COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

BEFORE THE PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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COMMISSION MEETING

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BEFORE: Ronald A. Weaner, President

Ralph A. Martone, Vice President

David J. Putnam, Secretary

Gregory J. Isabella, Member

Thomas E. Boop, Member

David W. Schreffler, Member

James J. Delaney, Jr., Member

Robert W. Schlemmer, Member

MEETING: Tuesday, June 28, 2011

8:31 a.m.

LOCATION: Pennsylvania Game Commission

2001 Elmerton Avenue

Harrisburg, PA 17110

WITNESSES: None

Reporter: Jolynn C. Prunoske

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(814) 536-8908
APPEARANCES

ALSO PRESENT:
Carl G. Roe, Executive Director
Bradley C. Bechtel, Esquire, Chief Counsel
Kathy Wilson, Executive Secretary
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PROCEEDINGS

PRESIDENT WEANER:

This meeting will now come to order. We are holding the official voting meeting of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Board of Commissioners. First order of the day is, if you do have a cell phone, please turn it off or put it on vibrate. Also, a reminder to you that we are streaming live on the Internet and for a long time to come. So keep that in mind. I'd like you to join me in a Pledge to the Flag.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE RECITED

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Mr. Secretary, will you take roll, please?

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, all Commissioners are accounted for.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Thank you. Next item is the approval of the minutes from April 12th, 2011.

MR. BOOP:

So moved.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Mr. Boop.

MR. SCHREFFLER:
Second.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Commissioner Schreffler. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, we shall proceed to vote. All in favor, say aye.

ALL RESPOND AYE

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Those opposed, say no. Mr. Secretary?

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, the motion passes unanimously.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Thank you. If you're following along in your agenda, we're now at page two. Mr. Bechtel?

MR. BECHTEL:
Thank you, Mr. President. The first item to come before the Commission today is Proposed Rule Making from the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management. Its amendments to 58 Pa. Code Section 137.34. The recent discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease in a free-ranging deer in Allegany County, Maryland, just over ten miles from the Pennsylvania border, prompted a review and updating of the Commonwealth's
Interagency Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan. This update necessitates amending Section 137.34 to bring the terminology and procedures in the regulation in line with the Response Plan. The text is shown on pages two and three of your agenda. The executive director and staff recommend the Commission approve this change.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Is there a motion?

MR. DELANEY:

So moved.

MR. SCHLEMMER:

Second.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Moved by Commissioner Delaney, seconded by Commissioner Schlemmer. Is there any discussion? All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

ALL RESPOND AYE

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion passes unanimously.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Thank you.
MR. BECHTEL:
The next item comes from the Bureau of Wildlife Protection. This concerns Adopted Rule Making in the Adoption of proposed amendments to Section 147.804. To effectively manage the wildlife resources of this Commonwealth, the Game Commission proposed at its April 12th, 2011 meeting, to amend Section 147.804, relating to general, to allow a mentor to transfer a valid antlerless license issued to him to an eligible mentored youth, upon the harvest of an antlerless deer. The executive director and staff recommend Final Adoption of this amendment to 58 Pa. Code, as shown on Exhibit A on page five of the agenda.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Is there a motion?

MR. ISABELLA:
Motion.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Mr. Isabella. Second?

MR. MARTONE:
Second.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Seconded by Mr. Martone. Any discussion?

Hearing none, we shall proceed to vote. All those in
favor, signify by saying aye.

ALL RESPOND AYE

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion passes unanimously.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Thank you.

MR. BECHTEL:

The next item is concerning Proposed Rule Making and amendment to 58 Pa. Code Section 147.701. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, or CITES, is a comprehensive conservation treaty signed by 175 countries, including the United States. This international agreement regulates the commercial trade of wildlife species and works to ensure that international trade of species is sustainable and does not threaten their survival. In relevant part, CITES requires permanent tags to be affixed to carcasses or parts of species being exported internationally. The bobcat, while not threatened with extinction, is listed in CITES, and trade is controlled in order to protect endangered cats that have fur and parts similar in appearance.
Therefore, CITES applies to international exportation of this species. CITES does not currently apply to fishers. Current Commission regulations take this requirement a step further by requiring permittees to obtain and the Commission to issue CITES tags for every bobcat and fisher harvested that will be exported beyond this Commonwealth. The Commission has determined that this requirement is unnecessarily restrictive on permittees, over-burdensome on the Commission and simply not applicable to fishers. The Commission is proposing to amend Section 147.701, relating to general, to reduce the applicability of the CITES tag to bobcats and international exports only. The text of this proposed rulemaking is shown on pages six and seven of your Agenda. The executive director and staff recommend that the Commission approve this change.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Is there a motion?

MR. SCHREFFLER:
So moved.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Mr. Schreffler, moved. Is there a second?

MR. MARTONE:
Second.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Mr. Martone, second. Any discussion?

Hearing none, we shall vote. All those in favor, say aye.

ALL RESPOND AYE

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion passes unanimously.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Thank you.

MR. BECHTEL:

The next items come from the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management that concern the acquisition of real estate; the first, Contract Number 3586, State Game Land Number 294, Mercer County. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Inc. (WPC, is offering for sale, 195 acres, more or less, of land in Cool Spring Township, Mercer County, adjoining State Game Land Number 294, as shown on Exhibit RED 1, page 9, of your agenda. The option is subject to an existing reservation of oil, gas and mineral rights, excluding peat. The option price is $90,000 lump sum,
with the Game Fund obligation limited to $62,487.89, and the remaining $27,512.11 being a donation from the Estate of Margaret Metcalfe. The property is mostly wetlands, with approximately 130 acres in emergent, scrub-shrub and forested wetlands. The upland portion of the property is 60 acres of woodland comprised of oak, maple, cherry and ash. The remaining five acres is reverting farmland.

Otter Creek flows through the property, as well as an unnamed tributary to Otter Creek. A Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory review indicates the presence of the eastern massasauga rattlesnake, a state-listed endangered species within the vicinity of this property. Acquiring this property will fill in gaps between two separate tracts of State Game Land Number 294.

This contract is contingent upon the WPC being able to secure an option with the owners of the property and approval by the WPC Board of Directors. If WPC is unable to secure an option on this property, a cooperative agreement between the Commission and the WPC will allow the $90,000 to be used to acquire other lands acceptable to the Commission.

The second contract is number 3587, State Game Land Number 314, Erie County. Again, the Western
Pennsylvania Conservancy, Inc., or WPC, is offering for sale, 81.5 acres, more or less, in Springfield Township, Erie County, adjacent to State Game Land Number 314, as shown on Exhibit RED 2 on page 10 of your agenda. The option price is $400 per acre, to be paid from the Game Fund. The acquisition is subject to the WPC purchasing the property.

This property is mainly forested with sugar maple, red maple, red ash, American beech, white pine and black cherry, with small pockets of open wetlands and old fields reverting back to early succession. Raccoon Creek flows through the southern portion of the property. Access is from Old Lake Road. The executive director and staff recommend the options listed above be accepted and the Commission authorize the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management to proceed with the acquisition of these tracts.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Is there a motion?

MR. DELANEY:
Mr. President, I'll make a motion to support the acquisition of these two properties.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Is there a second?

MR. SCHREFFLER:
Second.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Commissioner Schreffler, seconds, and Commissioner Delaney makes the motion. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, we shall proceed to vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

ALL RESPOND AYE

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion passes unanimously.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Okay. I guess the next thing we'll go to is new business. Is there any --- are there any items of new business that members would like to bring up? Mr. Martone?

MR. MARTONE:

Mr. President, I would like to present a motion to accept the preliminary management plans that we were presented yesterday for a ruffed grouse and bobwhite quail, as preliminary plans, and they would be posted on the website for public comment.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

We have a motion to adopt by Commissioner
Martone. Is there a second?

MR. DELANEY:
Second.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Second by Commissioner Delaney. Any discussion? Hearing none, we shall proceed to vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

ALL RESPOND AYE

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, the motion passes unanimously.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Thank you. Further items of new business?

MR. DELANEY:
Yes, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Go ahead.

MR. DELANEY:
I have a resolution. On February 10th, the House Game and Fisheries Committee met. At that time, Representative Marc Gergely asked the Board of Commissioners if they had an opinion on Sunday
hunting. Since then, I've given it a lot of
consideration and have prepared a resolution for the
Board of Commissioners to consider, and I will read
it. Sunday Hunting Resolution by the Board of
Commissioners, June 28th, 2011. The Board of
Commissioners for the Pennsylvania Game Commission
declares its support for a repeal of prohibitions on
Sunday hunting by the amending of Title 34 (Game), of
the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes in Hunting and
Trapping.

Whereas, Pennsylvania has experienced
consistent declines in hunting participation by both
resident and non-resident hunters over the past
several decades, with both the number of licenses sold
and revenues generated experiencing steady declines;
and whereas, youth participation is vital to
maintaining the long-standing tradition of hunting in
Pennsylvania. We can effectively double the number of
hunting days for youths during the school year by
offering Sunday hunting; and whereas, Sunday hunting
is an effective means of recruiting new hunters and
retaining current hunters by increasing the value of
the hunting license through offering additional
opportunities to spend time in the field; and whereas,
many Pennsylvania residents seek hunting opportunities
and hunting leases in neighboring states that offer
Sunday hunting. Sunday hunting will keep Pennsylvania
hunters in Pennsylvania; and whereas, Pennsylvania has
a longstanding tradition of hunting camps and clubs.
Sunday hunting will effectively double the number of
hunting days for camp owners and club members; and
whereas, Sunday hunting is expected to generate a
substantial increase in out-of-state license sales and
the accompanying revenue for the Pennsylvania Game
Commission; and whereas, hunting license sales and
their associated federal matching funds are the
primary revenue source for the Pennsylvania Game
Commission in carrying out its mission, including
maintaining 1.5 million acres of state game lands and
acquisition of additional public lands, research and
management of wildlife and providing information and
education to the public; and whereas, Sunday hunting
will provide substantial economic benefits to rural
areas and businesses by increasing money spent by
hunters on lodging, food, gas and other incidental
items; and whereas, Sunday hunting is expected to
generate $629 million in additional spending and
create 5,300 new jobs, resulting in $18 million in
additional sales and income tax; and whereas, the
mission of the Pennsylvania Game Commission is to
manage wildlife and its habitat for current and future
generations; and whereas, Sunday hunting, which is
currently permitted to control a growing population of
coyotes, will provide the biologists of the
Pennsylvania Game Commission a new tool to manage
wildlife populations; and whereas, the 43 states that
currently permit Sunday hunting, have not experienced
any discernable impact on the health or vibrancy of
game populations; and whereas, the Board of
Commissioners recognizes, the authority to permit
Sunday hunting lies entirely with the General Assembly
of Pennsylvania; and whereas, if the General Assembly
repeals the restrictions on Sunday hunting, thus
giving the authority to regulate Sunday hunting to the
Board of Commissioners, the Board recognizes the many
stakeholder groups any actions on Sunday hunting will
affect and will endeavor to engage these stakeholders
before passing any new regulations in regard to Sunday
hunting.

Now, therefore, we, the Board of
Commissioners for the Pennsylvania Game Commission, do
hereby urge the General Assembly of Pennsylvania to
repeal the prohibition on Sunday hunting in the
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. And I make a motion to
support this resolution.
PRESIDENT WEANER:
Is there a second?

MR. MARTONE:
Second.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
It's been seconded by Commissioner Martone. Is there discussion? Commissioner Boop?

MR. BOOP:
With respect to this resolution, I would preface my remarks by saying that they don't have anything to do with my personal religious beliefs or what I consider those aspects might be. And I certainly hunt in the western states where Sunday hunting is allowed. Generally, I've hunted on Sunday. But having said that, I have some concerns with this resolution. On or about June 14th, we started selling licenses for the upcoming seasons that we have here in Pennsylvania. If past history is any guide, we will sell 500,000 to 1,000,000 licenses for the upcoming seasons. All of those hunters, whether they're residents or non-residents, need a place to go. They have to have access to property where they can pursue whatever quarry they bought a license for.

And I believe, statistically, about 80 percent of the available land, plus or minus in
Pennsylvania where all those people that we license by this agency hunt, are going to be hunting on private land. Fairly clear to me as a commissioner, and I certainly follow this controversy, that the rural land owners who make their properties available to our hunters to whom we sell licenses, simply do not want Sunday hunting on their property or properties.

And I'm concerned that this type of resolution at this time, when this matter has not been acted on by the General Assembly, is --- has the potential to damage that relationship we have with private landowners who are very much opposed to this concept and to allowing this to occur. I'm also not convinced, and I haven't seen any studies that lead me to be convinced, that the problem that we have in this state and that other states have with recruiting new and retaining existing hunters, is suddenly going to be solved by having Sunday hunting. I think it's much more an endemic problem that goes far beyond the concept of Sunday hunting. So I can't support this resolution at this time, as an outgoing commissioner. If the legislature does act and does give authority to this Board in the future, that's fine. But I just think this resolution is premature.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Thank you. Further discussion? Mr. Schreffler?

MR. SCHREFFLER:

Yes. I concur with Mr. Boop's comments, but I also believe this resolution is being brought prematurely. I really urge my fellow commissioners to consider it carefully and vote against it at this time. Personally, I would like to survey a sportsmen's club and others more closely before I make a decision. The fact that this hasn't been acted upon in the legislature, is just really going through the process of evaluating the whole business of Sunday hunting, leads me to believe that, you know, this is really the legislature's business right now. They have kept it, and it would be unwise for the Board of Commissioners to interfere. This is an issue that not only affects sportsmen but all the people of Pennsylvania. And I think as they're going through their evaluation of the issue in the legislature, they'll find that it has greater ramifications than just hunting for sportsmen and on Sunday. The other thing that I would caution my fellow commissioners about, is that previous resolutions that we have passed have not been effective. And I question whether this is really an effective way to go about
this issue. That's it. Thank you.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Thank you. Is there further discussion?

Mr. Putnam?

MR. PUTNAM:
I support this resolution. I believe we do have regional differences throughout the state. But representing the north-central counties, I believe it would be a significant, positive thing for hunters in the north-central counties. We don't have as much farmland up there, and I believe issues with farmland, especially game and forest cooperators who don't want Sunday hunting, to be addressed through our cooperative programs. And I do believe that we do lose a lot of hunters from the very northern tiers that go hunting on Sunday in New York State. Thank you.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Thank you. Further discussion? Mr. Martone?

MR. MARTONE:
Thank you, Commissioner Weaner. I am dismayed that we are even talking about this issue in 2011. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has been a leader in wildlife management and a leader in the
world of hunting. Across this nation, our wildlife
management, our biologists, are looked upon as
leaders, and yet 43 other states allow Sunday hunting.
And Pennsylvania is only one of seven that are finally
coming around to having this discussion.

You know, I think it's 30 years later
than we should be doing it. We are a leader ——
Pennsylvania is the leader, and yet 43 other states
have already chosen to repeal laws that were written
back in the early 1900s. You know, this is something
that needs to be discussed, and I think it needs to
move forward. And I think it will benefit all our
hunters and our hunting traditions in Pennsylvania.
Society has changed, and we haven't. And I think it's
time we start to make that transition. Thank you.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Further comment? Commissioner Schlemmer?

MR. SCHLEMMER:
For years I've been hunting in other
states and providences of Canada on Sunday. They
don't seem to have a problem where I hunt. Back in
1937, you --- back in '36 you could not fish on
Sundays. And they changed that Blue Law in 1937 that
you could go fishing on Sunday. I think we have to be
forward-looking here, and I would support the
abolishment of the Sunday Blue Law in regards to hunting. And I think we could put another management tool in our toolbox. It doesn't necessarily mean that we have to run out and start hunting one species or another. We have the ability to manage wildlife.
Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Further comments? Commissioner Delaney?

MR. DELANEY:

Yes. I have a comment. Commissioner Schreffler's opinion that commissioner resolutions don't matter and are not effective, I'd like to remind the good commissioner that the Mentored Youth Tag was stuck in the legislature and that this Board, prior to the legislators acting on that law, received a resolution from this Board. And I believe that that's what propelled that legislation forward to give us the Mentored Youth Tag for today. So what we're doing today is exactly what we did several months ago with the resolution with regard to the Mentored Youth Transfer Tag.

MR. SCHREFFLER:

Mr. President?

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Is there further discussion? Yes?
MR. SCHREFFLER:
I'd like to comment on that. I think the
thing that has propelled that is the fact that we
anticipated the passing of that and proposed a change
to a regulation. But I'm not sure that it was the
resolution that did that. And there's some other
things that I have concerns, and this isn't the time,
I think, to really debate Sunday hunting, because what
we're really debating is the resolution. And I think
that it's the timing of this resolution at the present
time. I don't think it is appropriate, and in fact,
the thing --- that's the thing that I'm talking about.
Whether or not I vote for or against Sunday hunting is
something I have to decide down the road. But there
are some other issues that we'll have to decide when
this comes to it, too, because not only would it
possibly help hunters, you know, hunt and increase,
maybe some income in this area, but it's also going to
increase expenses for the Game Commission. And I know
I'm adding something else onto this, but you know,
when you want to do this, you have to pay for them.
You want better things, you have to pay for them. And
that's been held up in the legislature, as far as the
license increase, and so on.

So I feel that we just, at this time ---
you know, maybe, down the road, when action's been
taken by the legislature and we have something more to
base our resolution on than what we're talking about
right now. Thank you.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Thank you. Is there further discussion?

Commissioner Martone?

MR. MARTONE:

Once again, I have to agree with
Commissioner Schreffler, that timing is bad. This
should have been 20 years ago. You know, we've waited
a lot longer than we should have to come out and
support our hunters and discuss this issue. I think
the other thing that's important is, we are not ---
and Mr. Schreffler alluded to this, we are not
discussing Sunday hunting. We are not talking about
what we'll hunt on Sunday, what we will or won't.
Open seasons, that is not even a part of the
discussion. It's just to offer this Board a
management tool to further what we already do, and
that's to manage wildlife for Pennsylvania. Thank
you.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Further discussion? I'd like to add some
of my own comments. First of all, as we listen to the
resolution as it was read, there's a lot of the
whereas down here that I could take issue with and
argue against. But again, I'm just --- I'm not
satisfied with the resolution. I won't support the
resolution. I don't think that Sunday hunting is
going to be the magic bullet here. I think if you
look at the 43 other states that have Sunday hunting,
their hunting license sales range is decreasing,
actually, more rapidly than ours is, in some cases.
And so it hasn't solved their problem. This is an
issue, I think, that's extremely controversial. And
by taking a stand on it prior to the legislature, even
considering it for a vote, is premature. And I think
the Game Commission has nothing to be gained by doing
this. We're going to tick off a whole lot of people,
no matter which way we vote on this. And if we send a
resolution up that's not even near unanimous, it kind
of dilutes the whole idea of a resolution.

To reiterate what Tom had mentioned, I
don't think we can afford to alienate the vast number
of landowners that we have here in this state, that do
provide a place for us to hunt. And I just don't see
any good coming to the Game Commission by taking a
position either way at this point on this issue. So
for those reasons and many others, I also do not
support this resolution. Having said that, is there other discussion? Commissioner Boop?

MR. BOOP:

I move to table the resolution.

MR. SCHREFFLER:

I will second that.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

It has been properly moved and seconded to table this resolution. This requires a majority vote. All those in favor of tabling, signify by --- well, let me ask, is there any discussion? Hearing none, we shall vote. All those in favor of tabling the motion, signify by raising one hand.

FOUR HANDS RAISED

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Hands down. All those in favor of --- or opposed to tabling the motion, signify by raising one hand.

FOUR HANDS RAISED

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Secretary?

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the vote was four to four.

The motion fails.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Four to four tied, it fails, the motion to --- laying on the table fails. Is there any further discussion on this? Yes, sir?

Commissioner Delaney:

Mr. President, I would just add one more comment, that, you know, we live-stream these meetings now. And I'm just happy that the Board of Commissioners, each one of us, no matter what our opinions are, had a chance to present that opinion today.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Any further discussion?

MR. BOOP:

Call for the question.

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Okay. A question has been called for. We shall proceed to vote. To reiterate the motion is to adopt the resolution that Commissioner Delaney read into the record. All those in favor of supporting this resolution, signify by raising one hand.

FOUR HANDS RAISED

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Hands down. All those opposed to supporting this resolution, signify by raising one hand.
THREE HANDS RAISED

MR. ISABELLA:
Abstain.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
Commissioner?

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, the motion passes, five (sic) to three, with one abstention.

MR. BOOP:
Excuse me. Point of order. I think ---.

MR. PUTNAM:
It's four.

MR. BOOP:
Four to three?

MR. PUTNAM:
Four to three. It's my mistake.

PRESIDENT WEANER:
And the abstention was Commissioner Isabella. The motion fails. I mean --- excuse me, the motion does pass. Yes, he's correct. Four to three vote. Are there any other items of new business? Okay. One thing I'd like to --- a couple of things that we need to take care of yet. First of all, Executive Director Roe yesterday brought this item up, and I'd like to bring it up again on the
official record today. We have a very important person in our midst here, Kathy Wilson, who's the executive secretary to Director Roe and to the Board of Commissioners. She is retiring with 30 years of service to the Game Commission, effective tomorrow, and we're all kind of bummed out about that. We are going to miss her, but we offer our congratulations to her. We offer our thanks to her. She's done an outstanding job in her tenure here at the Game Commission, and we would just publicly like to say thank you very much. Kathy, would you like to stand, so that we can all see you.

APPLAUSE

PRESIDENT WEANER:

Thank you. At this time, I'd like to call in Greg Raffensperger to come and make a presentation.

MR. RAFFENSPERGER:

Good morning, everyone. I'm Executive Director of the House Game and Fisheries Committee. I'm happy to be here today to honor the service of Kathy Wilson, and we have a citation from the House of Representatives I'd like to read.

It goes, whereas, the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania is always proud to
acknowledge these individuals who, through professional excellence, bring great credit to themselves and this Commonwealth; and whereas, Kathy Wilson is being honored upon her retirement from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, concluding 30 years of committed state service; and whereas, Ms. Wilson established her career with this Commonwealth in the Department of Labor and Industry. She also was employed with the Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.

In 1988, she began her tenure with the Pennsylvania Game Commission and is retiring as executive secretary to the executive director. Throughout her service, Ms. Wilson has demonstrated remarkable knowledge, ability and integrity in carrying out her many responsibilities, thus earning the respect and gratitude of all those who receive the benefit of her timeless devotion to duty.

Now, therefore, the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania congratulates Kathy Wilson upon her well-deserved retirement, heartily recognizes her exemplary record of service in keeping with the highest ideals and traditions of this Commonwealth and directs that a copy of this Citation, sponsored by the Honorable John
R. Evans, on June 23rd, 2011, be transmitted to
Kathleen Wilson. And on a personal note, I would just
like to say thank you, Kathy. It's been a pleasure to
work with you over the years and sorry to see you go.

APPLAUSE

MR. RAFFENSPERGER:

Also with me is Josh Wilson, who happens
to be Kathy's son, and he has a Citation from the
Senate of Pennsylvania.

MR. WILSON:

Thanks, Greg. Obviously, I come in no
official capacity, other than Kathy's son, so
hopefully that will suffice here today. I did use to
work in the Senate for Senator Piccola. I suppose he's
deputizing me today to give you this Citation.

OFF RECORD COMMENT

MR. WILSON:

The Citation reads the same, except it's
transmitted by Senator Piccola, Senator Alloway and
Senator Kasunic, who are obviously the chairs in the
Game and Fisheries Committee in the Senate. And we
thought we had the lieutenant governor here today to
give you his Citation, but he promised that he'd give
it to you some time over the summer, so he was unable
to make it. So we have one from the lieutenant
governor, as well.

APPLAUSE

MR. WILSON:

And there's one other person that's bummed, that's my dad. He's retired as well. He knows he's going to have a lot of stuff to do.

OFF RECORD CONVERSATION

APPLAUSE

PRESIDENT WEANER:

The next item is the detail from yesterday. Yesterday, if you were here, you heard the presentation from -- the retiring addresses from Commissioner Boop and Commissioner Isabella. The transcripts of those presentations will be attached to the official transcript of our meeting today as Attachment One and Attachment Two. You'll notice on the agenda booklet here, that our October meeting is listed for October 3rd and 4th. And traditionally, we have traveled around the state to various locations for this meeting. Since I live in Adams County, I didn't feel it was -- we had a lot to be gained by going an hour down the road. So we will meet in Harrisburg here on October 3rd and 4th, and we're still working on the dates for the January meeting. Are there any other Commissioners that have any last
comments or any items for the good of the order? Hearing none, we stand adjourned. And we will have a press conference in the cafeteria in the training school in about ten minutes. We are adjourned.

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MEETING CONCLUDED AT 9:09 A.M.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings, meeting held before the PA Game Commission, was reported by me on 06/28/2011 and that I Jolynn C. Prunoske read this transcript and that I attest that this transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceeding.

Jolynn C. Prunoske
Attachment 1
REMARKS

I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT MY TERM AS A COMMISSIONER HAS NEARLY ENDED. IT WAS JUST YESTERDAY THAT I TOOK THE OATH & OBLIGATION TO SERVE AS AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONER OF THE PA GAME COMMISSION. THE SOLEMN OATH I TOOK WAS TO PROTECT THE RESOURCES OF THE STATE FOR ALL THE CITIZENS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PA.

WITH AN AGING BASE OF HUNTERS, EVER INCREASING FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES, MOMS & DADS HOLDING SEVERAL JOBS PER HOUSEHOLD JUST TO MAKE ENDS MEET, MORE HUNTING OPPORTUNITY WAS URGENTLY NEEDED. AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS EXPANDED HUNTING SEASONS WERE APPROVED. WITH RECRUITMENT OF YOUTH HUNTERS A TOP PRIORITY. SOMETHING NEEDED TO BE DONE.

DURING MY TENURE, NEW YOUTH MENTORED HUNTING SEASONS BECAME A REALITY. NOW, A DAD ALONG WITH HIS SON OR DAUGHTER CAN HUNT A SPECIAL YOUTH MENTORED HUNT FOR SQUIRRELS, RABBITS, WATERFOWL, SPRING GOBBLER AND DEER.

IN A DECEMBER 2005 MEETING, THE NEW ED, STAFF, MYSELF AND CONCERNED SPORTSMAN BROUGHT ABOUT A RENEWED EMPHASIS ON SMALL GAME HUNTING, ESPECIALLY PHEASANT HUNTING, WHICH HAS BROUGHT ON NEW CHALLENGES. THE DEVELOPMENT OF WPRA’S, OR WILD PHEASANT RECOVERY AREAS IN FOUR AREAS OF
The state are an attempt to re-establish wild pheasant's in these areas. I do not know the eventual success or failure of the WRPA's but these programs are very expensive. Good habitat is very important to the survival of wildlife. Our wildlife habitat management bureau has been able to bring excellent real estate transactions in all regions to the table for BOC approval. Once approved the bureau goes into the extensive job of managing them for wildlife and access for the sportsman. Again, this cost's money.

Why do I bring up money?? The PGC has not received a license increase since 1999. No business can successfully operate without an increase in funds for over 12 years!!! What is the outcome? Positions are not filled, food & cover crews, the mainstay of our habitat work on state game lands are not operating at capacity. Who suffers? The hunters and the wildlife we swore to protect. Hopefully in the near future there will be a resolution to the license increase. We need to get behind this 1000%.

Now comes the bad news. During my 8 years as a commissioner I was stunned by the behavior of a very small minority of our hunters. We cannot have hunters attacking hunters, personal attacks and disparaging remarks against PGC employees just because they do not agree with your views. And lastly, lawsuits against the PGC!! Not 1, Not 2 but 3!!!!! This is unheard of in any other state. IMO these lawsuits are motivated by personal and political motivation, financial reasons and most importantly it has a lasting detriment to our sport and traditions.
THE ONLY WINNERS OF THIS INFIGHTING ARE THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE OUT TO END SPORT HUNTING AND SHOOTING. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE!!!

LETS TALK ABOUT DEER. DURING MY TENURE AS A COMMISSIONER I WITNESSED SEVERAL COMMISSIONERS RETIRE FROM THIS BOARD TALKING ABOUT THE DEER MANAGEMENT CONTROVERSY DURING THEIR TENURE. WHEN I STARTED MY FIRST YEAR AS A COMMISSIONER I TOURED SQL 44 IN CLEARFIELD COUNTY. THE LAND MANAGER SHOWED ME NEWS ARTICLES OF THE DEER CONTROVERSY GOING BACK 60 YRS. I AM TALKING ABOUT THE SAME EXACT "WORDS" BEING USED TODAY ALONG WITH THE "DOOMSDAY AND EXTINCTION SCENARIOS" THAT I HEARD SPOKEN DURING MY TIME ON THE BOARD!!!!

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE "THREE LEGGED STOOL" OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT WE CONSTANTLY HEAR ABOUT. WHEN I CAME ON THE BOC THE EXPLANATION OF THE 3 LEGGED STOOL TO ME WAS TO BALANCE "THE STOOL" IE: HAVE ALL THE "LEGS" OF THE STOOL ON AN EVEN KEEL. NEVER WAS I TOLD THAT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE DECIDED SOLELY ON "ONE STOOL". OR, LEANING TO ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. I DO NOT KNOW WHERE WE ARE GOING TO GO IN DEER MANAGEMENT, I HOPE WE DO NOT GO BACKWARDS. MY VOTES THESE PAST 8 YEARS WERE NEVER DISSUADED BY PRIVATE INTEREST GROUPS, THE LOCAL GUN CLUB OR EMOTION. RATHER, BASED STRICTLY ON SCIENCE. OUR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BUREAU CAME IN WITH THE DATA, MY RESPONSIBILITY WAS TO QUESTION IT UNTIL I AM SATISFIED. ONE LOOK AT THE SOUTHERN SPROUL STATE FOREST 6 YRS AGO TOLD ME WE HAD A REGENERATION PROBLEM. ALL THE FOREST MEASURES WERE EXPLAINED AT LENGTH THE LAST BOC MEETING, YOU DO NOT NEED
TO BE A ROCKET SCIENTIST TO DEDUCT THAT PENNS WOODS ARE IN TROUBLE,
UNLESS WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. I AM PLEASED THAT I PERFORMED MY DUTIES
AS A COMMISSIONER AND FULLFILLED MY OATH & OBLIGATION I SWARE TO
UPHOLD 8 YEARS AGO.

BEING A PA GAME COMMISSIONER WAS A GREAT PRIVILEDGE AND CARRIED AN
ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY. AS A COMMISSIONER I WAS ENTRUSTED WITH THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF MANAGING ALL MAMMALS, WILDLIFE AND THEIR HABITAT FOR
MY GRANDSON AND HIS GRANDSONS. IMO I WAS A GOOD STEWART OF THE
RESOURCES I SWARE TO PROTECT. I BELIEVE THAT WE ARE ACHIEVING OUR MISSION
OF PROTECTING & PROMOTING OUR HUNTING & TRAPPING HERITAGE FOR THE GOOD
OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

LASTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK FORMER GOVERNOR RENDELL FOR NOMINATING
ME IN 2003 AND THE STATE SENATE FOR CONFIRMING MY NOMINATION. MY FELLOW
COMMISSIONERS, WHO I HAD AN EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH. OUR
REGIONAL DIRECTORS FOR THE HARD WORK THEY AND ALL THE REGION'S
EMPLOYEES DO WITH THE SKIMPY RESOURCES THEY HAD TO WORK WITH. OUR
BUREAU DIRECTORS WHO SET THE TONE FOR THE COMMISSIONER'S WORKING
GROUP. THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S, KATHY, FRANCES & DENISH. THESE LADIES
HAVE THE ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY OF SETTING EVERYTHING IN MOTION FOR THE
COMMISSIONERS. LASTLY THE ED. IMO THIS WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION I
MADE AS A COMMISSIONER. THE ED IS THE HELMSMAN WHO STEERS THE SHIP. THE
HUNTERS OF PA WERE VERY FORTunate TO HAVE A MAN OF CARL'S EXPERIENCE AND
EXPERTISE IN THESE VERY LEAN TIMES. WORKING WITH CARL MADE MY JOB MUCH
EASIER. TO ALL OF YOU I SAY THANK YOU.
AS MY PUBLIC SERVICE CAREER ENDS, I DO NOT KNOW IF YOU WILL SEE ME AGAIN AT RALLYS, SPORTSMAN MEETINGS OR GAME COMMISSION MEETINGS. BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT MY TIME AS A MEMBER OF THE BOC WITH THE PGC WAS THE BEST TIME I HAD WITH THE BEST WILDLIFE AGENCY IN THE COUNTRY. WITH THAT SAID, I STAND DOWN. THANK YOU ALL.
Attachment 2
In many respects, it is hard to believe it has been almost eight (8) years since I stood in Court Room No. 1 of the Northumberland County Court House and was sworn in as a Pennsylvania Game Commissioner. A lot has happened in the past eight (8) years, most of which has been very exciting and enjoyable, some of which has not been. On balance, it has been a wonderful eight (8) years, but like so many other things in life, it is time for me to close this particular chapter and prepare to move on to other professional challenges and responsibilities.

By way of background, it is probably necessary to explain a little bit about my prior life to put the past eight (8) years in perspective. I was born in 1949, the first of three (3) children. My father worked for the Commonwealth and my parents lived on a farm in Hartley Township, Union County, Pennsylvania, that was owned by the State. At the time, my father was employed at what was then the Laurelton Center. My earliest memories are of cattle in the pasture in front of our home and of the many beagle hunting dogs that my father was in the process of raising. Like many of his generation, my father was a World War II veteran, having grown up on a farm in Union County. Upon return from the service, it was his desire to have his own farm which dream became a reality in 1955 when my family moved to the farm where my father currently lives. Rabbit and pheasant hunting was king in the Buffalo Valley during this period of time. My father and his brothers were also avid deer hunters and some of my earliest memories are not only of the small game hunting, but of the two (2) week annual deer season, which began on the Monday after Thanksgiving as it does today. After my parents moved to their own farm, which they initially rented, and subsequently purchased, there was a lot of hard work for everyone. My family did not take vacations. I know in one (1) particular stretch, my father went fourteen (14) years without missing a milking. On a dairy farm, you milk at least twice a day, so putting that in perspective, in fourteen (14) years, there were not many nights away from the family farm. Pheasants were numerous during my early years and, later, when I was old enough to hunt, both my father and my uncle's farms held lots of birds. When I starting hunting in 1960, it was not unusual for my dad, my uncle and later my brother, to go through a field of standing corn on the first day of the season and flush 15 to 20 pheasants at the end of the field. At an uncle's farm, which was nearer to Lewisburg, you could flush 50 to 60 pheasants from a similar field. For the first three (3) to four (4) years that I hunted, roughly ages 12 through 15, I looked forward more to the first day of the general small game season that I did to deer season, but that changed about the time that I was 15. My father and his brothers hunted with a large group in the mountains of central Pennsylvania. This was my father's vacation and his social life. He would still have to milk in the morning and in the evening, but he would normally hunt ten (10) out of the twelve (12) days of the two (2) week season and it was what he would look forward to all year. It is what we talked about in the summer, at picnics, and it is what we talked about at the Christmas parties in December.
I started reading the Game News when I was in second grade and there have not been many months since 1956 that I haven't read the Game News. Ned Smith art on the front and wonderful articles in the body of the magazine such as how Uncle Ted got the 8-point in the hollow behind the farm house.

I had three (3) uncles. The two (2) uncles who were older than my dad -- were both avid hunters. They worked for and managed an apple orchard which would later became the present site of Camp Mount Luther. My oldest uncle was a deputy game warden. I spent a lot of time with him -- I was very impressed with his uniform, his hat, his service revolver, and the stories about being involved in law enforcement and the ethics of hunting.

When I, the first grandson in the family, became old enough to hunt deer in the rugged mountains where my dad and my uncles spent their season, you did not have much success until you were 14 or 15 just because if you went along, you were expected to participate on the drives, which many times, would last an hour or more. One particular drive could last as long as 3-1/2 hours. My dad and uncles spent a lot of time with me during this formative period. The oldest uncle, the deputy warden, was the captain. Once I finished law school and returned to central Pennsylvania, I started hunting the whole first week and usually Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the second week of deer season. I did that in the 70's and the 80's. In the mid-80's, I became one of the captains of the group and continued as a captain until our group disbanded in 2005.

As an attorney and as someone who is active with hunting, sporting groups, and sportsmen's clubs in the area, I became interested in becoming a Commissioner because I viewed then and still view being a Commissioner as the highest position that a Pennsylvania sportsman or woman can aspire to. It is a chance to be involved in not only setting but in influencing the policies for our sport. And I think I can say, safely, for most of us, this is our sport; this is what we are all about. Never particularly enjoyed golf or tennis, but always look forward to and spend most of my vacation days with my family hunting.

I first tried to become a Commissioner in 1995. Prior to 1995, I talked to my State Senator, went through the process of going out to sportsmen's clubs, making numerous presentations, and I believe in 1995 I had the support of most of the applicable stakeholders in the Fifth District. However, a last minute change was made by my then State Senator and I did not receive the appointment.

As often happens in life, things seem to work out for the best. I still had children in high school in 1995 and I think that, had I realized then the time commitment involved in being a Commissioner, which I do not think anyone fully appreciates until they actually start serving on the Board, I would have probably realized that 2003 was a better time than 1995, but being competitive, I was quite disappointed in 1995 when I did not get the appointment. I put the matter out of my mind for a while, but when the term of that particular individual was nearing completion, I was encouraged to apply again for the
seat, and this time I was successful. Greg Isabella and I both came on the Board at the same time. As they say, the rest is history.

Serving on this Board has been quite an experience. I have been fortunate in my lifetime to have served on a number of other Boards, so I had some experience prior to 2003. I was in the House of Delegates for the Pennsylvania Bar Association and subsequently served a three (3) year term on the Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, which, again, is a policy making Board, which meets at different locations around the State, so I had gotten to travel quite a bit and to be involved in the setting of policy on a state-wide basis for another large organization. I also had previous experience serving on an independent community Bank Board and on the Board of a fairly large feed mill and agri-business.

What did I find when I came to the Pennsylvania Game Commission -- excellent staff; hard working employees; some of the best and brightest people that I have worked with; and I have been fortunate to have worked with a lot of bright people during my lifetime. The level of commitment and the expertise of staff, for the most part, here at the PGC is unsurpassed in my experience. I think we have accomplished a lot in the last eight (8) years. We can list many, but time only allows for the mention of a few of those accomplishments. We have certainly done a great deal for youth, for mentored hunting, and to restore wild pheasants. Although the landscape in Pennsylvania has certainly changed in the last forty (40) years, I can not imagine that much more can be done than what this Board and prior Boards, in conjunction with staff and the leadership of the PGC, has done in an effort to try to restore a huntable population of wild pheasants in Pennsylvania. I am certainly hoping that this will continue and that eventually we will see huntable wild birds, not necessarily across the entire landscape, but certainly across much of the Commonwealth where suitable habitat is available.

Also, the wild turkey population that we see today is truly one of the great success stories that the PGC can point to with pride. This started long before I became a Commissioner, but I think over the last eight (8) years, much has been done to further that effort in conjunction with the NWTF and many other partners who have worked with us toward a common goal.

Look at the acquisitions of land alone over the past eight (8) years. In my personal and professional life and here at the PGC, I just do not think you can go wrong buying dirt and we have certainly acquired and bought a lot of dirt in the last eight (8) years. Brad Bechtel tells me about 29,000 acres since 2003; with another 12,600 acres under contract and in the process of acquisition.

Bear hunting -- I am very pleased that I could be part of the planning process in managing this expanding resource. To have the season open on Saturday, to have the increased participation. As I have told many of you, last year fourteen (14) of us, most of whom would probably have not bought a bear license or taken off a day’s work had the season not opened on a Saturday, got together, had a great day in Penns Woods and were successful in harvesting a bear.
Have there been disappointments? There have. My biggest disappointment, which will probably not come as a surprise to many of you who know my views on this subject, has been the decline of our deer hunting tradition here in Pennsylvania. I do not know that anyone could more breath and live the love of hunting the whitetail deer than I do, although I appreciate there are many others across the state who share this same passion. When I came on the Board, one of my goals was to increase the interest in deer hunting and further the tradition. Unfortunately, I have seen just the opposite during my eight (8) years on the Board. Very difficult for me personally to see the dissolution of a three (3) generation hunting group in my area of central Pennsylvania caused by the virtual elimination of a huntoble population of whitetail deer in the traditional state-owned forests where my family has hunted for three (3) generations. I have also found it difficult to understand in that in all my prior Board experience, including the Board of Governors of the Bar Association, I have always been in the majority. I can recall only a few votes on any of those other Boards where I was not in the majority. When I got on this Board, I found myself on almost all issues relating to deer and to deer management, to be in the minority and this has been very difficult for me to understand.

Prior to 2000, Pennsylvania was a top deer hunting state and a destination for out-of-state hunters. We featured abundant deer and an inexpensive hunting license. Basically anyone who was interested and shared the passion could go out on the public land and, if they made a commitment and hunted hard, they had a reasonable chance to be successful. This is virtually all gone today. We now seem to have either a Texas, or sometimes, I think, European model, where the emphasis is on a few large antlered animals, which for the most part are on private land, and if you don't either own land or have friends or relatives who do, you are pretty much closed out of our sport. I feel, quite candidly, that we now have a very subjective deer management program. We moved away from density goals to goals of healthy deer and healthy habitat, which are not readily definable, and which are value laden and almost wholly subjective. I, for one, believe that our deer management plan since 2000 has failed not only our sportsmen and women but all the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I feel that our 100 year deer hunting tradition, in a short period of ten (10) to twelve (12) years, has been largely destroyed. In all those years, both as a young boy and later in joining the hunting group and becoming a captain, the first day of deer season in rural Pennsylvania, in many respects, was bigger than Christmas day. Schools closed, businesses closed, the excitement built for weeks before opening day, spotlighting for weeks in the fall; the going to the gun shops. We basically have lost all of that. One used to go out the first morning, stand on a mountainside above a valley, and hear 300 or more shots until noon. Today, you are luck to hear five (5) or six (6) shots in many areas of the State. The parking lots that used to be filled to capacity are now nearly empty; the camps are closed, or, worse yet, for sale. I am not really sure what happened. I am not sure we know who we are or what we are anymore, but it certainly has been a negative, in my view and in the view of many people who share the same passion for hunting whitetails.
When I was in college and law school, we had a lot of people from the Philadelphia area and the classic oxymoron then was the “Schuylkill Expressway”. Well, there is now a new oxymoron for this soon to be retired Commissioner and that is the use of the term “sound science” in relationship to our current deer management plan. I do not know how many times I have heard speakers at this podium exhort this and prior Boards to follow the “sound science” of our deer management program. Quite candidly, ladies and gentlemen, there is no “sound science” with this program. We now have an almost completely subjective program that is not based on science and I will forever cringe when I hear the term “sound science” as applied to the current deer management program of this agency. I have spent my professional life in the Court rooms of central Pennsylvania presenting and cross-examining expert witnesses and I have spent eight (8) years reading basically everything I could get my hands on, on deer management in Pennsylvania and the other 49 states and the Canadian Provinces. I submit to you, ladies and gentlemen, we do not currently have a deer management plan based on “sound science”. What we have, in my opinion as an outgoing Commissioner, is a failed program that needs to be "scrapped" and we need to start over with the best and brightest professionals that we can hire. I hope that this Board or a successor Board will eventually come to this realization and take action to at least partly restore the tradition that we have had in this state, because we have lost a great deal, we have gained very little, and I, for one, do not believe that the ability to sell timber from certified forests or having some trillium on the ground comes even remotely close to compensating for what we have lost.

I wish I had been able to do more in my tenure to change the Agency’s direction with respect to the policies that it has followed with respect to deer management. I am concerned that all of our other accomplishments may eventually be for naught if we do not change our current deer management program. So I leave with mixed feelings. It has, for the most part, been a great and rewarding experience. I have enjoyed working with the Executive Directors, Vern Ross and Carl Roe, and I have enjoyed working with many of the Bureau Directors, the support staff, and with my fellow Commissioners. But I also leave this agency with some pretty serious disappointments that I hope this and future Boards can come to grips with as we go forward and make the changes that are necessary. Now I am looking forward to just being a hunter again and, professionally, to new challenges and new chapters in my life. Thank you all! Look forward to seeing many of you in the future.

Commissioner Tom Boop