.

23 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I

1 did. I did. So, I would like to make  
2 a motion for a second appraisal and  
3 move to purchase on the Freedom Hills  
4 WMA Sugar Camp Branch Addition in  
5 Colbert County. Is there a second?

6 DR. POWERS: Seconded by Dr.  
7 Powers, motion made by Commissioner  
8 Blankenship. Any discussion on that?

9 All those in favor, please raise  
10 your hand.

11 (Board members raising  
12 hands).

13 MS. MCCURDY: Thirteen,  
14 Commissioner.

15 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
16 opposed?

17 MS. MCCURDY: No hands.

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: The  
19 motion carries. That is a lot in one  
20 day.

21 Appreciate everybody's interest  
22 in that. I think that -- Any other  
23 discussion before we move into the

1 reports or anything else anybody wants  
2 to bring up?

3 MS. MCCURDY: All right.

4 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Ms.  
5 McCurdy.

6 MS. MCCURDY: We'll move into  
7 miscellaneous reports. I'm not sure  
8 it's going to be as exciting as all  
9 that, but we'll move there.

10 So, turn to tab 5. And we have  
11 already discussed a few of the items  
12 that were in tab 5.

13 So, I think that you can go to  
14 -- I'm just going to go in order.  
15 There's no magic to this order, it's  
16 just what I was able to gather at the  
17 mailing of the packet and then what had  
18 to follow.

19 So, let's go to tab 5-E. And I  
20 will just note for the Board that this  
21 is -- I'm sorry. I skipped over tab  
22 5-B. Y'all forgive me, I got carried  
23 away. Start with tab 5-B. This is --

1           There is no news here, which is, I  
2           think, why I forgot it.

3                     But I do want to note that at  
4           each meeting the No Board Action, or  
5           NBA, count that Ms. Stanley had  
6           referred to earlier, this is the point  
7           in the meeting in which I let you know  
8           if something is about to roll off and  
9           if you -- if you don't take action.  
10          This time we have a few that are going  
11          to be on it next time, but right now we  
12          don't have any, either on the shortlist  
13          or appraised nominations.

14                    So, nothing for you to do. But  
15          I didn't want to totally skip over it.

16                    So, now, if you'll go to tab  
17          5-E. Tab 5-E is a report that we are  
18          doing on a quarterly basis for the  
19          Board that provides some information on  
20          the -- our efforts to mitigate feral  
21          hogs on the Forever Wild acreage.

22                    So, we are doing that both  
23          through continuing and ongoing, but

1 with this Board's additional funding on  
2 this, have purchased additional  
3 equipment, cameras, et cetera, traps,  
4 the things that we need that were  
5 enhancing staff's ongoing efforts but  
6 ramp them up.

7 And, then, also, we have secured  
8 contractor services to also help us  
9 with the trapping, elimination,  
10 removal, et cetera.

11 So, this quarterly meeting I  
12 just wanted to give our usual update.  
13 You'll see attached the spreadsheet  
14 that we are maintaining and to tell you  
15 that the contractor services are going  
16 well. We had focused on, since we had  
17 not done this before, three tracts:  
18 Little River SOA; Live Oak Landing; and  
19 Grand Bay Savanna, that complex, those  
20 three areas for our initial contractor  
21 services to be sure how we're going to  
22 handle that and be sure we were  
23 utilizing the contractors and the

1 contractor well.

2 And so, we are -- that's going  
3 well and will be expanded onto some  
4 other properties. If there are any  
5 questions, I'll take those but that was  
6 one of our standard items, sort of like  
7 tab 5-B.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: I  
9 will say that I had a positive  
10 conversation with Senator David  
11 Sessions about the work that's taking  
12 place in the Grand Bay Swamp in his  
13 district, he was very thankful for the  
14 work of our staff and the contractor on  
15 that property.

16 MS. MCCURDY: All right. Just  
17 very briefly I will let the Board know,  
18 for those who may have wondered, one of  
19 the nominations that had been on the  
20 shortlist but fell off due to some  
21 other competition was the Hale Springs  
22 Tract. There's no immediate update.  
23 That's the one in Hoover, or near

1 Hoover, that the Friends of Shades  
2 Creek have spoken about. They're still  
3 talking to the various jurisdictions on  
4 that property. There's no real update  
5 on that but I did want -- I didn't want  
6 you to think they had pulled it or  
7 given up by the fact you did not see it  
8 on the shortlist.

9 The next item will be tab 5-G.  
10 We have now rolled into your green  
11 folder, so if you haven't moved your  
12 items over. This is also standard,  
13 once a year, that we give to the Board  
14 a copy of the Forever Wild Land Trust  
15 annual report that is required under  
16 Amendment 543. The amendment that  
17 formed the Program requires that an  
18 annual report be given to the Governor  
19 and Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker  
20 that tracks the activities of the Board  
21 over the last fiscal year period.

22 So, this report would have been  
23 -- would have ended -- it's October to

1           September and would have ended  
2           September 30, 2024.

3                     So, it tracks on the fiscal year  
4           basis. It discusses the properties  
5           we've acquired. It reviews what  
6           whoever may have been on the Board  
7           during that period.

8                     So, we were pleased to deliver  
9           the report and note the acquisitions  
10          across five counties in the State; it's  
11          approximately 6,381 acres that were  
12          brought into the program and a very  
13          good representative bunch of properties  
14          touching all four of our categories:  
15          Recreation opportunities, hunting  
16          opportunities, important habitats, as  
17          well as just State park additions, Lake  
18          Guntersville and Oak Mountain.

19                    We were able to leverage over \$5  
20          million in grant funding related to  
21          those acquisitions. Our percentage of  
22          categories, how they're managed, remain  
23          very similar, but to repeat those, we

1           have 93 percent of the Forever Wild  
2           acreage is huntable in some form; there  
3           is hunting taking place on 93 percent  
4           of the acreage. Eighty-four percent of  
5           the acreage is actively managed through  
6           Chuck Sykes, Wildlife and Freshwater  
7           Fisheries Division, specifically a  
8           designated wildlife management areas or  
9           special opportunity areas.

10                   And then, we say 99 percent is  
11           publically accessible; really, it -- I  
12           think it all is. We say 99 percent  
13           but, you know, we acquire these tracts  
14           with the goal of also getting the  
15           public on them. If there's a sensitive  
16           habitat, we try to route them around it  
17           and still use and many of those uses  
18           coexist, as we have seen.

19                   I won't go through the entire  
20           report. I will note that the report  
21           does also include a section on just an  
22           overview of some of the activities that  
23           have taken place on the properties.

1           So, I will have the Board -- and  
2           this is also posted on our website so  
3           the public can view this too.

4           But I want the Board, you know  
5           -- I won't hit them all but, you know,  
6           we have a lot of numbers related to our  
7           Forever Wild Field Trial Area. We had  
8           3,850 visitors for one use or another,  
9           be that the dog sporting events; the  
10          youth hunts; the physically disabled  
11          hunting; our field trips; our Audubon  
12          tours just being managed for multiple  
13          uses, in addition to the habitat work  
14          that we are doing on that property. We  
15          have two National AKC Sporting Dog  
16          Events coming, crossing over, beginning  
17          the -- it's already under way, one of  
18          them, but one in March.

19          So, we have two events that are  
20          national caliber coming.

21          At our Wehle Nature Center in  
22          Bullock County, we had over 2,300  
23          visitors there. We have a special

1 project for students in fourth through  
2 eight grade that we partner with Auburn  
3 University's Museum of Natural History  
4 and some offerings that they try to get  
5 into the classroom and then use our  
6 property as an outdoor classroom.

7 That same theme is used in our  
8 Campus Conservation Program. And I  
9 want to thank Chuck Sykes again and his  
10 staff's work connecting with various  
11 colleges and universities and trying to  
12 get their biology and wildlife programs  
13 on our properties. A lot of these  
14 institutions have very solid programs  
15 but do not have the acreage associated  
16 with sort of the on-site learning. And  
17 our biologists spend a lot of time with  
18 those students.

19 It also details our timber  
20 management activities, both in  
21 harvesting and clear-cuts. And we  
22 began and continue monitoring the pine  
23 beetle situation that we're all dealing

1 with. We were active and burned about  
2 17,000 acres of Forever Wild  
3 properties.

4 We also had our hog numbers in  
5 here. Again, over the fiscal year, 684  
6 that were removed. But I encourage the  
7 public and the Board to look through  
8 that. Again, I don't want list all of  
9 them but I also sure appreciate the  
10 work of my staff. I stand up and talk  
11 about it but my staff, both  
12 administratively and land management  
13 wise and public relation wise, are the  
14 ones that are out there doing the hard  
15 work. So, I want to thank them.

16 We'll keep moving. Let's see  
17 which ones we haven't covered, I don't  
18 want to repeat. Okay. Just continue  
19 on to 5-H. Speaking of timber, at our  
20 last meeting we are -- we brought up  
21 some specific actions that we're  
22 talking due to the Southern pine beetle  
23 outbreak. And I want to take this

1 opportunity to thank Mr. Oates and the  
2 Alabama Forestry Commission and their  
3 staff, the data and information and  
4 just the cooperation there, we sure  
5 appreciate it.

6 We are monitoring all the  
7 tracts. We are going on the tracts  
8 doing site assessment. Some of the  
9 work we can handle ourselves in  
10 creating buffer zones, as we've talked  
11 about in the past. But we do have a  
12 few very specific actions that I wanted  
13 to bring up that we will be taking on  
14 Autauga County WMA, just to make the  
15 Board aware of because this was fairly  
16 significant action that my foresters  
17 determined that we should proceed with.

18 And so, we're going to have a  
19 final harvest on one of the tracts that  
20 relates to about 180 acres; a first  
21 thinning on another area in Autauga of  
22 250 acres; and proceeding with a second  
23 thinning by the different area of 125

1           acres. We will, as we have been doing,  
2           will keep the Board informed of the  
3           more significant actions that we're  
4           taking very specifically; otherwise,  
5           just know that we are out there, as  
6           everybody else is, keeping an eye on  
7           the situation.

8                    Any questions on those efforts?

9                            (No response).

10                   MS. MCCURDY: So, let's now go  
11           to tab 5-J. This, very similarly, is  
12           no -- really no Board action that's  
13           required. But I have included a copy  
14           of an article that David Rainer on our  
15           staff wrote that you may have seen in  
16           the newspaper or, if you get e-mails  
17           through our Outdoor Alabama website,  
18           you would have already seen, but it's  
19           really highlighting some activities I  
20           just talked about at the Forever Wild  
21           Field Trial Area in Hale County.

22                    And, again, just a real exciting  
23           example of how the multiple uses that

1 we manage for are being incorporated on  
2 that tract.

3 So, you'll see a copy of that  
4 article.

5 I also note in there, and I'll  
6 make a pitch, if any of the Board  
7 members did not get this, it's because  
8 you're not signed up for e-mails  
9 through Outdoor Alabama. I will be  
10 happy to help you with that, I gave you  
11 some instructions in the memo. And you  
12 can pick your categories so you'll only  
13 get what you want to hear. And that's  
14 also a plug for the public, anybody  
15 here who may not be signed up.

16 I think, Commissioner, we  
17 covered everything else, one way or  
18 another, already during the meeting.  
19 Let me look at staff. Commissioner,  
20 unless you've got something or a Board  
21 member has something additional, I  
22 think we can move out of miscellaneous  
23 reports and into approval of the

1 minutes.

2 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: So,  
3 the next order of business is the  
4 approval of the minutes from the  
5 November 7th meeting, that's tab 6.

6 MR. HARPER: Motion to approve.

7 MR. OATES: Second.

8 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Mr.  
9 Harper has moved to approve the meeting  
10 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Oates.

11 Are there any corrections,  
12 additions, changes to the minutes?

13 (No response).

14 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
15 those in favor of approving those  
16 minutes, please say aye.

17 (Board members saying "aye").

18 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: Any  
19 opposed?

20 (No response).

21 COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: None  
22 opposed. The motion carries.

23 The next meeting will be May

1 1st, 10:00 a.m., in the Birmingham  
2 area. And we are working on a location  
3 on that now. We'll be back in touch  
4 but just plan for that meeting to be in  
5 the Birmingham area.

6 And then the meeting in August,  
7 we definitely hope to have at the  
8 Forever Wild Field Trial Area when the  
9 new events center and the other  
10 improvements there are completed; if  
11 it's not done, somebody's in -- some  
12 contractor is in trouble.

13 So, you can plan to see the  
14 facility and, hopefully, we can set up  
15 some tours and see all that there is to  
16 offer on that property. I think that  
17 you'll be very impressed with the work  
18 our staff does and how diverse the  
19 property is and how diversely we use  
20 that property for multiple objectives  
21 for the public.

22 So, dog trials are great, we do  
23 a lot of other stuff there as well.

1                   Anybody else got anything? Do I  
2                   have a motion to adjourn?

3                   MR. HARPER: So moved.

4                   MR. PARNELL: Second.

5                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: All  
6                   those in favor say "aye."

7                   (Board members saying "aye").

8                   COMMISSIONER BLANKENSHIP: We  
9                   are adjourned.

10                  Thank you.

11

12

13                                 (WHEREUPON, the Forever Wild  
14                                 Land Trust Board meeting held  
15                                 on Thursday, February 6,  
16                                 2025, was adjourned at 12:07  
17                                 p.m.)

18

19

20

21

22

23

## 1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 STATE OF ALABAMA

3 TALLADEGA COUNTY

4 I, Jamie McCracken, Certified Court  
5 Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of  
6 Alabama at Large, certify on Thursday, February  
7 6th, 2025, that I reported the proceedings in the  
8 matter of:

9 THE FOREVER WILD

10 LAND TRUST BOARD MEETING

11 TROY UNIVERSITY OF MONTGOMERY

12 MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

13 THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025 10:00 a.m.

14

15 That the foregoing 121 computer-printed  
16 pages contain a true and correct transcript of the  
17 hearing set out herein.

18 I further certify that I am neither a  
19 relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of  
20 the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of  
21 such attorney or counsel, nor am I financially  
22 interested in the results thereof. All rates  
23 charged are usual and customary.

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

5 This 4th day of April in the year of our  
6 Lord, 2024.

7

8

9

10

15/Jamie McCracken  
11 Jamie McCracken, CCR  
12 ACCR NO. 451 Exp. 9/30/25  
13 Certified Court Reporter and  
14 Notary Public  
15 Commission Expires 10/23/28

14

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**BOARD MEMBER: [3]**

11/5 91/17 97/10

**COMMISSIONER****BLANKENSHIP: [137]****DR. HOWELL: [5]** 4/3

61/12 98/11 98/14 104/2

**DR. KEENER: [9]** 4/6

61/15 89/20 90/1 93/7

93/10 94/14 94/18 102/16

**DR. MCCLINTOCK:****[12]** 4/9 13/8 13/18 60/16

61/18 86/14 86/18 93/14

99/17 100/1 100/8 100/11

**DR. NEUMANN: [7]**

4/12 61/21 96/22 97/4

97/18 100/14 101/7

**DR. POWERS: [10]**

4/21 62/7 70/16 70/19

71/15 84/19 85/1 87/3

96/12 105/6

**DR. VALENTINE: [2]**

5/1 62/10

**MAYOR THOMAS: [2]**

20/3 22/21

**MR. CHILDERS: [16]**

3/17 10/14 34/17 36/11

52/9 52/15 53/8 53/13

54/9 58/16 59/10 59/14

60/12 61/3 103/19 103/22

**MR. CONLON: [4]** 3/20

61/6 91/5 99/1

**MR. GRAHAM: [1]**

14/5

**MR. GRISAFFI: [1]**

37/11

**MR. HARPER: [9]** 5/4

32/5 35/13 45/9 47/13

62/13 91/16 119/6 121/3

**MR. HARRIS: [2]** 3/23

61/9

**MR. HOFFMAN: [1]**

15/9

**MR. INGRAM: [1]**

23/13

**MR. KNAPP: [3]** 53/23

54/11 54/19

**MR. LYBARGER: [3]**

55/10 58/22 59/15

**MR. MORRISON: [1]**

19/3

**MR. NORTHCUTT: [2]**

45/20 47/16

**MR. OATES: [5]** 4/15

35/2 35/15 62/1 119/7

**MR. PARNELL: [5]**

4/18 10/11 62/4 88/17

121/4

**MR. SCROGGINS: [5]**

49/7 52/13 52/18 53/10

53/14

**MR. SIMON: [1]** 27/15**MR. TASSIN: [7]** 29/11

30/1 31/18 31/21 32/7

34/5 37/1

**MR. TUGGLE: [4]** 5/7

62/19 90/5 101/15

**MR. YEAGER: [3]**

39/22 45/6 45/12

**MS. AYCOCK: [5]** 8/9

8/14 8/21 10/5 10/22

**MS. GAHAGAN: [2]**

11/20 13/11

**MS. MCCURDY: [53]**

10/18 11/1 11/7 14/2

29/17 33/12 35/18 44/21

59/1 59/13 63/3 63/21

64/3 70/17 71/1 71/17

79/12 79/18 81/13 82/11

84/23 85/5 88/13 89/6

89/16 90/19 91/1 91/13

92/7 93/3 95/13 97/2 97/8

97/11 98/2 98/8 98/21

99/10 99/14 99/21 100/23

101/3 102/1 102/5 103/12

104/14 104/21 105/13

105/17 106/3 106/6

109/16 117/10

**MS. STANLEY: [14]**

48/12 62/16 79/10 79/13

81/10 82/10 87/12 87/16

88/12 93/23 94/8 95/1

102/9 102/12

**\$****\$2.6 [1]** 67/23**\$3 [2]** 67/2 67/20**\$31 [1]** 65/22**\$49 [1]** 68/15**\$5 [1]** 111/19**'****'****'17 [1]** 81/15**1****1,500 [1]** 54/13**1,500-acres-plus [1]**

54/10

**1,951 [1]** 49/16**10 [2]** 52/20 88/6**10/23/28 [1]** 123/12**100 [3]** 5/12 48/15 82/20**10:00 [4]** 1/6 3/4 120/1

122/13

**10:46 [2]** 62/23 63/8**11 [2]** 29/8 29/9**11,000 [1]** 88/6**11,500 [1]** 16/6**11:15 [2]** 63/11 63/14**12 [1]** 43/14**121 [1]** 122/15**125 [1]** 116/23**12:07 [1]** 121/16**13 [1]** 98/4**13,000 [1]** 16/9**140,000 [2]** 38/6 43/6**15 [8]** 67/6 67/17 78/21

<b>1</b>	55/6 55/7 55/7	54/13 54/14
<b>15...</b> [5] 79/3 79/7 91/10 92/5 92/18	<b>30</b> [2] 68/14 111/2	<b>79</b> [2] 47/15 47/18
<b>16</b> [2] 41/10 47/5	<b>3rd</b> [1] 19/9	<b>7th</b> [1] 119/5
<b>17</b> [3] 10/10 11/14 11/15	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>17,000</b> [1] 115/2	<b>4-A</b> [1] 76/16	<b>80</b> [2] 100/10 104/1
<b>18</b> [1] 12/7	<b>4-B</b> [13] 10/10 11/14 11/15 23/10 23/10 29/8	<b>807</b> [1] 52/20
<b>180</b> [1] 116/20	29/9 37/8 37/8 37/10	<b>817</b> [3] 50/14 51/7 52/21
<b>1st</b> [1] 120/1	78/12 91/15 98/22	<b>9</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>420,000</b> [2] 56/2 56/7	<b>9/30/25</b> [1] 123/11
<b>2,103</b> [1] 87/19	<b>451</b> [2] 1/20 123/11	<b>900</b> [2] 24/20 25/8
<b>2,200</b> [1] 12/18	<b>49</b> [1] 68/15	<b>93</b> [2] 112/1 112/3
<b>2,300</b> [1] 113/22	<b>4th</b> [1] 123/5	<b>99</b> [2] 112/10 112/12
<b>2-A</b> [2] 64/9 66/2	<b>5</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>2-B</b> [2] 66/21 68/3	<b>5-A</b> [2] 71/23 72/18	<b>a.m</b> [6] 1/6 3/4 63/9 63/11 120/1 122/13
<b>2-C</b> [1] 68/4	<b>5-B</b> [3] 106/22 106/23 109/7	<b>able</b> [23] 7/18 8/12 21/22 31/3 32/1 36/2 42/4 43/17
<b>20</b> [1] 63/1	<b>5-C</b> [3] 14/3 14/4 71/5	44/2 64/13 66/7 74/2 74/16 75/5 75/14 76/2
<b>20-foot</b> [1] 80/19	<b>5-D</b> [4] 29/19 29/23 32/18 32/19	80/21 84/3 84/5 84/9 85/15 106/16 111/19
<b>200</b> [2] 56/3 56/6	<b>5-E</b> [3] 106/19 107/17 107/17	<b>about</b> [35] 10/9 12/18 14/15 14/18 15/14 17/3
<b>2009</b> [1] 20/20	<b>5-G</b> [1] 110/9	21/22 22/15 24/17 27/7 33/23 36/13 40/10 45/2
<b>2017</b> [1] 81/12	<b>5-H</b> [1] 115/19	50/1 50/11 51/2 52/2 52/23 53/9 54/6 63/1
<b>2020</b> [1] 20/20	<b>5-J</b> [1] 117/11	67/23 70/8 80/19 84/17 103/2 107/8 109/11 110/2
<b>2024</b> [3] 9/11 111/2 123/6	<b>5-K</b> [2] 48/20 49/2	115/1 115/11 116/11 116/20 117/20
<b>2025</b> [6] 1/5 86/23 121/16 122/7 122/13 123/15	<b>543</b> [2] 77/1 110/16	<b>abstract</b> [1] 26/20
<b>22nd</b> [1] 19/10	<b>6</b>	<b>accept</b> [2] 74/16 92/15
<b>23</b> [6] 37/8 37/8 37/10 38/8 65/18 73/13	<b>6,381</b> [1] 111/11	<b>accepting</b> [1] 91/7
<b>240-acre</b> [2] 9/5 41/6	<b>655</b> [1] 37/19	<b>accepts</b> [1] 67/5
<b>25</b> [9] 36/4 36/8 51/17 65/17 73/17 73/20 74/8 74/10 123/11	<b>684</b> [1] 115/5	<b>access</b> [20] 12/13 13/9 13/15 13/16 47/14 47/14
<b>250</b> [1] 116/22	<b>69</b> [1] 73/3	47/16 47/23 49/19 51/13 73/23 75/15 80/17 80/20
<b>27th</b> [1] 33/13	<b>6th</b> [2] 3/7 122/7	80/22 81/4 81/7 84/4 84/5
<b>28</b> [1] 123/12	<b>7</b>	
<b>29</b> [1] 51/6	<b>720</b> [1] 38/10	
<b>3</b>	<b>75</b> [2] 73/19 74/12	
<b>3,850</b> [1] 113/8	<b>75/25</b> [4] 36/4 65/17 73/17 74/8	
<b>3-A</b> [1] 68/19	<b>789</b> [5] 50/3 50/14 52/23	
<b>3-B</b> [7] 8/5 8/6 13/23 14/1		

<p><b>A</b></p> <p><b>access...</b> [1] 85/7</p> <p><b>accessible</b> [1] 112/11</p> <p><b>accord</b> [1] 81/20</p> <p><b>Accordingly</b> [1] 60/5</p> <p><b>account</b> [3] 65/5 65/20 67/9</p> <p><b>ACCR</b> [3] 1/20 123/3 123/11</p> <p><b>acquire</b> [10] 32/22 46/5 46/7 46/21 59/7 67/15 74/12 95/9 95/22 112/13</p> <p><b>acquired</b> [3] 47/8 56/11 111/5</p> <p><b>acquisition</b> [9] 12/5 44/1 59/3 59/9 59/12 72/13 73/4 82/21 96/18</p> <p><b>acquisitions</b> [2] 111/9 111/21</p> <p><b>acre</b> [3] 9/5 41/6 50/3</p> <p><b>acreage</b> [9] 31/23 36/7 36/13 87/20 107/21 112/2 112/4 112/5 114/15</p> <p><b>acres</b> [28] 16/6 16/9 21/13 24/20 25/8 31/4 37/19 49/17 50/14 50/15 51/7 52/20 53/1 54/10 56/2 56/4 56/6 56/7 87/19 88/3 88/6 100/10 104/1 111/11 115/2 116/20 116/22 117/1</p> <p><b>across</b> [5] 35/3 54/12 56/7 58/23 111/10</p> <p><b>Act</b> [1] 75/13</p> <p><b>action</b> [8] 79/2 79/15 80/2 80/4 107/4 107/9 116/16 117/12</p> <p><b>actions</b> [4] 86/9 115/21 116/12 117/3</p> <p><b>active</b> [1] 115/1</p> <p><b>actively</b> [1] 112/5</p> <p><b>activities</b> [5] 18/1 110/20</p>	<p>112/22 114/20 117/19</p> <p><b>actual</b> [2] 80/19 83/6</p> <p><b>actually</b> [9] 11/9 20/21 44/15 47/19 48/20 57/19 57/21 67/14 67/15</p> <p><b>ad</b> [1] 25/2</p> <p><b>add</b> [2] 6/1 94/3</p> <p><b>added</b> [1] 38/16</p> <p><b>adding</b> [3] 39/1 39/5 50/14</p> <p><b>addition</b> [38] 8/5 14/4 38/1 39/12 41/6 41/7 42/1 42/11 65/10 65/11 66/12 67/14 69/12 69/23 72/23 73/13 77/14 77/18 78/18 82/13 83/2 83/13 83/21 83/22 83/23 91/14 93/13 93/21 95/17 95/23 97/22 102/23 103/8 104/1 104/7 104/11 105/4 113/13</p> <p><b>additional</b> [5] 71/19 74/21 108/1 108/2 118/21</p> <p><b>additions</b> [2] 111/17 119/12</p> <p><b>addressing</b> [1] 52/12</p> <p><b>ADECA</b> [2] 19/13 19/17</p> <p><b>adjacent</b> [7] 12/1 27/21 37/22 50/5 51/13 52/16 83/8</p> <p><b>adjoining</b> [1] 21/12</p> <p><b>adjourn</b> [1] 121/2</p> <p><b>adjourned</b> [2] 121/9 121/16</p> <p><b>Administration</b> [1] 19/19</p> <p><b>administratively</b> [1] 115/12</p> <p><b>advocate</b> [1] 28/21</p> <p><b>AFC</b> [1] 65/17</p> <p><b>Affairs</b> [1] 40/20</p> <p><b>affirmative</b> [2] 89/13 98/5</p> <p><b>after</b> [3] 7/20 75/6 82/11</p>	<p><b>again</b> [18] 19/2 19/4 22/1 28/15 50/8 53/21 67/18 68/20 69/14 71/14 72/18 74/13 78/12 80/20 114/9 115/5 115/8 117/22</p> <p><b>agenda</b> [2] 71/9 71/9</p> <p><b>ago</b> [3] 55/11 57/11 58/11</p> <p><b>agree</b> [1] 46/12</p> <p><b>ahead</b> [3] 19/1 49/5 55/9</p> <p><b>air</b> [1] 19/15</p> <p><b>AKC</b> [1] 113/15</p> <p><b>ALABAMA</b> [23] 1/4 1/19 9/3 9/19 10/8 12/17 17/8 17/12 17/14 18/11 41/23 55/14 58/7 58/8 58/13 74/7 116/2 117/17 118/9 122/2 122/6 122/12 123/2</p> <p><b>Alexander</b> [1] 6/16</p> <p><b>all</b> [95] 6/1 8/16 15/2 16/9 18/5 20/7 24/23 26/4 26/10 27/5 27/7 30/6 30/22 32/6 33/20 34/1 35/2 35/4 35/4 35/7 35/10 35/11 36/5 36/7 37/5 38/20 39/6 45/11 45/16 46/10 47/5 48/17 51/18 53/8 54/21 55/7 56/21 58/1 58/15 59/8 59/17 60/1 60/1 62/20 63/20 64/3 65/19 66/10 66/20 71/19 71/22 74/17 76/14 84/21 85/16 87/1 89/4 89/14 90/17 90/21 91/3 91/14 92/22 92/22 93/5 93/16 95/3 97/23 98/9 99/6 99/12 100/21 101/20 102/2 102/7 103/6 103/6 104/3 104/9 104/15 105/9 106/3 106/8 109/16 111/14 112/12 113/5 114/23 115/8 116/6 119/14 120/15 121/5</p>
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<p><b>A</b></p> <p><b>all...</b> [2] 122/22 123/15</p> <p><b>allowing</b> [2] 9/1 27/16</p> <p><b>almost</b> [3] 5/12 51/10 58/8</p> <p><b>along</b> [6] 7/18 31/12 34/8 39/5 88/9 95/4</p> <p><b>already</b> [24] 16/6 20/13 21/4 22/23 32/22 43/13 44/6 50/12 51/4 51/10 51/14 52/17 59/11 70/22 71/4 87/22 88/20 91/21 92/2 94/2 106/11 113/17 117/18 118/18</p> <p><b>also</b> [37] 12/12 14/2 19/23 20/16 25/14 27/20 29/14 40/14 44/5 49/18 50/17 50/18 51/22 57/2 57/18 64/4 64/17 64/18 67/16 69/16 73/4 75/17 76/18 78/20 91/9 96/5 108/7 108/8 110/12 112/14 112/21 113/2 114/19 115/4 115/9 118/5 118/14</p> <p><b>always</b> [4] 27/2 72/11 78/6 83/4</p> <p><b>am</b> [6] 40/5 78/10 122/18 122/20 122/21 123/1</p> <p><b>amendment</b> [3] 77/1 110/16 110/16</p> <p><b>American</b> [1] 57/15</p> <p><b>amount</b> [3] 16/17 22/15 67/1</p> <p><b>anew</b> [1] 81/22</p> <p><b>anniversary</b> [1] 19/8</p> <p><b>annual</b> [2] 110/15 110/18</p> <p><b>another</b> [10] 6/2 33/7 74/5 89/21 91/19 94/22 96/18 113/8 116/21 118/18</p> <p><b>answer</b> [5] 13/5 14/22 21/9 27/9 80/16</p>	<p><b>anticipating</b> [1] 76/1</p> <p><b>any</b> [51] 7/1 7/20 9/22 10/1 13/5 14/21 21/15 25/11 26/23 27/8 34/13 45/7 47/12 64/4 64/22 66/2 66/3 69/17 71/19 76/10 77/12 80/12 84/6 84/16 86/12 86/13 87/10 88/21 90/14 93/21 96/19 98/6 99/3 100/19 101/2 101/18 102/5 103/1 103/4 103/14 104/7 105/8 105/15 105/22 107/12 109/4 117/8 118/6 119/11 119/18 122/19</p> <p><b>anybody</b> [8] 5/22 54/22 70/10 70/15 104/19 106/1 118/14 121/1</p> <p><b>anybody's</b> [1] 21/3</p> <p><b>anything</b> [8] 58/11 69/23 70/1 70/11 70/12 77/11 106/1 121/1</p> <p><b>anyway</b> [1] 46/20</p> <p><b>anywhere</b> [1] 58/12</p> <p><b>apart</b> [1] 16/10</p> <p><b>apology</b> [1] 20/17</p> <p><b>Appalachian</b> [3] 50/16 50/17 75/4</p> <p><b>appear</b> [1] 33/17</p> <p><b>application</b> [1] 19/17</p> <p><b>applied</b> [1] 19/13</p> <p><b>appraisal</b> [47] 9/13 9/15 9/18 26/9 26/16 27/6 30/10 44/11 44/11 44/13 45/1 60/3 60/6 69/3 69/20 69/21 79/2 80/7 86/20 87/7 89/2 90/2 90/8 91/20 92/2 92/4 92/9 92/17 93/19 93/22 97/20 97/22 98/15 98/19 99/7 100/5 100/17 101/9 101/13 101/21 102/13 102/22</p>	<p>103/7 103/23 104/6 104/10 105/2</p> <p><b>appraisals</b> [3] 7/9 69/10 85/21</p> <p><b>appraised</b> [9] 46/13 67/7 70/7 78/22 79/8 91/11 91/22 92/19 107/13</p> <p><b>appraiser</b> [1] 79/6</p> <p><b>appreciate</b> [13] 5/21 6/6 6/21 22/2 29/1 40/2 49/9 52/1 52/5 68/8 105/21 115/9 116/5</p> <p><b>appreciated</b> [1] 55/16</p> <p><b>appreciation</b> [2] 5/16 20/5</p> <p><b>approval</b> [4] 19/20 93/11 118/23 119/4</p> <p><b>approve</b> [4] 9/12 86/19 119/6 119/9</p> <p><b>approved</b> [3] 19/17 31/7 59/6</p> <p><b>approving</b> [1] 119/15</p> <p><b>approximate</b> [2] 36/4 74/8</p> <p><b>approximately</b> [4] 73/3 74/12 91/10 111/11</p> <p><b>April</b> [4] 44/15 75/10 76/4 123/5</p> <p><b>archers</b> [1] 12/18</p> <p><b>are</b> [85] 7/2 7/15 11/3 14/12 14/13 14/21 16/6 16/18 17/6 17/20 17/20 26/7 30/12 30/14 32/3 32/5 32/13 34/1 34/6 34/8 34/13 36/9 40/16 41/1 43/6 50/23 51/4 52/16 54/3 57/3 57/7 58/6 60/4 62/21 62/22 63/13 63/16 65/23 66/16 66/18 68/16 68/18 69/6 69/10 70/5 72/3 72/19 72/21 74/17 74/19 75/9 75/10 76/1</p>
--	--	--

**A**

**are... [32]** 76/7 76/10  
76/18 77/9 77/19 81/6  
83/15 84/12 85/20 89/20  
107/10 107/17 107/22  
108/14 108/15 109/2  
109/4 113/14 113/19  
115/13 115/14 115/20  
116/6 116/7 117/5 118/1  
119/11 120/2 120/10  
120/22 121/9 122/23  
**area [39]** 6/11 15/21 16/3  
16/13 22/13 28/3 28/12  
28/18 30/5 30/13 32/1  
32/17 32/19 33/4 33/22  
33/23 34/9 34/18 34/19  
34/20 35/3 43/17 55/15  
55/18 56/23 57/9 57/20  
59/5 59/17 77/15 77/16  
88/8 113/7 116/21 116/23  
117/21 120/2 120/5 120/8  
**areas [8]** 6/4 25/20 28/7  
34/1 52/16 108/20 112/8  
112/9  
**aren't [1]** 85/3  
**around [9]** 6/5 12/19  
15/10 21/7 28/13 38/5  
46/19 50/19 112/16  
**arrived [1]** 48/11  
**article [2]** 117/14 118/4  
**as [77]** 7/12 7/13 9/6 12/2  
12/11 12/11 14/10 14/19  
15/22 15/23 15/23 15/23  
16/20 17/11 17/18 17/23  
18/12 20/14 24/18 25/3  
25/4 25/6 25/12 28/15  
28/21 28/21 28/22 31/10  
34/9 36/20 42/1 42/9  
42/22 43/15 44/3 44/3  
44/12 48/1 48/6 50/3  
53/12 54/5 60/14 60/19  
65/3 66/2 66/8 67/18 68/1

68/4 68/4 68/11 68/13  
69/19 70/5 71/16 72/3  
72/18 74/14 76/23 77/13  
78/9 78/19 86/21 90/13  
106/8 106/8 111/16  
111/17 112/18 114/6  
116/10 117/1 117/5  
120/23 123/2 123/3  
**Ashley [1]** 89/12  
**Ashley's [1]** 89/7  
**ask [5]** 7/20 9/16 21/11  
43/9 68/19  
**asked [2]** 46/4 46/20  
**assessment [1]** 116/8  
**asset [2]** 47/10 68/6  
**assist [1]** 95/20  
**assistance [1]** 83/6  
**associated [1]** 114/15  
**assured [1]** 81/6  
**Athens [1]** 6/11  
**attached [3]** 26/17 41/11  
108/13  
**attend [1]** 60/10  
**attendance [4]** 5/12 22/10  
22/19 48/16  
**attended [1]** 22/16  
**attending [1]** 22/8  
**attorney [2]** 122/19  
122/21  
**attraction [1]** 20/12  
**attributes [1]** 78/4  
**Auburn [1]** 114/2  
**Audubon [1]** 113/11  
**August [1]** 120/6  
**Autauga [2]** 116/14  
116/21  
**authorized [1]** 66/23  
**available [7]** 9/23 9/23  
33/18 45/6 65/3 67/23  
69/15  
**award [2]** 73/2 74/6  
**aware [2]** 13/2 116/15

**away [2]** 10/23 106/23  
**Aycock [2]** 8/4 9/2  
**aye [6]** 60/22 62/19  
119/16 119/17 121/6  
121/7

**B**

**back [15]** 7/9 9/10 20/20  
21/20 25/2 36/19 37/10  
63/13 63/14 66/19 69/5  
69/5 75/6 81/21 120/3  
**balance [5]** 64/18 65/4  
65/21 70/23 71/15  
**Baldwin [3]** 83/3 83/22  
83/23  
**Bankhead [1]** 55/23  
**Barnett [1]** 22/18  
**Bartram [1]** 75/16  
**base [2]** 73/22 74/14  
**based [2]** 33/17 64/13  
**basically [2]** 12/6 77/12  
**basis [2]** 107/18 111/4  
**bathrooms [1]** 49/21  
**Bay [7]** 13/12 83/21 83/23  
84/2 84/20 108/19 109/12  
**Bayou [6]** 11/14 12/2  
83/3 101/10 101/13  
101/22  
**be [91]** 3/9 5/18 6/7 7/16  
7/18 8/4 8/12 9/1 11/19  
13/2 13/2 15/11 16/9  
18/10 18/11 20/8 21/3  
21/18 21/22 22/1 24/10  
24/22 26/13 27/9 27/20  
28/20 29/18 33/9 36/1  
36/2 36/3 36/6 36/18  
38/23 39/2 39/10 43/17  
44/2 44/4 44/8 45/2 47/2  
47/11 48/3 48/4 48/4 48/5  
48/6 49/4 50/3 50/7 51/9  
51/10 53/3 57/5 63/18  
64/10 65/1 67/21 74/2  
75/7 76/2 76/18 77/10

**B**

**be...** [27] 79/5 79/7 79/22  
80/21 82/20 83/18 84/3  
85/2 85/15 90/12 96/6  
106/8 107/11 108/21  
108/22 109/3 110/9  
110/18 113/9 116/13  
118/9 118/15 119/23  
120/3 120/4 120/17  
123/16  
**bear** [1] 21/18  
**beautiful** [6] 21/7 21/13  
23/2 28/8 37/17 38/3  
**Beaverdam** [5] 78/17  
91/6 91/8 91/14 92/15  
**because** [16] 18/9 21/11  
32/12 46/23 47/4 67/21  
69/16 71/1 71/10 71/18  
79/21 81/4 81/17 94/2  
116/15 118/7  
**become** [1] 20/12  
**been** [36] 7/3 8/8 12/6  
12/10 14/10 14/17 15/3  
17/11 19/17 28/4 30/15  
31/2 31/3 35/20 42/9 59/5  
66/3 66/23 69/18 74/15  
79/14 80/12 81/1 81/2  
81/5 84/1 84/2 84/5 84/8  
84/9 85/13 96/15 109/19  
110/22 111/6 117/1  
**beetle** [2] 114/23 115/22  
**before** [18] 1/17 8/8  
10/12 15/15 27/5 34/14  
41/4 46/15 51/19 68/5  
69/19 70/12 71/20 72/19  
81/23 94/2 105/23 108/17  
**began** [1] 114/22  
**begin** [5] 7/22 35/23  
71/14 75/10 82/1  
**beginning** [1] 113/16  
**behalf** [1] 20/17  
**behind** [1] 67/21

**being** [8] 15/9 25/5 66/6  
77/5 77/6 77/7 113/12  
118/1  
**Belcher** [1] 49/19  
**believe** [2] 35/4 58/9  
**Bell** [4] 83/13 100/3 100/6  
100/18  
**beloved** [1] 39/11  
**below** [3] 58/2 59/12  
123/4  
**benches** [2] 38/18 39/4  
**Bend** [4] 82/13 104/1  
104/7 104/10  
**benefit** [6] 64/16 67/3  
79/20 81/11 85/22 96/5  
**benefited** [1] 72/22  
**Bennett** [3] 79/9 80/10  
82/11  
**beside** [1] 86/6  
**best** [1] 80/18  
**better** [2] 39/14 81/17  
**between** [4] 28/12 41/12  
55/19 88/6  
**bids** [2] 76/2 76/2  
**big** [8] 18/19 19/5 22/5  
25/20 25/21 42/12 42/16  
42/17  
**bigger** [1] 39/14  
**biggest** [1] 43/9  
**biking** [1] 77/11  
**biologists** [1] 114/17  
**biology** [1] 114/12  
**bioswale** [1] 39/1  
**bird** [1] 77/12  
**Birmingham** [3] 37/17  
120/1 120/5  
**bit** [3] 14/11 21/6 47/4  
**Black** [1] 58/1  
**BLANKENSHIP** [7] 2/2  
3/15 23/14 61/1 86/15  
99/18 105/8  
**blue** [2] 53/2 58/17

**bluffs** [1] 57/12  
**board** [93] 1/2 1/23 3/1  
3/8 6/9 6/19 6/22 6/23 7/4  
8/18 9/9 9/11 9/17 14/9  
20/5 23/14 24/13 32/12  
32/21 34/12 35/19 36/2  
37/12 40/1 40/1 41/4 41/9  
44/14 46/7 47/9 48/17  
49/13 49/15 54/4 60/7  
60/9 63/4 63/7 63/10 64/8  
64/17 66/22 67/1 67/4  
67/13 69/3 70/3 71/13  
72/2 72/6 76/14 76/19  
79/19 80/2 80/4 80/13  
81/2 84/8 86/10 86/19  
88/11 90/11 93/1 94/8  
94/12 95/10 95/15 95/18  
96/8 101/8 103/10 104/12  
105/11 106/20 107/4  
107/19 109/17 110/13  
110/20 111/6 113/1 113/4  
115/7 116/15 117/2  
117/12 118/6 118/20  
119/17 121/7 121/14  
122/10 123/2  
**Board's** [2] 73/20 108/1  
**Boggs** [2] 123/15 123/16  
**Bon** [2] 65/9 72/23  
**both** [7] 28/21 47/20  
82/23 84/1 107/22 114/20  
115/11  
**bottom** [1] 68/3  
**bought** [1] 85/9  
**boundary** [2] 59/3 59/9  
**Branch** [12] 8/5 9/6 23/9  
23/11 23/17 27/22 69/12  
82/17 98/16 98/19 99/8  
105/4  
**brand** [1] 71/12  
**Brandon** [6] 37/3 37/6  
37/14 40/8 40/8 40/13  
**BRIAN** [1] 2/8

**B**

**briefly** [3] 11/16 78/10  
109/17  
**brightest** [1] 17/6  
**bring** [9] 12/16 19/12  
19/21 21/21 25/1 95/10  
96/8 106/2 116/13  
**bringing** [3] 25/13 26/1  
38/10  
**broader** [1] 29/21  
**brochure** [1] 58/10  
**Brooks** [3] 53/19 53/22  
54/1  
**brought** [5] 13/9 21/18  
81/12 111/12 115/20  
**brown** [1] 53/6  
**Buffalo** [1] 57/16  
**buffer** [1] 116/10  
**build** [1] 19/15  
**building** [1] 49/20  
**Bullock** [1] 113/22  
**bunch** [1] 111/13  
**burn** [1] 75/6  
**burned** [1] 115/1  
**burning** [1] 73/7  
**business** [1] 119/3  
**buy** [2] 36/15 95/3

**C**

**Cahaba** [2] 49/16 52/1  
**calculated** [1] 71/16  
**caliber** [1] 113/20  
**call** [3] 3/11 60/19 76/22  
**called** [3] 3/2 49/16 85/19  
**came** [3] 29/12 41/3 46/3  
**cameras** [2] 38/15 108/3  
**Camp** [4] 8/4 9/6 69/12  
105/4  
**campus** [3] 3/9 6/2 114/8  
**can** [34] 7/17 8/20 9/18  
10/19 11/4 11/5 11/10  
11/20 21/18 27/2 46/4

47/14 53/4 55/2 59/1  
69/16 75/3 79/15 80/16  
80/18 81/18 81/21 91/18  
92/5 94/14 94/22 97/6  
106/13 113/3 116/9  
118/12 118/22 120/13  
120/14  
**can't** [5] 10/14 11/2 64/5  
88/3 97/10  
**cannot** [1] 97/12  
**Canoe** [5] 18/19 19/5  
22/5 75/16 75/17  
**cans** [1] 39/3  
**Canyon** [2] 46/19 74/23  
**capture** [1] 8/13  
**cared** [1] 22/15  
**careful** [1] 83/18  
**carried** [1] 106/22  
**carries** [11] 89/19 91/4  
93/6 98/10 99/16 101/5  
102/8 103/18 104/19  
105/19 119/22  
**carry** [2] 67/10 78/22  
**carve** [1] 32/2  
**cash** [1] 69/14  
**categories** [6] 77/9 77/20  
78/2 111/14 111/22  
118/12  
**category** [1] 78/6  
**cattle** [1] 48/2  
**caught** [1] 104/22  
**CCR** [1] 123/10  
**celebrate** [1] 19/11  
**celebrated** [1] 19/7  
**center** [2] 113/21 120/9  
**Central** [2] 6/17 77/22  
**certain** [1] 80/3  
**certainly** [2] 28/19 29/1  
**CERTIFICATE** [1]  
122/1  
**Certified** [4] 1/18 122/4  
123/3 123/11

**certify** [3] 122/6 122/18  
123/1  
**cetera** [2] 108/3 108/10  
**Chad** [7] 15/6 18/16  
48/19 49/5 49/11 52/5  
53/17  
**Chairman** [1] 103/19  
**challenges** [1] 42/5  
**chance** [2] 6/7 54/23  
**Chancellor** [1] 5/16  
**Chandler** [3] 13/21 14/6  
15/17  
**change** [2] 42/7 45/13  
**changed** [2] 15/2 41/20  
**changes** [1] 119/12  
**charged** [1] 122/23  
**Charles** [3] 39/18 39/20  
40/4  
**checkbook** [1] 64/19  
**checks** [1] 64/20  
**Cherokee** [1] 9/5  
**CHILDERS** [7] 2/3 3/16  
52/8 60/14 61/2 103/21  
104/5  
**CHRIS** [4] 2/2 3/15 61/1  
96/13  
**Chuck** [5] 73/14 73/22  
74/1 112/6 114/9  
**citizens** [1] 88/18  
**city** [15] 6/16 11/23 12/1  
12/3 13/1 18/22 20/1 20/6  
23/18 24/17 24/21 25/9  
27/13 27/19 83/8  
**clarification** [2] 70/20  
92/12  
**clarify** [1] 71/6  
**classes** [1] 19/16  
**classroom** [2] 114/5  
114/6  
**clean** [2] 38/4 38/22  
**clear** [3] 80/16 92/21  
114/21

<p><b>C</b></p> <p><b>clear-cuts</b> [1] 114/21</p> <p><b>clearing</b> [1] 67/22</p> <p><b>Cleburne</b> [6] 29/8 29/10 82/19 102/14 102/23 103/8</p> <p><b>close</b> [2] 34/6 66/17</p> <p><b>closed</b> [1] 66/5</p> <p><b>closer</b> [1] 57/13</p> <p><b>closing</b> [6] 33/3 66/17 72/20 72/21 73/11 74/17</p> <p><b>clover</b> [1] 56/10</p> <p><b>coalition</b> [1] 17/14</p> <p><b>Coastal</b> [1] 73/1</p> <p><b>coexist</b> [1] 112/18</p> <p><b>Colbert</b> [4] 9/3 69/13 83/2 105/5</p> <p><b>collapse</b> [1] 41/14</p> <p><b>colleges</b> [1] 114/11</p> <p><b>color</b> [5] 33/5 52/22 53/6 58/13 68/21</p> <p><b>colored</b> [1] 64/11</p> <p><b>combination</b> [1] 81/5</p> <p><b>combined</b> [1] 56/22</p> <p><b>come</b> [9] 7/9 7/13 34/19 38/6 38/7 40/11 53/2 81/18 81/19</p> <p><b>comfortable</b> [2] 86/3 86/9</p> <p><b>coming</b> [5] 43/7 50/23 94/2 113/16 113/20</p> <p><b>commenced</b> [1] 3/3</p> <p><b>comment</b> [1] 7/6</p> <p><b>comments</b> [4] 7/23 8/16 8/20 96/20</p> <p><b>Commission</b> [10] 12/11 21/17 31/7 33/1 33/9 51/16 74/7 74/11 116/2 123/12</p> <p><b>COMMISSIONER</b> [30] 2/2 10/11 11/6 22/17 22/19 23/14 37/12 39/23 49/8 54/1 70/11 75/13</p>	<p>84/11 86/14 89/13 90/20 91/5 93/4 93/7 98/4 98/11 99/11 99/17 102/9 102/17 103/13 105/7 105/14 118/16 118/19</p> <p><b>communities</b> [1] 20/8</p> <p><b>community</b> [6] 25/15 28/3 38/3 38/5 38/9 39/11</p> <p><b>Company</b> [2] 21/5 21/16</p> <p><b>comparing</b> [1] 36/12</p> <p><b>compete</b> [1] 77/21</p> <p><b>competition</b> [1] 109/21</p> <p><b>competitive</b> [2] 79/22 81/18</p> <p><b>complete</b> [1] 45/12</p> <p><b>completed</b> [1] 120/10</p> <p><b>completely</b> [3] 16/3 42/7 59/20</p> <p><b>completing</b> [1] 14/19</p> <p><b>complex</b> [1] 108/19</p> <p><b>comprehensive</b> [1] 9/7</p> <p><b>computer</b> [1] 122/15</p> <p><b>computer-printed</b> [1] 122/15</p> <p><b>conceptual</b> [1] 43/13</p> <p><b>concern</b> [1] 80/17</p> <p><b>concerns</b> [1] 81/4</p> <p><b>condensed</b> [1] 43/8</p> <p><b>condition</b> [1] 91/8</p> <p><b>conduct</b> [1] 75/5</p> <p><b>confidential</b> [1] 60/4</p> <p><b>confirm</b> [1] 77/4</p> <p><b>confusing</b> [2] 32/15 47/18</p> <p><b>confusion</b> [1] 29/14</p> <p><b>conjunction</b> [2] 13/3 32/23</p> <p><b>CONLON</b> [6] 2/4 3/19 6/10 61/5 92/14 99/3</p> <p><b>connect</b> [1] 30/19</p> <p><b>connected</b> [2] 13/15 72/5</p> <p><b>connecting</b> [1] 114/10</p> <p><b>connection</b> [2] 72/12</p>	<p>72/14</p> <p><b>consent</b> [1] 123/16</p> <p><b>conservancy</b> [14] 30/16 31/13 41/22 43/21 45/10 45/18 45/22 94/19 95/19 96/3 96/14 96/23 97/5 97/14</p> <p><b>conservation</b> [12] 12/12 12/23 17/15 22/5 30/7 30/12 34/9 40/6 73/2 94/3 94/23 114/8</p> <p><b>conservatively</b> [1] 65/2</p> <p><b>conserve</b> [1] 31/4</p> <p><b>consider</b> [5] 16/12 17/5 18/6 20/8 47/10</p> <p><b>consideration</b> [4] 9/17 10/2 29/2 71/4</p> <p><b>considering</b> [1] 16/17</p> <p><b>considers</b> [1] 47/9</p> <p><b>constitutes</b> [1] 73/21</p> <p><b>construction</b> [1] 76/3</p> <p><b>contain</b> [1] 122/16</p> <p><b>context</b> [1] 87/17</p> <p><b>continually</b> [1] 81/6</p> <p><b>continue</b> [6] 3/12 39/10 68/18 74/23 114/22 115/18</p> <p><b>continuing</b> [2] 75/11 107/23</p> <p><b>continuous</b> [1] 31/9</p> <p><b>contractor</b> [7] 76/3 108/8 108/15 108/20 109/1 109/14 120/12</p> <p><b>contractors</b> [1] 108/23</p> <p><b>contribute</b> [1] 78/21</p> <p><b>contributed</b> [1] 73/3</p> <p><b>contributes</b> [1] 91/9</p> <p><b>control</b> [1] 12/9</p> <p><b>conversation</b> [1] 109/10</p> <p><b>Coon</b> [4] 82/12 103/23 104/6 104/10</p> <p><b>Cooper</b> [8] 23/9 23/10</p>
--	--	---

**C**

**Cooper...** [6] 23/16 27/22  
82/17 98/16 98/19 99/8  
**cooperation** [2] 80/15  
116/4  
**Coosa** [8] 16/7 17/21  
69/11 87/18 87/20 88/7  
88/18 88/20  
**copy** [3] 110/14 117/13  
118/3  
**Copyright** [1] 123/15  
**Corporation** [1] 30/3  
**correct** [5] 59/13 71/18  
100/8 100/11 122/16  
**corrections** [1] 119/11  
**corridor** [11] 29/7 29/9  
29/15 30/19 30/20 31/14  
32/4 65/15 74/4 82/18  
102/13  
**corridors** [1] 57/3  
**cost** [4] 36/14 72/8 72/15  
73/4  
**costs** [1] 44/13  
**could** [16] 24/22 25/1  
26/22 46/12 46/21 51/2  
59/4 59/4 65/8 77/10 82/8  
92/10 95/18 95/21 98/2  
99/22  
**counsel** [2] 122/19 122/21  
**count** [7] 66/22 79/19  
79/21 81/22 82/2 82/2  
107/5  
**counties** [3] 82/15 83/1  
111/10  
**county** [46] 9/4 16/7 28/4  
28/4 28/5 29/8 29/10  
37/20 40/6 46/3 48/22  
49/11 49/12 49/17 50/6  
50/10 51/16 52/7 52/22  
54/4 69/11 69/14 82/14  
82/18 82/19 82/23 83/2  
83/3 83/12 83/14 83/22

84/1 87/18 87/21 88/7  
88/18 88/20 98/20 102/14  
102/23 103/8 105/5  
113/22 116/14 117/21  
122/3  
**couple** [4] 21/13 66/16  
98/22 103/3  
**course** [2] 38/20 82/6  
**court** [8] 1/18 8/12 8/19  
85/23 122/4 123/2 123/3  
123/11  
**courts** [1] 46/23  
**covered** [2] 115/17  
118/17  
**crawfishes** [1] 18/4  
**cray** [1] 18/4  
**Craze** [4] 82/13 104/1  
104/6 104/10  
**create** [1] 31/13  
**creating** [2] 28/6 116/10  
**creek** [55] 10/9 12/3 12/7  
13/22 15/8 15/13 15/15  
15/19 15/21 15/22 15/23  
16/1 17/9 18/19 19/5 22/5  
37/7 37/15 38/2 38/10  
39/2 39/6 40/10 41/1 41/7  
42/2 42/9 43/4 44/4 65/12  
69/11 69/22 70/20 79/9  
80/11 82/12 83/9 83/12  
83/17 83/20 86/21 87/8  
87/19 88/9 89/4 91/7  
93/12 93/19 95/16 95/23  
97/21 100/2 100/6 100/17  
110/2  
**crew** [1] 26/23  
**critical** [1] 32/3  
**crosses** [1] 82/23  
**crossing** [1] 113/16  
**Cumberland** [6] 55/19  
56/1 57/13 57/14 58/1  
75/2  
**current** [4] 51/7 52/19

68/11 76/7  
**currently** [2] 12/17 70/6  
**customary** [1] 122/23  
**cut** [2] 10/22 10/23  
**cuts** [1] 114/21  
**cutting** [1] 22/9

**D**

**Darnall** [1] 6/21  
**data** [1] 116/3  
**date** [3] 19/12 19/22  
81/15  
**dated** [2] 44/15 86/22  
**David** [2] 109/10 117/14  
**Davidson** [12] 13/22 15/7  
15/12 15/15 15/23 65/12  
69/10 70/20 86/21 87/8  
87/18 89/3  
**day** [4] 24/22 67/22  
105/20 123/5  
**days** [1] 23/2  
**deal** [2] 25/6 27/3  
**dealing** [1] 114/23  
**deals** [1] 24/8  
**dealt** [1] 46/8  
**debate** [1] 94/8  
**December** [1] 68/14  
**decide** [1] 47/1  
**decides** [1] 94/12  
**decision** [5] 18/7 20/19  
26/9 47/6 88/11  
**decisions** [1] 26/8  
**declined** [2] 66/6 66/13  
**deducted** [1] 70/22  
**definitely** [1] 120/7  
**delay** [1] 80/23  
**delicate** [1] 24/5  
**deliver** [1] 111/8  
**delivered** [1] 69/19  
**Delta** [2] 66/11 75/16  
**demand** [1] 50/19  
**Department** [2] 12/12  
17/15

**D**

**descend** [1] 12/19  
**described** [1] 86/22  
**description** [1] 24/15  
**designated** [3] 17/11  
17/18 112/8  
**detailed** [1] 68/10  
**details** [1] 114/19  
**determine** [1] 80/18  
**determined** [1] 116/17  
**developed** [2] 24/23 48/4  
**development** [8] 16/14  
24/19 25/7 25/13 27/18  
28/1 50/19 73/7  
**did** [18] 31/17 37/3 40/13  
41/9 44/10 44/11 46/18  
46/22 47/3 48/10 71/1  
71/5 88/13 105/1 105/1  
110/5 110/7 118/7  
**didn't** [6] 41/15 41/16  
54/23 64/6 107/15 110/5  
**different** [11] 6/4 20/9  
32/15 38/9 46/9 46/11  
59/16 59/21 85/11 92/1  
116/23  
**diligence** [2] 26/18 27/4  
**direct** [1] 63/5  
**directly** [4] 11/18 37/22  
50/4 51/13  
**director** [7] 11/23 27/19  
28/22 40/5 40/20 40/21  
45/21  
**disabled** [1] 113/10  
**disagreements** [1] 41/12  
**discuss** [2] 7/8 60/6  
**discussed** [5] 68/5 69/19  
77/5 91/20 106/11  
**discusses** [1] 111/4  
**discussion** [14] 71/8  
84/14 85/19 87/10 88/22  
90/15 91/18 93/21 99/4  
100/19 101/18 104/7

105/8 105/23  
**district** [5] 6/13 6/15 6/17  
78/4 109/13  
**districts** [2] 77/22 77/23  
**disturbed** [1] 24/9  
**diverse** [3] 16/18 42/18  
120/18  
**diversely** [1] 120/19  
**diversity** [1] 58/5  
**Divide** [1] 57/21  
**Division** [2] 73/16 112/7  
**DNR** [1] 31/1  
**do** [26] 5/14 6/9 12/7  
21/23 23/17 24/3 26/9  
27/3 27/8 37/4 48/15  
52/10 54/5 75/21 79/20  
82/2 83/16 92/3 94/3  
100/1 107/3 107/14  
114/15 116/11 120/22  
121/1  
**document** [1] 123/15  
**does** [7] 34/19 70/1 81/20  
92/2 92/20 112/21 120/18  
**doesn't** [2] 81/21 82/2  
**dog** [3] 113/9 113/15  
120/22  
**doing** [10] 39/7 50/2  
82/15 97/5 107/18 107/22  
113/14 115/14 116/8  
117/1  
**dollar** [2] 74/1 74/14  
**dollars** [4] 12/16 50/12  
68/13 74/20  
**don't** [12] 7/1 9/14 14/3  
28/18 34/2 44/20 95/6  
102/5 107/9 107/12 115/8  
115/17  
**donated** [1] 79/7  
**donation** [4] 67/5 78/20  
91/7 92/15  
**done** [12] 20/6 20/10  
20/23 26/16 27/6 38/20

51/19 51/23 92/17 97/15  
108/17 120/11  
**double** [4] 50/5 50/9  
50/15 51/5  
**Doug** [4] 18/17 19/1 19/4  
20/14  
**down** [3] 53/4 64/4 80/9  
**DR** [48] 2/7 2/8 2/9 2/10  
2/13 2/16 4/1 4/4 4/7 4/10  
4/19 4/22 6/20 15/17  
23/21 23/21 24/6 60/18  
61/10 61/13 61/16 61/19  
62/5 62/8 70/17 84/18  
86/16 87/5 90/8 90/12  
93/8 93/17 93/18 94/17  
96/10 96/21 97/3 98/12  
98/17 99/19 99/22 100/15  
101/6 101/12 102/18  
102/21 104/5 105/6  
**draining** [1] 15/22  
**drawn** [1] 14/11  
**Drive** [1] 13/13  
**drops** [1] 79/15  
**due** [7] 14/11 26/18 27/4  
75/5 82/7 109/20 115/22  
**Dugdown** [12] 29/7 29/9  
29/15 30/8 30/15 65/15  
65/16 74/4 82/18 102/13  
102/22 103/7  
**duly** [1] 123/1  
**Dunnavant** [2] 52/20  
82/22  
**durable** [1] 39/3  
**during** [4] 15/11 60/4  
111/7 118/18  
**dynamic** [1] 38/11

---

**E**

---

**e-mails** [2] 117/16 118/8  
**each** [8] 16/10 67/4 68/9  
69/4 72/1 77/1 83/18  
107/4  
**earlier** [4] 83/7 88/5

**E**  
**earlier...** [2] 91/21 107/6  
**early** [1] 67/19  
**earn** [1] 76/21  
**easier** [1] 47/4  
**EBSCO** [3] 50/4 53/10  
54/2  
**echo** [1] 96/13  
**ecological** [1] 24/1  
**economic** [6] 12/16 24/18  
25/7 25/13 27/18 28/22  
**ecosystem** [1] 24/6  
**education** [3] 6/4 12/14  
38/11  
**educational** [1] 19/16  
**effort** [2] 20/21 43/22  
**efforts** [3] 107/20 108/5  
117/8  
**eight** [5] 50/11 56/14  
56/15 89/10 114/2  
**Eighty** [1] 112/4  
**Eighty-four** [1] 112/4  
**either** [7] 10/15 69/4 72/3  
72/12 84/6 84/10 107/12  
**elimination** [1] 108/9  
**else** [7] 58/12 94/13  
104/19 106/1 117/6  
118/17 121/1  
**employed** [1] 17/6  
**employee** [2] 122/19  
122/20  
**encourage** [1] 115/6  
**encroaching** [1] 16/15  
**end** [7] 30/21 41/17 50/16  
54/21 64/14 80/23 97/9  
**endangered** [4] 24/4 43/2  
55/13 56/10  
**ended** [4] 41/13 66/5  
110/23 111/1  
**endemic** [2] 17/20 58/8  
**Energy** [1] 75/12  
**engaged** [1] 28/20

**enhancements** [1] 75/20  
**enhancing** [1] 108/5  
**enjoy** [2] 16/21 25/18  
**enjoyed** [1] 22/8  
**enjoying** [1] 12/22  
**Enlow** [1] 9/2  
**enough** [7] 9/12 11/9  
24/17 36/15 67/16 76/21  
85/14  
**entertain** [1] 86/12  
**entire** [4] 17/9 22/12  
56/14 112/19  
**entity** [1] 35/6  
**equal** [1] 67/1  
**equipment** [1] 108/3  
**especially** [1] 32/11  
**et** [2] 108/3 108/10  
**even** [5] 20/11 22/3 39/14  
67/5 70/21  
**event** [1] 22/11  
**events** [5] 12/14 113/9  
113/16 113/19 120/9  
**ever** [2] 24/9 24/9  
**every** [2] 43/7 67/22  
**everybody** [10] 5/13 7/12  
8/2 34/15 37/9 86/2 86/8  
92/21 103/5 117/6  
**everybody's** [2] 86/6  
105/21  
**everyone** [2] 54/3 95/15  
**everyone's** [1] 22/22  
**everything** [4] 12/8 54/12  
58/2 118/17  
**evidenced** [1] 123/3  
**exactly** [1] 42/19  
**example** [1] 117/23  
**exceeded** [1] 22/21  
**excellent** [1] 15/16  
**exception** [1] 28/8  
**excited** [3] 6/1 14/18  
75/23  
**exciting** [2] 106/8 117/22

**excuse** [2] 72/20 79/10  
**Executive** [8] 7/8 15/12  
40/21 60/8 60/10 62/23  
63/8 63/13  
**exhausted** [1] 84/21  
**existing** [4] 13/4 37/22  
51/4 75/20  
**Exp** [1] 123/11  
**expand** [1] 43/17  
**expanded** [1] 109/3  
**expect** [1] 33/16  
**expectation** [1] 46/17  
**expectations** [2] 22/22  
46/11  
**expected** [1] 21/3  
**expedient** [1] 95/2  
**expenditure** [1] 73/20  
**experience** [1] 96/14  
**experienced** [1] 80/11  
**Expires** [1] 123/12  
**express** [3] 5/15 20/4  
20/16  
**External** [1] 40/20  
**extremely** [1] 86/1  
**eye** [1] 117/6

## **F**

**fabulous** [1] 28/14  
**facilities** [1] 6/5  
**facility** [2] 85/10 120/14  
**fact** [2] 80/14 110/7  
**factor** [1] 64/18  
**fail** [1] 48/10  
**failed** [1] 82/14  
**fairly** [2] 43/7 116/15  
**fairness** [1] 92/7  
**fall** [2] 39/9 75/21  
**falls** [1] 59/5  
**familiar** [3] 30/14 32/13  
37/18  
**family** [11] 41/5 41/10  
41/11 41/13 41/19 42/6  
43/23 47/1 47/5 95/2

<b>F</b>	<b>fire-lane [1]</b> 73/5	116/2
<b>family... [1]</b> 95/20	<b>first [31]</b> 8/3 9/12 23/20	<b>forever [35]</b> 1/1 3/8 12/4
<b>family's [1]</b> 45/9	30/9 44/10 44/12 77/3	16/7 16/22 18/9 18/13
<b>fantastic [3]</b> 14/23 16/12	80/6 81/12 85/21 90/12	18/20 24/10 31/8 36/6
22/23	93/11 93/19 93/22 97/20	37/17 43/5 44/14 46/6
<b>far [2]</b> 21/9 88/14	97/22 98/15 98/18 99/7	48/16 49/14 54/4 74/1
<b>farms [1]</b> 25/17	100/5 100/17 101/9	74/9 74/14 75/21 82/20
<b>favor [14]</b> 60/21 62/21	101/13 101/21 102/12	88/19 96/9 97/7 107/21
89/4 90/18 92/23 97/23	102/22 103/7 103/23	110/14 112/1 113/7 115/2
99/7 100/22 101/21 103/6	104/6 104/9 116/20	117/20 120/8 121/13
104/9 105/9 119/15 121/6	<b>fiscal [6]</b> 66/9 66/20	122/9
<b>favorite [1]</b> 63/22	67/19 110/21 111/3 115/5	<b>forgive [1]</b> 106/22
<b>FEBRUARY [8]</b> 1/5 3/7	<b>fish [3]</b> 17/16 38/7 75/1	<b>forgot [1]</b> 107/2
19/8 19/10 86/22 121/15	<b>Fisheries [2]</b> 73/15 112/7	<b>form [2]</b> 77/13 112/2
122/6 122/13	<b>fishes [1]</b> 18/3	<b>formed [1]</b> 110/17
<b>Fed [1]</b> 85/3	<b>fit [1]</b> 30/5	<b>former [1]</b> 22/17
<b>Federal [4]</b> 17/7 19/18	<b>five [5]</b> 32/7 32/8 89/10	<b>forthcoming [1]</b> 33/9
59/2 73/23	89/17 111/10	<b>forward [8]</b> 6/22 14/13
<b>federally [3]</b> 55/13 56/9	<b>fixed [1]</b> 11/13	22/3 30/11 41/15 71/12
59/6	<b>flags [1]</b> 27/1	71/16 80/5
<b>feel [1]</b> 7/19	<b>flip [3]</b> 7/17 63/22 78/12	<b>forwarded [1]</b> 19/18
<b>feelings [1]</b> 17/3	<b>flows [3]</b> 50/22 58/1 58/2	<b>forwards [1]</b> 30/11
<b>feels [2]</b> 16/3 86/3	<b>focus [1]</b> 18/1	<b>found [3]</b> 56/15 57/10
<b>fell [1]</b> 109/20	<b>focused [2]</b> 56/9 108/16	123/4
<b>fellow [1]</b> 91/21	<b>folder [4]</b> 48/21 64/10	<b>Foundation [1]</b> 75/2
<b>feral [1]</b> 107/20	68/21 110/11	<b>four [7]</b> 77/9 77/19 79/14
<b>fever [1]</b> 104/22	<b>Foley [3]</b> 11/23 12/19	89/10 89/17 111/14 112/4
<b>few [6]</b> 40/14 57/11 58/10	83/8	<b>Fourteen [2]</b> 103/12
106/11 107/10 116/12	<b>folks [2]</b> 17/14 40/15	104/14
<b>field [4]</b> 113/7 113/11	<b>follow [2]</b> 7/18 106/18	<b>fourth [1]</b> 114/1
117/21 120/8	<b>following [3]</b> 65/6 78/17	<b>Fowl [1]</b> 65/11
<b>figure [1]</b> 79/4	123/4	<b>Fran [1]</b> 40/17
<b>figuring [1]</b> 65/2	<b>foot [1]</b> 80/19	<b>free [2]</b> 7/19 38/4
<b>filled [1]</b> 22/12	<b>forefront [1]</b> 21/21	<b>freed [1]</b> 96/17
<b>filling [1]</b> 23/1	<b>foregoing [1]</b> 122/15	<b>Freedom [4]</b> 65/10 69/11
<b>Filmore [1]</b> 5/17	<b>forest [11]</b> 30/20 30/21	83/1 105/3
<b>final [2]</b> 54/16 116/19	33/1 33/7 42/12 42/18	<b>Freshwater [3]</b> 53/7
<b>financially [2]</b> 51/22	55/23 58/18 59/7 59/10	73/15 112/6
122/21	59/20	<b>friend [1]</b> 10/8
<b>fine [1]</b> 11/19	<b>foresters [1]</b> 116/16	<b>Friends [1]</b> 110/1
<b>finish [1]</b> 7/21	<b>Forestry [7]</b> 12/11 31/7	<b>front [1]</b> 66/4
<b>fire [2]</b> 12/8 73/5	32/23 33/8 74/7 74/10	<b>functional [1]</b> 38/16

**F**

**fund [11]** 35/6 35/16  
66/23 67/3 68/5 68/13  
73/9 75/4 78/23 92/6  
92/20  
**funding [13]** 33/18 72/22  
73/17 73/19 74/3 74/11  
75/13 76/8 82/22 84/4  
84/6 108/1 111/20  
**funds [5]** 12/21 65/16  
73/23 85/7 96/17  
**further [5]** 42/22 76/6  
78/21 122/18 123/1  
**future [4]** 21/22 35/9  
44/10 69/17

**G**

**Gahagan [2]** 10/7 11/22  
**gain [1]** 79/3  
**gap [1]** 80/19  
**gaps [1]** 34/6  
**gate [1]** 38/7  
**gates [1]** 51/3  
**gather [1]** 106/16  
**gave [2]** 73/4 118/10  
**general [4]** 18/18 71/8  
84/14 85/19  
**generally [1]** 85/20  
**generate [1]** 25/11  
**Georgia [6]** 30/17 30/23  
31/1 31/2 31/10 31/15  
**get [31]** 15/21 19/9 20/18  
20/23 25/21 26/22 27/2  
28/15 37/9 44/1 55/1 55/1  
55/2 63/21 66/7 75/23  
77/2 77/3 79/3 80/1 80/21  
87/16 94/21 95/18 95/21  
97/6 114/4 114/12 117/16  
118/7 118/13  
**gets [1]** 24/9  
**getting [3]** 11/13 26/6  
112/14

**give [11]** 7/17 11/10 19/6  
37/9 40/12 50/7 72/13  
80/16 81/8 108/12 110/13  
**given [2]** 110/7 110/18  
**gives [2]** 50/20 68/10  
**giving [2]** 23/15 40/2  
**glad [7]** 3/9 5/13 6/11  
27/9 47/11 48/14 48/17  
**Glades [1]** 56/5  
**go [22]** 7/10 7/10 19/1  
23/19 27/5 29/19 46/23  
48/1 49/5 55/9 60/7 72/8  
76/2 80/3 84/13 86/1  
106/13 106/14 106/19  
107/16 112/19 117/10  
**goal [1]** 112/14  
**goals [1]** 24/12  
**going [35]** 19/9 20/13  
20/18 20/22 23/3 25/11  
30/7 30/12 34/6 38/23  
39/2 39/10 44/3 44/8 46/1  
54/14 55/5 57/5 64/9  
68/17 69/7 70/9 78/10  
81/8 81/22 85/2 89/7  
106/8 106/14 107/10  
108/15 108/21 109/2  
116/7 116/18  
**GOMESA [1]** 75/12  
**gone [1]** 24/10  
**good [22]** 3/6 6/21 8/23  
9/12 10/8 11/21 14/5 19/1  
19/3 20/3 22/20 27/14  
36/18 39/20 39/20 39/22  
47/23 48/12 49/5 53/21  
96/16 111/13  
**got [18]** 9/22 10/18 10/20  
11/8 20/21 21/19 26/11  
26/20 27/8 34/17 35/22  
42/18 58/10 58/15 66/10  
106/22 118/20 121/1  
**Gotcha [1]** 88/12  
**Government [1]** 17/7

**Governor [3]** 75/14  
110/18 110/19  
**grab [1]** 63/4  
**grade [1]** 114/2  
**Graham [12]** 10/9 11/14  
12/2 12/3 12/6 13/22 14/6  
83/3 83/8 101/9 101/13  
101/22  
**Grand [2]** 108/19 109/12  
**grant [27]** 19/13 33/1  
33/8 33/18 34/20 35/4  
35/12 63/19 65/16 70/8  
70/12 71/20 72/3 72/4  
72/11 72/22 73/2 73/19  
74/5 74/11 74/16 75/4  
76/8 82/22 84/4 84/6  
111/20  
**grasslands [1]** 56/4  
**gray [1]** 52/22  
**great [5]** 28/4 40/22  
42/20 57/9 120/22  
**greater [1]** 22/4  
**green [10]** 10/20 39/11  
48/21 52/10 52/11 54/21  
55/2 64/10 68/21 110/10  
**greenhouse [1]** 38/19  
**greenish [1]** 52/22  
**greenish-gray [1]** 52/22  
**Greenways [3]** 37/21  
40/7 46/3  
**grew [1]** 25/16  
**Grisaffi [3]** 37/3 37/6  
37/14  
**group [3]** 20/6 40/16 95/8  
**groups [1]** 38/9  
**Grove [1]** 56/5  
**grow [2]** 20/13 23/3  
**growing [2]** 22/4 38/17  
**guess [7]** 20/16 24/1  
24/14 33/10 48/23 55/11  
88/10  
**guests [1]** 7/2

**G**

**Gulf [5]** 75/12 82/13  
104/1 104/6 104/10  
**Gulf-Craze [4]** 82/13  
104/1 104/6 104/10  
**Guntersville [1]** 111/18  
**guys [5]** 19/7 19/21 40/2  
44/2 45/7

**H**

**habitat [8]** 16/20 17/12  
17/19 24/10 56/8 59/17  
112/16 113/13  
**habitats [1]** 111/16  
**had [38]** 9/9 9/14 15/15  
19/13 23/21 25/17 28/10  
38/6 46/7 46/9 46/10 47/1  
64/22 65/12 66/3 66/23  
69/2 70/10 70/11 73/1  
75/6 80/14 83/5 84/1 84/2  
84/3 84/8 95/14 106/17  
107/5 108/16 108/16  
109/9 109/19 110/6 113/7  
113/22 115/4  
**haggle [1]** 47/5  
**Hale [2]** 109/21 117/21  
**half [4]** 13/11 40/11 50/11  
55/11  
**hammock [1]** 39/5  
**hand [13]** 70/4 77/8 78/14  
89/5 90/18 92/23 98/1  
99/9 100/22 101/23 103/9  
104/11 105/10  
**handle [2]** 108/22 116/9  
**hands [9]** 89/7 89/11 91/1  
93/2 102/6 103/11 104/13  
105/12 105/17  
**hang [1]** 38/8  
**happen [1]** 27/20  
**happened [3]** 5/18 66/4  
95/7  
**happy [2]** 14/22 118/10

**hard [1]** 115/14  
**hardwood [1]** 42/12  
**HARPER [5]** 2/6 5/3  
62/12 92/14 119/9  
**HARRIS [4]** 2/5 3/22  
6/13 61/8  
**harvest [1]** 116/19  
**harvesting [1]** 114/21  
**has [47]** 7/12 8/2 13/14  
13/16 14/10 14/16 15/2  
16/19 17/11 19/17 20/6  
20/10 26/11 28/4 28/16  
32/21 40/8 42/12 42/18  
43/1 48/23 49/3 56/21  
57/9 59/11 64/11 67/12  
67/16 68/22 69/3 73/22  
74/9 78/19 79/13 80/10  
80/11 80/23 81/2 82/4  
83/8 83/9 95/7 96/15  
97/15 98/18 118/21 119/9  
**hasn't [1]** 85/13  
**hatch [2]** 32/20 34/3  
**hatched [1]** 32/19  
**Hatchet [4]** 15/19 15/20  
17/9 88/9  
**have [168]**  
**haven't [2]** 110/11 115/17  
**having [6]** 11/3 19/4 47/4  
56/16 64/13 80/19  
**Hawaii [2]** 46/16 46/18  
**he [8]** 5/19 6/12 23/19  
23/20 40/18 97/13 104/22  
109/13  
**he's [3]** 9/23 34/3 34/15  
**head [1]** 88/3  
**heads [1]** 83/16  
**healthy [1]** 42/18  
**hear [11]** 8/20 10/15  
10/19 11/2 11/4 11/5  
11/21 64/5 97/10 97/12  
118/13  
**heard [5]** 45/23 60/14

72/18 83/2 83/7  
**hearing [1]** 122/17  
**HEATHER [1]** 2/7  
**heavily [1]** 43/5  
**heirs [2]** 46/9 46/16  
**held [1]** 121/14  
**help [8]** 18/22 32/11  
44/19 57/6 67/9 89/8  
108/8 118/10  
**helpful [1]** 15/11  
**helping [1]** 5/21  
**her [1]** 26/23  
**here [48]** 3/9 3/14 3/15  
3/17 3/20 3/23 4/3 4/6 4/9  
4/12 4/15 4/18 4/21 5/1  
5/4 5/7 5/13 5/18 5/22 6/7  
6/14 7/2 8/8 9/1 9/4 9/16  
9/21 10/8 13/5 14/7 20/4  
20/14 22/2 23/20 30/8  
32/14 34/4 40/3 40/16  
48/14 48/18 50/1 58/5  
65/15 75/8 107/1 115/5  
118/15  
**herein [1]** 122/17  
**hesitant [1]** 81/3  
**high [2]** 57/17 102/14  
**higher [2]** 6/4 82/7  
**highlighting [1]** 117/19  
**highly [2]** 43/16 50/18  
**highway [3]** 19/19 22/14  
47/14  
**hike [1]** 38/7  
**hiking [1]** 77/11  
**Hill [1]** 65/11  
**Hills [6]** 65/10 65/18  
69/12 73/13 83/1 105/3  
**Hills-Section [1]** 73/13  
**hilltops [1]** 24/3  
**him [2]** 5/21 22/20  
**his [4]** 73/15 74/2 109/12  
114/9  
**historical [2]** 57/10 58/4

# H

**Historically** [1] 57/1  
**History** [1] 114/3  
**hit** [1] 113/5  
**Hoffman** [1] 15/6  
**hog** [1] 115/4  
**hogs** [1] 107/21  
**Holley** [1] 83/21  
**Hollow** [17] 37/7 37/21  
39/8 42/10 47/17 47/20  
48/1 55/5 55/6 69/13  
69/22 83/20 90/3 90/10  
93/13 93/20 97/22  
**homes** [1] 48/2  
**honestly** [1] 41/16  
**Hoover** [2] 109/23 110/1  
**hope** [5] 6/14 15/11 47/9  
63/1 120/7  
**hoped** [1] 75/6  
**hopefully** [6] 9/18 44/12  
44/19 76/4 76/5 120/14  
**hoping** [2] 23/19 39/13  
**House** [1] 5/20  
**houses** [1] 24/23  
**how** [9] 41/23 47/2 85/6  
88/3 108/21 111/22  
117/23 120/18 120/19  
**HOWELL** [8] 2/7 4/2  
23/21 24/6 61/11 98/13  
98/18 104/5  
**however** [2] 21/4 104/20  
**huge** [1] 43/22  
**Hull** [1] 6/14  
**Hundreds** [1] 58/5  
**huntable** [1] 112/2  
**hunting** [5] 77/12 77/17  
111/15 112/3 113/11  
**hunts** [1] 113/10  
**HVC** [1] 85/11

# I

**I'd** [8] 5/15 9/23 59/15

91/5 91/17 100/1 101/7  
103/22  
**I'll** [14] 7/10 7/14 21/1  
27/9 34/22 47/23 72/17  
76/5 76/11 93/14 99/1  
100/14 109/5 118/5  
**I'm** [37] 3/9 6/1 9/2 9/4  
9/16 9/21 9/23 10/12  
11/21 11/22 13/5 14/6  
14/22 19/4 20/4 21/20  
27/18 30/8 37/14 45/20  
45/21 46/1 48/13 49/11  
54/1 54/1 64/4 68/17 69/7  
70/9 81/15 94/9 97/2  
97/11 106/7 106/14  
106/21  
**I've** [10] 15/14 15/15 17/1  
17/3 21/4 21/19 34/17  
46/15 58/15 60/14  
**idea** [2] 50/2 87/17  
**immediate** [2] 51/10  
109/22  
**imperiled** [1] 43/2  
**important** [7] 27/17  
41/23 44/4 51/20 56/23  
58/6 111/16  
**impressed** [1] 120/17  
**improve** [2] 39/1 75/15  
**improved** [1] 38/13  
**improvements** [3] 20/22  
75/19 120/10  
**include** [3] 65/9 78/16  
112/21  
**included** [1] 117/13  
**includes** [2] 17/10 42/23  
**including** [3] 12/15 22/17  
58/7  
**incorporate** [1] 83/10  
**incorporated** [1] 118/1  
**increased** [1] 38/14  
**incredible** [1] 42/11  
**Indian** [1] 57/15

**indicate** [2] 3/14 7/14  
**indicated** [1] 7/3  
**indicates** [1] 58/17  
**Industries** [1] 54/2  
**influence** [1] 21/15  
**information** [10] 15/10  
26/22 36/21 49/3 63/19  
64/12 68/11 68/22 107/19  
116/3  
**informed** [1] 117/2  
**Ingram** [1] 23/9  
**initial** [3] 14/14 73/6  
108/20  
**initially** [1] 71/11  
**input** [1] 17/4  
**installation** [1] 73/6  
**installing** [1] 39/3  
**instances** [1] 72/9  
**instead** [1] 47/4  
**institutions** [1] 114/14  
**instructions** [1] 118/11  
**interest** [1] 105/21  
**interested** [3] 72/7 85/4  
122/22  
**interim** [1] 40/21  
**internal** [1] 15/3  
**introduce** [2] 19/23 40/14  
**invasive** [1] 12/9  
**invested** [1] 44/9  
**investigate** [1] 80/8  
**investment** [3] 44/6 44/8  
50/10  
**investments** [1] 68/12  
**involved** [1] 31/2  
**is** [211]  
**issues** [1] 13/9  
**it** [154]  
**it'd** [1] 48/5  
**it's** [81] 7/23 9/5 15/2  
18/10 18/18 20/12 20/13  
21/10 21/11 23/3 24/5  
25/11 26/21 28/3 28/8

**I**

**it's...** [66] 28/8 28/13  
 28/13 29/11 29/19 29/20  
 30/6 30/15 35/3 35/6 35/9  
 35/15 35/15 37/19 42/8  
 42/8 42/8 42/12 42/17  
 43/7 44/17 44/17 44/18  
 44/19 45/12 47/18 48/20  
 49/1 49/16 50/17 50/18  
 51/8 54/11 56/7 56/17  
 56/20 56/22 59/20 60/17  
 63/17 65/14 70/21 70/22  
 71/4 76/23 79/18 80/12  
 81/5 85/2 85/2 85/5 87/4  
 87/19 90/6 94/2 96/7 99/2  
 101/16 106/8 106/15  
 110/23 111/10 113/17  
 117/18 118/7 120/11  
**item** [3] 36/20 71/9 110/9  
**items** [3] 106/11 109/6  
 110/12  
**its** [5] 12/4 28/7 67/10  
 79/2 82/6  
**itself** [1] 79/7

**J**

**Jack** [1] 6/21  
**Jacks** [1] 15/23  
**Jackson** [1] 82/14  
**JAKE** [1] 2/6  
**JAMES** [2] 2/3 2/9  
**JAMIE** [3] 1/17 122/4  
 123/10  
**Janet** [1] 40/21  
**JAY** [1] 2/10  
**Jefferson** [5] 37/20 40/6  
 46/3 83/1 83/14  
**Jerry** [5] 23/8 23/12  
 27/11 28/11 28/15  
**JIMMY** [1] 2/12  
**job** [1] 24/15  
**Joe** [3] 23/9 23/12 27/11

**JOHN** [1] 2/16

**joint** [1] 49/15  
**Jones** [1] 6/20  
**JR** [1] 2/10  
**judge** [2] 47/1 47/6  
**jurisdictions** [1] 110/3  
**just** [83] 8/11 11/18 13/1  
 14/8 15/2 15/10 16/20  
 17/2 17/21 17/21 18/18  
 19/6 19/7 19/20 19/21  
 20/4 21/1 21/19 22/1  
 28/11 28/13 28/13 28/20  
 32/11 34/14 35/21 35/22  
 36/7 36/11 37/9 37/16  
 38/8 40/12 40/13 46/12  
 47/17 47/23 52/19 54/2  
 58/13 58/23 59/3 63/4  
 63/21 64/19 65/1 65/21  
 68/14 70/10 70/19 71/6  
 72/2 73/10 74/20 78/11  
 79/19 80/20 83/6 84/7  
 85/2 85/3 85/13 86/6  
 87/16 92/7 96/12 97/14  
 98/3 106/14 106/16  
 106/20 108/12 109/16  
 111/17 112/21 113/12  
 115/18 116/4 116/14  
 117/5 117/20 117/22  
 120/4

**K**

**KAREN** [1] 2/14  
**KEENER** [9] 2/8 4/5  
 61/14 90/8 93/9 93/18  
 94/17 102/19 102/21  
**Keener's** [1] 90/12  
**keep** [11] 69/16 78/9  
 79/20 80/1 81/22 82/2  
 89/7 89/11 98/3 115/16  
 117/2  
**keeping** [2] 38/21 117/6  
**Keith** [3] 29/6 36/23  
 43/21

**kept** [1] 82/1  
**kind** [15] 24/11 27/4 33/4  
 35/10 41/19 42/5 42/13  
 44/17 47/18 50/21 53/5  
 67/19 69/15 78/9 96/12  
**Knapp** [2] 53/19 54/1  
**knew** [1] 46/5  
**know** [56] 5/18 9/14 11/9  
 11/10 14/3 14/22 15/2  
 20/7 22/18 23/1 23/16  
 23/23 24/7 24/11 24/13  
 24/14 24/16 24/20 24/21  
 25/1 25/3 25/4 25/5 25/8  
 25/9 25/10 25/12 25/14  
 25/16 25/17 25/23 26/3  
 26/10 26/14 26/16 27/2  
 36/18 44/20 45/23 54/3  
 57/16 57/19 57/23 59/6  
 72/7 85/7 85/9 91/20 94/9  
 95/6 107/7 109/17 112/13  
 113/4 113/5 117/5  
**knows** [1] 34/15  
**Kyle** [1] 55/4

**L**

**lack** [1] 82/7  
**Lake** [2] 66/11 111/17  
**land** [13] 1/2 3/8 39/13  
 40/5 53/7 56/6 79/6 94/19  
 95/8 110/14 115/12  
 121/14 122/10  
**Landing** [1] 108/18  
**landowner** [14] 31/20  
 31/22 66/14 77/4 78/19  
 80/15 81/1 81/7 81/19  
 82/4 91/9 92/8 92/18 96/6  
**landowners** [1] 14/7  
**lane** [1] 73/5  
**large** [4] 12/16 28/19  
 31/23 122/6  
**larger** [1] 56/21  
**largest** [1] 56/19  
**larkspur** [1] 58/7

**L**

**last [18]** 9/9 9/13 21/10  
21/11 22/9 28/11 29/13  
38/5 38/12 41/18 44/15  
53/18 55/10 57/2 75/7  
82/9 110/21 115/20  
**Lawley [2]** 22/18 22/19  
**Lawrence [1]** 69/13  
**lays [1]** 58/19  
**leading [1]** 41/13  
**leaf [1]** 56/10  
**Leah [1]** 40/20  
**learning [1]** 114/16  
**least [3]** 27/3 78/2 96/15  
**leave [1]** 21/1  
**left [2]** 52/19 88/14  
**Legacy [2]** 33/1 33/8  
**Legislature [1]** 5/19  
**length [1]** 81/16  
**Leslie [4]** 10/7 11/9 11/21  
13/20  
**less [1]** 16/10  
**lessen [1]** 73/8  
**let [10]** 3/10 32/11 34/23  
54/3 55/1 76/13 103/3  
107/7 109/17 118/19  
**let's [3]** 106/19 115/16  
117/10  
**letter [3]** 33/14 35/23  
77/3  
**letting [1]** 37/13  
**leverage [1]** 111/19  
**leveraging [1]** 76/7  
**licensed [1]** 123/1  
**Lieutenant [1]** 110/19  
**light [3]** 10/20 41/17  
52/11  
**like [28]** 5/15 10/1 16/5  
18/5 24/18 26/15 26/22  
27/3 29/22 30/5 40/12  
51/23 59/15 59/19 63/23  
64/19 85/10 90/1 91/6

91/17 93/10 94/21 95/8  
98/14 100/1 101/7 105/1  
109/6  
**likely [1]** 7/7  
**limit [1]** 8/1  
**limits [1]** 25/9  
**line [7]** 5/21 31/9 53/4  
57/3 58/17 58/20 59/12  
**list [9]** 33/11 33/17 33/19  
36/20 57/20 70/7 79/22  
81/18 115/8  
**listed [1]** 46/22  
**listening [1]** 26/5  
**listing [1]** 76/23  
**literally [1]** 51/2  
**little [14]** 14/11 26/6  
26/11 26/18 29/13 29/19  
40/3 41/6 44/18 46/19  
47/3 67/21 74/23 108/18  
**live [3]** 9/3 25/20 108/18  
**lived [2]** 46/9 46/16  
**living [1]** 79/21  
**local [1]** 21/17  
**location [1]** 120/2  
**locations [1]** 6/3  
**long [9]** 14/10 20/18  
42/16 67/11 79/16 82/9  
86/5 95/11 96/6  
**longer [1]** 66/8  
**longleaf [2]** 42/15 42/15  
**longstanding [1]** 49/13  
**look [9]** 16/13 22/3 23/22  
26/3 53/4 58/11 68/19  
115/7 118/19  
**looked [1]** 43/13  
**looking [9]** 5/17 6/22  
32/18 35/23 50/13 52/9  
54/7 64/4 72/11  
**Lord [1]** 123/6  
**lot [20]** 12/13 18/21 23/1  
24/9 25/1 25/16 25/18  
25/19 34/19 46/1 46/8

49/22 50/18 87/22 88/17  
105/19 113/6 114/13  
114/17 120/23  
**lots [4]** 12/21 31/22 51/12  
58/4  
**loud [1]** 11/10  
**Lowe [2]** 78/17 91/14  
**Lybarger [1]** 55/4

**M**

**ma'am [6]** 10/4 48/14  
87/15 94/11 95/12 102/11  
**made [20]** 14/14 17/14  
20/11 20/19 23/20 44/6  
44/6 47/6 69/3 76/20  
78/16 83/16 85/21 90/7  
92/13 93/17 98/18 102/20  
104/4 105/7  
**magic [1]** 106/15  
**mailing [1]** 106/17  
**mails [2]** 117/16 118/8  
**main [1]** 22/13  
**Maine [1]** 35/16  
**maintained [1]** 13/13  
**maintaining [1]** 108/14  
**maintenance [3]** 40/19  
51/23 67/11  
**make [32]** 3/11 7/11 18/8  
20/22 26/8 26/8 26/14  
34/12 34/14 37/23 39/14  
41/9 42/6 47/3 69/18 78/2  
81/3 86/2 86/8 90/2 91/6  
93/11 95/2 95/22 98/15  
101/8 103/4 103/22  
104/20 105/1 116/14  
118/6  
**makes [1]** 16/2  
**making [5]** 9/19 18/7  
43/22 60/14 80/13  
**manage [4]** 12/2 13/3  
57/6 118/1  
**managed [7]** 18/21 37/20  
68/5 77/16 111/22 112/5

**M**

**managed...** [1] 113/12  
**management** [10] 18/1  
39/9 68/1 74/21 77/15  
83/11 88/8 112/8 114/20  
115/12  
**manager** [5] 19/5 37/15  
40/10 49/12 96/7  
**managing** [4] 12/6 41/1  
44/9 72/15  
**many** [3] 22/17 88/3  
112/17  
**map** [7] 29/16 32/18  
32/19 36/1 47/18 52/10  
103/3  
**March** [2] 75/10 113/18  
**MARK** [3] 2/15 6/16 9/21  
**Marks** [1] 40/17  
**match** [2] 73/22 74/15  
**matter** [1] 122/8  
**may** [18] 33/17 36/14  
36/20 45/2 52/3 54/8  
66/19 76/5 78/13 86/12  
90/12 95/15 109/18 111/6  
117/15 118/15 119/23  
123/15  
**maybe** [4] 26/16 53/3  
80/6 80/7  
**Mayor** [2] 20/1 22/8  
**MCCLINTOCK** [10] 2/9  
4/8 15/18 23/22 60/18  
61/17 86/17 93/18 99/20  
99/23  
**MCCRACKEN** [3] 1/17  
122/4 123/10  
**McCurdy** [2] 63/20 106/5  
**me** [27] 3/10 9/1 10/19  
11/2 11/2 11/7 11/21 19/4  
32/11 37/13 40/3 41/22  
55/1 64/5 64/20 64/23  
72/20 76/13 78/12 79/10  
86/6 88/18 88/19 89/8

103/3 106/22 118/19  
**mean** [3] 78/5 84/22  
96/13  
**meaning** [2] 17/19 80/4  
**means** [3] 59/3 59/8  
67/13  
**meet** [1] 46/18  
**meeting** [33] 1/2 3/1 3/8  
3/13 6/2 9/9 9/13 29/13  
52/3 54/8 63/10 63/15  
63/23 64/16 68/10 72/1  
75/7 76/17 78/10 80/2  
85/19 107/4 107/7 108/11  
115/20 118/18 119/5  
119/9 119/23 120/4 120/6  
121/14 122/10  
**meetings** [3] 58/11 79/14  
80/4  
**meets** [1] 24/11  
**member** [1] 118/21  
**members** [28] 2/1 6/10  
6/19 6/23 7/4 8/18 23/15  
32/12 34/13 37/12 40/2  
41/11 41/13 47/5 48/17  
49/13 63/4 63/16 64/8  
85/23 90/11 93/1 103/10  
104/12 105/11 118/7  
119/17 121/7  
**memo** [5] 14/3 44/22 71/5  
86/22 118/11  
**mention** [2] 44/5 70/4  
**mentioned** [2] 28/16 88/5  
**met** [1] 57/2  
**Mexico** [1] 75/12  
**mic** [4] 10/12 10/20 11/6  
11/8  
**Michael** [2] 27/12 27/17  
**MICKEY** [1] 2/3  
**microphone** [4] 8/11 8/19  
97/3 99/22  
**middle** [1] 56/20  
**might** [2] 21/22 69/17

**miles** [3] 16/10 43/14  
51/6  
**million** [7] 50/11 65/22  
67/2 67/20 67/23 68/15  
111/20  
**mind** [2] 21/20 69/17  
**minds** [1] 21/21  
**minute** [3] 8/1 11/11 98/3  
**minutes** [7] 7/21 63/1  
119/1 119/4 119/10  
119/12 119/16  
**miscellaneous** [2] 106/7  
118/22  
**miss** [1] 6/18  
**mitigate** [1] 107/20  
**mitigating** [1] 72/15  
**Mobile** [2] 75/16 83/12  
**Mobile-Tensaw** [1] 75/16  
**modern** [1] 38/16  
**moment** [2] 40/3 43/20  
**momentum** [1] 20/22  
**money** [10] 25/1 36/15  
50/13 65/2 67/16 73/5  
73/8 85/14 94/20 94/21  
**monitoring** [2] 114/22  
116/6  
**montane** [1] 42/15  
**MONTGOMERY** [6] 1/3  
1/4 3/10 6/8 122/11  
122/12  
**month** [1] 64/14  
**more** [17] 7/7 20/11 23/4  
28/6 28/6 29/22 36/21  
43/10 52/2 56/21 66/18  
74/20 78/5 80/13 80/16  
83/5 117/3  
**Morgan** [5] 55/5 55/6  
69/13 90/3 90/9  
**morning** [16] 3/7 7/11  
8/23 11/21 14/6 20/3 20/4  
23/12 23/13 29/11 39/20  
39/22 48/12 49/6 53/22

**M**

**morning...** [1] 60/2  
**Morrison** [2] 18/18 19/5  
**most** [2] 21/7 43/5  
**motion** [53] 26/15 26/17  
 30/9 60/9 60/15 60/20  
 66/12 69/2 70/22 71/7  
 71/13 71/18 80/13 81/3  
 83/19 86/18 87/6 89/2  
 89/19 89/21 90/2 90/7  
 90/12 91/4 91/6 91/19  
 92/13 92/22 93/6 93/11  
 93/17 93/22 97/20 98/10  
 98/15 98/18 99/16 101/5  
 101/8 101/12 102/8  
 102/20 103/18 103/23  
 104/4 104/19 104/20  
 105/2 105/7 105/19 119/6  
 119/22 121/2  
**motioned** [6] 32/22 64/23  
 65/7 69/20 70/2 80/5  
**motions** [4] 69/17 83/15  
 85/20 86/12  
**Moulton** [3] 55/17 56/2  
 59/18  
**Mount** [1] 83/11  
**mountain** [11] 24/2 24/8  
 25/4 28/16 41/3 49/20  
 65/15 74/4 102/23 103/8  
 111/18  
**Mountains** [1] 50/17  
**move** [18] 14/13 30/10  
 41/15 68/4 70/8 71/12  
 71/20 76/12 80/5 87/7  
 89/3 90/9 102/12 105/3  
 105/23 106/6 106/9  
 118/22  
**moved** [6] 41/8 60/12  
 71/16 110/11 119/9 121/3  
**moving** [3] 76/1 78/10  
 115/16  
**MR** [49] 2/3 2/4 2/5 2/6

2/11 2/12 2/15 3/16 3/18  
 3/21 4/13 4/16 5/2 5/5  
 9/21 23/8 27/12 29/6  
 33/23 34/23 35/1 35/19  
 39/18 48/19 49/3 52/8  
 53/18 60/13 61/1 61/4  
 61/7 61/22 62/2 62/11  
 62/17 74/15 88/15 90/10  
 92/13 92/14 98/11 99/3  
 101/17 103/19 103/20  
 104/4 116/1 119/8 119/10  
**MS** [12] 2/14 5/8 10/7  
 48/10 62/14 63/20 79/10  
 79/12 102/11 102/20  
 106/4 107/5  
**much** [7] 16/16 22/3  
 36/21 48/18 68/7 84/21  
 88/20  
**multiple** [4] 95/7 113/12  
 117/23 120/20  
**Muscle** [1] 9/2  
**muscles** [1] 18/3  
**Museum** [1] 114/3  
**mustard** [1] 33/5  
**my** [19] 5/15 9/1 17/2  
 21/11 26/13 26/13 29/12  
 35/19 37/13 40/4 40/9  
 49/10 84/12 88/2 96/15  
 115/10 115/11 116/16  
 123/4

**N**

**name** [6] 3/13 9/1 37/13  
 55/2 60/19 123/4  
**name's** [2] 40/4 49/11  
**national** [8] 30/21 55/23  
 58/17 59/19 73/1 75/1  
 113/15 113/20  
**Native** [1] 57/15  
**natural** [4] 11/22 17/15  
 38/3 114/3  
**nature** [41] 12/3 18/19  
 19/6 21/12 22/6 25/22

28/6 28/15 30/16 37/7  
 37/15 41/2 41/7 41/22  
 42/10 43/20 45/10 45/18  
 45/22 69/22 77/9 83/9  
 83/13 83/17 83/20 93/12  
 93/20 94/18 95/16 95/19  
 95/23 96/3 96/14 96/23  
 97/5 97/14 97/21 100/2  
 100/6 100/18 113/21  
**NBA** [1] 107/5  
**near** [2] 35/9 109/23  
**need** [5] 14/3 60/7 71/7  
 88/10 108/4  
**needed** [3] 41/20 68/1  
 87/21  
**needs** [1] 70/22  
**negotiation** [1] 60/5  
**neighborhood** [1] 27/21  
**neither** [1] 122/18  
**net** [2] 68/6 68/14  
**Network** [1] 17/13  
**NEUMANN** [8] 2/10  
 4/11 61/20 96/21 97/3  
 100/16 101/6 101/12  
**never** [1] 75/3  
**new** [19] 6/9 6/23 7/4  
 32/12 34/12 38/15 39/1  
 39/3 40/1 49/12 63/16  
 66/9 71/12 75/19 77/14  
 77/18 85/22 90/11 120/9  
**news** [1] 107/1  
**newspaper** [1] 117/16  
**next** [18] 10/7 13/21 15/6  
 18/17 23/8 29/6 37/3  
 39/18 45/2 45/16 48/19  
 79/9 82/12 82/17 107/11  
 110/9 119/3 119/23  
**nice** [1] 48/3  
**nine** [4] 89/10 89/12  
 89/12 99/10  
**no** [40] 5/10 13/14 13/16  
 20/9 21/9 21/10 28/7

**N**

**no...** [33] 35/15 35/17  
60/23 65/23 66/8 68/16  
70/5 79/15 82/21 88/23  
90/16 90/23 91/1 98/7  
99/5 100/20 101/19 102/4  
103/16 104/17 105/17  
106/15 107/1 107/4  
109/22 110/4 117/9  
117/12 117/12 119/13  
119/20 123/11 123/15  
**NOAA** [1] 84/5  
**nominate** [4] 30/4 44/2  
54/7 54/14  
**nominated** [3] 9/10 42/9  
96/4  
**nomination** [11] 13/23  
29/20 32/9 33/6 41/4  
53/20 72/6 77/1 81/20  
82/5 87/9  
**nominations** [9] 32/16  
70/7 76/19 77/20 81/17  
82/8 83/17 107/13 109/19  
**None** [1] 119/21  
**north** [2] 13/11 37/17  
**Northcutt** [2] 45/17  
45/21  
**northern** [3] 6/12 30/20  
77/22  
**nos** [1] 98/8  
**not** [59] 10/12 11/7 16/20  
17/2 18/7 21/2 21/10  
21/11 25/11 28/19 36/6  
36/14 37/18 46/1 46/12  
46/18 48/3 48/23 48/23  
49/1 51/19 58/7 66/7 69/5  
69/20 69/23 71/12 74/1  
74/15 75/4 76/12 78/14  
80/2 80/5 80/10 80/11  
80/13 80/14 80/20 81/9  
81/20 82/4 84/5 84/9  
84/19 88/10 91/21 92/2

92/9 95/19 96/6 106/7  
108/17 110/7 114/15  
118/7 118/8 118/15  
120/11  
**Notary** [2] 122/5 123/12  
**note** [9] 35/18 66/1 78/18  
83/4 106/20 107/3 111/9  
112/20 118/5  
**nothing** [3] 15/1 59/19  
107/14  
**notice** [1] 48/10  
**noting** [1] 102/14  
**November** [1] 119/5  
**now** [28] 8/21 33/15  
36/10 41/1 42/8 45/10  
60/10 62/22 63/16 64/13  
66/10 66/19 67/20 68/18  
69/8 71/13 72/17 72/20  
74/19 76/11 76/15 78/8  
81/15 107/11 107/16  
110/10 117/10 120/3  
**NP** [1] 102/15  
**number** [4] 54/16 78/7  
80/3 123/4  
**numbers** [3] 85/8 113/6  
115/4

**O**

**Oak** [8] 25/4 28/16 49/20  
50/5 50/9 50/15 108/18  
111/18  
**Oaks** [1] 82/23  
**OATES** [8] 2/11 4/14  
34/23 35/1 61/23 74/15  
116/1 119/10  
**Oates'** [1] 35/20  
**objectives** [1] 120/20  
**obtain** [1] 75/14  
**obviously** [2] 23/23 81/2  
**occurring** [1] 34/9  
**October** [1] 110/23  
**off** [15] 6/20 10/22 10/23  
11/16 13/12 47/17 50/23

79/5 79/15 81/19 82/3  
82/6 88/2 107/8 109/20  
**offer** [11] 6/6 14/14 16/20  
38/2 41/10 51/17 66/5  
66/13 71/11 83/5 120/16  
**offered** [6] 46/13 50/4  
73/16 78/19 78/21 83/9  
**offerings** [1] 114/4  
**office** [1] 38/16  
**Oh** [3] 57/1 79/18 97/11  
**okay** [11] 8/14 10/16  
10/19 11/1 11/7 11/20  
32/18 37/4 77/4 81/23  
115/18  
**old** [2] 26/21 40/9  
**once** [3] 77/8 77/20  
110/13  
**one** [58] 13/8 18/10 18/11  
18/20 19/8 20/15 24/22  
34/20 35/4 35/4 35/5 35/5  
35/5 35/6 35/11 35/11  
35/21 36/3 37/10 43/4  
43/8 47/13 50/2 51/1  
56/16 64/10 64/11 64/22  
68/20 70/16 71/6 78/2  
78/5 78/18 79/17 81/23  
82/9 82/20 83/19 84/7  
84/20 89/9 89/16 90/11  
92/1 92/4 92/9 94/1 101/3  
105/19 109/6 109/18  
109/23 113/8 113/17  
113/18 116/19 118/17  
**one-year** [1] 19/8  
**ones** [3] 57/20 115/14  
115/17  
**ongoing** [2] 107/23 108/5  
**only** [8] 20/13 20/14 23/3  
25/23 26/21 56/3 56/16  
118/12  
**open** [3] 19/15 42/12 51/3  
**open-air** [1] 19/15  
**opening** [1] 20/15

**O**

**operations [1]** 40/19  
**opinion [1]** 96/15  
**opportunities [13]** 22/4  
 25/18 43/10 70/9 72/3  
 72/5 72/12 74/19 74/22  
 76/8 76/9 111/15 111/16  
**opportunity [23]** 7/12 8/2  
 9/15 15/16 23/16 27/23  
 28/10 28/14 30/19 42/21  
 43/16 49/9 50/8 50/20  
 51/9 52/2 73/14 74/5  
 74/16 77/15 79/23 112/9  
 116/1  
**opposed [12]** 60/22 89/15  
 89/16 90/22 99/13 101/2  
 102/3 103/15 104/16  
 105/16 119/19 119/22  
**option [1]** 72/14  
**order [5]** 3/2 60/5 106/14  
 106/15 119/3  
**orient [1]** 32/11  
**original [2]** 86/21 87/8  
**originally [1]** 14/20  
**other [33]** 6/19 7/1 13/16  
 13/17 16/11 24/16 26/2  
 26/2 27/1 30/7 30/11  
 30/16 31/1 31/12 31/22  
 34/1 34/7 34/7 36/13  
 40/15 52/16 56/13 56/22  
 57/20 70/1 87/20 88/22  
 96/20 105/22 109/4  
 109/21 120/9 120/23  
**others [1]** 21/21  
**otherwise [2]** 70/2 117/4  
**our [76]** 6/2 7/22 8/3 10/6  
 13/4 13/15 18/20 19/8  
 20/8 28/2 32/12 33/16  
 36/9 36/15 38/1 38/7  
 38/17 38/19 40/16 40/17  
 40/18 40/19 40/21 45/2  
 48/16 48/17 49/17 50/12

51/7 51/12 53/18 58/6  
 58/10 60/2 63/14 64/18  
 66/21 67/8 68/1 68/8  
 68/12 70/6 70/23 75/7  
 75/15 76/20 77/21 78/3  
 79/5 80/23 88/8 90/11  
 96/13 107/20 108/12  
 108/20 109/6 109/14  
 111/14 111/21 113/2  
 113/6 113/11 113/11  
 113/21 114/5 114/7  
 114/13 114/17 114/19  
 115/4 115/19 117/14  
 117/17 120/18 123/5  
**ours [1]** 53/12  
**ourselves [1]** 116/9  
**out [28]** 14/11 16/5 16/18  
 20/14 22/13 24/6 24/20  
 25/21 26/12 27/2 29/22  
 32/2 35/3 38/8 41/21 43/7  
 45/9 55/12 56/2 57/10  
 76/2 81/11 89/8 94/21  
 115/14 117/5 118/22  
 122/17  
**out-parcels [1]** 26/12  
**outbreak [1]** 115/23  
**outcrops [1]** 42/17  
**outdoor [3]** 114/6 117/17  
 118/9  
**outdoors [1]** 25/19  
**outlet [1]** 25/21  
**outlined [2]** 32/20 34/2  
**over [26]** 16/6 16/8 30/22  
 30/23 38/6 38/10 38/12  
 40/8 41/3 41/6 42/23 43/6  
 43/14 47/5 51/22 65/21  
 68/15 82/3 106/21 107/15  
 110/12 110/21 111/19  
 113/16 113/22 115/5  
**overall [1]** 83/10  
**oversees [1]** 40/18  
**overview [2]** 29/16

112/22  
**own [10]** 21/6 31/22  
 31/23 31/23 50/13 54/12  
 79/2 81/19 94/13 94/13  
**owned [2]** 35/5 53/6  
**owner [2]** 53/11 53/11  
**ownership [3]** 30/5 45/13  
 95/11  
**owns [7]** 12/1 30/3 35/7  
 45/10 52/22 53/9 88/19

**P**

**p.m [1]** 121/17  
**packet [7]** 7/15 9/8 29/15  
 44/23 49/1 71/23 106/17  
**packets [2]** 26/5 63/4  
**paddled [1]** 15/18  
**page [21]** 7/15 8/5 8/5 8/6  
 10/10 11/14 11/15 13/23  
 14/1 23/10 23/10 29/8  
 29/9 37/8 37/8 55/7 55/7  
 66/1 66/4 91/15 98/22  
**pages [3]** 63/22 68/22  
 122/16  
**panels [1]** 85/11  
**paper [1]** 17/2  
**parcel [2]** 12/1 58/19  
**parcels [3]** 26/12 30/3  
 31/12  
**park [16]** 25/5 28/17  
 37/14 38/18 38/21 39/5  
 49/15 49/16 49/20 50/5  
 50/6 50/9 50/15 52/21  
 77/18 111/17  
**parking [4]** 22/12 23/1  
 49/22 51/12  
**Parks [2]** 49/19 52/1  
**PARNELL [4]** 2/12 4/17  
 62/3 88/16  
**part [12]** 18/12 24/14  
 32/3 48/4 48/6 58/18 59/8  
 63/23 77/6 85/18 88/7  
 88/13

**P**  
**particular** [5] 28/17  
49/10 49/23 51/15 79/17  
**parties** [1] 122/20  
**partner** [4] 50/8 51/18  
51/21 114/2  
**partnered** [1] 49/18  
**partnering** [2] 20/10 57/6  
**partners** [2] 30/17 31/1  
**partnership** [3] 12/22  
23/7 52/6  
**parts** [1] 46/10  
**party** [1] 47/11  
**passed** [2] 15/10 64/13  
**past** [4] 84/9 95/8 97/15  
116/11  
**Path** [2] 57/17 57/18  
**patience** [1] 14/9  
**Patti** [2] 26/23 79/11  
**Paulding** [1] 30/23  
**pause** [2] 70/9 76/13  
**pavilion** [1] 19/15  
**pavilions** [1] 51/11  
**paying** [1] 67/14  
**Pelham** [8] 23/19 24/17  
24/21 27/13 27/19 27/20  
28/16 28/18  
**people** [9] 16/21 22/11  
22/15 25/19 38/10 43/6  
43/9 86/12 98/22  
**percent** [23] 5/12 36/8  
48/15 51/17 67/6 67/17  
73/3 73/19 73/20 74/10  
74/13 78/22 79/4 79/8  
82/20 91/10 92/6 92/19  
112/1 112/3 112/4 112/10  
112/12  
**percentage** [1] 111/21  
**Perdido** [1] 75/17  
**perfect** [1] 30/6  
**perhaps** [1] 94/23  
**period** [3] 26/18 110/21

111/7  
**periods** [1] 60/4  
**person** [1] 35/5  
**petroglyphs** [1] 57/11  
**phase** [5] 35/22 36/3 50/2  
53/9 54/13  
**phases** [1] 54/5  
**physically** [1] 113/10  
**pick** [3] 63/14 82/15  
118/12  
**picture** [1] 94/4  
**piece** [2] 28/9 51/15  
**pieces** [3] 30/6 32/2 97/1  
**pine** [5] 42/15 42/15  
42/16 114/22 115/22  
**pink** [2] 52/14 52/18  
**Pinson** [1] 37/16  
**pitch** [1] 118/6  
**Pittman** [2] 73/17 74/2  
**Pittman-Robertson** [2]  
73/17 74/2  
**pivotal** [1] 43/15  
**place** [6] 16/19 32/14  
58/9 109/12 112/3 112/23  
**places** [1] 71/3  
**plan** [3] 43/14 120/4  
120/13  
**plant** [4] 21/2 55/13 58/4  
59/21  
**planting** [1] 75/9  
**plants** [3] 24/4 24/4 56/21  
**Plateau** [5] 55/20 56/1  
57/14 58/1 75/2  
**please** [17] 3/14 8/18  
60/19 60/21 60/23 64/6  
89/5 89/11 90/18 92/23  
97/23 99/8 101/22 103/9  
104/11 105/9 119/16  
**pleased** [1] 111/8  
**plenty** [1] 27/23  
**plug** [1] 118/14  
**plus** [2] 52/20 54/10

**point** [13] 16/5 35/8 64/5  
65/7 81/10 86/11 94/7  
94/11 95/1 95/4 95/6  
95/21 107/6  
**pointed** [1] 20/14  
**pointing** [1] 24/6  
**pop** [1] 81/21  
**pops** [1] 82/6  
**populated** [1] 43/17  
**population** [1] 56/19  
**populations** [8] 18/2  
55/13 56/12 56/13 56/14  
56/15 56/22 57/7  
**portfolio** [1] 18/13  
**portion** [6] 52/11 54/10  
64/15 72/1 76/16 123/15  
**position** [1] 60/20  
**positive** [1] 109/9  
**possibility** [1] 14/18  
**possible** [2] 42/6 82/4  
**posted** [1] 113/2  
**potential** [5] 48/22 53/19  
65/19 72/13 95/22  
**potentially** [1] 64/21  
**power** [3] 21/5 21/16  
57/3  
**POWERS** [8] 2/13 4/20  
62/6 70/18 84/18 87/5  
96/11 105/7  
**prairie** [2] 56/5 56/10  
**predate** [1] 95/15  
**preliminary** [1] 27/4  
**preparing** [1] 12/18  
**prescribed** [2] 12/8 73/6  
**presence** [1] 38/14  
**present** [2] 2/1 68/23  
**presented** [1] 56/18  
**presents** [1] 42/20  
**preservation** [4] 24/2  
24/12 87/22 87/23  
**preserve** [35] 12/3 13/4  
13/16 18/20 19/6 19/11

**P**

**preserve...** [29] 21/12  
22/6 22/16 37/7 37/16  
37/23 38/15 40/9 41/2  
41/8 42/10 43/18 48/5  
48/7 69/22 77/10 83/9  
83/13 83/17 83/20 93/12  
93/20 95/17 96/1 96/5  
97/21 100/2 100/6 100/18  
**Preserve-Bell** [3] 83/13  
100/6 100/18  
**Preserve-Red** [5] 69/22  
83/20 93/12 93/20 97/21  
**preserved** [1] 56/4  
**pressures** [1] 21/18  
**pretty** [5] 9/7 16/11 16/14  
24/5 84/21  
**previously** [3] 64/23 69/2  
95/14  
**price** [2] 47/6 51/18  
**primarily** [1] 30/17  
**printed** [1] 122/15  
**prior** [4] 32/16 66/12  
71/2 71/18  
**priority** [4] 17/23 30/15  
76/23 85/6  
**private** [1] 57/8  
**probably** [3] 5/20 24/22  
36/4  
**problem** [2] 10/21 11/8  
**problems** [1] 80/12  
**proceed** [5] 9/19 65/7  
71/10 101/8 116/17  
**proceeding** [2] 86/19  
116/22  
**proceedings** [4] 1/11 1/17  
3/3 122/7  
**process** [11] 14/10 30/10  
33/3 33/16 41/9 44/20  
66/8 72/21 73/11 76/20  
77/6  
**program** [11] 15/1 18/9

19/14 63/17 67/12 73/2  
78/20 85/14 110/17  
111/12 114/8  
**programs** [6] 12/14 38/11  
77/17 85/3 114/12 114/14  
**progressive** [1] 28/5  
**project** [3] 41/14 54/5  
114/1  
**projects** [2] 24/18 30/12  
**properties** [25] 7/15  
16/23 18/21 26/11 46/8  
56/16 57/8 64/21 65/6  
65/9 65/19 65/20 66/16  
66/18 67/12 69/1 69/9  
75/22 79/23 109/4 111/4  
111/13 112/23 114/13  
115/3  
**property** [79] 9/10 12/5  
13/3 13/10 13/12 14/23  
15/1 15/7 16/7 17/3 17/11  
18/8 21/7 21/14 23/22  
25/12 26/4 26/21 27/14  
27/22 28/9 29/2 31/10  
32/21 34/3 38/1 39/7  
41/21 42/3 44/9 45/17  
46/2 46/5 46/6 46/12  
46/15 46/17 46/19 46/21  
47/2 47/8 47/19 48/3 48/6  
51/5 51/12 55/22 56/17  
56/20 57/12 57/17 58/14  
59/7 66/3 67/5 67/6 67/6  
67/8 67/10 67/15 67/15  
71/2 73/10 73/18 77/5  
80/6 85/22 92/1 92/5  
92/16 94/5 95/9 109/15  
110/4 113/14 114/6  
120/16 120/19 120/20  
**proposed** [1] 36/1  
**protect** [7] 16/17 42/21  
50/21 50/22 97/1 97/7  
97/16  
**protected** [3] 16/14 31/9

56/12  
**protecting** [1] 55/12  
**protection** [2] 45/22  
95/11  
**protections** [1] 42/22  
**proud** [1] 48/6  
**provide** [2] 43/12 92/18  
**provided** [5] 17/1 45/1  
69/21 74/8 92/8  
**provides** [2] 68/9 107/19  
**Pruitt** [1] 9/22  
**public** [29] 7/6 7/13 7/13  
7/23 12/13 12/13 21/16  
27/16 51/9 56/6 60/2  
64/17 67/4 69/1 76/17  
77/2 77/6 79/20 80/20  
80/22 81/11 112/15 113/3  
115/7 115/13 118/14  
120/21 122/5 123/12  
**publically** [1] 112/11  
**publicly** [1] 13/13  
**pull** [3] 68/20 73/9 81/20  
**pulled** [3] 29/22 82/5  
110/6  
**purchase** [17] 9/20 26/10  
50/3 50/9 51/17 64/21  
65/8 66/7 86/20 87/7 89/3  
90/3 90/9 94/4 94/22  
96/17 105/3  
**purchased** [4] 34/8 42/3  
53/12 108/2  
**purchases** [2] 67/4 94/19  
**purchasing** [2] 31/8  
47/10  
**purview** [1] 52/17  
**put** [3] 25/10 76/2 91/18  
**putting** [1] 54/16  
**puzzle** [1] 30/6

**Q**

**quarterly** [3] 68/9 107/18  
108/11  
**question** [11] 34/18 47/13

**Q**

**question...** [9] 58/16 64/6  
78/13 81/16 86/7 87/13  
90/14 96/2 97/9

**questions** [27] 7/20 9/22  
13/5 14/21 27/8 34/13  
45/7 45/8 47/12 65/23  
68/16 70/5 71/20 76/10  
84/12 84/17 87/10 88/22  
93/21 96/20 99/4 100/19  
103/1 103/4 104/8 109/5  
117/8

**quickly** [1] 41/21  
**quite** [2] 21/6 94/1  
**quorum** [2] 3/12 5/14

**R**

**radar** [1] 21/3  
**Rainer** [1] 117/14  
**raise** [10] 89/5 90/18  
92/23 97/23 99/8 100/22  
101/22 103/9 104/11  
105/9  
**raised** [1] 91/2  
**raising** [4] 93/1 103/10  
104/12 105/11  
**ramp** [1] 108/6  
**ranches** [1] 48/2  
**ranking** [1] 78/1  
**rare** [3] 18/3 24/4 104/21  
**rarely** [1] 104/20  
**rates** [1] 122/22  
**Raymond** [1] 6/20  
**reached** [1] 41/21  
**ready** [3] 51/9 63/21  
89/20  
**real** [6] 30/15 30/18 48/3  
58/14 110/4 117/22  
**really** [28] 16/2 18/18  
21/3 25/6 31/2 40/22 41/8  
41/16 42/20 43/15 43/19  
50/2 55/15 56/7 56/23

57/9 58/14 71/3 74/19  
80/10 80/11 80/12 81/1  
87/21 95/3 112/11 117/12  
117/19  
**realtor** [1] 46/22  
**reason** [4] 9/16 66/6  
81/14 96/4  
**reasons** [2] 97/6 97/17  
**received** [4] 33/2 33/7  
33/13 81/9  
**recent** [2] 31/6 49/1  
**recently** [1] 33/6  
**recess** [5] 60/7 60/10  
60/21 62/22 63/7  
**record** [2] 11/16 55/3  
**recovery** [1] 18/2  
**recreation** [8] 12/15  
12/22 16/21 43/11 77/10  
77/13 102/15 111/15  
**recreational** [2] 19/14  
74/22  
**red** [19] 27/1 32/20 32/20  
34/2 37/7 37/21 39/8 41/2  
42/10 47/17 47/20 48/1  
65/18 69/22 73/12 83/20  
93/12 93/20 97/21  
**reducing** [1] 72/8  
**reference** [1] 78/11  
**references** [1] 44/23  
**referred** [3] 9/6 76/23  
107/6  
**refinished** [1] 38/18  
**reflected** [2] 65/1 65/14  
**reflects** [1] 66/21  
**Regina** [2] 8/4 9/2  
**regional** [1] 20/12  
**regular** [1] 63/15  
**regulation** [1] 60/3  
**rejected** [1] 71/11  
**related** [3] 74/20 111/20  
113/6  
**relates** [1] 116/20

**relation** [1] 115/13  
**relationship** [1] 49/14  
**relative** [2] 122/19  
122/20  
**remain** [1] 111/22  
**remaining** [2] 34/7 74/13  
**remind** [1] 69/1  
**Reminder** [1] 7/23  
**remote** [1] 16/4  
**removal** [1] 108/10  
**remove** [1] 51/3  
**removed** [2] 14/17 115/6  
**repairs** [1] 85/12  
**repeat** [2] 111/23 115/18  
**report** [11] 63/17 68/7  
68/17 69/4 107/17 110/15  
110/18 110/22 111/9  
112/20 112/20  
**reported** [1] 122/7  
**reporter** [7] 1/18 8/12  
8/20 86/1 122/5 123/3  
123/11  
**REPORTER'S** [1]  
121/18  
**Reporting** [3] 123/2  
123/15 123/16  
**reports** [4] 84/13 106/1  
106/7 118/23  
**represent** [2] 9/4 14/7  
**representative** [2] 23/18  
111/13  
**representatives** [1] 21/5  
**representing** [3] 6/14  
6/17 58/19  
**represents** [1] 6/12  
**reproduced** [1] 123/16  
**required** [3] 73/21  
110/15 117/13  
**requires** [1] 110/17  
**reservation** [1] 14/16  
**Reserve** [2] 83/21 83/23  
**Reserve-Holley** [1] 83/21

**R**

**Reserve-White [1]** 83/23  
**reserved [1]** 123/15  
**resident [2]** 27/20 28/23  
**residents [1]** 28/7  
**Resources [2]** 11/22  
 17/16  
**response [13]** 5/10 88/23  
 90/16 90/23 99/5 100/20  
 101/19 102/4 103/16  
 104/17 117/9 119/13  
 119/20  
**rest [2]** 18/11 74/18  
**restoration [2]** 12/9 18/2  
**restrooms [1]** 51/11  
**results [1]** 122/22  
**resumed [1]** 63/10  
**retirement [2]** 35/6 35/16  
**return [1]** 63/1  
**returned [1]** 69/10  
**review [3]** 9/15 70/2  
 76/17  
**reviewing [1]** 76/18  
**reviews [1]** 111/5  
**ribbon [1]** 22/9  
**RICK [1]** 2/11  
**ride [1]** 28/11  
**ridge [4]** 42/14 50/15  
 50/21 50/23  
**ridges [1]** 28/12  
**right [31]** 6/1 33/21 37/5  
 45/16 53/8 55/8 59/13  
 60/1 64/3 66/9 66/19  
 71/19 71/22 74/19 75/6  
 76/14 85/17 87/2 91/4  
 92/22 93/6 93/17 97/6  
 97/17 98/10 102/8 103/6  
 104/4 106/3 107/11  
 109/16  
**rights [1]** 123/15  
**River [11]** 17/21 46/19  
 49/16 52/1 58/3 65/9

65/12 72/23 74/23 75/17  
 108/18  
**Rivers [1]** 17/13  
**road [16]** 13/14 37/7  
 37/21 39/8 42/10 47/17  
 47/21 47/22 48/1 49/21  
 58/23 69/23 83/21 93/13  
 93/20 97/22  
**Robertson [2]** 73/17 74/2  
**rock [2]** 24/8 42/17  
**rock-top [1]** 24/8  
**role [2]** 3/11 40/9  
**roll [3]** 70/12 82/3 107/8  
**rolled [3]** 6/19 82/1  
 110/10  
**room [2]** 7/10 63/6  
**roughly [1]** 36/8  
**route [1]** 112/16  
**Ruffner [1]** 41/2  
**run [8]** 64/13 64/17 66/2  
 69/7 69/15 72/10 72/17  
 78/8  
**running [1]** 66/21  
**runoff [1]** 39/2  
**runs [2]** 82/6 84/12

**S**

**safe [2]** 38/4 38/22  
**safety [1]** 38/13  
**said [2]** 96/13 97/14  
**sale [1]** 9/10  
**Saloom [1]** 6/20  
**same [10]** 8/17 15/7 27/13  
 39/9 39/19 45/17 53/10  
 53/11 53/19 114/7  
**sandstone [1]** 57/12  
**sandwiched [1]** 55/19  
**Savanna [1]** 108/19  
**save [1]** 44/13  
**saw [1]** 41/23  
**say [19]** 3/13 22/2 28/21  
 31/17 39/6 39/6 57/2  
 59/15 60/21 60/23 75/3

79/1 82/15 83/15 109/9  
 112/10 112/12 119/16  
 121/6  
**saying [2]** 119/17 121/7  
**scattered [1]** 35/10  
**schools [1]** 38/9  
**scientists [1]** 17/6  
**score [2]** 78/1 78/5  
**scored [5]** 76/21 77/7  
 77/9 77/21 78/15  
**scores [1]** 102/15  
**scoring [2]** 76/20 82/7  
**Scroggins [3]** 48/20 49/3  
 49/11  
**seamless [1]** 37/23  
**SEAN [1]** 2/13  
**second [31]** 9/18 37/9  
 60/15 60/16 66/1 70/10  
 76/13 85/21 86/20 87/2  
 87/3 87/7 89/2 90/2 90/5  
 90/8 91/16 93/14 98/20  
 99/1 100/13 100/14  
 101/14 101/15 102/16  
 104/2 105/2 105/5 116/22  
 119/7 121/4  
**seconded [12]** 60/18 87/5  
 90/7 90/10 92/14 93/18  
 99/3 101/17 102/21 104/5  
 105/6 119/10  
**Secour [2]** 65/9 72/23  
**section [6]** 15/19 15/20  
 65/18 71/8 73/13 112/21  
**secure [3]** 84/6 84/10  
 85/15  
**secured [4]** 65/17 72/4  
 74/6 108/7  
**security [3]** 38/13 38/15  
 75/12  
**sedimentation [1]** 50/22  
**see [45]** 5/13 5/17 6/3 6/5  
 19/1 19/3 22/20 25/3 25/6  
 25/12 27/14 36/2 39/21

**S**

**see...** [32] 41/16 42/19  
43/15 48/2 48/2 48/17  
49/5 52/2 53/21 58/9  
58/12 64/6 66/18 68/6  
70/10 78/14 81/14 81/14  
81/15 82/8 87/17 87/18  
88/13 89/9 98/22 102/5  
108/13 110/7 115/16  
118/3 120/13 120/15  
**seed** [1] 21/2  
**seeing** [1] 71/3  
**seek** [1] 30/9  
**seen** [3] 112/18 117/15  
117/18  
**selected** [1] 17/23  
**sell** [2] 35/8 41/20  
**seller** [3] 33/13 35/23  
77/3  
**sellers** [2] 14/12 14/13  
**Senator** [1] 109/10  
**sensitive** [1] 112/15  
**separate** [1] 57/22  
**September** [2] 111/1  
111/2  
**service** [5] 21/16 25/14  
58/18 59/7 59/11  
**services** [3] 108/8 108/15  
108/21  
**session** [9] 5/19 7/8 15/12  
60/8 60/11 62/23 63/8  
63/13 71/8  
**Sessions** [1] 109/11  
**set** [5] 55/12 92/4 92/5  
120/14 122/17  
**seven** [2] 56/17 89/10  
**several** [1] 66/15  
**Shades** [1] 110/1  
**share** [4] 12/4 17/4 44/7  
63/20  
**she** [1] 11/10  
**She'll** [1] 64/2

**Sheffield** [1] 30/22  
**Shelby** [12] 28/3 28/4  
48/22 49/12 50/6 50/10  
51/16 52/6 54/4 82/18  
82/23 98/20  
**Shepherd** [2] 41/5 95/17  
**Shepherd-Family** [1]  
41/5  
**Shoals** [1] 9/3  
**short** [5] 33/11 33/17  
33/19 36/20 44/18  
**shortleaf** [1] 42/16  
**shortlist** [9] 29/20 49/2  
76/22 78/3 78/7 78/16  
107/12 109/20 110/8  
**shortly** [1] 75/8  
**should** [6] 9/7 18/8 20/16  
33/19 57/1 116/17  
**show** [2] 27/1 44/7  
**shown** [1] 29/20  
**shows** [1] 36/19  
**side** [6] 22/13 30/18 31/3  
31/5 31/10 49/17  
**sides** [1] 47/20  
**signed** [2] 118/8 118/15  
**significance** [3] 57/10  
58/4 58/20  
**significant** [3] 59/11  
116/16 117/3  
**similar** [3] 36/3 74/8  
111/23  
**similarly** [3] 73/12 74/5  
117/11  
**Simon** [2] 27/12 27/18  
**simply** [1] 28/21  
**Simpson** [1] 40/22  
**since** [5] 82/21 86/5 89/8  
103/2 108/16  
**sir** [19] 13/7 15/5 27/14  
29/5 39/17 45/15 48/9  
52/8 52/13 53/14 54/18  
55/9 59/23 70/17 87/12

89/23 93/23 94/17 97/18  
**sit** [1] 70/6  
**site** [4] 43/12 43/15  
114/16 116/8  
**sites** [1] 43/5  
**situate** [1] 41/18  
**situation** [5] 41/19 42/7  
95/14 114/23 117/7  
**six** [1] 89/10  
**skip** [1] 107/15  
**skipped** [1] 106/21  
**slip** [1] 55/2  
**slips** [1] 54/21  
**slow** [2] 7/11 86/2  
**slows** [1] 80/9  
**small** [1] 43/8  
**smaller** [1] 100/3  
**snails** [1] 18/3  
**snapshot** [1] 26/7  
**so** [153]  
**SOA** [1] 108/18  
**Socapatoy** [1] 15/22  
**solar** [1] 85/10  
**sold** [1] 47/2  
**solid** [1] 114/14  
**some** [59] 6/3 7/7 14/15  
15/10 17/4 17/5 21/4 21/6  
24/3 24/4 24/7 24/12  
26/11 27/3 30/14 32/13  
34/8 35/8 36/12 41/12  
41/12 41/18 46/16 50/22  
55/12 57/3 57/7 57/8  
63/18 65/7 66/6 68/10  
68/22 72/9 73/5 73/6 73/7  
75/18 75/19 75/19 75/21  
78/4 84/4 84/9 85/9 88/9  
91/17 107/19 109/3  
109/20 112/2 112/22  
114/4 115/21 116/8  
117/19 118/11 120/11  
120/15  
**somebody** [2] 55/1 94/13

**S**

**somebody's** [2] 52/17  
120/11  
**something** [15] 21/19  
25/10 26/15 28/1 51/19  
53/3 54/15 70/3 80/7  
84/15 86/5 95/18 107/8  
118/20 118/21  
**sometimes** [4] 38/8 84/3  
85/6 85/8  
**somewhat** [1] 64/12  
**somewhere** [1] 88/5  
**soon** [1] 33/10  
**sorry** [4] 81/15 97/2  
97/11 106/21  
**sort** [6] 64/11 67/10 72/14  
80/9 109/6 114/16  
**sound** [1] 92/21  
**south** [2] 10/8 58/19  
**Southeast** [1] 17/22  
**southern** [5] 6/15 13/14  
75/3 77/23 115/22  
**space** [3] 38/3 38/17  
39/11  
**speak** [21] 8/3 8/7 8/11  
11/10 11/18 27/16 34/4  
34/23 37/13 40/3 49/4  
49/10 54/23 55/1 55/5  
64/7 78/13 86/7 94/14  
97/2 99/21  
**speaker** [15] 8/3 10/7  
13/21 15/6 18/17 23/8  
29/6 37/3 39/18 45/2  
45/16 48/19 53/18 83/7  
110/19  
**speakers** [5] 7/13 7/19  
7/20 46/1 60/2  
**speaking** [5] 7/16 32/5  
34/15 83/19 115/19  
**special** [11] 7/2 16/3  
16/19 18/10 20/8 20/11  
28/2 58/14 77/15 112/9

113/23  
**species** [5] 16/18 17/20  
43/3 58/5 59/21  
**specific** [3] 83/5 115/21  
116/12  
**specifically** [3] 77/16  
112/7 117/4  
**spend** [3] 7/6 67/1 114/17  
**spending** [2] 12/21 16/22  
**split** [3] 36/1 65/17 73/18  
**spoken** [3] 15/14 21/4  
110/2  
**sporting** [2] 113/9 113/15  
**spot** [1] 76/21  
**spots** [1] 24/7  
**spread** [2] 35/3 89/8  
**spreadsheet** [1] 108/13  
**Springs** [1] 109/21  
**Springville** [6] 18/23 20/2  
20/7 20/11 20/17 21/8  
**Springville's** [1] 20/9  
**staff** [18] 35/19 35/20  
38/14 38/17 63/5 70/1  
72/11 79/1 80/8 80/21  
86/19 109/14 115/10  
115/11 116/3 117/15  
118/19 120/18  
**staff's** [2] 108/5 114/10  
**staffs** [1] 36/9  
**stand** [2] 67/18 115/10  
**standard** [2] 109/6  
110/12  
**standpoint** [1] 24/2  
**stands** [1] 39/5  
**STANLEY** [8] 2/14 5/9  
48/11 62/15 79/12 102/11  
102/21 107/5  
**start** [7] 10/12 55/12  
55/14 64/9 81/22 82/3  
106/23  
**started** [2] 55/16 66/9  
**state** [26] 1/19 5/20 6/5

9/19 12/17 17/7 25/5  
28/17 31/9 35/16 39/12  
46/10 49/19 49/20 56/14  
56/19 58/6 60/20 68/8  
73/22 74/14 77/18 111/10  
111/17 122/2 122/5  
**State-base** [2] 73/22  
74/14  
**status** [4] 63/17 63/19  
70/13 71/21  
**step** [2] 46/4 46/21  
**stepped** [3] 10/23 42/2  
95/20  
**Steve** [4] 43/21 45/17  
45/19 45/20  
**stewardship** [10] 66/22  
67/2 67/9 68/13 68/17  
73/9 78/23 91/11 92/6  
92/20  
**Stiggins** [1] 66/11  
**still** [11] 11/2 11/3 54/6  
54/15 65/14 67/20 67/23  
70/21 75/8 110/2 112/17  
**strategic** [2] 17/12 17/19  
**Streams** [1] 17/13  
**streets** [1] 22/13  
**stretches** [1] 42/17  
**strongly** [1] 28/23  
**structure** [3] 74/9 75/18  
75/19  
**structured** [1] 14/20  
**structures** [1] 75/20  
**students** [2] 114/1 114/18  
**stuff** [3] 24/5 67/22  
120/23  
**stunning** [1] 42/14  
**subject** [1] 27/17  
**subset** [1] 30/4  
**successful** [1] 22/10  
**such** [3] 27/17 28/19  
122/21  
**Sugar** [4] 8/4 9/6 69/12

**S**

**Sugar...** [1] 105/4  
**suggest** [1] 28/23  
**summer** [1] 9/11  
**super** [1] 58/6  
**superintendent** [1] 40/18  
**support** [2] 12/4 83/6  
**sure** [16] 3/11 7/11 10/12  
 34/12 34/15 65/1 76/18  
 79/23 86/8 94/1 103/4  
 106/7 108/21 108/22  
 115/9 116/4  
**surrounding** [1] 57/8  
**Sutton** [1] 65/11  
**Swamp** [5] 78/17 91/8  
 91/14 92/16 109/12  
**Swamp-Lowe** [1] 78/17  
**swiftly** [1] 41/8  
**swim** [1] 38/7  
**Sykes** [3] 73/14 112/6  
 114/9

**T**

**tab** [45] 8/5 10/10 11/14  
 13/23 14/2 14/4 23/9  
 29/18 29/19 29/23 44/23  
 48/20 49/2 63/17 63/18  
 63/19 64/9 66/2 66/21  
 68/3 68/3 68/7 68/18  
 68/19 68/23 71/5 71/23  
 72/18 76/12 76/15 76/15  
 78/12 91/15 98/21 106/10  
 106/12 106/19 106/21  
 106/23 107/16 107/17  
 109/7 110/9 117/11 119/5  
**table** [2] 14/17 86/6  
**tables** [2] 38/18 39/4  
**tabs** [1] 63/18  
**take** [14] 16/8 24/20 25/8  
 43/19 46/1 51/22 65/5  
 76/11 79/2 79/14 86/9  
 107/9 109/5 115/23

**taken** [5] 1/17 40/8 65/20  
 71/4 112/23  
**taking** [6] 32/14 79/16  
 109/11 112/3 116/13  
 117/4  
**talk** [5] 10/9 14/15 50/1  
 70/8 115/10  
**talked** [2] 116/10 117/20  
**talking** [7] 33/23 45/2  
 52/23 54/6 103/2 110/3  
 115/22  
**Talladega** [3] 30/21  
 31/14 122/3  
**Tassin** [2] 29/7 33/23  
**tax** [1] 25/12  
**taxes** [1] 25/2  
**TCNP** [1] 42/10  
**team** [2] 40/19 40/23  
**tell** [6] 47/23 64/2 79/15  
 88/3 88/18 108/14  
**telling** [1] 11/2  
**ten** [4] 16/10 41/3 43/1  
 43/1  
**Tennessee** [4] 55/20  
 55/22 57/21 58/3  
**Tensaw** [1] 75/16  
**term** [3] 67/11 95/11 96/6  
**than** [7] 7/7 13/17 16/10  
 56/21 70/1 78/5 83/5  
**thank** [65] 8/23 10/1 10/3  
 10/17 13/18 13/19 14/5  
 14/8 15/3 15/4 18/14  
 18/15 22/2 22/6 22/7 23/6  
 23/15 27/10 27/15 27/15  
 29/3 29/4 33/21 36/23  
 37/1 37/5 37/11 39/15  
 39/16 39/23 39/23 40/7  
 43/19 43/20 45/4 45/14  
 48/8 48/18 49/7 52/4  
 53/13 53/14 53/16 53/23  
 54/17 54/19 55/4 55/9  
 58/15 59/14 59/22 60/1

63/2 82/10 85/17 89/19  
 92/11 93/6 98/10 100/16  
 101/17 114/9 115/15  
 116/1 121/10  
**thankful** [2] 18/12 109/13  
**thankfully** [1] 16/13  
**thanks** [2] 19/4 99/23  
**that** [388]  
**that'll** [2] 11/19 36/18  
**that's** [39] 13/23 17/13  
 21/19 25/23 27/7 27/7  
 32/14 32/19 33/22 35/11  
 38/4 47/20 51/1 51/12  
 52/19 53/2 54/9 58/15  
 58/22 58/23 59/2 59/5  
 59/8 69/23 82/13 91/13  
 91/15 92/1 92/22 93/3  
 98/21 100/5 101/12 109/2  
 109/11 109/23 117/12  
 118/13 119/5  
**their** [20] 6/21 7/21 14/9  
 16/22 19/19 21/9 21/10  
 25/5 25/9 30/4 46/17 59/9  
 73/16 77/5 78/3 81/19  
 83/11 94/21 114/12 116/2  
**them** [18] 13/6 14/22  
 21/10 25/21 32/2 46/14  
 56/16 56/17 57/6 69/6  
 98/3 108/6 112/15 112/16  
 113/5 113/18 115/9  
 115/15  
**theme** [1] 114/7  
**then** [26] 3/12 6/15 7/6  
 7/9 19/18 36/21 49/2  
 51/22 53/5 63/5 65/18  
 69/18 71/22 77/13 77/21  
 79/7 81/2 81/21 95/9  
 95/21 96/8 106/17 108/7  
 112/10 114/5 120/6  
**there** [72] 5/22 12/20  
 14/15 14/21 16/6 16/18  
 17/20 22/9 22/11 26/19

**T**

**there... [62]** 27/1 27/23  
 29/13 29/14 29/17 32/8  
 34/13 34/19 35/10 41/10  
 44/19 44/21 49/22 51/14  
 53/2 54/22 55/3 56/1 57/3  
 57/4 58/16 59/20 60/9  
 60/15 65/23 68/16 70/5  
 76/10 76/13 80/2 81/7  
 82/21 83/18 84/12 85/13  
 87/2 87/22 87/23 88/4  
 88/8 90/14 96/7 97/8  
 98/20 100/13 100/18  
 101/14 103/2 105/5 106/9  
 107/1 109/4 112/2 113/23  
 115/14 116/4 117/5 118/5  
 119/11 120/10 120/15  
 120/23

**there's [25]** 14/2 23/23  
 23/23 26/23 30/18 32/7  
 34/18 47/19 47/19 47/22  
 47/22 50/1 50/18 56/3  
 56/3 56/13 57/11 57/14  
 57/19 59/18 80/18 106/15  
 109/22 110/4 112/15

**thereabouts [1]** 54/15

**thereof [1]** 122/22

**these [22]** 16/22 24/2 24/3  
 24/7 24/8 25/20 26/4 26/4  
 29/12 30/3 31/11 31/11  
 32/2 42/13 42/13 52/15  
 52/16 57/7 86/13 97/1  
 112/13 114/13

**they [48]** 6/6 7/16 7/21  
 10/12 11/2 24/8 24/17  
 24/21 24/22 24/23 25/3  
 25/6 25/12 31/3 31/22  
 31/23 31/23 35/7 35/8  
 38/7 41/20 41/21 42/2  
 42/3 42/4 42/4 46/10  
 46/12 46/20 47/14 73/18  
 77/8 77/23 78/5 81/18

92/5 94/12 94/19 94/21  
 94/22 95/3 95/21 96/3  
 96/4 96/23 97/15 110/6  
 114/4

**they'll [1]** 96/16

**they're [13]** 11/1 11/13  
 12/20 14/17 24/19 25/7  
 69/5 69/5 81/8 96/16  
 96/17 110/2 111/22

**they've [3]** 17/18 17/22  
 33/2

**thing [7]** 8/17 16/12  
 24/16 26/1 26/2 26/13  
 51/1

**things [4]** 43/9 85/11  
 97/16 108/4

**think [45]** 7/1 10/18  
 11/19 16/11 16/16 17/5  
 18/9 20/19 24/12 24/17  
 27/12 28/2 29/14 32/3  
 35/7 36/20 44/3 44/12  
 45/1 48/5 58/22 59/1 75/7  
 75/8 79/18 80/12 82/14  
 84/20 88/2 88/4 90/11  
 94/20 95/19 96/2 96/3  
 96/23 97/4 105/22 106/13  
 107/2 110/6 112/12  
 118/16 118/22 120/16

**thinking [2]** 36/13 69/14

**thinning [2]** 116/21  
 116/23

**Thirteen [4]** 90/19  
 100/23 102/1 105/13

**this [165]**

**THOMAS [3]** 2/5 6/13  
 20/1

**those [61]** 7/17 34/5 34/7  
 34/7 41/13 42/5 50/21  
 56/11 56/15 60/21 60/22  
 63/20 65/8 65/19 69/8  
 72/9 72/17 73/23 74/17  
 75/18 75/21 76/6 76/11

77/17 77/19 78/2 78/8  
 78/11 84/1 84/2 84/7 84/7  
 84/10 89/4 89/15 90/18  
 90/22 92/23 96/16 97/16  
 97/23 99/7 100/22 101/21  
 102/3 103/3 103/6 104/9  
 104/16 105/9 108/19  
 109/5 109/18 111/21  
 111/23 112/17 114/18  
 117/8 119/15 119/15  
 121/6

**though [2]** 59/16 70/21

**thoughts [1]** 17/2

**thousand [1]** 21/13

**thousands [1]** 31/4

**threatened [1]** 43/2

**three [18]** 6/9 6/19 7/21  
 8/1 32/6 32/15 51/3 56/11  
 56/13 57/19 72/20 77/21  
 78/1 89/9 89/17 99/14  
 108/17 108/20

**three-minute [1]** 8/1

**through [31]** 15/18 21/14  
 28/11 33/8 36/5 38/6 41/8  
 42/5 46/23 51/14 57/4  
 57/16 64/18 66/2 67/2  
 69/7 69/15 72/10 72/17  
 73/14 76/20 78/8 84/4  
 84/12 107/23 112/5  
 112/19 114/1 115/7  
 117/17 118/9

**throughout [2]** 38/19  
 39/4

**THURSDAY [4]** 1/5  
 121/15 122/6 122/13

**tied [1]** 94/20

**timber [3]** 14/15 114/19  
 115/19

**time [17]** 7/5 7/7 7/17  
 7/22 8/1 16/22 18/14 46/2  
 67/4 69/4 72/1 81/16  
 83/18 100/3 107/10

**T**

**time...** [2] 107/11 114/17  
**timeline's** [1] 44/18  
**times** [1] 95/7  
**title** [1] 74/12  
**titled** [2] 36/7 74/10  
**today** [15] 5/13 9/16 10/9  
 14/12 23/18 30/9 37/13  
 40/16 44/3 48/16 48/18  
 50/1 56/18 86/2 104/22  
**together** [4] 19/10 20/10  
 35/20 36/10  
**told** [2] 21/10 88/19  
**ton** [1] 57/14  
**tons** [3] 55/21 58/3 58/13  
**too** [5] 25/6 35/14 85/5  
 88/20 113/3  
**took** [1] 20/18  
**top** [5] 24/8 50/16 54/12  
 78/1 88/2  
**tops** [3] 42/14 50/21  
 50/23  
**totally** [3] 59/16 85/2  
 107/15  
**touch** [1] 120/3  
**touching** [1] 111/14  
**tournaments** [1] 12/15  
**tours** [2] 113/12 120/15  
**toward** [2] 65/8 72/8  
**towards** [1] 91/11  
**Town** [1] 57/17  
**traces** [2] 57/15 57/16  
**track** [3] 51/5 75/9 80/1  
**tracks** [2] 110/20 111/3  
**tract** [72] 9/5 10/10 11/14  
 12/2 13/14 14/16 15/8  
 15/13 15/15 15/17 16/8  
 16/16 17/10 23/17 28/19  
 29/8 29/10 31/6 37/8  
 37/18 37/21 39/8 39/13  
 39/19 41/11 42/1 42/11  
 43/8 44/4 48/22 49/10

49/23 55/6 55/7 60/6  
 65/12 65/13 69/11 70/21  
 78/19 79/9 79/9 79/13  
 80/10 80/11 80/17 82/12  
 82/18 82/19 83/3 83/4  
 83/11 83/12 86/21 87/19  
 89/4 90/4 90/10 90/15  
 94/22 98/16 98/19 99/4  
 99/8 100/3 100/7 100/18  
 101/10 101/14 101/22  
 109/22 118/2  
**tracts** [22] 24/3 29/12  
 32/6 32/8 34/6 34/8 68/2  
 70/6 72/16 72/19 72/20  
 78/4 78/7 78/11 78/15  
 84/2 84/2 108/17 112/13  
 116/7 116/7 116/19  
**trail** [5] 43/14 50/16 73/7  
 75/16 75/17  
**trails** [8] 19/14 28/6  
 38/21 43/11 51/4 51/5  
 51/6 51/14  
**transaction** [1] 14/8  
**transactions** [1] 72/9  
**transcript** [2] 1/11  
 122/16  
**transfer** [2] 67/17 91/12  
**transferred** [1] 67/8  
**trapping** [1] 108/9  
**traps** [1] 108/3  
**trash** [1] 39/3  
**Treasurer** [1] 68/8  
**treasury** [1] 36/15  
**Trial** [3] 113/7 117/21  
 120/8  
**trials** [1] 120/22  
**tried** [3] 17/4 46/7 95/18  
**trip** [1] 23/20  
**trips** [1] 113/11  
**trouble** [2] 11/3 120/12  
**TROY** [5] 1/3 3/10 5/22  
 6/7 122/11

**true** [1] 122/16  
**trust** [7] 1/2 3/8 53/7 95/8  
 110/14 121/14 122/10  
**try** [7] 7/10 30/10 64/21  
 86/1 96/23 112/16 114/4  
**trying** [6] 6/3 21/20 26/7  
 87/16 97/16 114/11  
**TUGGLE** [6] 2/15 5/6  
 6/16 62/18 90/10 101/17  
**tune** [1] 50/10  
**tunnel** [1] 41/17  
**Turkey** [22] 37/6 37/15  
 38/2 40/10 41/1 41/7 42/1  
 42/9 43/4 44/4 69/22  
 83/12 83/16 83/20 93/12  
 93/19 95/16 95/23 97/21  
 100/2 100/6 100/17  
**turn** [5] 64/2 71/22 76/15  
 76/15 106/10  
**TVA** [2] 55/21 57/2  
**two** [19] 12/20 35/22  
 45/23 53/9 56/12 56/16  
 57/19 57/22 66/3 71/3  
 72/19 77/17 81/6 83/16  
 89/9 89/17 98/8 113/15  
 113/19  
**type** [1] 97/16

**U**

**ultimate** [1] 95/10  
**unanimous** [1] 93/3  
**unbelievable** [1] 22/14  
**under** [8] 34/20 39/9  
 52/17 55/16 77/1 94/3  
 110/15 113/17  
**under-appreciated** [1]  
 55/16  
**understand** [1] 52/10  
**understanding** [2] 29/12  
 92/16  
**understands** [1] 86/3  
**underway** [1] 75/8  
**unencumbered** [2] 65/3

**U**

**unencumbered... [1]**  
65/21

**unfortunately [1]** 41/15

**unique [3]** 15/21 51/1  
51/19

**unit [2]** 17/12 17/19

**universities [1]** 114/11

**UNIVERSITY [3]** 1/3  
3/10 122/11

**University's [1]** 114/3

**unless [4]** 70/2 84/11  
84/14 118/20

**unlike [1]** 58/11

**unrepresented [1]** 56/8

**unsure [1]** 86/4

**until [3]** 20/20 41/18 82/5

**up [52]** 5/21 7/14 13/9  
17/14 19/12 19/22 22/9  
22/12 23/1 23/20 25/16  
26/1 27/1 29/12 34/6  
35/21 36/19 37/16 40/11  
41/13 41/18 42/2 46/4  
46/21 48/1 51/4 51/14  
57/12 63/14 64/7 66/6  
67/1 78/13 81/12 82/15  
83/16 86/7 89/7 89/11  
94/20 96/7 96/17 98/3  
106/2 108/6 110/7 115/10  
115/20 116/13 118/8  
118/15 120/14

**update [9]** 18/19 19/7  
66/10 72/2 74/20 76/6  
108/12 109/22 110/4

**updated [3]** 26/20 64/12  
68/22

**updates [1]** 40/12

**upgraded [1]** 38/19

**upgrades [1]** 85/10

**upon [2]** 12/19 28/5

**Upper [1]** 66/11

**urban [1]** 25/20

**us [21]** 5/14 6/12 11/10  
17/16 25/16 26/6 46/3  
46/4 46/20 50/7 51/20  
65/7 73/5 79/16 80/19  
81/8 85/2 85/14 94/2 95/3  
108/8

**use [9]** 8/18 19/16 51/9  
68/1 96/16 112/17 113/8  
114/5 120/19

**used [6]** 40/11 43/5 50/12  
73/18 85/9 114/7

**uses [4]** 74/11 112/17  
113/13 117/23

**USGS [1]** 17/17

**usual [4]** 78/9 84/13  
108/12 122/23

**utilize [3]** 73/16 74/2  
92/10

**utilizing [2]** 75/11 108/23

**V**

**VALENTINE [3]** 2/16  
4/23 62/9

**valid [2]** 94/7 94/11

**valley [9]** 21/14 42/13  
52/21 55/17 55/20 55/22  
56/3 59/18 82/22

**valorem [1]** 25/2

**valuation [1]** 79/3

**value [12]** 36/8 46/11  
46/13 67/7 68/6 68/14  
73/21 78/22 79/8 91/11  
92/4 92/19

**values [3]** 46/18 60/3 60/6

**various [2]** 110/3 114/10

**varying [1]** 78/6

**Vernon [1]** 83/11

**very [22]** 12/16 16/16  
18/10 22/3 28/2 28/5  
33/10 43/16 48/18 66/17  
68/7 96/16 102/14 109/13  
109/17 111/12 111/23  
114/14 116/12 117/4

117/11 120/17

**Vice [1]** 5/16

**Video [2]** 123/15 123/16

**view [2]** 29/21 113/3

**views [1]** 28/14

**visit [1]** 15/16

**visitors [3]** 38/6 113/8  
113/23

**voting [1]** 86/4

**W**

**waiting [1]** 19/20

**want [33]** 14/8 19/23 21/2  
34/12 34/14 40/7 40/14  
42/19 43/19 44/5 44/7  
64/20 69/18 71/10 72/7  
72/10 78/8 79/22 80/8  
85/1 86/8 94/13 107/3  
107/15 110/5 110/5 113/4  
114/9 115/8 115/15  
115/18 115/23 118/13

**wanted [13]** 5/23 12/4  
13/1 19/6 19/12 19/21  
22/1 54/2 54/22 55/14  
95/3 108/12 116/12

**wants [1]** 106/1

**Warrior [1]** 58/2

**Warriors [1]** 57/18

**was [60]** 3/2 5/17 9/12  
13/9 14/14 14/15 14/19  
22/10 22/14 22/19 22/20  
22/22 23/19 24/6 29/13  
31/6 31/8 36/11 40/9 41/6  
41/10 42/1 44/15 45/1  
46/6 46/13 46/22 48/21  
48/23 66/12 66/13 68/14  
69/21 71/2 71/11 73/13  
74/6 75/1 75/14 81/12  
81/23 88/4 90/7 92/9  
92/13 93/17 95/1 95/4  
95/6 95/16 95/17 97/8  
102/20 104/4 106/16  
109/5 109/13 109/21

**W**

**was...** [2] 116/15 121/16  
**Washington** [1] 21/14  
**wasn't** [2] 20/20 94/1  
**watching** [1] 77/12  
**water** [2] 39/1 40/5  
**watershed** [6] 17/10  
 17/21 17/23 42/21 42/23  
 43/3  
**watersheds** [1] 57/22  
**way** [3] 30/22 113/17  
 118/17  
**we** [230]  
**we'll** [14] 3/12 7/5 7/6 7/9  
 36/20 63/14 76/1 83/18  
 84/3 92/3 106/6 106/9  
 115/16 120/3  
**we're** [44] 6/3 12/17 19/9  
 19/20 20/14 22/23 26/1  
 26/6 36/4 36/9 37/16  
 37/19 38/23 39/2 39/7  
 39/10 39/13 44/8 45/6  
 47/11 49/23 50/13 52/9  
 52/23 54/6 54/7 54/14  
 54/15 57/5 64/8 64/12  
 65/2 67/18 75/23 76/9  
 83/19 86/4 89/8 103/1  
 108/21 114/23 115/21  
 116/18 117/3  
**we've** [25] 10/20 11/8  
 12/6 12/10 20/10 23/21  
 26/20 38/12 38/16 38/17  
 38/20 43/13 46/7 47/8  
 50/12 51/19 56/11 66/10  
 68/4 69/19 71/16 83/5  
 85/9 111/5 116/10  
**weather** [1] 75/5  
**website** [2] 113/2 117/17  
**week** [3] 12/21 28/11 57/2  
**weeks** [6] 12/20 57/11  
 83/21 83/22 84/2 84/20  
**Wehle** [1] 113/21

**weight** [1] 67/10  
**welcome** [5] 3/7 5/23 10/5  
 13/2 40/1  
**well** [21] 10/19 11/9  
 12/11 15/22 15/23 16/14  
 21/6 31/10 31/14 34/10  
 42/22 53/12 54/11 76/21  
 90/13 96/15 108/16 109/1  
 109/3 111/17 120/23  
**went** [1] 44/10  
**were** [20] 22/11 26/14  
 32/1 42/4 56/15 65/6 66/7  
 75/4 91/1 92/8 97/15  
 103/2 106/12 108/4  
 108/22 111/8 111/11  
 111/19 115/1 115/6  
**west** [2] 49/17 65/11  
**Wetlands** [3] 65/10 72/23  
 73/1  
**Weyerhaeuser** [5] 30/2  
 31/17 31/18 31/21 35/14  
**what** [37] 7/15 16/19  
 16/19 17/1 17/4 20/5  
 20/10 20/19 21/22 26/7  
 30/8 31/16 34/15 34/16  
 36/1 39/7 42/19 44/3  
 50/13 52/11 52/23 53/8  
 54/14 58/20 66/4 76/22  
 79/16 81/13 85/7 86/3  
 87/19 94/3 96/13 106/16  
 106/17 111/5 118/13  
**What's** [1] 15/9  
**whatever** [1] 21/17  
**when** [12] 3/13 10/22  
 10/23 16/12 18/6 36/18  
 36/19 41/18 58/9 66/18  
 96/17 120/8  
**where** [18] 7/16 12/7  
 12/20 14/12 15/21 31/3  
 46/8 46/16 57/21 64/2  
 69/5 70/8 72/1 72/2 80/15  
 85/20 95/8 95/21

**WHEREUPON** [2] 3/1  
 121/13  
**whether** [7] 18/7 26/8  
 66/5 80/1 88/10 94/12  
 96/8  
**which** [18] 13/13 15/19  
 16/9 16/11 17/10 30/3  
 47/17 50/5 51/18 58/7  
 59/18 65/6 66/12 74/9  
 83/19 107/1 107/7 115/17  
**while** [4] 11/12 38/21  
 81/23 103/1  
**White** [1] 83/23  
**who** [4] 21/6 53/9 109/18  
 118/15  
**who's** [1] 40/17  
**who've** [1] 84/7  
**whoever** [1] 111/6  
**whole** [4] 22/12 34/20  
 39/4 54/6  
**why** [2] 94/1 107/2  
**wild** [32] 1/1 3/8 12/5  
 16/4 16/7 16/23 18/9  
 18/13 18/21 31/8 36/6  
 37/18 43/5 44/14 46/6  
 48/16 49/14 54/5 74/9  
 75/21 82/21 88/19 96/9  
 107/21 110/14 112/1  
 113/7 115/2 117/20 120/8  
 121/13 122/9  
**Wild's** [2] 74/1 74/14  
**wildlife** [8] 17/16 73/15  
 75/1 77/14 88/8 112/6  
 112/8 114/12  
**wildly** [1] 22/10  
**will** [53] 6/18 7/5 7/5 7/16  
 7/22 8/3 8/7 8/12 15/11  
 16/8 31/13 33/9 33/15  
 35/18 43/12 44/12 44/19  
 44/20 49/2 49/4 63/5  
 63/18 63/20 66/1 66/2  
 66/17 68/6 70/7 75/7

**W**

**will...** [24] 76/12 78/18  
78/23 79/1 79/2 82/15  
83/15 85/23 86/1 86/11  
91/19 95/9 106/20 109/3  
109/9 109/17 110/9  
112/20 113/1 116/13  
117/1 117/2 118/9 119/23  
**William** [2] 5/16 5/18  
**willing** [6] 14/13 24/19  
25/8 33/13 35/22 77/3  
**wise** [2] 115/13 115/13  
**within** [6] 32/8 59/5  
59/19 68/12 68/12 78/3  
**without** [5] 71/12 73/23  
74/13 80/4 123/16  
**WMA** [8] 30/23 65/11  
66/11 69/12 83/2 102/15  
105/4 116/14  
**WMA-Heard** [1] 83/2  
**WMA-Stiggins** [1] 66/11  
**WMA-Sugar** [1] 69/12  
**WMA-Sutton** [1] 65/11  
**Wolf** [1] 13/12  
**won't** [3] 57/20 112/19  
113/5  
**wondered** [1] 109/18  
**Wonderful** [1] 23/6  
**work** [24] 6/18 6/22 12/9  
30/7 31/13 32/1 32/13  
42/5 43/23 44/12 64/23  
65/4 74/23 75/9 75/11  
79/6 109/11 109/14  
113/13 114/10 115/10  
115/15 116/9 120/17  
**worked** [3] 30/1 30/2  
46/15  
**working** [9] 6/23 12/10  
35/20 36/5 36/9 36/9  
75/13 76/9 120/2  
**workout** [1] 63/23  
**world** [1] 12/19

**worth** [1] 16/16  
**would** [67] 13/2 16/5 16/9  
17/5 18/5 18/10 18/11  
23/19 24/10 26/13 26/17  
28/20 28/23 29/18 29/22  
33/16 36/1 36/2 36/3 36/6  
37/23 39/9 47/2 47/10  
48/3 50/3 50/7 51/3 51/10  
51/17 51/21 53/3 58/12  
60/7 63/3 64/9 67/21  
68/19 71/7 71/11 71/13  
72/8 73/8 73/9 74/1 74/15  
76/15 79/5 79/7 81/10  
82/8 82/20 84/13 88/18  
89/6 90/1 92/17 92/18  
93/10 94/21 96/3 98/14  
105/1 110/22 110/23  
111/1 117/18  
**Wow** [1] 104/22  
**write** [1] 64/20  
**written** [1] 123/16  
**wrote** [1] 117/15

**Y**

**y'all** [21] 10/19 11/3 11/3  
14/5 14/19 18/6 20/19  
22/6 23/15 26/3 26/3 26/7  
26/14 27/8 39/15 54/19  
58/15 84/20 89/6 98/2  
106/22  
**y'all's** [2] 24/14 24/15  
**Yeager** [2] 39/19 40/4  
**Yeah** [6] 10/14 33/12  
44/21 96/12 96/22 97/4  
**year** [20] 19/8 20/15 22/9  
26/21 38/5 38/12 38/23  
41/18 43/7 44/16 55/10  
55/11 66/9 66/20 67/19  
110/13 110/21 111/3  
115/5 123/5  
**years** [5] 12/7 30/18  
40/11 41/3 53/4  
**yellow** [9] 33/4 33/5

33/22 34/18 34/21 36/12  
64/11 68/21 88/14  
**yellowish** [1] 53/6  
**yellowish-brown** [1] 53/6  
**yes** [38] 13/7 29/17 35/2  
35/11 49/7 52/8 52/13  
53/14 60/22 61/1 61/3  
61/6 61/9 61/12 61/15  
61/18 61/21 62/1 62/4  
62/7 62/10 62/13 62/16  
70/17 71/3 71/17 79/12  
82/3 87/12 87/14 89/22  
93/23 94/10 94/16 95/12  
97/18 101/7 102/10  
**you** [205]  
**you'd** [1] 48/6  
**you'll** [15] 7/18 8/11 8/18  
11/18 14/3 29/19 44/22  
52/2 71/22 81/13 107/16  
108/13 118/3 118/12  
120/17  
**you're** [13] 3/14 10/5  
18/6 26/5 26/5 32/17  
37/18 52/11 58/19 71/2  
84/19 86/4 118/8  
**you've** [5] 8/7 9/14 9/22  
45/23 118/20  
**your** [43] 3/13 7/14 8/19  
8/20 9/17 18/7 18/14 29/1  
29/15 29/18 29/20 29/22  
44/22 48/21 49/1 55/2  
60/19 60/20 63/4 63/22  
63/23 64/10 64/19 68/20  
71/18 71/23 78/14 81/16  
89/5 89/7 89/11 90/18  
92/23 97/23 99/9 100/22  
101/23 103/9 104/11  
105/10 110/10 110/11  
118/12  
**youth** [1] 113/10

**Z**

**zones [1] 116/10**