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MINUTES OF THE  
FOREVER WILD BOARD MEETING  
University of South Alabama  
MacQueen Alumni Center  
100 Alumni Drive  
Mobile, Alabama  
August 3, 2023  
10:00 a.m.

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Transcript of Proceedings

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PROCEEDINGS, taken before Stacey  
L. Johnson, Certified Court Reporter and  
Commissioner for the State of Alabama at  
the University of South Alabama, MacQueen  
Alumni Center, 100 Alumni Drive, Mobile,  
Alabama, on the 3rd day of August, 2023,  
commencing at 10:00 a.m.

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**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Commissioner Chris Blankenship, Chairman**
- Mr. Reginald N. Holloway**
- Dr. Sean P. Powers**
- Dr. James B. McClintock**
- Mr. Jack Darnall**
- Ms. Karen Stanley**
- Mr. Jake Harper**
- Mr. Jimmy Parnell**
- Mr. Rick Oates**
- Dr. Heather Howell**
- Dr. Salem Saloom**
- Dr. John Valentine**

\* \* \* \* \*

1           CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Good morning,  
2           everybody, and welcome to the August 3rd  
3           meeting of the Forever Wild Land Trust  
4           Board. We appreciate the opportunity to  
5           host this here at the University of South  
6           Alabama, my alma mater. I even broke out  
7           my 1989 University of South Alabama  
8           Southerner tie, which is older than some  
9           of the folks that are here at the meeting  
10          today. But I'm glad to be here on our  
11          campus, and I appreciate the president,  
12          President Bonner, and the alumni  
13          association for allowing us to use this  
14          facility.

15                 I'll call the roll and make sure  
16          we have a quorum present. If you're here,  
17          please indicate that when I call your  
18          name.

19                 Chris Blankenship's here.

20                 Jack Darnall?

21                 MR. DARNALL: Here.

22                 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Harper?

23                 MR. HARPER: Here.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

2 MR. HOLLOWAY: Here.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Howell?

4 DR. HOWELL: Here.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

6 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Here.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Oates?

8 MR. OATES: Here.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Parnell?

10 MR. PARNELL: Here.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

12 DR. POWERS: Here.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Saloom?

14 DR. SALOOM: Here.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Valentine?

16 DR. VALENTINE: Here.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Neumann?

18 Ms. Stanley?

19 Mr. Childers?

20 Raymond Jones?

21 We have 11 members present. We do  
22 have a quorum.

23 I'd like now to ask Ms. Margaret

1 Sullivan to come up and welcome on behalf  
2 of the University of South Alabama.

3 MS. SULLIVAN: Thank you so much,  
4 Commissioner.

5 I'm Margaret Sullivan,  
6 vice president for development and alumni  
7 relations. And on behalf of President  
8 Bonner, who, unfortunately and  
9 regrettably, was called out of town, I am  
10 here to welcome you to the University of  
11 South Alabama and to the MacQueen Alumni  
12 Center. We are thrilled that you're  
13 hosting the quarterly meeting here and  
14 just commend you for all you do in service  
15 to Alabama and to conserve our beautiful  
16 lands, wildlife, and marine life.

17 Just briefly, I wanted to let you  
18 know that the MacQueen Alumni Center  
19 opened in 2020, and it is the campus home  
20 to over 96,000 alumni. And since the  
21 MacQueen Alumni Center opened in 2020,  
22 there have been a lot of transformational  
23 things going on on campus. We now have

1 the Hancock Whitney Stadium and had the  
2 best football season of all time last  
3 year. I invite you all to come to some  
4 home games and would love that.

5 We are scheduled to break ground  
6 on a new college of medicine education and  
7 research facility in December. This will  
8 be a 250,000-square-foot, 200-million-  
9 dollar facility that will provide state-  
10 of-the-art education and research. It  
11 will also allow us to expand our medical  
12 school class size from 80 to a hundred  
13 students. So very excited about that.

14 You may have seen we announced the  
15 purchase of Providence Hospital in April.  
16 That will add over 2,000 employees to the  
17 university.

18 We are planning for a new  
19 performing arts center, and we are  
20 building a Jaguar marching band facility  
21 on campus.

22 One of the most relevant things I  
23 think for you-all is our now Stokes School

1 of Marine and Environmental Sciences,  
2 which was established, Dr. Powers, in  
3 2021, received accreditation, and so there  
4 is a lot going on here thanks to the  
5 phenomenal leadership of President Joe  
6 Bonner, our fourth president.

7 I also wanted to call out one of  
8 our most accomplished alumni and your  
9 Board Chair, Commissioner Chris  
10 Blankenship. Chris is a 1993 alumni in  
11 political science, and fortunately for all  
12 of us, he did not take the path to DC to  
13 pursue a career in political science. He  
14 stayed in Alabama and has done such  
15 amazing and great things that have been in  
16 his DNA I think since he was a young boy  
17 on Dauphin Island. Chris, if you don't  
18 know, was a 2023 distinguished alumni for  
19 the university. That is our most  
20 prestigious award recognizing accomplished  
21 alumni doing great things. So,  
22 Commissioner, we are so very grateful to  
23 call you part of our family and for all

1       that you do for this state.

2               I also want to recognize my dear  
3 friend and colleague, Dr. Sean Powers.  
4 Dr. Powers joined us -- and he will not  
5 brag on himself but I will. He joined the  
6 university in 2003 and since that time has  
7 really built an incredible marine sciences  
8 program, over 30 million dollars of  
9 research, a strong, strong partnership  
10 with Dr. Valentine and the Dauphin Island  
11 Sea Lab, and I think over 156  
12 peer-reviewed applications.

13               We started the new school of  
14 marine and environmental sciences in 2021,  
15 enrolled the first class last fall, about  
16 40 students. We now have 205 declared  
17 majors in marine and environmental  
18 sciences. So the good work that you-all  
19 will continue for generations to come.

20               But just want to welcome you-all  
21 to USA. We want you to come back often  
22 and our campus is your home, so thank you  
23 so much for being here. It means the

1 world to us.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you,  
4 Margaret. I appreciate that welcome.

5 Just for my purposes, how many of  
6 the Board members this is your first time  
7 on the University of South Alabama campus?

8 Well, glad to have you down here.  
9 One of the good reasons for having these  
10 meetings in different places around the  
11 state is so that we can get a good feel  
12 for what's going on from one end of the  
13 state to the other. So I appreciate all  
14 of you from North Alabama making the trip  
15 down here.

16 We'll now begin our public comment  
17 period. Just a reminder that we have a  
18 three-minute time limit on the public  
19 comments. We only have, I think, three  
20 speakers this morning so far that have  
21 signed up. If you wanted to make public  
22 comment but haven't had the opportunity to  
23 fill out one of these green slips, please

1 raise your hand and one of our staff  
2 members will get that to you to make sure  
3 that your opportunity for public comment  
4 is available.

5 All right. I'm not seeing any.  
6 Our first speaker is on the Belcher Phase  
7 2 Tract. It's Justinn Overton with Coosa  
8 Riverkeeper. That's Tab 3b. Just a  
9 second. How are you today?

10 MS. OVERTON: I'm great. How are you?

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Good to see  
12 you.

13 MS. OVERTON: This is also my first  
14 time on campus. This is a beautiful  
15 facility. Thank you for having us.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Okay. Go  
17 ahead.

18 MS. OVERTON: Good morning. My name  
19 is Justinn Overton. I'm the executive  
20 director and staff riverkeeper at Coosa  
21 Riverkeeper.

22 We're a citizen-based river  
23 conservation nonprofit representing over

1 3500 dues-paying members who love the  
2 lakes, creeks, and skinny waters of the  
3 Coosa River system as well as the land  
4 that is over 5,000 square miles that we  
5 work in at Coosa Riverkeeper.

6 I'm here today to enthusiastically  
7 support the Belcher Phase 2 Tract. I have  
8 had the opportunity personally to play in  
9 that part of the Belcher Tract as well as  
10 growing up going to Oak Mountain basically  
11 begging my dad to go up to King's Chair.  
12 For those of you that have ever done that  
13 hike, it can be sort of brutal, especially  
14 on a summer day like this, and so the  
15 aesthetic value that this particular tract  
16 of land can offer folks that are on the  
17 Cahaba River basin looking out into the  
18 Coosa Valley is substantial, as well as,  
19 as y'all may know, Shelby County is one of  
20 the fastest growing counties in Alabama.  
21 Our office is actually located in  
22 Shelby County about 15 minutes from this  
23 tract of land, so it's incredibly

1 important to us as an organization, as  
2 well as to me personally, that we keep  
3 this aesthetic value from King's Chair  
4 intact. There are so many new  
5 neighborhoods in the Chelsea area. It  
6 actually seems like they're popping up  
7 what seems like every single day.

8 So the water quality is also a  
9 vital reason that I'm here today.

10 Coosa Riverkeeper just settled a case with  
11 a large developer that was having ongoing  
12 sedimentation issues into the north fork  
13 of Yellow Leaf Creek, which is a major  
14 tributary to Lay Lake on the Coosa River.  
15 So I believe by protecting this land it  
16 will also protect water quality of Cooper  
17 Branch, which is a very small skinny water  
18 that is also a tributary to the north  
19 fork of Yellow Leaf Creek, which is also  
20 home to a variety of species that y'all  
21 may know and love, including some really  
22 excellent redeye bass. So the  
23 sedimentation issue this particular part

1 of our watershed is facing is substantial  
2 on top of the value that this will bring  
3 to the communities that I represent and  
4 serve that are looking for more places to  
5 enjoy Alabama's abundant natural  
6 resources.

7 So I'm very excited and hope that  
8 y'all will consider this, and thank you  
9 for the opportunity to speak.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you.

11 Just for the court reporter,  
12 Ms. Stanley has joined us on the Board.

13 Our next speaker is on the Turkey  
14 Creek update from Jefferson County,  
15 Charles Yeager and Carter Sanford.

16 MR. YEAGER: Carlee.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Carlee. And  
18 there's no tab. This is not a current  
19 nomination. Okay.

20 MR. YEAGER: Thank you, Commissioner,  
21 members of the Board. I really appreciate  
22 you giving me an opportunity to speak.

23 I'm here to provide updates on things

1 going on at Turkey Creek every year.

2 My name is Charles Yeager, and I  
3 am the manager of Turkey Creek Nature  
4 Preserve. I've been there for now over 12  
5 years. I have the wonderful honor and  
6 responsibility of working with the State  
7 to manage the Turkey Creek Nature  
8 Preserve. If you are not familiar, it's  
9 in Pinson, Alabama. We have estimated  
10 around 130,000 that are coming out every  
11 year. This is our busy time of year.  
12 It's a very popular place for folks to  
13 swim, fish, hike, and this year is no  
14 different. We certainly are seeing record  
15 numbers, and I think that our numbers are  
16 up, to say the least.

17 This year it's been incredibly  
18 busy here. Our education programs have  
19 seen over 800 students come through our  
20 programs. Just in the calendar year  
21 alone, we've had over 25 volunteer groups  
22 with 175 volunteers coming out to help us  
23 maintain and improve the preserve. We've

1 had another number of events, including a  
2 native plant sale. We have a trail ride  
3 coming up in October. And amongst all  
4 this, we've been working very closely with  
5 the State to improve a parking lot, which  
6 is a huge asset and a huge change for the  
7 preserve. It's much needed with the  
8 amount of traffic we have. So I want to  
9 thank the State Lands folks, Zach and  
10 Jacque, for working so diligently to make  
11 this possible because it is much needed.  
12 I want to thank you for helping to fund  
13 that and make that possible. So thank you  
14 so much for that.

15 I also want to introduce you guys  
16 to Carlee. She's the executive director  
17 of Ruffner Mountain Coalition. This year  
18 we went through a pretty major transition,  
19 and she's going to tell you guys about  
20 that transition and some of the things  
21 that are coming up in the future.

22 MS. SANFORD: Thank you. I'll be  
23 quick. Just wanted to go ahead and

1 mention that Charles Yeager in April, he  
2 became under -- under the staff of Ruffner  
3 Mountain Nature Coalition.

4 So we are going through some major  
5 changes in Jefferson County. I want to  
6 just go ahead and mention them. Our bill  
7 passed, so we are officially now the  
8 Jefferson County Greenways Commission. So  
9 we are looking at how we maintain and  
10 operate and bring all the green spaces --  
11 large-acre green spaces in the future.  
12 Ruffner Mountain also has Forever Wild  
13 land. We average about 100,000 visitors  
14 per year. So it's really great. We're  
15 all coming together, streamlining  
16 operations, and we're working towards  
17 being more efficient and having more in  
18 the future. So hopefully, we'll be here  
19 again soon once everything is in place.  
20 So the Jefferson County Greenways  
21 Commission, we're working for all of it  
22 right now.

23 Thank you so much.

1           CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: And that also  
2 includes Red Mountain Park?

3           MS. SANFORD: Yes. It also includes  
4 Red Mountain Park, yes. Five years in the  
5 making.

6           CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you very  
7 much.

8                   And just for the Board, there are  
9 some reports from our State Lands Division  
10 in the back of the folder. If you recall,  
11 last May, y'all provided some funding from  
12 the Stewardship Fund to do things. The  
13 parking lot at Turkey Creek is one of  
14 those projects that has been funded  
15 through the vote that you had on those  
16 Stewardship projects.

17                   Thank, y'all.

18                   The next speaker is Mike Bunn.  
19 This is on the Historic Blakeley Pye  
20 Addition, Tab 4b page 19, and also it's 5g  
21 in your green folder.

22                   All right, sir. Go ahead.

23           MR. BUNN: Good morning, everyone.

1 I'm Mike Bunn. I'm the director of  
2 Historic Blakeley State Park. With me is  
3 Jamie Jaye who is probably listed, maybe  
4 separately. We're going to tell you about  
5 this together.

6 Real quick, we just want to  
7 reiterate probably some things that you  
8 may know already, but the tract that's  
9 being considered is adjacent to property  
10 that's already operating as part of the  
11 park. We already have some property on  
12 the southern end of our park that Forever  
13 Wild is allowing us to use for our trail  
14 system, et cetera. This particular parcel  
15 is, of course, incredibly valued for its  
16 natural heritage. It's on the river.  
17 It's a beautiful habitat for wildlife,  
18 et cetera, but it also has some serious  
19 significance associated with the Battle of  
20 Ft. Blakeley. It's on the very northern  
21 end of the confederate line during the  
22 nine-day siege, and when the battle  
23 occurred on April 9th, part of that line

1 charged right through that bluff on that  
2 property to the northernmost portion of  
3 the confederate line at Ft. Blakeley. And  
4 what's really interesting about that is  
5 that northern part of the confederate line  
6 that was involved there represents one of  
7 the largest concentrations of  
8 African-American troops to fight. They  
9 were on the battlefield at Ft. Blakeley.  
10 So adding to that to what we're already  
11 interpreting is the USCT Heritage Trail  
12 would be really significant for us and I  
13 think, you know, a really good use of  
14 resources. And our park is prepared,  
15 able, in a willing position to maintain  
16 access to this. Just want to make sure  
17 everybody understood that. We've got an  
18 access road that is already deeded to the  
19 foundation. We provide access to and  
20 maintain that.

21 MR. JAYE: Good morning. My name is  
22 Jamie Jaye.

23 I was introduced to Ms. Pye around

1 a year ago through a mutual friend of  
2 ours, Sam Crosby. And although she's in  
3 her mid-90s now, she's originally from  
4 this area, and she relocated to Detroit,  
5 Michigan, saying she could not handle the  
6 heat in South Alabama any longer. But  
7 she's very sharp-minded and was quick to  
8 point out that she has strictly held onto  
9 this piece of property for conservation  
10 and preservation and, in her words, a  
11 place for the critters to hang out. But  
12 she's expressed a sincere interest in  
13 allowing this property to be continued for  
14 that and to be preserved and conserved for  
15 future generations.

16 Thank you for your time.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

18 DR. POWERS: Now, holding right in the  
19 middle of that -- so this isn't  
20 continuous. There seems to be a little --

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: In your green  
22 folder on 5g, the nomination has been  
23 edited and --

1 DR. POWERS: Never mind.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right.

3 Thank you.

4 That's the end of our public  
5 comment period. Is there anybody else  
6 that wanted to speak that didn't get a  
7 chance?

8 All right. Thank you.

9 By regulation, appraisal values  
10 are confidential during periods of  
11 negotiation. Accordingly, in order to  
12 discuss tract appraisal values, the Board  
13 will need to go into a recess for an  
14 executive session.

15 Is there a motion for the Board to  
16 now recess to attend an executive session?

17 MR. OATES: So moved.

18 MR. HARPER: Second.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Moved by  
20 Mr. Oates and seconded by Mr. Harper.

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

23 Those in favor indicate by saying aye and

1 those opposed by saying no.

2 Chris Blankenship, yes.

3 Jack Darnall?

4 MR. DARNALL: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Harper?

6 MR. HARPER: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

8 MR. HOLLOWAY: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Howell?

10 DR. HOWELL: Aye.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. McClintock?

12 DR. MCCLINTOCK: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Oates?

14 MR. OATES: Yes.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Parnell?

16 MR. PARNELL: Yes.

17 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

18 DR. POWERS: Yes.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Saloom?

20 DR. SALOOM: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Valentine?

22 DR. VALENTINE: Yes.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP:

1 Ms. Stanley?

2 MS. STANLEY: Yes.

3 Thank you. It is now 10:19.  
4 We'll take approximately a 20-minute  
5 recess and then return.

6 (Recess from 10:19 a.m. to  
7 10:34 a.m.)

8 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All right. We  
9 are back from executive session. It is  
10 10:34. I'll turn it over to Ms. McCurdy  
11 for program status.

12 MS. MCCURDY: Thank you, Commissioner.

13 All right. Board members, we'll  
14 be on Tab 2a, and this is from your green  
15 folder so it will be the slightly yellow  
16 sheet. We had some updates to the  
17 numbers.

18 So I wanted to run through the  
19 properties that we currently have in the  
20 closing process based on prior Board  
21 motions for staff to proceed with second  
22 appraisals and negotiation with landowners  
23 to get these tracts across the finish

1 line. So I wanted to run through those  
2 for status and also to let the Board know  
3 what their current available balance is  
4 for additional property actions if you  
5 choose to move forward with anything  
6 today.

7 All right. The properties that  
8 are in some phase of the closing process  
9 are the following: Bon Secour River  
10 Wetland Addition, Baldwin County; Sipse  
11 River Swamp Brownville Addition,  
12 Tuscaloosa County; Skyline WMA-Fowler Cove  
13 Addition, Jackson County. If we take  
14 those properties, the acquisition cost,  
15 and also the required transfer to the  
16 Forever Wild Stewardship Account and do  
17 all that math, that leaves you with  
18 approximately just over 20 million. We  
19 have to stay within our budgetary  
20 authority per the State budget process so  
21 you actually would have an unencumbered  
22 balance of just over 21 million, but  
23 technically for this fiscal year, you are

1 operating more along the lines of 20  
2 million. So that's the current status of  
3 properties in closing. To remind the  
4 Board, once you instruct staff to get  
5 those closed, unless we hit a glitch of  
6 some sort, we continue that process and  
7 close those. If we hit a glitch or  
8 something unexpected, I come back to you  
9 and ask for further direction, but right  
10 now everything is okay with those  
11 closings.

12 I wanted to also run through the  
13 properties that have closed this fiscal  
14 year. Before I do that, are there any  
15 questions on the properties that are  
16 currently in the closing process?

17 Okay. Let's run through for the  
18 benefit of the public as well as the Board  
19 the tracts that have closed in this fiscal  
20 year so far. Our fiscal year began  
21 October 1st of last year. That's Autauga  
22 WMA-County Road 112 Addition, Autauga  
23 WMA-Hart Addition, Cahaba

1 River-Shelby County Park Peel Addition,  
2 Coldwater Mountain-McVey Addition,  
3 Coldwater Mountain-Robertson Addition,  
4 Freedom Hills WMA-Boddie Addition, Perdido  
5 WMA-Snowden Branch Addition, Red Hills-  
6 Flat Creek Phase IV, also Phase V,  
7 Riverton CHA-Hurd Hollow Addition, and  
8 Riverton CHA-Barnett Mill Hollow. That's  
9 so far this fiscal year a total of  
10 approximately 3,184 acres.

11 Any questions on the closed  
12 properties?

13 All right. Let's move to Tab 2b.  
14 This is our Stewardship Fund information.  
15 The Board had previously authorized  
16 spending from the Stewardship account for  
17 the various projects and that did include,  
18 as the Commissioner noted, the parking lot  
19 work that Charles was updating us on.  
20 Currently, we have in our available  
21 balance -- the accounting reports, which  
22 is what I give you, would show that we  
23 have an available balance of just over a

1 million dollars. However, in various  
2 aspects and phases currently of our  
3 procurement and process, there's an  
4 additional \$946,000 that is in process of  
5 being paid or is encumbered related to  
6 contract work, such as the parking lot.  
7 So actually, we're getting toward the end  
8 of fiscal -- that will be September  
9 30th -- so we don't expect a problem, but  
10 we are approaching the figure we had  
11 budgeted for Stewardship Fund expenditures  
12 for this fiscal year, but we're fine.

13 I would also note for the Board we  
14 give -- in connection with Tab 4c that was  
15 in your green folder -- the quarterly  
16 report the State treasurer office provides  
17 us as to current net asset value of the  
18 Stewardship Fund and that report is  
19 detailed in Tab 4c. The bottom line  
20 figures the net asset value is over  
21 43.4 million at this point. The  
22 Stewardship Fund by the constitutional  
23 amendment it was formed is designed to

1 provide a basis of security perpetually  
2 for care and maintenance of the tracts  
3 that are acquired.

4 Any questions related to the  
5 Stewardship Fund?

6 Okay. Commissioner, that wraps up  
7 the usual financial reports. If there are  
8 no questions, I will move on to the update  
9 and status of our appraisals that have  
10 been motioned by the Board. And that's  
11 Tab 3a. Again, we had a few updates, and  
12 so, Board members, you will be looking for  
13 your yellow sheet.

14 Of the appraisals, this is -- I  
15 will run through the appraisals that we  
16 have in hand. Therefore, these tracts are  
17 available for further Board action if the  
18 Board should choose to move toward  
19 acquisition. I also want to update you on  
20 the appraisals you motioned for in  
21 previous meetings that have not yet been  
22 completed, so I'm going to run through  
23 everything.

1           We have the Lake Guntersville  
2           State Park-John Doss Mountain Addition,  
3           Marshall County; the Lillian Swamp  
4           Blackwater Addition, Baldwin County; Oak  
5           Mountain State Park-Belcher Addition  
6           Phase 2, Shelby County.

7           We have additional appraisals that  
8           you've motioned for but we have not yet  
9           initiated, and those include Blackwater  
10          River SOA-Clapper Addition. We had not  
11          initiated that one as we did not have  
12          complete deed information back from the  
13          landowner. We did receive that as I was  
14          driving down yesterday so we'll review  
15          that when we get back, but I anticipate  
16          that one will move forward as soon as we  
17          return. We're still missing some deed  
18          information on the Coldwater Mountain-  
19          Martin Addition. We're also missing some  
20          deed information -- or clarifying  
21          information on the West Fowl River Tract.  
22          We did receive information from the  
23          landowner, but we're having to follow up

1 on some questions related to that before  
2 we move forward with the appraisals.  
3 Again, we don't initiate the appraisals  
4 until we have the information that ensures  
5 we'll get a proper valuation from the  
6 appraiser based on acreage, based on  
7 potential encumbrances that we are aware  
8 of at this time, so that's -- but those  
9 are in -- hopefully will be in the process  
10 of being available for our next meeting.

11 Any questions from the Board  
12 related to pending appraisals?

13 All right. Commissioner, if you  
14 don't have anything else, then I will move  
15 forward to Tab 5a, which reflects the  
16 status of various grant activity staff's  
17 been working on.

18 And for the benefit of the public,  
19 the Board has asked the staff to continue  
20 to be vigilant in trying to find out  
21 opportunities to leverage the Board's  
22 dollars, either through partnerships or  
23 identifying grant opportunities that some

1 of the tracts might fit within that grant  
2 program requirements. Oftentimes those  
3 are federal grants. A lot of our  
4 partnership opportunities have also been  
5 in conjunctions with our Wildlife &  
6 Freshwater Fisheries Division, Chuck  
7 Sykes' division, on their federal Pittman-  
8 Robertson funds. So I just want to kind  
9 of run through that quickly.

10 The nominations that have already  
11 been approved that are in the acquisition  
12 process that are benefiting from grant  
13 funding or leverage funding or  
14 partnerships include the Bon Secour River  
15 Wetland Additions. That tract is  
16 benefiting from a grant that we are able  
17 to secure through the National Coastal  
18 Wetlands Conservation program, and it is  
19 providing -- that federal funding will  
20 cover approximately 68 percent of that  
21 land value portion of that acquisition.  
22 We also are partnering with the  
23 Wildlife -- our department's Wildlife &

1        Freshwater Fisheries Division on the  
2        Skyline WMA-Fowler Cove Addition. Those  
3        are some of Chuck's Pittman-Robertson  
4        funds. They require a 25 percent  
5        State-based match. Forever Wild provides  
6        that State-based match so that we can  
7        assess those federal funds.

8                The nominations that are in some  
9        portion of the appraisal process that have  
10       a leveraging opportunity include the  
11       Blackwater River SOA-Clapper Addition.  
12       That's another property that we are  
13       working with Chuck on in the Pittman-  
14       Robertson funding. We are currently  
15       looking at an approximate 75/25 split on  
16       that one.

17               Other nominations that are on our  
18       short list that would provide a potential  
19       grant opportunity, that includes the  
20       Dugdown Mountain Corridor property. We've  
21       discussed before that is a rather lengthy  
22       grant evaluation process that the Forestry  
23       Commission has been working on, and so

1       there are -- I'll offer, Mr. Oates, any  
2       opportunity if you want to update, but I  
3       know that last we heard, you were waiting  
4       for possibly some indication that that  
5       grant award might be forthcoming before  
6       you proceeded with the appraisal. But the  
7       Forestry Commission has offered to cover  
8       that expense, or that was where we left  
9       off. So how about an update?

10       MR. OATES: That's correct, Patti. We  
11       are waiting -- frustratingly waiting for  
12       the award announcement from USDA. We  
13       expect it anytime. Nominations for the  
14       next year are due in a couple weeks, and  
15       we think it will be in before then. So  
16       hopefully by the next meeting.

17       MS. MCCURDY: I know we're used to  
18       waiting on that opportunity, so maybe  
19       that's good news.

20       A couple of other grants that I  
21       noted in Tab 5a are not really related to  
22       acquisition but are helping us provide  
23       some additional work on the properties.

1 One is the Little River Canyon Hancock/TNC  
2 Addition. We are benefiting from some  
3 grant funding through the National Fish &  
4 Wildlife Foundation, or NFWF. This is  
5 NFWF's Cumberland Plateau-Southern  
6 Appalachian fund, and so we are currently  
7 utilizing those funds on the Little River  
8 WMA in Cherokee County. Harvesting  
9 activities are underway. That is the  
10 first step in the removal of the existing  
11 loblolly pine stand and proceeding with  
12 habitat restoration on that tract. So  
13 that one moving in forward fine. And we  
14 are about at 60 percent of the loblolly  
15 stand having been harvested roughly at  
16 this point, so that one's moving fine.

17 We also received great news since  
18 the last meeting, and I want to thank  
19 Commissioner Blankenship for his support  
20 on this. The Department of Conservation  
21 will be benefiting from some Gulf of  
22 Mexico Energy Security Act, or GOMESA,  
23 dollars that the Governor has awarded to

1 go toward enhancements to the Mobile-  
2 Tensaw Delta Bartram and also Perdido  
3 River Canoe Trails. It's going to be  
4 about 1.9 million dollars. It will allow  
5 us to add additional stops, improve the  
6 shelters in some overnight accommodations  
7 along those river-based trails that are  
8 greatly used, and also refurbish some of  
9 the existing shelters that were put in  
10 many years ago that needed touch-ups. So  
11 we are very excited to be able to enhance  
12 that usage and add stops along those  
13 water-based trails. But those are the  
14 funds of some grant nature that we are  
15 currently involved in trying to utilize.

16 Any questions from the Board as  
17 far as grant work?

18 All right. Well, we will move to  
19 Tab 4. This is the portion of the meeting  
20 where I will run through our tracts that,  
21 through our scoring process, have attained  
22 a position on the short list. Of all the  
23 nominated tracts that we receive once we

1 secure willing seller letters from the  
2 landowners, we proceed with scoring in the  
3 four categories of nature preserve, state  
4 parks addition, wildlife manage -- or new  
5 state parks, or wildlife management areas  
6 or SOAs, either new or additions to those,  
7 and then general recreation. Each tract  
8 is scored in all four categories. Tracts  
9 compete amongst themselves within the  
10 North, Central, and Southern District.  
11 That produces a short list that a tract  
12 must score in the top 3 of one of those  
13 four categories in its district. So the  
14 result of all that magic, which, as you  
15 can imagine, my staff does for me, results  
16 in the short list that we will run through  
17 now. As usual, I'm going to run through  
18 just the tract by name. I kind of go  
19 through it fairly quickly. If you have a  
20 question and I don't see your hand,  
21 please, as usual, speak up and stop me.

22 So of the tracts that are  
23 currently on the short list and would be

1 available to the Board for a motion for  
2 first appraisal include the following:  
3 Alabama River-Montgomery Tract. I do want  
4 to -- on some of these if I have an update  
5 for you, I'll stop and give the update.  
6 As I've noted in the information from the  
7 Board, this has been a tract that we have  
8 been involved in sort of an ongoing  
9 assessment and evaluation both by myself  
10 and my staff and Chuck Sykes and his  
11 staff. We have determined based on some  
12 of the restrictions on the property that  
13 we would not be able to incorporate a  
14 shooting range on this property. We would  
15 not be able to install the berm that would  
16 be necessary. There's also concerns that  
17 flooding -- periodic water coverage -- let  
18 me say it that way -- on the tract would  
19 result in damage of the structure, so not  
20 a very good use of those funds. Also in  
21 the continuing assessment with Chuck,  
22 there are some other access questions,  
23 usage restrictions, that currently does

1 not look like Wildlife will be able to be  
2 matching or providing the opportunity for  
3 Pittman-Robertson match on that tract.  
4 We're just having a little bit of a  
5 difficulty working on how it would be  
6 utilized, so I just wanted to update the  
7 Board that we're just not really  
8 successful and able to figure that out.  
9 We were on the tract this week again and  
10 that's just simply where we were.

11 On the Bennett Creek Tract, as I  
12 noted for the Board, after the tract made  
13 the short list, we have also found, it  
14 looks like, an access issue on that tract.  
15 I would ask the Board to let us continue  
16 to look at that. We have an access  
17 concern right now, so I don't think that  
18 one is ripe to move forward.

19 All right. We have the Bon Secour  
20 River-Cook Road Addition, Baldwin County;  
21 Cathedral Caverns State Park-Gurly Drive  
22 Addition, Marshall County; Coldwater  
23 Mountain-Oxanna Addition, Calhoun County;

1 D'Olive Bay-North Addition,  
2 Baldwin County; Dugdown Mountain Corridor,  
3 Cleburne County; Freedom Hills WMA-Sutton  
4 Hill Addition, Colbert County. The  
5 Historic Blakeley State Park-Pye Addition,  
6 we have that on the short list. That is  
7 the tract that we mentioned. There's also  
8 some green folder information, Tab 5g. I  
9 want to note for the Board that at the  
10 time of the map, we still had it listed at  
11 85 acres. The map has been updated as you  
12 will see in 5g. We worked with the  
13 landowner to sort of remove some of the  
14 acreage that we thought might produce  
15 future management issues that sort of  
16 circled around the existing area that does  
17 have some residential homes, and so that  
18 tract has been revised and it's now closer  
19 to 81 acres. But that is a green folder  
20 item. I want to thank my staff for their  
21 work with that landowner and also Mike  
22 Bunn in, you know, expressing our concerns  
23 and getting that reshaped. And we

1 appreciate Ms. Pye's work with us on that.

2 The next one on the short list,  
3 Natural Bridge Park, you will also see an  
4 update in your green folder, Tab 5h, on  
5 that one. I need to update the Board that  
6 over the weekend, the Natural Bridge  
7 nomination was acquired by a private  
8 buyer, so that one is no longer available  
9 to the Board. The nominator wanted me to  
10 pass along their appreciation for the  
11 Board's continual evaluation and  
12 discussion on that tract, but it is now in  
13 private hands. And I really don't have  
14 any additional information. Literally,  
15 that happened over the weekend. I just  
16 know it's not available to us.

17 Red Hills-Blanton Addition,  
18 Monroe County, I wanted to update the  
19 Board somewhat on that one. As we've  
20 mentioned in prior meetings, Chuck and the  
21 Wildlife Division had been in discussions  
22 with the landowners about possibly  
23 acquiring that tract themselves with their

1       division's funds. It appears that the  
2       landowner anticipated purchase expectation  
3       will not be in line with appraised value.  
4       I think those discussions have, therefore,  
5       ceased. While it is still available to  
6       the Board as an addition, it would  
7       indicate that the acquisition of that's  
8       probably unlikely due to the price point  
9       expectation of the landowners on that  
10      tract.

11               Those are the short list  
12      nominations. I ran through those a bit  
13      quickly. Any questions on those?

14               Okay. Commissioner, I don't see  
15      any, so I'm going to turn it back to you  
16      for general discussion. As I do, just  
17      want to remind everyone be sure your mics  
18      are on and that if you are speaking that  
19      you are speaking into the mic. The court  
20      reporter's moved up so I think she's  
21      better, but just for the back of the room.

22               Commissioner?

23               CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you for

1       those reports.

2               This is the portion of the meeting  
3 where we generally receive motions for  
4 nominations and motions for appraisals or  
5 action on properties. Are there any  
6 motions?

7               Dr. McClintock?

8               DR. MCCLINTOCK: Yes. I would like to  
9 so move that the Belcher Tract 2-Oak  
10 Mountain State Park property be considered  
11 for purchase. I see this is the last  
12 opportunity to expand this very popular  
13 state park in our state adjacent to major  
14 ongoing rapid development. As we heard  
15 from the Coosa Riverkeeper earlier, it's  
16 high in diversity, Coosa River Shed, and  
17 potential locations for water quality  
18 should all be considered, and I just would  
19 like to say that this is an opportunity  
20 I'd hate to see squandered.

21               MS. MCCURDY: The motion is for second  
22 appraisal and move to purchase.

23               CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So the motion

1 is for a second appraisal and move to  
2 purchase on the Belcher Phase 2 Addition.  
3 That's in Tab 3 in your packet.

4 Any questions/discussion?

5 All those in favor, please raise  
6 your hand.

7 MS. MCCURDY: I'm going to count. If  
8 y'all could please hold your hands up.  
9 One, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. I'm going to  
10 ask for confirmation. Nine votes, nine  
11 yea.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: All those  
13 opposed?

14 MS. MCCURDY: We have two nays.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any abstain?

16 MS. MCCURDY: Abstention, Mr. Harper?

17 MR. HARPER: No, this is nay.

18 MS. MCCURDY: Mr. Harper and  
19 Mr. Parnell were nays. Do we have any  
20 abstentions?

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Motion carries.

22 DR. SALOOM: Question, Commissioner.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Saloom?

1 DR. SALOOM: The Red Hills-Blanton  
2 Addition, there has not been an appraisal  
3 on that as of yet; is that correct?

4 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: That's correct.  
5 Our Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries  
6 Division is working directly with the  
7 landowner and they are working with him  
8 and they may purchase without the Board --  
9 a hundred percent with Wildlife &  
10 Freshwater Fisheries dollars since it's  
11 all --

12 MS. MCCURDY: Can you speak in the  
13 mic. Make sure your microphone is on.

14 DR. SALOOM: So the question is in  
15 order for that to come about to add to the  
16 addition of the rest of the Red Hills, we  
17 need a first appraisal on that now or not.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I think the  
19 Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries is working  
20 with them directly, and they can just  
21 handle the appraisal through their  
22 process.

23 MR. HOLLOWAY: Mr. Chairman?

1           CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

2           MR. HOLLOWAY: I'd like to move for a  
3 first appraisal for the Historic Blakeley  
4 Pye Addition, Baldwin County.

5           MR. DARNALL: I'll second that.

6           CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Motion by  
7 Mr. Holloway and second by Mr. Darnall for  
8 a first appraisal on the Historic Blakeley  
9 Park Pye Addition as presented today in  
10 Tab 5 with the updated nomination.

11          MS. MCCURDY: 5g.

12          CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any questions  
13 on that? I know that's a little confusing  
14 since we had a new revised nomination in  
15 the packet.

16          MR. PARNELL: From 85 to 81?

17          CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Yes, sir. So  
18 it would be on the 81-and-a-half-acre  
19 piece.

20          MS. MCCURDY: Approximately.

21          CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any questions?

22                 All right. All those in favor,  
23 please raise your hand for a first

1 appraisal on the Blakeley Pye Addition.

2 MS. MCCURDY: I have 11 yea.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any opposed?

4 MS. MCCURDY: And Mr. Parnell one nay.

5 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you. The  
6 motion carries.

7 Dr. Powers?

8 DR. POWERS: I'd like to move for a  
9 first appraisal on the Cathedral Caverns  
10 State Park-Gurly Drive Addition.

11 DR. MCCLINTOCK: I'll second that.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers  
13 makes a motion and Dr. McClintock seconded  
14 for a first appraisal on the Cathedral  
15 Caverns State Park-Gurly Drive Addition.

16 Any questions or discussion for a  
17 first appraisal there?

18 All right. All those in favor  
19 please raise your hand.

20 MS. MCCURDY: I see 11 yea.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any opposed?

22 MS. MCCURDY: Mr. Parnell one nay.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Motion carries.

1 Dr. Powers?

2 DR. POWERS: I'd like to move for a  
3 second appraisal and purchase of the  
4 Gunterville State Park Addition.

5 MS. MCCURDY: John Doss Mountain.

6 DR. POWERS: It's a relatively small  
7 acquisition, but it seems like it would be  
8 very valuable at that state park.

9 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
11 Mr. Holloway. So it is for a second  
12 appraisal on move to purchase on the  
13 Gunterville State Park-John Doss Mountain  
14 Addition.

15 Any discussion or questions?

16 All those in favor please raise  
17 your hand.

18 MS. MCCURDY: Okay. Eleven yea.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any opposed?

20 MS. MCCURDY: No nays. Any  
21 abstentions?

22 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Motion carries.

23 Thank you.

1 Dr. Powers?

2 DR. POWERS: So this one is  
3 actually -- I think this would be an  
4 appropriate time to keep the D'Olive Bay  
5 on for one more. And I apologize to the  
6 Board. I was not able -- I have questions  
7 about the existing structures on that. I  
8 know this property's been on for a long  
9 time. And I'd also like to talk to  
10 Patti's staff about grant opportunities  
11 for it. So I don't -- anyway, I'd like to  
12 move to keep it on for one more meeting,  
13 and I promise I'll make a decision at that  
14 point.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: And that's all  
16 we need. Thank you. We'll do that.

17 MS. MCCURDY: For the court reporter,  
18 that's the D'Olive Bay North Addition  
19 Tract.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any other  
21 discussion? Any other general business?

22 Mr. Parnell?

23 MR. PARNELL: I think probably anybody

1       that's observed realizes I'm kind of  
2       against us buying more land because I  
3       don't think we're taking care of our  
4       current property. I get complaints on a  
5       regular basis about Forever Wild land  
6       being an incubator for wild hogs. I would  
7       ask -- make a motion that the staff do  
8       some research and come up with us a wild  
9       hog eradication program that would be  
10      extremely aggressive on Forever Wild land  
11      so that I don't have to hear about  
12      Forever Wild being the source of wild hogs  
13      all across Alabama.

14           CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Thank you for  
15      that information. I think as we move into  
16      these miscellaneous reports that are  
17      provided by the staff, there's information  
18      on the work that's being done, not only on  
19      hog eradication, but other work on the  
20      Forever Wild properties. And I will be  
21      glad to provide to the Board some numbers  
22      of wild hogs that have been removed on  
23      Forever Wild properties because I do think

1       that that is important work that our staff  
2       is doing to help manage these properties.

3                Would that be sufficient to do  
4       that --

5               MR. PARNELL:    Sure.

6               CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP:  -- and let's  
7       discuss it from there after you see some  
8       of those numbers?

9               MR. PARNELL:    Sure.  I'm good.

10              CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP:  Because we  
11      agree with you that it is an issue that  
12      they are addressing on the properties.

13              So with that if there's no other  
14      business, let's move into the Tab 5  
15      reports where we can highlight some of the  
16      work that is being done on the tracts that  
17      includes a lot of the work that y'all  
18      agreed to fund on the access and way  
19      finding and then as well as some of the  
20      forestry management work.

21              MS. MCCURDY:  All right.  Well, we  
22      have taken care of Tab 5.  The only tract  
23      that was rolling off due to NBA procedure

1 was the tract that Dr. Powers has  
2 continued, so we've taken care of 5b.

3 If you will look at Tab 5c, we are  
4 required by Amendment 543 to initiate at  
5 least an initial management plan for our  
6 tracts within one year after acquisition.  
7 I generally try to bring these to the  
8 Board when I can one meeting in advance.  
9 In case there are questions, we can  
10 address them in between. The tracts that  
11 are -- would be added to management plans  
12 this time are existing tracts that were  
13 additions and would fall into current  
14 management plans, so I want to run through  
15 those. Again, this is Tab 5c.

16 We have the Coldwater-Robertson  
17 Addition that we would propose including  
18 within the current Coldwater Mountain  
19 Complex plan. We have the Barnett  
20 Addition and Hurd Hollow Addition to the  
21 Riverton Community Hunting Area complex.  
22 Again, due to all these tracts being  
23 additions, we would propose that they be

1 incorporated within the existing  
2 management plans. If the Board agrees  
3 with that and the information provided in  
4 your packet for Tab 5c, there is a  
5 potential motion, but I would need  
6 eventually a motion and a vote by the  
7 Board to accept.

8 MR. HOLLOWAY: Mr. Chairman?

9 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Mr. Holloway?

10 MR. HOLLOWAY: I'd like to move that  
11 the Board approves the State Lands  
12 proceeding with the inclusion of the  
13 Coldwater Mountain Complex-Robertson  
14 Addition, and the Riverton CHA Complex-  
15 Barnett and Hurd Hollow Additions into  
16 existing management plans as set forth in  
17 the memorandum dated August 3, 2023.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Is there a  
19 second?

20 DR. SALOOM: Second.

21 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
22 Dr. Saloom.

23 All those in favor please raise

1 your hand.

2 MS. MCCURDY: Eleven yea.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Any opposed?

4 Any abstention?

5 Motion carries. Thank you.

6 MS. MCCURDY: All right. With that  
7 business taken care of, next I would like  
8 to move to Tab 5d. Now, Tab 5d includes  
9 several memos that we incorporated sort of  
10 into one.

11 Each year at the August meeting,  
12 we provide some information on the  
13 activities that we have accomplished this  
14 fiscal year. Now, the fiscal year is not  
15 over. However, we generally go ahead and  
16 present this in August due to other  
17 business items that come up later in the  
18 year. So it's not a full account, but it  
19 is somewhat of an account of what the  
20 staff has been engaged in.

21 Now, the staff works together  
22 holistically, but we do these reports  
23 divided into the certain different

1 sections/areas of my State Lands Division  
2 that are targeting different activities  
3 and are working together but with a  
4 different focus. So I will run through --  
5 as usual, I'm not going to read every word  
6 in these reports, but I wanted to run  
7 through the reports, give you some  
8 examples of the activities.

9 And I will say as you will see by  
10 these reports and that I often remark  
11 quite truthfully, I stand up here and  
12 report to you what's going on with the  
13 program, but it is only through the hard  
14 work of my staff and the Wildlife &  
15 Freshwater Fisheries staff, State Lands,  
16 and State Parks staff assisting us with  
17 those efforts. These reports focus on  
18 State Lands, but I don't want anyone to  
19 think that it is not with great  
20 appreciation and assistance from the other  
21 divisions within the Department.

22 The first activity report covers  
23 our field operations and our enforcement

1 operations on our tracts. I have  
2 enforcement officers that are both on the  
3 tracts for purposes of public safety,  
4 compliance with Department regulations,  
5 but are also either biologists or from  
6 forestry backgrounds and so they are  
7 simultaneously observing the tracts,  
8 preparing for and organizing various land  
9 management and land stewardship  
10 activities. Again, I'm not going to run  
11 through everything, but I do want to just  
12 give you a few examples.

13 They engage in a lot of habitat  
14 restoration or routine maintenance, both  
15 of those types of work. We either  
16 contract out, do ourselves, work with  
17 partners such as the Forestry Commission,  
18 sometimes the Nature Conservancy, other  
19 division personnel, to perform a good bit  
20 of prescribed burning.

21 Our staff proceeded with burning  
22 on approximately 2200 acres this year so  
23 far and then assisted with another 5300

1        acres related to prescribed burning. You  
2        will note in the report some of the tracts  
3        that benefited from this work included  
4        Freedom Hills, Perdido, Little River,  
5        Blackwater, and Wolf Bay. And we have  
6        additional work that's going on currently  
7        prepping additional tracts for burning.  
8        You will see that. We have sort of  
9        detailed the work by district, the North,  
10       Central, and Southern. But the one  
11       example -- we had some question on Freedom  
12       Hills. So far this year, we've  
13       accomplished burning on just under 1500  
14       acres at Freedom Hills WMA.

15                In addition to the prescribed  
16       burning, they are also actively evaluating  
17       and preparing various herbicide and  
18       mechanical applications on the tracts.  
19       Cogan grass continues to be a challenge  
20       and a source of a lot of man hours trying  
21       to combat. There are others that we work  
22       on, but obviously Cogan grass, as with  
23       everyone, is a perpetual problem.

1           We provide both for habitat  
2 benefit and public hunting benefit. We  
3 perform a lot of supplemental planting and  
4 various habitat projects designed to  
5 increase recreational opportunities and  
6 quality of hunting on the tract. This can  
7 include various food plot establishment,  
8 various plantings. Old Cahawba this  
9 fiscal year, along with the Forever Wild  
10 Field Trial Area, are a couple of tracts  
11 that we have concentrated on continuing to  
12 improve. We have a lot of very good  
13 public feedback on the work on Old  
14 Cahawba. And as we'll note in a separate  
15 report, these efforts support several  
16 activities at the Forever Wild Field Trial  
17 Area in Greensboro.

18           My staff is also continually  
19 ensuring -- and this is constant work --  
20 that our boundaries are maintained and  
21 marked. So there's ongoing evaluation and  
22 work to mark boundaries or where we  
23 realize we have issues arising obtain the

1 survey work necessary to clarify those  
2 boundaries.

3 A lot of roadwork and access  
4 improvements, and we'll have a full report  
5 at the November meeting sort of giving you  
6 the FY report on the work that was done on  
7 your request to improve access through  
8 parking, through signage, way finding,  
9 trail markers on all the properties. So I  
10 won't go deep into that for this meeting  
11 because I'm going to go into more detail  
12 on that for the November meeting. But we  
13 always have routine work, but that was a  
14 special focus this year.

15 We also have engaged in feral pig  
16 trapping programs. We've had certain  
17 tracts that have been the focus of that,  
18 especially the Central and Southern  
19 districts, and we are seeing improvement  
20 in areas. We are also working obviously  
21 with Chuck and his division -- a lot of  
22 these tracts are managed as WMAs, and so  
23 we're working with their division. A lot

1 of work continues in Grand Bay. We have  
2 installed cameras -- additional cameras.  
3 We had cameras. And so we are working on  
4 those trapping numbers. I will have  
5 certain numbers. Commissioner, I know you  
6 have specific numbers on one tract.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: It looks like,  
8 Mr. Parnell -- and I will be glad to  
9 provide this for the Board --

10 Ms. McCurdy's staff is still pulling some  
11 stuff together because we do this trapping  
12 cooperatively with Wildlife & Freshwater  
13 Fisheries, the USDA APHIS, and the Nature  
14 Conservancy, but this year so far  
15 somewhere between 7- and 800 wild hogs  
16 have been trapped and removed from the  
17 Forever Wild properties. But I'll get  
18 some better numbers by location and  
19 provide that to the Board.

20 MS. MCCURDY: Ms. Stanley?

21 MS. STANLEY: Thank you. I just would  
22 like to request for clarification 7- or  
23 800 out of how many? A thousand? Five

1 thousand? How much is that?

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: It's not  
3 enough, not enough.

4 MS. MCCURDY: I think she meant --

5 MS. STANLEY: I just want to know --

6 MS. MCCURDY: -- as opposed to the  
7 total. And I don't know that we can give  
8 a total number of hogs, therefore, to  
9 subtract out what we successfully track.  
10 We can tell by some cameras maybe some  
11 activity, but I don't -- Commissioner, you  
12 may be able to address it differently --  
13 but I don't know that we can tell you a  
14 total number of hogs.

15 MS. STANLEY: I just want to know if  
16 you're putting a dent in it since my  
17 colleague asked the question.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: I would say  
19 it's not half. It is making a dent, but  
20 we can do -- and that is a focus of our  
21 staff and working with these other  
22 agencies to try and do more hog work on  
23 these properties.

1 MS. STANLEY: We appreciate it.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: We're like  
3 every other landowner in South Alabama  
4 that is struggling with wild and feral  
5 swine.

6 MS. MCCURDY: Including my husband.  
7 The field staff, the Stewardship staff is  
8 also actively helping us evaluate. We get  
9 research requests from individuals and  
10 institutions wanting to do research on our  
11 tracts, which we try to assist with, try  
12 to foster, but we want to be sure it does  
13 not interfere with our public recreation  
14 activities or damage the land in any way.  
15 So they assist us in those evaluations.

16 They're also involved in many  
17 education and public outreach events.  
18 This includes we host and work with  
19 Chuck's division on youth tracking events,  
20 provide staffing for the Mentored Hunt  
21 Program.

22 Obviously, again, these officers  
23 are assisting with routine law

1 enforcement, which is necessary based on  
2 public recreation opportunities often.  
3 They also, like all of our enforcement  
4 staff across the department, are assisting  
5 with various disaster events. We are  
6 called upon -- our enforcement officers  
7 are APOST certified, and they are called  
8 upon in many differing activities.

9 Yes, Ms. Stanley?

10 MS. STANLEY: I'm sorry. You went to  
11 the next question before I could state  
12 something.

13 MS. MCCURDY: I'm sorry.

14 MS. STANLEY: You've got a lot of  
15 information. I just wanted to commend the  
16 organization. I specifically noticed that  
17 the public outreach included work by  
18 Alabama A&M, Tuskegee, and Alabama State,  
19 and I would be remiss if I did not note  
20 how important this is in terms of leading  
21 to a pipeline of a more diverse workforce  
22 in this area. It is greatly needed.

23 Thank you.

1 MS. MCCURDY: Yes. And it is the  
2 reason for that focus. Both working with  
3 the current students in assisting with  
4 various research programs, we've also had  
5 them on our properties and at our Wehle  
6 Land Conservation Center that I'll mention  
7 in a moment that provides grounds that  
8 they can work on their research projects,  
9 can stay on the property when necessary.  
10 We also have facilities where the classes  
11 can meet. We have outdoor experiences,  
12 but also the indoor, almost classroom-type  
13 facility. And I really want to thank  
14 Chuck and his division as we work  
15 collaboratively with them. We are very  
16 excited about those partnerships and  
17 wonderful students, and also to have them  
18 fairly close by is of help to us in  
19 fostering that. So thank you for noting  
20 that.

21 All right. Since it is, as  
22 Ms. Stanley mentioned, a lot of  
23 information, I'll move on to the next

1 memo.

2 Yes, sir, Mr. Harper?

3 MR. HARPER: Ms. Patti, just inform me  
4 on the maintenance. I visited the Barnett  
5 Lawley Tract last year, and I was a little  
6 disturbed by the lack of -- it looked like  
7 the lack of maintenance. Are we  
8 contracting with people for that? Is that  
9 part of this? Who takes care of  
10 maintenance?

11 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, sir. And when you  
12 say maintenance, you mean of the land  
13 or --

14 MR. HARPER: When I drove in, it just  
15 seemed like it needed -- the grass needed  
16 to be cut and bush hogged and all that.

17 MS. MCCURDY: I would encourage -- I  
18 would love for you to come back and go  
19 with us on that tract. We can move to  
20 that to report. But we approach the  
21 Forever Wild Field Trial Area this way.  
22 Where we can burn to limit the need to  
23 bush hog, we do. We have some specific, I

1 would say, cutting work that we do,  
2 especially around the ponds. The various  
3 dog events that occur require different  
4 pond condition, grass height. It varies  
5 competition to competition. I'm not sure  
6 when you would have been on the site -- I  
7 don't know what month that would have  
8 been -- but we would have done extensive  
9 burning and very specific eradication of  
10 some invasives on that tract both in the  
11 ponds and on the grounds. We can move to  
12 that report, but I would love if we could  
13 schedule a time -- I know your schedule is  
14 packed -- to go out there. I would love  
15 for you to look around. We also are in  
16 the process of additional facility  
17 improvements there.

18 So why don't we go to that report.  
19 I'll go a little out of order. And so you  
20 would be looking for what should be the  
21 third report from where we just were, and  
22 it's titled Annual Activity - M. Barnett  
23 Lawley Forever Wild Field Trial Area.

1 I'll give you a second to get to that  
2 report. It's in that same grouping.  
3 While you're getting there, I will note  
4 that this tract is actually a partnership  
5 between Forever Wild and the State Lands  
6 Division. Some of the acreage is held by  
7 State Lands. It's held by State Lands as  
8 it contained the structures on the  
9 property. You know, Forever Wild does not  
10 really acquire and maintain structures.  
11 So State Lands purchased that acreage, and  
12 we work to maintain the facilities, we  
13 work to organize the events that take  
14 place on this tract. And so, again, we're  
15 not quite done with this fiscal, but what  
16 has occurred on the tract so far and --  
17 this is a -- the Forever Wild acreage is  
18 about 3300. State Lands has just under a  
19 thousand.

20 Anyway, so far this fiscal year on  
21 the field trial area, we've had 34  
22 sporting dog events, 13 physically  
23 disabled deer hunts, 13 youth deer hunts,

1 we had 36 hunters -- they were accompanied  
2 by the parents, but there were 36 youth  
3 hunters, nine youth duck hunts consisting  
4 of 14 youth hunters, again, accompanied by  
5 parents, we had two youth dove hunts that  
6 had approximately a hundred hunter --  
7 youth hunters accompanied by parents. I  
8 also again want to thank Chuck's division  
9 for their assistance with those events.  
10 We have also had ongoing interest that's  
11 building in the birding community. It's a  
12 stop on the birding trail, and we are  
13 working a lot with Audubon on their events  
14 in the Black Belt and they're utilizing  
15 our tract as part of the stops on those  
16 sort of field trips for those events. And  
17 the Black Belt Birding Festival is also  
18 one of the events that's occurring. We  
19 continue to work with the birding groups  
20 trying to increase how we can foster  
21 additional birding events.

22 Field Trial and Hunt Tests are dog  
23 events. Again, as I mentioned, each of

1 those events vary. Some are on horseback;  
2 some are not. The requirements of what  
3 each club looks for, the acreage that they  
4 need, how that acreage is maintained,  
5 varies group to group. We do our best to  
6 accommodate their scoring needs, their  
7 testing needs. It has many events. We  
8 have gone to having multiple events at the  
9 same time, and so far, that's working  
10 well. It's a scheduling challenge. But  
11 you'll note that of the field trial and  
12 hunt test events, the best estimate is we  
13 had about 2,931 dogs. Of course, those  
14 dogs bring people, but we're counting dogs  
15 on that.

16 So far this season, we had six  
17 horseback pointing dog field trials, 12  
18 retriever field trials/hunt test events,  
19 13 fox hunting events, we had the -- we  
20 had one National Wounded Game Seminar/UBT  
21 Test -- that is sort of a new usage we're  
22 seeing, but we appreciate their  
23 participation -- the Drathaar Test, and

1 then we also had some weekend training  
2 seminar that is put on there.

3 Now, we have day-to-day usage by  
4 the handlers, the trainers who are coming  
5 out with their dogs. They can come during  
6 the day, during the week, and we provide  
7 them areas to give them an opportunity for  
8 one-on-one time training their dog and  
9 hopefully improving their dog's  
10 competition results.

11 We also have several hunting  
12 programs as I've mentioned. I will say  
13 that on this tract our focus, as opposed  
14 to like a WMA, is to use it for very  
15 targeted events benefiting youth,  
16 benefiting physically disabled. We have  
17 had women's deer hunts there in the past.  
18 That is the type of hunting usage. Again,  
19 we're incorporating that with our dog  
20 usage.

21 We also are working to improve --  
22 again, with the help of Chuck's -- the  
23 Fisheries Division -- fishing

1 opportunities. You know, fishing  
2 opportunities on our tract are very  
3 popular, and we're continuing to try to  
4 improve the ponds that we were left with.  
5 Some of them were not in great condition,  
6 but we are working on that and have  
7 incorporated grass carp trying to decrease  
8 some of the invasives in those ponds.

9 We also are carrying on  
10 simultaneously various habitat restoration  
11 projects and sort of a native grasses type  
12 of restoration. That work has been since  
13 the beginning of that tract acquisition  
14 and has included various experiments on  
15 what techniques work best. That continues  
16 and we're seeing great progress. As any  
17 tract, we have invasive species. Cogan  
18 grass activity continues on the tract.

19 One thing that I do want to --  
20 Commissioner, I don't know if you want to  
21 add anything to -- but in addition to the  
22 events that are really primarily utilizing  
23 grounds, there are some structures there

1 that benefit the dog events, and we are  
2 continuing to improve those. I separated  
3 out in your memo of the infrastructure  
4 improvements the ones that are being  
5 furthered by State Lands dollars because  
6 it's State Lands acreage and ones that are  
7 being furthered by Forever Wild dollars.  
8 But we have renovated our office to better  
9 serve -- it's an old scale house when I  
10 say office -- but anyway, have  
11 accommodated it, it helps the daily user  
12 sign in, a lot of the dog users. Our  
13 outdoor pavilion received an upgrade and  
14 painting and a pair of bathroom  
15 facilities. We had a large building that  
16 was formally actual inmate quarters. We  
17 have demolished that building. Obviously,  
18 it was of no use to us, and we took the  
19 work on of demolishing that and making way  
20 for future plans to add a new event  
21 facility there we hope in the future. We  
22 have two houses that were left on the  
23 property. The clubs use those. A few

1 people may sleep there, but most of the  
2 occupancy is pushed into surrounding  
3 communities benefiting them economically.  
4 But the clubs will host -- they may have a  
5 small dinner in the houses. The judges  
6 use that for scoring and for meeting  
7 during the events. But there are two  
8 houses used for those activities.

9 We're doing roadwork, trying to  
10 improve a connecting road -- again,  
11 improving access -- that will allow a  
12 better flow between events in different  
13 areas on the properties.

14 We have what we call the red horse  
15 barn. Currently, the horse dog events can  
16 paddock -- have paddocks there for horses.  
17 We are expanding that, almost doubling  
18 that capacity. We're going to add  
19 fencing. We're working on mulching to  
20 open up an area so that more horses can be  
21 better maintained there. We're working on  
22 installing hook ups for the attendees --  
23 they're coming with very large dog

1 trailers -- for them to be able to stay  
2 overnight and stay with their dogs there.

3 We have conducted surveys related  
4 to that work, and basically also we are  
5 requiring -- it doesn't sound exciting  
6 maybe but will be well used -- five new  
7 sort of bathroom -- permanent bathrooms  
8 that will be placed for the public usage  
9 so they are not trying to come back in to  
10 those two houses to use the facilities.  
11 They can -- the dog events can go on  
12 without interruption, shall we say.

13 Any questions on the field trial  
14 area? Anything, Commissioner, you would  
15 like to add?

16 Yes, sir, Dr. Valentine?

17 DR. VALENTINE: I have a question  
18 about how you're managing the invasive --

19 MS. MCCURDY: I'm sorry. Can you  
20 speak up.

21 DR. VALENTINE: I have a question  
22 about how you're managing invasive SAV in  
23 the one pond and in the fishing. Is that

1 a sterile carp, or is that an invasive  
2 carp?

3 MS. MCCURDY: It is in conjunction  
4 with input from the dog events organizers,  
5 the various ones. It was sort of a  
6 mutually agreed upon carp. All I can tell  
7 you is it a white amur grass carp. I'm  
8 sure if you don't mind hanging out  
9 afterwards, my staff can --

10 DR. VALENTINE: Just curious.

11 MS. MCCURDY: The biologist and not  
12 the lawyer would probably be the better  
13 person to tell you that.

14 DR. VALENTINE: I'm assuming it's a  
15 sterile carp.

16 MS. MCCURDY: I'm going to have to  
17 tell you I do not know, but my staff can  
18 assist you. If you will hang around, I'll  
19 plug you in with my staff on the tract.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Saloom?

21 DR. SALOOM: Just a comment. I must  
22 say this a very impressive report and the  
23 work that is being done and the outreach

1 and education part of this and making all  
2 this available to the public, you know,  
3 it's a great testament of the mission of  
4 what we're all about.

5 MS. MCCURDY: Thank you. It's a lot  
6 of work.

7 MR. HARPER: Just a comment. I got  
8 this and read this, and I reckon I visited  
9 the property before I got on this Board.  
10 But back April or May time frame of last  
11 year, I was just a little disappointed in  
12 the entrance. And this was after field  
13 trial season, so May, June. You know, I  
14 imagine everybody was gone. But that's  
15 what I was concerned about, the  
16 maintenance in that time frame. But it's  
17 continued maintenance year round, I'm  
18 sure.

19 MS. MCCURDY: Yes, it is. It is more  
20 intensive when the events are taking  
21 place, yes, but it's year round. And  
22 please visit anytime. You may want to  
23 take certain points in the year. I'd

1 actually love to sit down with you. We  
2 can show you the plan that we have that we  
3 follow on that tract and why we do what we  
4 do when we do. Like everybody, I mean,  
5 it's work and everybody's strapped.  
6 Anybody with land is strapped to manage  
7 it. But we have a plan that we follow, a  
8 rotation of burning, a rotation of  
9 spraying, which event's taking place when  
10 that we concentrate on as far as pulling  
11 the Bush Hog out or, you know, tracking  
12 work or roadwork, but more than happy to  
13 run through the seasonal plan on that  
14 tract whenever you have time.

15 MR. HARPER: Like I said, I did read  
16 the report and that's impressive. What I  
17 saw didn't really match this, but that was  
18 earlier than this. But this is  
19 impressive.

20 MS. MCCURDY: We'd love to have you  
21 out, and we'd love any input on the tract  
22 that you might want to share.

23 Commissioner, I know we're running

1 long. I've now gone through -- well, let  
2 me keep going. I'm sorry. Any additional  
3 questions on the field trial area?

4 All right. Going back to pick up  
5 where I was. We had the Natural Heritage  
6 Section report, and I will -- this  
7 section -- and Jo Lewis is head of this  
8 effort -- straddles both the  
9 administrative arm, getting the  
10 nominations, overseeing the processing of  
11 nominations, getting you information for  
12 your packet, a lot of work that goes on  
13 administratively from the staff. But  
14 they're also doing many things that I want  
15 to note. I'll, again, let you read  
16 through.

17 The database that we maintain that  
18 is utilized by over 2500 individuals  
19 currently holds over 6 million records.  
20 Just within this last year, we've exceeded  
21 so far 975,000 additional entries that are  
22 available and provide a lot of information  
23 to the public when they call as to before

1 they take action where there may be  
2 sensitive areas, but also various  
3 researchers from around the nation that  
4 are in need of additional information. We  
5 have so far also attached the coordinates,  
6 about 96 percent of those records. And  
7 this work is also benefited by U.S. Fish &  
8 Wildlife Service, State Wildlife grant  
9 funding that Chuck's division allows us to  
10 utilize. You will see also in this report  
11 the interaction with the public that takes  
12 place with the Heritage Section as well as  
13 the research that is done that is then  
14 turned back out into applications. I will  
15 let you read through that, but it is an  
16 impressive work that is ongoing also of  
17 a -- going onto our tracts, for example --  
18 is a very practical application.

19 When we're putting in a  
20 recreational trail, we're adding a new  
21 road, whatever we're doing, there is an  
22 assessment that's done, an ecological  
23 assessment on the tract to be sure that

1 we're not damaging a sensitive habitat,  
2 but if we are, we're worried about that,  
3 we're just going to route the trail around  
4 it. But it is important, ongoing, very  
5 intensive work, and while they're doing  
6 that type of work inventorying the finds  
7 of the various species -- plant species as  
8 an example that will be encountered on  
9 these tracts -- that helps us with various  
10 federal funding opportunities in a lot of  
11 different work that we do to have the  
12 background on the tracts to demonstrate  
13 that they qualify for grant assistance of  
14 various natures.

15 Next, you'll see what we  
16 categorize as our recreational programs  
17 update. Again, this will be also part of  
18 a more detailed report we'll have in  
19 November after we've completed the fiscal  
20 year, but I do want to highlight a few  
21 stats. We currently are managing 173  
22 miles of canoe trail, 79 miles of hiking  
23 trail, 47 miles of mountain biking trail,

1       39 miles of horseback riding trail, and  
2       54 miles of what we term multi-use trail.  
3       It's hard for us to put it in one category  
4       or another because of the multiple uses,  
5       so we just call it multiple use.

6               This report also details the  
7       various parking lot work and improvement  
8       that we're currently undergoing. Again,  
9       you'll hear more about that in December  
10      (sic).

11              We also are lucky to have great  
12      partnerships like with the City of Dothan.  
13      There was an erosion issue that was noted  
14      on that tract. The City of Dothan is  
15      working with us on that and helping us  
16      with certain work and repairs that will be  
17      needed on that tract, so I want to thank  
18      Dothan for their partnership.

19              Again, you will note the various  
20      recreational access improvements. I  
21      think, Commissioner, I'll just wait and  
22      detail those again in more detail in  
23      November when we have a more complete

1 picture.

2 Again, our rec crew, they're  
3 certified burners. They help on burns.  
4 Again, we're all working together, but  
5 it's just how we group these reports.

6 I also have a detailed report on  
7 the Wehle Land Conservation Center. This  
8 is the facility that I mentioned in  
9 Bullock County. We have used that  
10 facility as a means for outreach to the  
11 local school systems, providing  
12 educational assistance in trying to have  
13 field trips on those properties. We  
14 provide some financial assistance. That  
15 having been in conjunction with Auburn  
16 University.

17 But if you'll see this tract --  
18 I'm going to run through -- in addition to  
19 its uses for field-based research, you'll  
20 note that we have 14 open trail weekends.  
21 I'm not going to detail all the visitation  
22 numbers, but that alone is over 480  
23 visitors. We had over 200 visitors for

1 various meetings. We have been a good  
2 spot in that area of the state -- it's  
3 fairly rural -- to bring together resource  
4 agencies, both local and state. We had  
5 143 students and teachers for the  
6 Bullock County Water Festival. We had  
7 youth at the Bullock County Youth Fishing  
8 Derby. Again, you'll see the numbers in  
9 the report on those activities, but that  
10 is, again, another property that is used  
11 for education. We are burning on that  
12 property. We have trapped 23 hogs on that  
13 property as part of one of our efforts.  
14 I'll let you run through that reporting.  
15 Again, Commissioner, I know we're running  
16 long. But the interaction of that staff  
17 and their knowledge and expertise and  
18 biology expertise is also utilized on  
19 other Forever Wild tracts, but their  
20 primary responsibility day to day is  
21 managing the Wehle facility, both the land  
22 and the activities.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: One thing that

1        didn't make the report that I'm probably  
2        very proud of working here is that County  
3        Road 47 that goes through the Wehle Nature  
4        Center had potholes in it that you could  
5        lose a school bus in. It was very in bad  
6        shape. And working with Governor Ivey,  
7        DOT Director Cooper, and Bullock County,  
8        we were able to get that paved last year  
9        and that has been a great addition getting  
10       in and out of the Wehle Center. All the  
11       stuff that we do, I'm tickled to get a  
12       road paved. I think that was -- took a  
13       lot of work and it was very -- took a lot  
14       of cooperation from the Governor to get  
15       that done. So I'm very thankful for her  
16       help on that.

17                MS. MCCURDY: Yeah, I'm on the  
18        Bullock County Tourism Council, and I  
19        don't know -- every time I go, I think  
20        that's the -- maybe the greatest comment  
21        is thank you, Commissioner and Director  
22        Cooper, for doing something about that  
23        road.

1           So I think I hit the memos. If I  
2           skipped one, I apologize. But I know that  
3           went on a little bit. I both wanted to  
4           point out a few aspects of that and also  
5           note to the Board if these reports either  
6           spark questions you have or concerns you  
7           have, you know, please let us know.  
8           Staff's available to sit down and go  
9           through these with y'all. If there's  
10          additional information you would like to  
11          see in these reports and have them  
12          recognized in a different manner, I'm also  
13          always open for that. Please just let me  
14          know and I'll put you in touch with the  
15          staff member that is most focused in that  
16          area.

17                 Next, moving on is also an  
18                 activity report of sorts. I skipped over  
19                 forest management. Sorry about that. The  
20                 last report, 5d, before we move to 5e,  
21                 relates to an update on the forest  
22                 management activities. We have divided  
23                 that report usually in harvest activities

1 and then in reforestation activities.

2 We only had about 30 acres of  
3 needed specific reforestation efforts this  
4 year. We have made great progress in  
5 working through some of the timber  
6 reserves that we had to work through  
7 reforestation on. Those are beginning to  
8 lessen. That is on Uchee that we had the  
9 reforestation work. I won't go tract by  
10 tract, but between first, second  
11 thinnings, final harvest, clearcuts as of  
12 date of the report, we estimate about  
13 3,550 acres had some type of forest timber  
14 management activity, again, whether that  
15 be thinning or clearcuts or final harvest  
16 on those tracts. I do that last normally  
17 because it leads to our next item, which  
18 is Tab 5e.

19 At the August meeting, we also try  
20 to -- in addition to updating you on  
21 forest activity over this fiscal year, we  
22 try to give you a picture of what we  
23 anticipate will be the intended focus

1 going into this next fiscal year. And so  
2 we are anticipating the need in the  
3 upcoming fiscal year to either initiate or  
4 continue thinning on Barbour WMA, Coosa  
5 WMA, Freedom Hills WMA, Old Cahawba Tract  
6 Addition, Portland Landing SOA, Red  
7 Hills -- additional work there -- Skyline  
8 WMA Post Oak Flat Patrick Addition, Turkey  
9 Creek Nature Center Parker Addition, Uchee  
10 SOA Tract. We anticipate final harvest to  
11 be completed on Lauderdale WMA, Little  
12 River Canyon WMA, Portland Landing SOA.  
13 Again, you will see the exact acreage  
14 figures in your memo. Then we anticipate  
15 in the upcoming year reforestation  
16 activity needed at Freedom Hills and,  
17 again, at Uchee. Because it is a little  
18 difficult to know in advance, also we may  
19 encounter an issue on a tract that moves  
20 work up in priority. We generally ask for  
21 a fairly broad motion from the Board as to  
22 upcoming activities. I will say if the  
23 Board members any tract you want to visit

1 to see the activity or a tract that you  
2 believe needs to be prioritized within the  
3 next fiscal year that's not on that list,  
4 you know, please continue to let me know  
5 and work with staff and identify that and  
6 add that. This is really just staff's  
7 anticipated focus for the upcoming fiscal.

8 So I'll take any questions or  
9 concerns on that.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Dr. Powers?

11 DR. POWERS: So I move that the Board  
12 authorizes the State Lands Division to  
13 implement or continue, as applicable,  
14 forest management activities for the  
15 fiscal year 2024 as described in the  
16 memorandum dated August 3, 2023.

17 MR. HOLLOWAY: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
19 Mr. Holloway.

20 Are there any questions or follow-  
21 up on that from the Board?

22 All those in favor say I.

23 Any opposed?

1           None opposed. The motion carries.

2           Thank you. I think that concludes  
3 the reports from -- the miscellaneous  
4 reports that we were going to cover.  
5 There's some other information in your  
6 packets. I think we've already talked  
7 about most of those with Natural Bridge,  
8 Blakeley State Park.

9           The next order of business is the  
10 approval of the minutes from the May 4th  
11 meeting. That's in your packet. It's  
12 Tab 6.

13           Are there any corrections or  
14 additions to the minutes?

15           Any edits?

16           Is there a motion to approve the  
17 May 4, 2023, minutes?

18           MR. OATES: So moved.

19           CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: So moved by  
20 Mr. Oates.

21           MR. HARPER: Second.

22           CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP: Seconded by  
23 Mr. Harper.

1 All right. With no corrections or  
2 additions, all those in favor say I of  
3 approving the minutes.

4 Any opposed?

5 None opposed. The motion carries.

6 The next meeting will be in Auburn  
7 on November the 2nd, my wife's birthday.  
8 She'll be glad that I'm not here with her.

9 MS. MCCURDY: You can take her to a  
10 good dinner while you're there. I'll help  
11 you with that. And that's going to be --  
12 the School of Forestry has graciously been  
13 assisting us, so we anticipate being  
14 there.

15 MR. BLANKENSHIP: So is there any  
16 other business from the Board?

17 Any other from you, State Lands?

18 MS. MCCURDY: Unless staff tells me I  
19 missed something.

20 Commissioner, I would like to  
21 just, again, take the opportunity to thank  
22 my staff for their hard work. They're the  
23 ones out in hundred degree temperatures,

1       and I just want to -- many of them are  
2       here today, and I just want to tell them I  
3       appreciate your efforts.

4               CHAIRMAN BLANKENSHIP:   And I  
5       appreciate the reports.  I enjoyed reading  
6       about their work and more importantly  
7       enjoyed seeing it on the tracts when you  
8       go in, see how the access is looking so  
9       much better, the way finding signage and  
10      access improvements, and then all the  
11      habitat management.  Glad to see that, all  
12      that work being done.  Thank, y'all.

13               With that, we are adjourned.

14               (Proceedings concluded at

15               12:36 p.m.)  
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