ALABAMA FOREVER WILD LAND TRUST

BOARD MEETING

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Board Meeting Held on May 7, 2026

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Transcript of proceedings held before the Board Members of Alabama Forever Wild, held at Bishop State Community College - Southwest Campus, Mobile, Alabama on May 7, 2026, commencing at 10:00 a.m.

Stenographically Reported by
L. Alan Peacock, RDR, CRR, CCR

A P P E A R A N C E S

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

MR. CHRISTOPHER M. BLANKENSHIP, Commissioner, Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

MR. RICK OATES

MR. JAKE HARPER

DR. CHARLIE MARTIN

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

MR. THOMAS HARRIS

DR. JOHN VALENTINE

MR. JAMES "MICKEY" CHILDERS

DR. BRIAN KEENER

DR. HEATHER HOWELL

ALSO PRESENT:

MS. PATTI McCURDY, Director, State Lands Division, Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

ALYSSA PRATER

DAVE MILTON

STEVE NORTHCUTT

JONATHAN GOODE

DOUG MORRISON

KAYLA BOYD

PUBLIC SPEAKERS (Continued)

JERRY INGRAM

WALTER ERNEST

SAM TATE

MATTHEW CAPPS

JESSLAN WILSON

BILL WHISTON

THE COMMISSIONER: Good morning, everyone. I'd like to welcome you to our May Forever Wild Board Meeting. We still have a couple Board members that are working their way here through the rain and traffic. I'll give them a couple more minutes before we go ahead and get started with the meeting. As they come in, I will recognize their attendance for the court reporter.

So at this time, I will call roll. If you're here, please indicate your presence.

Chris Blankenship is here.

Mr. Childers is here.

MR. CHILDERS: Here.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Harper?

MR. HARPER: Here.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Harris?

MR. HARRIS: Here.

THE COMMISSIONER: Dr. Howell?

DR. HOWELL: Here.

THE COMMISSIONER: Dr. Keener?

DR. KEENER: Here.

THE COMMISSIONER: Dr. Martin?

DR. MARTIN: Here.

THE COMMISSIONER: Dr. Neumann?

(No response.)
Mr. Oates?
MR. OATES: Here.
THE COMMISSIONER: Ms. Stanley?
(No response.)
THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Tuggle?
(No response.)
Dr. Valentine?
DR. VALENTINE: Here.
THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Conlon?
(No response.)
Mr. McClintock?
(No response.)
And Mr. Parnell?
(No response.)
We do have a quorum of nine. We expect two more people to join us and, like I say, I'll indicate their arrival when they get here for the court reporter.
I do appreciate Bishop State Community College for letting us meet at this facility and Ms. Su-Sun Ivey for allowing us to be here.
Just to take a moment of personal privilege, since we're waiting on a couple

people to arrive, this is where I went to 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten, right across the street. And that was Central Baptist Church. Back in the day it was a big church here in Mobile. And the Dauphin Island Parkway was part of my neck of the woods, and I went to 4- and 5-year-old kindergarten over there.

Mae Eanes Middle School was right behind us here. And I went to school there one day a week. They sent me to Mae Eanes to a class over there. So it's nice to be back in the old neighborhood. A lot has changed in 50 years -- me and the area.

But this used to be Carver State Technical College back in the day when they did a lot of combining of the community college system. Obviously, this became part of Bishop State Community College, and they put some money in this facility and it really turned it into a nice place.

And I appreciate very much them allowing us to meet here at their facility. The community college system continues to be a good friend of the Forever Wild Board. We have had multiple meetings at their

facilities over the last eight or nine years, and they've always been very gracious and very nice places to meet.

I would like to indicate that Dr. Neumann has braved the weather and has made it here. So that makes our tenth person here today.

Also, I would like to note the passing of Mr. George Barber, who was one of our Forever Wild Board members for a long time. He passed away recently, and I just wanted to mark his passing and appreciate his service to the Board and his time when he was here.

So with that, any other announcements? Anything else I need to cover, Patti?

No? We're good?

Well, it's good to be here this morning. We will start our public comment period. As a reminder, when I call your name, step to the microphone. You'll have three minutes to speak.

When you come up, give me just a second so I can tell the Board what piece of property or what nomination that you're wanting to speak on so they can find it in

their books and -- so they see can be prepared and understand exactly what you're talking about and look at it up here.

Our first speaker is going to be Alyssa Prater on Forks of the River. That's Tab 4b, page 19, Mobile-Tensaw Delta, Forks of the River.

Go ahead.

MS. PRATER: Good morning. My name is Alyssa Prater. I work with the Nature --

MS. McCURDY: Can you please speak up?

MS. PRATER: This is a 62-acre tract not too far from here in Baldwin County. It's surrounded on the northeast and south by the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta Wildlife Management Area and bordered on its west by the Alabama River. This tract is currently only accessible by water.

The TNC first acquired property in this area back in 2024. That was about 8,000 acres north of this tract that had been owned by Mobile River Sawmill Division.

Last year that property was named the E.O. Wilson Land Between the Rivers Preserve. Also last year, Cooper Marine and Timberland

reached out to us about the opportunity to acquire three tracts nearby, including Forks Preserve. As they boasted some beautiful forested wetlands that Cooper wanted to keep in conservation, so they offered us the opportunity to acquire the tracts before they ever got put on the market.

Of the three, we ultimately decided to acquire two of the tracts offered. One we called the Osprey Tract. It's about 1700 acres, and it's adjacent to the tracts we acquired in 2024. And we bought it to add it to the overall preserve.

At the same time, we saw that the 62-acre River Tract was an inholding in state lands, so we acquired it in the hopes that Forever Wild would be able to add it to the surrounding (inaudible).

By acquiring this tract, Forever Wild will gain a half-mile of river frontage to consolidate the ownership and management of the protected area.

In terms of conservation values, this area is unparalleled. This property is located in the upper Mobile-Tensaw Delta in

the area just about the confluence of the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers.

The Mobile-Tensaw Delta is among America's most significant wetland complexes and serves as a critical connector for biodiversity, serving its resident wildlife as well as the hundreds of species that migrate here each year.

Protecting the course of the River Tract contributes to the work being done to create an effort of protecting conservation throughout the Delta. This tract has been scored, and we're requesting the Board for the first approval.

Thank you for the time. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

THE COMMISSIONER: Any questions?

All right. Thank you.

The next speaker is Mr. Dave Milton, on the Doss Mountain Tract at 4b, page 9.

MS. McCURDY: There's a handout from the speaker on that. Commissioner, give us just a second. We're going to try to turn up the microphone if we can. And the thing about the microphone being so low, I will tell

y'all, it is finally perfect for me. But that's really all that matters.

So give us just one second.

All right. I hope this helps. We are fancy here at the State Lands Division.

THE COMMISSIONER: Go ahead whenever you're ready.

MR. MILTON: My name is Dave Milton with Southeastern Land Group. And I'm going to be reading a status on 7100 acres in Tallapoosa County called the Doss Mountain Tract. It was a part of the old General Pearson Plantation for those that are familiar with the area.

I'm going to read a quick statement. Chris Oberholster from Southeastern Grasslands Institute has been preparing for this meeting and wanted to be here. Many of y'all know his wife is battling shingles and he couldn't make it today, so I'm going to read a brief statement from him, if that's okay with the Board.

This is from Chris. He would like to share a few comments on behalf of the Southeastern Grasslands Institute. He hoped

to be here today.

SGI is an organization dedicated to serving and restoring grassland over the west and the south. With permission, the landowner, Chris and other biologists visited Doss Mountain in recent weeks. He found there were extensive canebrakes of giant cane on the streamside areas. The top of Doss Mountain has a remnant Rocky Piedmont Woodland area with longleaf pine, shortleaf pine, blackjack oak with unusual mafic geology.

This area has extensive stands of native grasses, including Indiangrass, Switchgrass, Little Bluestem, potentially harboring rare animals and plants, extensive low-volume pine plantations in upland areas with relatively mature grass and understories and they have a high potential for restoration of longleaf pine and shortleaf pine woodlands; savannas associated with wildlife with harvesting or thinning of the tree canopy and the reintroduction of regular prescribed fire.

For these reasons and the general scarcity of public conservation lands in East

Central Alabama and Auburn, Lake Martin areas, SGI supports acquisition of the Doss Mountain Tract.

That's his comment.

And I will be quick because I don't have much time, so I'll give you my comments now.

You will see on the back -- this is just a recent aerial. It's a little hard to see the cut areas. This is just from a couple weeks ago. I'll give you a timber breakdown, substantial saw timber assets, 3900 acres of main merchantable timber, about 1700 acres have been clearcut and have been -- they're putting back in the young timber right now. Some has been burned, so they're working on that.

There's 1450 acres of older natural timber stands. Along many creeks and branches, SMZ stands and bottomland timber primarily, and then 50 or so acres of the higher elevations of Doss Mountain are naturally forested. And longleaf pine and other hardwood species, like you might see in the Talladega National Forest but this is right on Tallapoosa-Chambers County line. It

looks like you took a little mountain in the Talladega National Forest and dropped it in where it doesn't belong. So it's a pretty unique area there.

My last comment is, if you will notice on your map, the eastern entrance is just north of the town of Camp Hill. What's neat about the property is there once were a lot of county roads on this property. It's all been gated up.

This has been in institutional holdings for a couple generations now. It's a significant -- all the county roads are in good shape throughout the property, over 20 miles of good roads. It would make good trails. And then another 20 miles of lesser roads, which would be more like buggy trails the hunting club uses. It would be ideal for mountain biking, horses, hikers, multiuse property, hunting, so forth.

You've got a western entrance just north of Dadeville off Booger Hollow Road, for those familiar with that area, and then the eastern entrance is just north of Camp Hill off of the Doss Mountain Road. Wildlife and

timber has been well managed for a couple of generations now.

This would be good for constructing Camp Hill area. It's a depressed area economically. It's only 20 miles from Auburn, Opelika, 10 miles from Lake Martin. And we have shortage of these types of properties in the area. If you go to Chewacla State Park on weekends and see all of the kids on the mountain bikes, you will see several of them.

That's all I've got.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

Any questions?

MR. HARPER: It's closer to 7100 acres than 7,000. Our pamphlet has 7,000.

MR. MILTON: 7100, yes, sir. I'm sorry. Again, that's an estimate. But that's what the county has.

And it also borders significant Auburn University research property.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

The next speaker is Steve Northcutt on the Inland Lake North Tract, Inland Lake North Tract, Tab 3b, page 8. And that's also

in your green folder. There was an update on the evaluation on that.

All right, sir.

MR. NORTHCUTT: Good morning. I am Steve Northcutt. I'm here to discuss the Inland Lake North property. It's 3,862 acres. This property is located about 40 miles north of downtown Birmingham. So it's a great central location for a large population center to use this property for recreation.

There's very few public hunting areas around this site, and it's a nice forested property. But what is really unique about this is its connectivity to the property that's owned by the Central Alabama Water District. It used to be the Birmingham Water Works.

And Inland Lake was established in 1939 by damming up the Blackburn Fork. And so it's a very large, deep, clean lake. The average depth is 77 feet. Right now there's recreational boating and skiing. So you have the component of the lake, but the most important thing, I guess, about Inland Lake

is that it is the largest water source for the Central Alabama Water District. And so it plays a crucial role in providing drinking water to the metro area. It serves five counties and approximately 770,000 people.

So this property has the unique attributes of protecting the watershed and the drinking source. The way a lot of these areas that have drinking water sources, they try to protect the surrounding areas. The Water District owns about 2200 acres. And they try to buy every lot surrounding the lake so that it doesn't have pollution.

They have to spend a lot more money to treat the water when you have pollutants. And so having this forested recreational tract surrounding the water intake system would be a crucial component for them and the citizens of Birmingham.

So I was speaking recently with John Matson, who is the public relations manager for the Central Alabama Water District, and he was extremely hopeful that this project could go forward. I think to write a letter of support, if that would help.

But this is a property that I think you can get two for one. You would get drinking water protection; you would have great recreational opportunities for citizens. And one thing that I think is extremely important is Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries are willing to put in 20 percent of the purchase price using the Pittman-Robertson Fund. So it reduces your overall cost in the property. And we think it would be a wonderful opportunity to move forward. I would hope today, since you have the first appraisal, you would consider a second and close.

Any questions?

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Steve.

The next speaker is Jonathan Goode on the Little River - East Fork Addition, Tab 3b, page 9.

MR. GOODE: Commissioner and members, good morning. My name is Jonathan Goode. I am here to speak on behalf of the Little River - East Fork Addition to ask you to take the next step in acquiring this property.

This is truly one of the most unique and beautiful properties that I have had the

pleasure of visiting in Alabama. It has almost two miles of river frontage on the Little River. It connects to the Little River National Preserve. So this would be a great way to continue to protect the Little River corridor.

You recently had a first appraisal done on this, and I ask you to move forward with the second appraisal and acquiring the property.

THE COMMISSIONER: Any questions?

(No response.)

Thank you.

The next speaker is Doug Morrison on the Big Canoe Creek Nature Reserve Bettis property, 4b, page 3.

Hang on a second, Doug, let him get that all handed out.

All right, sir, go ahead.

MR. MORRISON: I'm Doug Morrison. I work for the City of Springville, managing the Big Canoe Creek Nature Preserve. I'm here to speak on the position hopefully of the first appraisal on the property on the southern border, which is 72.5 acres.

We're hoping to add that to the preserve one day. There's a lot of reading probably in the handout that I gave you. You can probably take that back with you.

But this property, we've got in 2018 -- well, I didn't get on until 2024, so that was two years ago. It's been well received in the community. We've done a lot of things with that. I have an education coordinator hired with the City to do field trips on.

We just acquired a grant from ADECA for the preserve and we received some funds from State and federal agencies. And additionally, we have a lease agreement -- I'm on the Board with the Big Canoe Creek Preserve Park, which is a 501(c)(3), to help support the preserve with some of the educational things we're doing as a partnership with 501(c)(3).

We have a -- we lease 1921 Old Rock School with BCC Preserve Partners Leasing pertaining to the nature center. We have applied for grants to do that. This could be an extension of the preserve is our hope for further educational conservation.

So the property's 72 and a half acres on the southern border of the nature preserve. We have plans to add that to the preserve. It's beautiful property.

Do you have any questions?

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you, sir.

The next speaker is Kayla Boyd.

MS. McCURDY: I was just going to clarify for the Board, in our naming and what you'll will see in the packet, it's Big Canoe Creek - South Addition. It doesn't matter. It's just for the record and the court reporter, that is the tract we were just covering. Thanks.

THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Again, we're just going to talk about the Oyster restoration from the adjacent Forever Wild property down in Heron Bay. There's not a tab in your books. It's just an update. And we get to hear from you twice, two days in a row.

MS. BOYD: I know. So exciting.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak this morning. As Commissioner Blankenship said, my name is Dr. Kayla Boyd.

I'm the Oyster Project Manager at Mobile Baykeeper. And I'm here today to give a project update in regards to Heron Bay Oyster Restoration Project, acquisition 220 and 119, Heron Bay, Alabama.

We moved to implementation phase of our project, and we engaged over 25 volunteers over the last month and had over 200 sacks of cured oyster shells. And just to give you some context on how much that is, it's about 20 cubic yards of shell or 15,000 pounds of shell.

We've planted 10-cubic yard of that shell across 12 out of 28 plant plots protecting approximately 1,120 feet of tidal marsh using small volunteer vessels. And there's photos of the plantings on the back of the page, along with the planting project goals from now until 2030.

Our volunteers have enjoyed the coastal marshes. Some of them for the first time. And last week, we saw a six-foot gator. We are incredibly grateful to do this work, and I will continue to provide updates on progress and tracking when we start to see

oyster recurring on those new reefs.

Thank you for the opportunity to give this update.

THE COMMISSIONER: Any questions?

(No response.)

Thank you.

The next speaker is Mr. Jerry Ingram on the Cooper Branch, Tab 3b, page 4.

Good morning.

MR. INGRAM: Good morning, Commissioner, and good morning, Board members. I'm Jerry Joe Ingram. I'm a land broker with National Land Realty, and I'm here representing today on behalf of the owner of the Cooper Branch Tract in Shelby County.

This property has had the first appraisal done, and we're here seeking to get a second appraisal on it. I did bring a few props with me. I'm going to move this over a little closer just to kind of --

Can everybody see this?

THE COMMISSIONER: Talk really loud while you're there so that he can hear you.

MR. INGRAM: This is the 900-acre parcel. And the only outholding in it is

about a 5-acre parcel that belongs to Shelby County. They have a big water tank up there. So they do have an easement coming in here and check -- they actually maintain that road and keep it in really good shape. There is county road access off of Dickerson Road, Rolling Hills Drive, and then, of course, up here on County Road 36.

One of the problems we ran into on this property is there's a really, really nice cabin up on this big hill, on this big rock outcropping. And I know with Forever Wild, y'all don't like to take ownership of anything that has improvements that you have to maintain.

So that property does -- and you will hear from Jesslan in a little bit from Shelby County. That prompted us to work a deal with Shelby County.

And this is where the cabin is right here. So they said we'll buy this outparcel with the cabin. And they wanted to buy this piece right here, which is about 62 acres. And I think Patti kind of ran it up the flagpole with her crew. And it seemed to be

something that would work for everybody.

So in this purchase, Shelby County would buy this piece and take out the house with the improvement. And then they -- the future plan also is to put a trailhead and parking area there that they would pay for out of their own money, bathroom facility, and then they would fully work and develop the trails off of the mountain biking on the rest of the property and maintain them at their expense.

This map right here -- this in red right here is the Cooper Branch Tract. This little purple piece right here is what Shelby County would purchase. This right here is Oak Mountain State Park.

Since we've been working on this, Oak Mountain State Park -- and I think Jesslan will comment on this in a minute. They're almost done with this. This is a new trailhead area, that little yellow dot right there, that Shelby County is building on the Oak Mountain parcel.

And it really, by the way the crow flies, it's about a quarter mile -- it's really about half a mile by bike to get to

this tract. So it essentially connects the two tracts together is what it does.

And this -- the owner's son was a big mountain bike guy. I just brought this to illustrate. His son GPS'd all of the biking trails, him and his friends did. These are primitive biking trails. They're not to the standard that you would see in Oak Mountain State Park. But there's over 20 miles of these, so it does show you that the property is pretty conducive for mountain bike development.

And then to kind of finish things up, these are some really -- some kind of bullet points on the thing that I think are important. That Shelby County has agreed to purchase the 62 acres that has the house on it. So that takes that out of the maintenance part for Forever Wild to do.

Oak Mountain State Park is finishing up on the construction of the new trailhead on the old mountain property that basically gets them a quarter to a half a mile away, so it really connects the two.

I did include these pictures of the

cabin. This thing is really nice. And Shelby County has some big plans on how to implement this into the park and use it for kind of -- you know, extra activities and that type of thing.

Innovate Alabama with Abe Harper and that group, they did a pretty extensive survey looking at what people are looking for in Alabama. And one thing they realized with young professionals is that outdoor recreation was really important. So I know they made that investment there with y'all. I think you were -- I saw a picture of you at the ribbon cutting where they're going after this international mountain bike "silver" designation. IMBA Silver is what it's called for short. It will literally bring millions of dollars into the state in tourism.

And then, you know, another big deal in this is you're going to leverage Shelby County's assets to help develop this thing, you know, and all of that. So that's using their money. And then, you know, the big thing at the end of the day, you're maintaining, saving the ecosystem.

I know Dr. Howell has been out there. It's a 100-year-old-plus Appalachian forest. But it's also going to be real economic development for the State of Alabama.

And then, lastly, the owner of the property is willing to discount the price 10 percent, you know, in the purchase price of it. He would be willing to do that if this deal goes through.

So any questions or anything like that?

THE COMMISSIONER: Any questions?

(No response.)

Thank you for being here. And I will say this. I think it's maybe the first time I've ever seen you in a suit, and that's a very sharp suit.

MR. INGRAM: My wife dressed me.

THE COMMISSIONER: Nice summer seersucker suit.

The next speaker is Walter Ernest. He will speak on the Hells Swamp Creek, Tab 4b, page 13.

MR. ERNEST: This is a 219-acre parcel. It's owned by Mr. Bill Whiston, he's here today. We hold the conservation easement on

it, but it has two homesites so it could be developed. It has two homesites.

It's a black bear habitat. At one time it was known as Ground Hells Swamp property. At one time it was 3900 acres many, many years ago. The uplands have been developed around it and are continued to be developed. But the black bear are still coming to this parcel. And there's been a great deal of research done by the Alabama Black Bear Alliance, Auburn University, about the migration.

The black bear migrate from Eglin Air Force Base to Meridian, Mississippi. And they're known to have their cubs in this area. As a matter of fact, there was one that was just tracked on this site and the adjacent property.

It's surrounded -- this property has a wetland mitigation bank that adjoins it that might could be acquired at a later date. And it also has another parcel that we hold the easement on that adjoins the mitigation bank.

It's really interesting about the Florida black bear population. If Chris

Oberholster was here, I'd get him up here because he knows a lot about that over the years and remembers when they did all of that research.

They continue to come to this area. And if you talk to anybody in the Celeste Road area in Saraland, they will tell you about that. And they're losing habitat. The town is very interested -- one of the council members was going to come here today. I think the inclement weather may have kept him away, Chris Jessee. And he has taken numerous photographs of the black bear, along with Fontaine Howard. You may have seen some of those in her book.

But I'd ask you to consider acquiring this tract for conservation. This is one of the fastest-growing areas in Mobile County. If you travel on Celeste Road, you will see, and where you see all of the development is what was part of this tract at one time, when it was a 3900-acre Crane Brown Foundation parcel.

It would be great for recreation as well because it's close in proximity to the

interstate. And I know the City of Saraland has expressed support for the conservation of the parcel. And like I said, the landowner is here if you have any questions for the landowner or if you have any questions for me.

THE COMMISSIONER: Remind me -- say one more time what is the area in the orange? What is that?

MR. ERNEST: That is a wetland mitigation bank, and it's right at close to 700 acres. I think it's 689 acres, if I'm not mistaken.

And the red would be the conservation easement. The green is another easement we hold. And then there's a parcel that the Alabama Forest Land Trust that owns that I put on there just to show conserved land.

And then MAWSS has some property nearby for the water. It would be the upper part of this map. I didn't show the MAWSS parcel.

You've probably been out there, Chris. It was loaded with -- before they cut through when they timbered it years ago. And you couldn't go in there, and that's part of the

reason it's called Hells Swamp because it's so thick. Only the bears went in there. And anybody with conservation, ADCNR, from this area knows about this site I'm sure.

DR. VALENTINE: Walter, is there any form of comprehensive management plan that ties together all of these various landholders into a plan that could benefit the bears? I mean, right now it sounds like there's a postage stamp here and postage stamp there.

MR. ERNEST: Years ago there was. As a matter of fact, a larger tract was nominated to Forever Wild in 2004. And the idea was to have a corridor that went from the Perdido River property that the State owns all the way through the Delta, through the State property, through the Bayou Sara property, which at that time was owned by private owners to this parcel. That's always been a vision.

The Nature Conservancy might have some information on that from years ago, Steve. You remember those days when we were talking about a corridor? It would have been the

early 2000s. But that's the only thing I can recall from a management standpoint.

DR. VALENTINE: It seems like it would be useful to have that tied together so you don't have to manage the bears and keep the neighbors happy at the same time.

MR. ERNEST: It would. And it would probably -- easily a map could be done to conserve property from the Perdido River all the way through the Mobile-Tensaw Delta to Bayou Sara here that you could kind of see the corridor.

And those bears have been documented. I'm not making this up. It's interesting to read about how they travel from Eglin to here to Meridian and then back. It's -- I never knew they moved that far.

THE COMMISSIONER: Species do a lot of stuff looking for a mate. A long way.

MR. ERNEST: They do. I would like to ask you to consider this tract. If it's not on the short list -- I'd love to see it on the short list and eventually appraised and acquired for conservation.

Like I say, the yellow tract, the

mitigation bank could eventually either be purchased or donated. That would take a conversation with the mitigation bank holder. I'm not sure where they stand on the sale of their credits, but they ought to be getting close. It's been banking a while.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

The next speaker Sam Tate on the Lake Lurleen Expansion, 4b, page 15. 4b, page 15.

MR. TATE: My name is Sam Tate, Selma, Alabama. Now I live in Auburn, Alabama. I'm a registered forester and a land agent at TrueSouth Properties. Thank y'all for letting me hand that out. I'm a little late to this. But I am here on behalf of my client.

We have two tracts. If you'll look at the map I handed out, one of which is directly adjacent to the west of Lake Lurleen in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. These tracts combine for 282, give or take, acres.

We were hoping that this might provide value for trail expansion, watershed protection, timber management coming in from the west side. I don't think there is a west

access to Lake Lurleen hunting and wildlife, of course. And then, of course, you're only 9 miles from Tuscaloosa, 14 miles from the University of Alabama.

So there is a problem. We only have prescriptive easements into the tract that we own on the map. You'll see the one that is directly to the west, there's been logging activity that is accessed through there before, but there is a 20-foot sliver of land between us and the public road. So we were going to propose that you guys work hand in hand with the Mental Health Board about getting access because they actually -- they're in the yellow on that map, if you could get an access road through them, and that would open up the opportunity to begin accessing the west side of Lake Lurleen.

Lake Lurleen is in the blue. That's the blue. We are the red. Mental Health is the yellow. Does that help? Sorry if I confused y'all. You can see it on the big map on the back.

We think this would be a good opportunity. If this one were to work, it

could be a domino effect. We have more land holdings to the west and could build a corridor to the Sipsey River complex creating quite a vast green space just 9 miles from Tuscaloosa.

That's all I've got unless you've got any questions.

THE COMMISSIONER: Any questions?

(No response.)

Thank you, sir.

MR. TATE: Thank y'all.

THE COMMISSIONER: The next speaker is Mr. Matthew Capps, our State Parks director. He would like to say a word about Lake Lurleen.

MR. CAPPS: Good afternoon. Thank y'all so much for having me.

I just wanted to give y'all a quick update about Lake Lurleen State Park. Recently we have had a bond initiative that allowed us to have $80 million to invest in our State Park system. Of that, we invested $18 million of that to Lake Lurleen State Park.

Some of the improvements that we did

were renovating 67 camp sites for people to hook up. We have Wi-Fi at the park now. We did seven new pavilions for the day use area, new accessible playground, nine new restrooms. The drinking water and wastewater projects, that was through ADEM. We fully renovated all of our utilities there on that front. And we've also been able to resurface the entire park. So that's another grant we've had with ADEM and had recycled rubber asphalt.

So I just wanted to really briefly just show y'all what the investments that we have done into the State park as it relates to the property that we were just talking about. It is a large chunk of property to our west, and that does help us get access to the west side of our property.

And we do envision that we could have enhanced trails. It could be a hunting opportunity program. And it also allows us to try to get into our side of -- the west side of Lake Lurleen State Park to help do some timber management and enhance our property from that area.

So I just wanted to give y'all a quick update as to where we are on the State park. I know that we're in favor of it, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

MR. CHILDERS: Back to the nomination. Is there any public access to those two parcels?

MR. CAPPS: So yes and no. You could access the park if you go through the park on our trails, or you could go through the lake using a boat to get to that side of the property. And then I believe you were mentioning that there is a dirt road to get to it, but it's not necessarily --

THE COMMISSIONER: It's prescriptive. It's not deeded.

MS. McCURDY: The westmost parcel is a prescriptive, meaning by use. They have been using the strip that connects to public roads, but it is not currently deeded; so it would not be deeded access to the westernmost.

The parcel that is immediately adjacent to the park would simply be an addition to the park where we would add trails anyway.

It's not in your public access, but it would allow the State parks to expand the trails. And they're a division of our department, the Department of Conservation.

THE COMMISSIONER: So the answer is "no" to my question?

MS. McCURDY: To the westmost, there's not immediate access to a public road, and that is referenced in your Tab 4 property description that there is not public access there.

THE COMMISSIONER: In your green folder, there was a news release that was sent out when we did the ribbon cutting at Lake Lurleen about three weeks ago.

Matthew described the work, but it totally renovated that entire market as one of our larger bond projects. I'm extremely proud of the park. Whether you're interested in this nomination or not, I hope you will take time to go to Lake Lurleen State Park next time you're in Tuscaloosa because it has been redone first class, and you will be very proud of what the park has to offer.

The day we did the ribbon cutting, the

beach was full, the playground was full, kids were everywhere. And somebody asked me how do we get all of these kids here, I said we just opened the gate.

And this is all organic, people are coming to enjoy the park. It wasn't people we brought in. It was great to have the park open and everybody was so happy to be back up there.

I do have to apologize that Jerry Joe Ingram and I served -- both are Rotarians. And I was so shocked by seeing him in a suit that it totally threw me off and I forgot the next speaker on the Cooper Branch Tract and that's Jesslan Wilson.

So I apologize for skipping over you. So Jessian is going to speak on the Cooper Branch Tract, the same one that Jerry just spoke about, Tab 3b, page 4.

And I apologize again for skipping you.

MS. JESSLAN WILSON: No worries at all. Good to see you too.

Good morning. If I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you, my name is Jesslan Wilson, and I have the privilege of serving

as the deputy county manager for Shelby County. And I'm here to just reiterate the County Commission's support and willingness to partner with Forever Wild on this project. We're going to do that in two components. Jerry touched on the first, the 62 acres which would bring the Board's request for purchase down to 838 acres. And the second piece is to maintain the park and the trails for the longevity of the park.

Something else Jerry talked about was the park access and pavilion. So one thing that we plan on doing is creating a parking lot as well as restroom amenities and pavilion for the park entrance, very similar to how we partnered with Oak Mountain State Park, which he referenced, at their Belcher property.

The second thing is he referenced the cabin there. And our long-term plan would be to create that and develop that into a caretaker's house to have a presence at the property at all times if there's any maintenance needs or anything like that.

But we're really excited about the

potential of this project, and we're very, very happy and excited to partner with Forever Wild. And I'd love to answer any other questions that you have.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

The last speaker is Bill Whiston on the Hells Swamp Tract in Saraland.

MR. WHISTON: Thank you. I'll just throw Walter's map back up here real quick.

Just a couple of quick points, just to reinforce a little bit about what Walter said. I bought this piece of property a while back with the intent of putting a house there. It can be divided twice into two tracts. Each can have homesites, an acre, and it can have outbuildings and barns and these sorts of things.

And my intentions for it changed. I have other properties in other places. This piece, you know, I kind of fell in love with it as I worked on it. The number of bears -- it's a funnel between I-65 -- it's not really shown on the map, but there's I-65. It's just a couple of minutes -- literally like three minutes -- off of the Celeste Road

exit.

And Celeste Road is here. What happens is those folks funnel down. And my property is just a collection area for these bears. Walter didn't mention it, but that's a photo of a couple of the cubs with me.

And this has happened multiple times. They den -- the sows den up. They den on my property. So Auburn has been in there. And they've trapped them, they've collared them, they do all of the research with these.

There's been a couple of different wildlife biologists from Auburn that are just almost living on the property with trailers and traps and so forth. But it just occurred to me. I could sell it. I mean, I could put it on the market and sell it with no problem.

But the unique nature of this property, to be that close to the interstate, to be that surrounded by development all around it, to have -- it's an interior gravel road network. It has two paved entrances. And it just seems to me like there would be -- I don't know if you guys ever want to have like an environmental study center or a visitor's

center, but somebody could literally get off of I-65 in five minutes beyond this, looking at deer, looking at turkeys, looking at bears, looking at -- it's opened areas, longleaf pine. They've been on the property. It's resource protection areas, a lot of good timber.

So like I said, I could sell it. I could sell it easily. But it's just unique. And with everything that's growing up in Saraland -- and Facebook -- Voices of Saraland, Facebook, they're all just stressed out over the loss of habitat for the bears. I just thought this was a great opportunity for Forever Wild. And I'm familiar with the work you guys have done. My hat's off to you. But this one is unique. If you're interested, I would love to talk to you about it. And if not, then now you know.

DR. VALENTINE: I have a question before you go. How do bears do with the wild hogs?

MR. WHISTON: Well, I've only ever seen one hog on that property.

DR. VALENTINE: I'm just curious because we spend a lot of time talking about hogs and

the consequences of our decisions. And I've wondered what happens if the natural predator were to show back up.

MR. WHISTON: I have property on the Tombigbee River in Marengo County, and hogs are just taking it over. It's a never-ending battle.

DR. VALENTINE: And do you have bears?

MR. WHISTON: No, not there.

I think that the hogs, the piglets, have just become the main food source for the coyote population. I have heard and seen them catch piglets. I can catch piglets. I know coyotes can.

But on this property, surprisingly, because it does have some low-end wetland area, I have only ever on camera seen one hog there, and it went away.

So the bears -- you know, as far as migration pattern, I don't know about all that. I have to think that's been severely interrupted by the amount of development that's around it.

What is the unique, I think, what I see, is from everything north of me, as those

bears try to move down, they can't cross the interstate, they can't really cross Celeste, and it funnels them down there.

The concentration is unreal. I mean, we're 15 minutes away. You could drive in there and likely see bears. There are that many. So, anyway, it's unique. It's very unique. That's why I wanted to put --

MR. CHILDERS: How many bears are we talking about?

MR. WHISTON: I have seen dozens. And the cubs -- every year there will be sows -- and it's only the ones we know about. They put collars on the sows. And they track the collars. And when the collar stops moving at a certain time of year, that's how they know where the sows end up.

And we have gone in there, and you have to literally spook the sow off of her den and find the cubs and weigh them, and they do hair samples and all the stuff. That's what we were doing here.

MR. CHILDERS: You said Auburn spends a lot of time in their research, and I wonder if they have any kind of population study.

MR. WHISTON: I'm sure they do. I'm sure we can get that.

MR. CHILDERS: Okay. But they do cross interstates, because we get them through north Alabama all the time from somewhere down here.

MR. WHISTON: I don't know what they do, but they love that spot right there.

So thank you-all. Nice meeting you.

THE COMMISSIONER: I've got a lot of wildlife folks right here that are pretty sharp on bears. And the work Auburn is doing -- they're doing that under our direction.

So I would encourage you, anything you want to know about bears, that fellow right there, Keith, he can tell you all about it, the northeast population of bears or the southwest population of bears and how they move and what they do.

MR. CHILDERS: I just thought, Commissioner, we might ought to put some of them around in these wild hog places instead of these traps.

THE COMMISSIONER: All right. Thank you

all to all of the speakers.

Now it's time to recess for executive session. By regulation, appraisal values are confidential during periods of negotiation. Accordingly, in order to discuss tract appraisal values, the Board will need to go into recess for an executive session.

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

DR. MARTIN: So moved.

THE COMMISSIONER: Moved by Dr. Martin and seconded by -- no. Sorry. Moved by Dr. Neumann and seconded by Dr. Martin.

As I call your name, please state your position on this motion to recess. Those in favor, please indicate by saying "aye."

Mr. Blankenship, aye.

Mr. Childers?

MR. CHILDERS: Aye.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Harper?

MR.HARPER: Aye.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Harris?

MR. HARRIS: Aye.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Howell?

DR. HOWELL: Aye.

THE COMMISSIONER: Dr. Keener?
DR. KEENER: Aye.
THE COMMISSIONER: Dr. Martin?
DR. MARTIN: Aye.
THE COMMISSIONER: Dr. Neumann?
DR. NEUMANN: Aye.
THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Oates?
MR. RICK OATES: Aye.
THE COMMISSIONER: Dr. Valentine?
DR. VALENTINE: Aye.
THE COMMISSIONER: All are in favor. We are now in recess. It is 10:54. We plan to be back in about 20 minutes.
(A BRIEF RECESS WAS HELD.)
THE COMMISSIONER: All right. We have everyone back. For the record, it is 11:20, and we are back from executive session, ready to pick back up on the agenda with number 5, Tab 2.
Go ahead, Ms. McCurdy.
MS. McCURDY: Okay. For the Board members, if you would be finding your Tab 2a, your yellow-green folder is slightly updated.
Just as you may recall, we ran some numbers as late as we can before coming to

this meeting. And your yellow Tab 2a will reflect that.

So as a review for the Board and for information for the public, this is the portion of the meeting where I just update everyone on where we are as to the tracts that the Board has asked staff to proceed trying to close and also give some update of financial information so you will know the amount of money you have to work with if you choose to take any actions today.

So let me first just run through all of the tracts that have been previously motioned for acquisition. And those include the Turkey Creek Nature Preserve, Bell addition; Red Hollow Road addition; Double Oak Tract; Dugdown Corridor, Phase II; and Graham Bayou.

Those tracts are all still active in either getting the final offers accepted and then closed.

I do need to provide one update. The second page of your 2a always includes an update, just an overall summary by fiscal year of the offers that have been made, the tracts that have been closed, and if we've

had any landowners decline our offer.

And since our last meeting, I do need to let you know that the landowner for the Sipsey River Swamp, Kellytown Addition, has now formally declined the Board's offer with concerns of our offer amount and chosen to hold on to the tract in hopes of making better money off a later acquisition in the private sector. So that is an update of that.

Taking all of the tracts that I mentioned that are still trying to be actively negotiated and closed in accordance with the Board's previous motion, you still have an unincumbered balance of approximately $32 million. So you're in good shape if you would like to take any action.

Since our last meeting -- and I'm just going to run through this fiscal year overall. We have closed the Beaver Dam Swamp Lowe Addition land donation; we have closed the Davidson Creek Tract; we have closed the Dugdown Mountain Corridor Phase I Tract; and we have closed the West Fowl River Tract.

So far we have closed just over 3100

acres and then have been able to leverage an additional -- just over 1400 acres through grant funds. And then, again, the declination that I mentioned was 1,052 acres. So that's the status of -- from a stats perspective of acreage if anyone is interested in that.

Any questions to 2a?

MR. HARPER: On the Sipsey River, it was just the total amount of money? Our appraised value didn't suit the landowner?

MS. McCURDY: In summary, yes, sir.

Then I wanted to update you on Tab 2b, the Stewardship Fund. The Board had authorized for fiscal year $3 million. We're still doing fine.

Right now you're seeing a balance of just over $2.4 million, although I will tell you we have -- gosh, I don't know -- I think it was over 400 approaching -- like $400,000 that are currently in the bid process in the State system. So, again, that number is coming down, but we should still be fine.

We always discuss, at this point as well, sort of a combination of your Tab 2b

and Tab 2c. 2c is information that the State Treasurer's office provides to the Board for each meeting that gives us a status update as to the net asset value for the Stewardship Fund.

So for the period that would end March 31, the net assets were at just over $52 million for the Stewardship Fund. Again, that fund is -- it's for each acquisition the Board makes, in addition to the acquisition costs, the staff transfers 15 percent of the appraised value into the Stewardship Fund to guarantee long-term perpetual ability to manage these tracts. And that's true even for a donated parcel. 100 percent donated acreage still carries with it a 15 percent transfer of the appraised value in the Stewardship Fund.

Any questions on Tab 2b or c?

(No response.)

Commissioner, if there are no questions on Tab 2, we are going to move on to Tab 3 of your packet. And if you will look at, again, what I call your yellow Tab 3a, I'm going to run through the tracts that comprise our

appraised nomination list, and I'm going to provide an update to the Board and the public as to each tract the Board at a previous meeting has motioned for staff to obtain a first appraisal.

So let me run through those. Those include Coon Gulf - Craze Bend Addition; Cooper Branch Tract; DeSoto State Park Oak Hill Road Northeast Addition; Freedom Hills WMA - Heard Addition; Inland Lake North Tract; Little River - East Fork Addition; and Riverton CHA, Community Hunting Area, Walker Chapel Hollow Addition.

Those appraisals are in and have been reviewed by staff. And to give an overview, including what would be the stewardship cost, all of those totals are over $18 million.

A couple that we do not have appraisals back on, let me update you on. That would be the Fort Pierce Tract. In working with the landowner and getting the deed information we always obtain before getting an appraisal, we learned, while talking, he had an offer from an additional purchaser come in. They're in active negotiations on that tract. He thinks

that would garner a preferable end result financially, and so they're working on that.

I, therefore, did not receive or pay for, an appraisal. I believe that probably ultimately will not be available for Board acquisition.

And then Certain Tract, Sunset Cove Addition, we have not received the deed information that we need from the landowner to be able to proceed with the appraisal process for the appraisal. But that's everything and an update on all of those tracts.

If there are no questions as to the appraised nominations, let's move to Tab 5a. This is the portion of the meeting where each time I update the Board on the status of the various efforts by staff to obtain grant dollars, either -- or leverage opportunities -- either to offset acquisition costs or perhaps mitigate tract management or recreational implementation costs on various tracts. So let me run through what we have for leveraging opportunities for right now.

As you know, the Dugdown Corridor

Phase II Tract, that was just a tract that the Forestry Commission obtained from U.S. Forest Service Grant funding. That tract is still in our closing process.

As to our appraised nominations, the Inland Lake North Tract is a tract that our Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division director, Chris Lewis, his division has offered some of their Pittman-Robertson funding to offset the acquisition costs of that tract. They're offering to partner with and contribute 20 percent of that acquisition cost for the Inland Lake North Tract within Pittman-Robertson funding. And that's at that 20 percent rate, at this time all they really had available to contribute. So it's a little different from what you have seen in the past, but that's what they had available.

And then to update on just some of our other grants, the Coosa Wildlife Management Area Tract, that was a tract that we worked with Alabama Forestry Foundation and their application for National Fish and Wildlife funding under the Longleaf Landscape Grant Program. So we are working on that and have

a timber harvest that was going out for bid, and we're working on that tract.

The Bon Secour River Wetlands Addition, that benefited from a National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Program Grant. And it offset the acquisition cost. In that grant, we were actually also able to get some funding for prescribed burning, as well as installation of the trailhead and implementation of about a mile and a quarter of hiking trail.

Our burning had to be put off until some better conditions. We need a little bit more moisture for that burn. But we're going to go ahead and proceed with the trailhead preparation, and the trail work will not be damaged by the burn, so we will go ahead and start with that while we wait for some better conditions.

As an update on the Mobile-Tensaw Delta Bartram and Perdido River Canoe Trail work that we were doing with the State, the GOMESA Grant that Governor Ivey provided, we're about 60 percent complete on that project.

Some of the improvements do benefit

Forever Wild tracts. And we have the land-based platforms are in place. And three of the five floating platforms have been constructed and will be placed soon. And so I have included a couple of pictures.

We receive a lot of reservations -- a lot of usage along both the Bartram and Perdido Trails. So we're excited to continue to see improvements to those areas.

We're also going to do some signage work and just some land-based work near those access points. So we're excited and continue to see that moving.

If there are no questions as to grants and leverage opportunities, I will move on to running through the short list.

All right. So if you will look at your Tab 4b. I'm going to run through -- I'll remind the Board, and for the benefit of the public, all of the tracts that are currently on what we call the short list. Each nomination that's made to the program, once we receive a willing-seller letter, so we have willing-seller confirmation from the landowner, we proceed to score each tract

under the four constitutional categories established for the program. And those are nature preserve, recreation area, wildlife management area -- that could be additions to or new wildlife management areas -- and State park acreage. Again, it could be State park but most often it's a State park addition.

So those four categories give the score -- we have a score for each of those four categories. The nominations then compete amongst themselves in the North, Central, and Southern district. A tract has to the score in the top three of their district in at least one category to make the short list.

Now, several of the properties actually have attributes that allow them to score in the top three in more than one category. But however that works out each time in that competition is how we derive the short list. These are properties available to the Board for motion first appraisal.

I'm going to run through those and always tell you -- I'm looking down, so if you have a question, just speak up and stop

me.

We have Big Canoe Creek - South Addition, St. Clair County; we have Coon Gulf - Flat Rock Creek Addition, Jackson County; Coon Gulf - Kings Bend Addition, Jackson County; Doss Mountain Tract, Tallapoosa County; Geneva State Forest - Black Creek Addition in Geneva County.

I will pause just a second for an update. Our State Lands and Wildlife Freshwater Fisheries Division staff, as well as Forestry Division staff, continue to look at this one on the ground. Mr. Oates and I are going to go out with staff here shortly and just try to see if we can work out an opportunity for possibly a swap. We have some deed restrictions we're looking into and just a couple of on-the-ground conditions we're confirming. But we are continuing to discuss that, and we will have an update, I'm sure, for the next meeting.

Hells Swamp Branch Tract, Mobile County; Lake Lurleen State Park - Lake Arnedra Road Addition.

I'm sure I destroyed that name.

Mobile-Tensaw Delta - Chacaloochee Bay Addition, Baldwin County.

I need to be recoached on that one.

Mobile-Tensaw Delta - Forks of the River Addition; Riverton CHA, Happy Hollow Addition; and Yates Lake WMA - Tucker Road Addition.

Again, those tracts comprise the competitive short list. And also I mentioned to the public, as we get a new nomination, that short list could change at each meeting what comes on and comes off.

In addition, if the Board moves today for a first appraisal as a short-list nomination, that nomination moves on to the appraised list I mentioned earlier. So that opens up a spot in the competition on the short list.

So I will pause for a second and see if there are any questions as to the short-list nominations.

(No response.)

All right. Commissioner, I think, if there are no questions, that takes us to the general discussion portion.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

This is the general discussion portion of the meeting where we generally entertain motions for first or second appraisals, if there's any interest. So I will open it now for any nomination.

Mr. Harris?

MR. HARRIS: Thank you, Commissioner.

I would like to make a motion for a second appraisal and to proceed to purchase on Cooper Branch Tract conditioned on the landowner donating 10 percent of the purchase amount.

THE COMMISSIONER: Is there a second?

DR. HOWELL: Second.

THE COMMISSIONER: Seconded by Dr. Howell. So the motion is for a second appraisal and move to purchase on the Cooper Branch Tract contingent upon the landowner donating 10 percent of the value.

MR. HARRIS: Correct.

THE COMMISSIONER: Everybody understand that? Any questions or any discussion?

All those in favor, please raise your hand.

MS. McCURDY: And, again, please keep your hands up for me.

I'm sorry. Keep your -- I can't count.

Commissioner, we only have eight.

THE COMMISSIONER: The motion does not carry.

DR. VALENTINE: Commissioner, I'll make a nomination as well.

THE COMMISSIONER: Hang on.

Dr. Keener had his hand up.

Go ahead, Dr. Keener.

DR. KEENER: Thank you.

I make a motion for staff to proceed with the second appraisal and purchase of the Inland Lake North Tract nomination contingent upon the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division providing grant funds for its acquisition and approximately 20 percent of the total appraised value for this nomination.

THE COMMISSIONER: Is there a second?

MS. McCURDY: Do you want to repeat that? Just speak into the microphone a little closer, Dr. Keener.

DR. KEENER: I make a motion for staff

to proceed with the second appraisal and purchase of the Inland Lake North Tract nomination contingent upon the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division providing grant funds for its acquisition and acreage of approximately 20 percent of the total appraised value for this nomination.

THE COMMISSIONER: Is there a second?

MR. HARRIS: I second.

THE COMMISSIONER: Seconded by Mr. Harris.

Is there any questions about that? Any discussion?

So the motion is for second appraisal to move and purchase on the Inland Lake Addition contingent upon the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division providing 20 percent of the purchase price.

All those in favor, please raise your hand.

MS. McCURDY: Commissioner, we only have seven.

THE COMMISSIONER: Motion fails.

Thank you.

Dr. Valentine?

DR. VALENTINE: Commissioner, I would like to nominate the Hells Swamp Branch Tract for first appraisal.

DR. MARTIN: Second.

THE COMMISSIONER: Motion by Dr. Valentine, seconded by Dr. Martin. For first appraisal on the Hells Swamp Addition.

Any questions or discussion?

(No response.)

All those in favor, please raise your hand.

MS. McCURDY: Commissioner, we have eight.

THE COMMISSIONER: Motion fails, not having nine affirmative votes.

Any other motions?

Dr. Keener?

DR. KEENER: I make a motion we move to the first appraisal of the Forks of the River Addition in Baldwin County.

DR. NEUMANN: I second.

THE COMMISSIONER: Motion by Dr. Keener, seconded by Dr. Neumann, for a first appraisal on the 62-acre Forks in the River Addition.

Any questions or discussion?
(No response.)
All those in favor, please raise your hand.
MS. McCURDY: Eight, Commissioner.
THE COMMISSIONER: Motion fails.
Thank you.
Any other motions?
Dr. Martin?
DR. MARTIN: I motion for staff to proceed with the second appraisal and closing of the Little River - East Fork Addition tract continent upon resolution satisfactory to ADCNR and our staff regarding any necessary amendments to any conservation easements applicable to tract acreage.
DR. VALENTINE: I'll second that.
THE COMMISSIONER: Seconded by Dr. Valentine.
So it's for a second appraisal move to purchase on the Little River - East Fork Addition contingent upon the staff working out the appropriate conservation easement and information from the landowner. Is that clear enough?

All of those in favor, please raise your hand.

MS. McCURDY: Eight, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Motion failed for lack of nine votes necessary.

All right. Thank you. We will move into --

MS. McCURDY: Miscellaneous?

THE COMMISSIONER: -- miscellaneous reports on Tab 5.

MS. McCURDY: If you turn to Tab 5, I'll be doing the same, so give me just a minute.

We're now on Tab 5b. Each meeting I let the Board know as to the tracts, absent additional action by the Board, would roll off at the next meeting. And so I wanted to note those two. If anybody wants to keep a tract on the list, it just takes one -- it's something that one Board member can do.

DR. KEENER: I would like to keep Cooper Branch tract.

MS. McCURDY: Dr. Keener asked that we keep Cooper Branch Tract and we will do so. The only other nomination that would roll off is an additional -- there's an appraised

nomination, and that's a Coon Gulf - Craze Bend Addition. Unless a Board member asks to hold on to that one, it will roll off after this meeting.

MR. CHILDERS: I would like to move we keep the Coon Gulf on.

MS. McCURDY: So Mr. Childers has asked that we keep the Coon Gulf - Craze Bend Addition on the appraisal list.

Thank y'all.

All right. So I normally do start you off with the business and make you make motions and things, but I wanted to start with something a little bit fun before I make you work.

I wanted to give everybody an update. We often update you on activities that the Forever Wild Field Trial Area in Hale County.

We had a big event that drew a lot of press coverage and a lot of thanks, and so many people wanted me to pass thanks along to the Board, I decided to just basically do that first.

On March 5, there was a statewide Emergency Management Agency, EMA, exercise

that was conducted at the Field Trial Area. And it had over 750 first responders, had additional volunteers, that came and used the new event center for a dinner. And it was really just a very spectacular event to see the facility used.

The Hale County EMA came to us and asked if they could use the Field Trial Area. And in the end, they utilized about 400 acres to simulate a plane crash. They wanted to do it at night to further complicate the response efforts and also utilize our ponds to incorporate a water rescue aspect of the exercise.

As those who have been out there know, it was very, very dark. They set hay bales on fire to create smoke. And Rick Oates can attest to just how spooky and hazy it was. It was very dry. So just the dust was creating very complex conditions.

So they had volunteers laid out across those 43 acres, all with preplanned, very specific injuries that had to be addressed by the first responders.

The Jaws of Life were used. And one

portion of the wreckage, we had -- there were no live volunteers actually in the pond. But they did have crash-dummy type of individuals in the pond. Boats were put into the pond. The equipment had to be figured out and used.

It also included triage, transport. So you had a true-life incident there at the Field Trial Area. And it was very successful. There were issues encountered that were unexpected about -- that's the point of the whole drill.

So, anyway, I just wanted to tell y'all thank you. So many people asked me to thank the Board for allowing the property to be used and allowed for a complex setup of debris. It also allowed them to leave it overnight and come back and clean up the next day, which they did a great job.

So, anyways, many, many thanks. Although he is not here today, I wanted to give kudos to Mr. Parnell. ALFA sponsored the meal that night for working up to almost a thousand people, and it was excellent. So, anyway, I just pass along the thanks to the entire Board.

And then we -- also on the Field Trial Area, we had another group of Tuskegee University students that came out to the property for a cast-and-blast class. And that is hard to say.

And that's part of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division R3 and Fisheries Section program. And those students came along and, for many of them, it was the first time they caught a fish. They were taught about fishing. This were taught about cleaning a fish. Also had a little bit instruction on cooking the fish.

But also were introduced to some shooting sport instruction, as well as taken out to see how we trap feral hogs and how we remove them after we trap them.

It gave our staff, our State Lands and Wildlife staff an opportunity to talk about land management and invasive species. And I included the quotes from the students in your Tab 5c memo, and they were just very, very appreciative. And I wanted to comment on Wildlife's ongoing effort and desire to continue that coordination with Forever Wild.

So that was Tab 5c. I included some photos, but I just wanted to tell you it was a very impressive, high-pressure night and everyone did really well.

All right. If you will look at Tab 5d. Within a year of closing on a tract, we are required to prepare a management plan. At this meeting, I have one tract that we would like to go ahead and propose to the Board to be incorporated into an existing management plan due to the overall complex acreage. And that would be for the Freedom Hills WMA - Sugar Camp Branch Addition to be added to that current management plan.

The Board included a draft. If the Board -- unless there's a question -- I would take questions -- I would need a motion from the Board to adopt that plan.

MR. HARRIS: So moved.

MS. McCURDY: There's a motion, 5c. Here.

MR. HARRIS: The Board approves the State Land's Division proceeding with the inclusion of Freedom Hills - Sugar Camp Branch Addition into the existing management

plan as set forth in the memorandum dated May 7th, 2026.

THE COMMISSIONER: Is there second?

DR. KEENER: Second.

THE COMMISSIONER: Seconded by Dr. Keenan.

Just to put this into that existing management plan, all of those in favor, please say aye.

Any opposed?

None opposed. Motion carries.

MS. McCURDY: We will keep moving. We are now on Tab 5e. For Board members who have been with me long enough, you know at the May meeting we take care of two administrative matters. And so the first one of those relates to staff seeking Board approval to establish expenditure amount from the Stewardship Fund for the upcoming fiscal year that starts October 1.

We come to you at the May meeting for this because the constitutional amendment forming the program denotes that such a motion would be necessary prior to the start of the fiscal year. So I bring it in May, in

case there are any questions or concerns. We have one more meeting, assuming we have a quorum, to take care of it.

So I have included in Tab 5e sort of a description. We meet -- staff of the divisions coordinate to try to project needed expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year from the Stewardship account.

We look at routine management needs. We start with -- we're always going to start with the base land management needs, our burning, you know, the roadwork that we need, we need rock, we need a new culvert, we need a trail network.

We also are going to be looking at, on a tract-specific basis, do we have reforestation needs that will tie into that fiscal year. We are also then looking at recreation improvements that we could make on the tract.

So it's not an exact science, but we do need to look at that. And I have included some information on reforestation in Exhibit B to that memo. This would be some activities that we would anticipate in that

year. We may have other needed activities that we can't predict and we never really know for sure.

And so this year, similar to past years, in meeting with staff and talking with the Commissioner, we would suggest the Board approving expenditures again this year at the $3 million amount for any anticipated needs.

And also as part of the constitutional amendment requires the Board to take this action, in the event that we do not project to have sufficient interest income, and that's the specific wording used in the amendment from the Stewardship account.

As you know, several years ago, the State treasurer began working with the Board and really implementing the current strategy focusing on increasing the value, the net value, the assets in that account. So we don't have enough true quote/unquote interest income. Anytime we don't, which would be every time, the Commissioner has to officially make an insufficiency determination. And you will also see that in Exhibit A to your memo. So that's the

procedural matter like last year, that we went through.

So if the Board is comfortable with once again establishing a $3 million expenditure from the corpus of the Stewardship account, I would need a motion from the Board, and I would need the nine votes from the Board to approve that motion.

THE COMMISSIONER: Is there a motion?

DR. NEUMANN: I make a motion for the Board to authorize ADNCR and, after exhausting available interest and income from the Stewardship account, to expend funds from the corpus Stewardship account up to an amount that, when added to the available interest income, does not exceed $3 million for the fiscal year '27.

THE COMMISSIONER: Second?

Seconded by Dr. Martin.

All those in favor, please raise your hand.

MS. McCURDY: Commissioner, we have all ten.

THE COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

Motion carries.

MS. McCURDY: Thank you.

I will now move to the next Tab 5 memo, which is Tab 5F.

Simply to keep them together, we also in the May meeting -- we made the motion related to the current fiscal year that we're in related to transfer of administrative funds to the State Lands Division for its administrative support of the program.

We are, again, asking this year to transfer the amount of $900,000. That remains level since the amount we requested for FY20.

We do intend to have an acreage increase, so that could increase in the future, but we, this year, are again requesting that $900,000 transfer.

I'll take any questions. But if the Board is comfortable with that, I would, once again, need a motion and a nine-member vote for that.

THE COMMISSIONER: Dr. Martin?

DR. MARTIN: Yeah. I make a motion for the Board to approve the State Lands Division staff proceeding with the requested

administrative transfer in the amount of $900,000 for fiscal year '26 administrative support provided by the State Lands Division.

THE COMMISSIONER: Is there a second?

DR. NEUMANN: Second.

THE COMMISSIONER: Seconded by Dr. Neumann.

Any questions?

All in favor, please raise your hand.

MS. McCURDY: All right. Commissioner, that would be all ten.

THE COMMISSIONER: Motion carries.

Thank you.

MS. McCURDY: To sort of finish out some of your information you have in your packet, Tab 5G, your standard quarterly update as to the ongoing feral hog mitigation efforts, both by staff but also by contractors across the tracts. So we have our usual compilation of stats on that for the Board.

And let me double-check myself. That may be all I have, if you will give me one second.

MR. CHILDERS: Question: On this swine mitigation, we authorized a certain amount of

money. What was it? Do you remember?

MS. McCURDY: I think it was at the time up to a million.

MR. CHILDERS: How are we standing there?

MS. McCURDY: Well, we are still within that million. We are spending it both between -- we are still making equipment purchases, so you have that category of expense, you have the contractor, professional service category, and then the additional staff time.

MR. CHILDERS: So there's not a date certain, just an amount certain?

MS. McCURDY: It is an initiative we have taken as an ongoing directive of the Board. Unless the Board tells us to quit doing it, we will do it, and it is factored into our Stewardship.

THE COMMISSIONER: So it's back to the $3 million that you just approved. This is one of the activities that is included in that $3 million.

MR. CHILDERS: But it does have a cap on the amount; right?

MS. McCURDY: Yes, sir. $1 million.

MR. CHILDERS: You will let us know when we get close?

MS. McCURDY: I will.

Commissioner, that's all I had for miscellaneous. I'm done.

THE COMMISSIONER: The next item of the agenda is approval of the minutes from the February 5th meeting. Those are provided in the packet.

Are there any corrections or deletions to the minutes in anybody's notice? If not, is there a motion to approve the minutes from the February 5th meeting?

MR. RICK OATES: Moved.

MR. HARPER: Second.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Harper seconded and -- Mr. Oates made the motion, seconded by Mr. Harper.

All of those in favor of approval of the February 5 minutes as presented in your pocket, please say aye.

Any opposed?

None opposed. Motion carries.

Our next meeting will be August 6th at

Lake Guntersville State Park. So I look forward to seeing everybody towards the other end of the state in August.

Is there any other discussion or input or questions or anything from anybody before we adjourn?

(No response.)

Then I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

MR. HARRIS: Motion.

THE COMMISSIONER: Second? I'll second it myself.

All in favor, please say aye.

We are adjourned.

Thank you.

(PROCEEDINGS ADJOURNED AT 12:01 P.M.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Alan Peacock, Registered Diplomate Reporter, Certified Realtime Reporter, and Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a verbatim transcript of the testimony as taken stenographically by me at the time, place, and on the date hereinfore set forth, to the best of my ability.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a relative nor employee nor attorney nor counsel of any of the parties to this action, and that I am neither a relative nor employee of such attorney or counsel, and that I am not financially interested in the action.

Alan Peacock

ALAN PEACOCK, FAPR, CCR, RDR, CRC
Registered Diplomate Reporter
Certified Realtime Reporter
Notary Public
Dated: 5-19-26