

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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A P P E A R A N C E S

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ALSO PRESENT:

Carl G. Roe, Executive Director

Bradley C. Bechtel, Esquire, Chief Counsel

Kathy Wilson, Executive Secretary

I N D E X

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DISCUSSION AMONG PARTIES

5 - 35

Attachments

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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:

1 Mr. Boop.

2 MR. SCHREFFLER:

3 Second.

4 PRESIDENT WEANER:

5 Commissioner Schreffler. Is there any
6 discussion? Hearing none, we shall proceed to vote.

7 All in favor, say aye.

8 ALL RESPOND AYE

9 PRESIDENT WEANER:

10 Those opposed, say no. Mr. Secretary?

11 MR. PUTNAM:

12 Mr. President, the motion passes

13 unanimously.

14 PRESIDENT WEANER:

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

17 MR. BECHTEL:

18 Thank you, Mr. President. The first item
19 to come before the Commission today is Proposed Rule
20 Making from the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management.
21 It's amendments to 58 Pa. Code Section 137.34. The
22 recent discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease in a
23 free-ranging deer in Allegany County, Maryland, just
24 over ten miles from the Pennsylvania border, prompted
25 a review and updating of the Commonwealth's

1 Interagency Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan.
2 This update necessitates amending Section 137.34 to
3 bring the terminology and procedures in the regulation
4 in line with the Response Plan. The text is shown on
5 pages two and three of your agenda. The executive
6 director and staff recommend the Commission approve
7 this change.

8 PRESIDENT WEANER:

9 Is there a motion?

10 MR. DELANEY:

11 So moved.

12 MR. SCHLEMMER:

13 Second.

14 PRESIDENT WEANER:

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

18 ALL RESPOND AYE

19 PRESIDENT WEANER:

20 Those opposed, say no.

21 MR. PUTNAM:

22 Mr. President, the motion passes
23 unanimously.

24 PRESIDENT WEANER:

25 Thank you.

1 MR. BECHTEL:

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

15 PRESIDENT WEANER:

16 Is there a motion?

17 MR. ISABELLA:

18 Motion.

19 PRESIDENT WEANER:

20 Mr. Isabella. Second?

21 MR. MARTONE:

22 Second.

23 PRESIDENT WEANER:

24 Seconded by Mr. Martone. Any discussion?

25 Hearing none, we shall proceed to vote. All those in

1 favor, signify by saying aye.

2 ALL RESPOND AYE

3 PRESIDENT WEANER:

4 Those opposed, say no.

5 MR. PUTNAM:

6 Mr. President, the motion passes
7 unanimately.

8 PRESIDENT WEANER:

9 Thank you.

10 MR. BECHTEL:

11 The next item is concerning Proposed Rule
12 Making and amendment to 58 Pa. Code Section 147.701.
13 The Convention on International Trade in Endangered
14 Species, or CITES, is a comprehensive conservation
15 treaty signed by 175 countries, including the United
16 States. This international agreement regulates the
17 commercial trade of wildlife species and works to
18 ensure that international trade of species is
19 sustainable and does not threaten their survival. In
20 relevant part, CITES requires permanent tags to be
21 affixed to carcasses or parts of species being
22 exported internationally. The bobcat, while not
23 threatened with extinction, is listed in CITES, and
24 trade is controlled in order to protect endangered
25 cats that have fur and parts similar in appearance.

1 Therefore, CITES applies to international exportation
2 of this species. CITES does not currently apply to
3 fishers. Current Commission regulations take this
4 requirement a step further by requiring permittees to
5 obtain and the Commission to issue CITES tags for
6 every bobcat and fisher harvested that will be
7 exported beyond this Commonwealth. The Commission has
8 determined that this requirement is unnecessarily
9 restrictive on permittees, over-burdensome on the
10 Commission and simply not applicable to fishers. The
11 Commission is proposing to amend Section 147.701,
12 relating to general, to reduce the applicability of
13 the CITES tag to bobcats and international exports
14 only. The text of this proposed rulemaking is shown
15 on pages six and seven of your Agenda. The executive
16 director and staff recommend that the Commission
17 approve this change.

18 PRESIDENT WEANER:

19 Is there a motion?

20 MR. SCHREFFLER:

21 So moved.

22 PRESIDENT WEANER:

23 Mr. Schreffler, moved. Is there a
24 second?

25 MR. MARTONE:

1 Second.

2 PRESIDENT WEANER:

3 Mr. Martone, second. Any discussion?

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

6 ALL RESPOND AYE

7 PRESIDENT WEANER:

8 Those opposed, say no.

9 MR. PUTNAM:

10 Mr. President, the motion passes
11 unanimously.

12 PRESIDENT WEANER:

13 Thank you.

14 MR. BECHTEL:

15 The next items come from the Bureau of
16 Wildlife Habitat Management that concern the
17 acquisition of real estate; the first, Contract Number
18 3586, State Game Land Number 294, Mercer County. The
19 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Inc. (WPC, is
20 offering for sale, 195 acres, more or less, of land in
21 Cool Spring Township, Mercer County, adjoining State
22 Game Land Number 294, as shown on Exhibit RED 1, page
23 9, of your agenda. The option is subject to an
24 existing reservation of oil, gas and mineral rights,
25 excluding peat. The option price is \$90,000 lump sum,

1 with the Game Fund obligation limited to \$62,487.89,
2 and the remaining \$27,512.11 being a donation from the
3 Estate of Margaret Metcalfe. The property is mostly
4 wetlands, with approximately 130 acres in emergent,
5 scrub-shrub and forested wetlands. The upland portion
6 of the property is 60 acres of woodland comprised of
7 oak, maple, cherry and ash. The remaining five acres
8 is reverting farmland.

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

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

24 The second contract is number 3587, State
25 Game Land Number 314, Erie County. Again, the Western

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

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

18 PRESIDENT WEANER:

19 Is there a motion?

20 MR. DELANEY:

21 Mr. President, I'll make a motion to
22 support the acquisition of these two properties.

23 PRESIDENT WEANER:

24 Is there a second?

25 MR. SCHREFFLER:

1 Second.

2 PRESIDENT WEANER:

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

7 ALL RESPOND AYE

8 PRESIDENT WEANER:

9 Those opposed, say no.

10 MR. PUTNAM:

11 Mr. President, the motion passes
12 unanimously.

13 PRESIDENT WEANER:

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

18 MR. MARTONE:

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

24 PRESIDENT WEANER:

25 We have a motion to adopt by Commissioner

1 Martone. Is there a second?

2 MR. DELANEY:

3 Second.

4 PRESIDENT WEANER:

5 Second by Commissioner Delaney. Any
6 discussion? Hearing none, we shall proceed to vote.

7 All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

8 ALL RESPOND AYE

9 PRESIDENT WEANER:

10 Those opposed, say no.

11 MR. PUTNAM:

12 Mr. President, the motion passes
13 unanimously.

14 PRESIDENT WEANER:

15 Thank you. Further items of new
16 business?

17 MR. DELANEY:

18 Yes, Mr. President.

19 PRESIDENT WEANER:

20 Go ahead.

21 MR. DELANEY:

22 I have a resolution. On February 10th,
23 the House Game and Fisheries Committee met. At that
24 time, Representative Marc Gergely asked the Board of
25 Commissioners if they had an opinion on Sunday

1 hunting. Since then, I've given it a lot of
2 consideration and have prepared a resolution for the
3 Board of Commissioners to consider, and I will read
4 it. Sunday Hunting Resolution by the Board of
5 Commissioners, June 28th, 2011. The Board of
6 Commissioners for the Pennsylvania Game Commission
7 declares its support for a repeal of prohibitions on
8 Sunday hunting by the amending of Title 34 (Game), of
9 the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes in Hunting and
10 Trapping.

11 Whereas, Pennsylvania has experienced
12 consistent declines in hunting participation by both
13 resident and non-resident hunters over the past
14 several decades, with both the number of licenses sold
15 and revenues generated experiencing steady declines;
16 and whereas, youth participation is vital to
17 maintaining the long-standing tradition of hunting in
18 Pennsylvania. We can effectively double the number of
19 hunting days for youths during the school year by
20 offering Sunday hunting; and whereas, Sunday hunting
21 is an effective means of recruiting new hunters and
22 retaining current hunters by increasing the value of
23 the hunting license through offering additional
24 opportunities to spend time in the field; and whereas,
25 many Pennsylvania residents seek hunting opportunities

1 and hunting leases in neighboring states that offer
2 Sunday hunting. Sunday hunting will keep Pennsylvania
3 hunters in Pennsylvania; and whereas, Pennsylvania has
4 a longstanding tradition of hunting camps and clubs.
5 Sunday hunting will effectively double the number of
6 hunting days for camp owners and club members; and
7 whereas, Sunday hunting is expected to generate a
8 substantial increase in out-of-state license sales and
9 the accompanying revenue for the Pennsylvania Game
10 Commission; and whereas, hunting license sales and
11 their associated federal matching funds are the
12 primary revenue source for the Pennsylvania Game
13 Commission in carrying out its mission, including
14 maintaining 1.5 million acres of state game lands and
15 acquisition of additional public lands, research and
16 management of wildlife and providing information and
17 education to the public; and whereas, Sunday hunting
18 will provide substantial economic benefits to rural
19 areas and businesses by increasing money spent by
20 hunters on lodging, food, gas and other incidental
21 items; and whereas, Sunday hunting is expected to
22 generate \$629 million in additional spending and
23 create 5,300 new jobs, resulting in \$18 million in
24 additional sales and income tax; and whereas, the
25 mission of the Pennsylvania Game Commission is to

1 manage wildlife and its habitat for current and future
2 generations; and whereas, Sunday hunting, which is
3 currently permitted to control a growing population of
4 coyotes, will provide the biologists of the
5 Pennsylvania Game Commission a new tool to manage
6 wildlife populations; and whereas, the 43 states that
7 currently permit Sunday hunting, have not experienced
8 any discernable impact on the health or vibrancy of
9 game populations; and whereas, the Board of
10 Commissioners recognizes, the authority to permit
11 Sunday hunting lies entirely with the General Assembly
12 of Pennsylvania; and whereas, if the General Assembly
13 repeals the restrictions on Sunday hunting, thus
14 giving the authority to regulate Sunday hunting to the
15 Board of Commissioners, the Board recognizes the many
16 stakeholder groups any actions on Sunday hunting will
17 affect and will endeavor to engage these stakeholders
18 before passing any new regulations in regard to Sunday
19 hunting.

20 Now, therefore, we, the Board of
21 Commissioners for the Pennsylvania Game Commission, do
22 hereby urge the General Assembly of Pennsylvania to
23 repeal the prohibition on Sunday hunting in the
24 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. And I make a motion to
25 support this resolution.

1 PRESIDENT WEANER:

2 Is there a second?

3 MR. MARTONE:

4 Second.

5 PRESIDENT WEANER:

6 It's been seconded by Commissioner
7 Martone. Is there discussion? Commissioner Boop?

8 MR. BOOP:

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

24 And I believe, statistically, about 80
25 percent of the available land, plus or minus in

1 Pennsylvania where all those people that we license by
2 this agency hunt, are going to be hunting on private
3 land. Fairly clear to me as a commissioner, and I
4 certainly follow this controversy, that the rural land
5 owners who make their properties available to our
6 hunters to whom we sell licenses, simply do not want
7 Sunday hunting on their property or properties.

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

25

PRESIDENT WEANER:

1 Thank you. Further discussion? Mr.
2 Schreffler?

3 MR. SCHREFFLER:

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

1 this issue. That's it. Thank you.

2 PRESIDENT WEANER:

3 Thank you. Is there further discussion?
4 Mr. Putnam?

5 MR. PUTNAM:

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

18 PRESIDENT WEANER:

19 Thank you. Further discussion? Mr.
20 Martone?

21 MR. MARTONE:

22 Thank you, Commissioner Weaner. I am
23 dismayed that we are even talking about this issue in
24 2011. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has been a
25 leader in wildlife management and a leader in the

1 world of hunting. Across this nation, our wildlife
2 management, our biologists, are looked upon as
3 leaders, and yet 43 other states allow Sunday hunting.
4 And Pennsylvania is only one of seven that are finally
5 coming around to having this discussion.

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

16 PRESIDENT WEANER:

17 Further comment? Commissioner Schlemmer?

18 MR. SCHLEMMER:

19 For years I've been hunting in other
20 states and providences of Canada on Sunday. They
21 don't seem to have a problem where I hunt. Back in
22 1937, you --- back in '36 you could not fish on
23 Sundays. And they changed that Blue Law in 1937 that
24 you could go fishing on Sunday. I think we have to be
25 forward-looking here, and I would support the

1 abolitionment of the Sunday Blue Law in regards to
2 hunting. And I think we could put another management
3 tool in our toolbox. It doesn't necessarily mean that
4 we have to run out and start hunting one species or
5 another. We have the ability to manage wildlife.
6 Thank you, Mr. President.

7 PRESIDENT WEANER:

8 Further comments? Commissioner Delaney?

9 MR. DELANEY:

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

22 MR. SCHREFFLER:

23 Mr. President?

24 PRESIDENT WEANER:

25 Is there further discussion? Yes?

1 you know, maybe, down the road, when action's been
2 taken by the legislature and we have something more to
3 base our resolution on than what we're talking about
4 right now. Thank you.

5 PRESIDENT WEANER:

6 Thank you. Is there further discussion?
7 Commissioner Martone?

8 MR. MARTONE:

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

23 PRESIDENT WEANER:

24 Further discussion? I'd like to add some
25 of my own comments. First of all, as we listen to the

1 resolution as it was read, there's a lot of the
2 whereas down here that I could take issue with and
3 argue against. But again, I'm just --- I'm not
4 satisfied with the resolution. I won't support the
5 resolution. I don't think that Sunday hunting is
6 going to be the magic bullet here. I think if you
7 look at the 43 other states that have Sunday hunting,
8 their hunting license sales range is decreasing,
9 actually, more rapidly than ours is, in some cases.
10 And so it hasn't solved their problem. This is an
11 issue, I think, that's extremely controversial. And
12 by taking a stand on it prior to the legislature, even
13 considering it for a vote, is premature. And I think
14 the Game Commission has nothing to be gained by doing
15 this. We're going to tick off a whole lot of people,
16 no matter which way we vote on this. And if we send a
17 resolution up that's not even near unanimous, it kind
18 of dilutes the whole idea of a resolution.

19 To reiterate what Tom had mentioned, I
20 don't think we can afford to alienate the vast number
21 of landowners that we have here in this state, that do
22 provide a place for us to hunt. And I just don't see
23 any good coming to the Game Commission by taking a
24 position either way at this point on this issue. So
25 for those reasons and many others, I also do not

1 support this resolution. Having said that, is there
2 other discussion? Commissioner Boop?

3 MR. BOOP:

4 I move to table the resolution.

5 MR. SCHREFFLER:

6 I will second that.

7 PRESIDENT WEANER:

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

14 FOUR HANDS RAISED

15 PRESIDENT WEANER:

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

19 FOUR HANDS RAISED

20 PRESIDENT WEANER:

21 Secretary?

22 MR. PUTNAM:

23 Mr. President, the vote was four to four.

24 The motion fails.

25 PRESIDENT WEANER:

1 Four to four tied, it fails, the motion
2 to --- laying on the table fails. Is there any
3 further discussion on this? Yes, sir?

4 Commissioner Delaney:

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

11 PRESIDENT WEANER:

12 Any further discussion?

13 MR. BOOP:

14 Call for the question.

15 PRESIDENT WEANER:

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

21 FOUR HANDS RAISED

22 PRESIDENT WEANER:

23 Hands down. All those opposed to
24 supporting this resolution, signify by raising one
25 hand.

1 THREE HANDS RAISED

2 MR. ISABELLA:

3 Abstain.

4 PRESIDENT WEANER:

5 Commissioner?

6 MR. PUTNAM:

7 Mr. President, the motion passes, five
8 (sic) to three, with one abstention.

9 MR. BOOP:

10 Excuse me. Point of order. I think ---.

11 MR. PUTNAM:

12 It's four.

13 MR. BOOP:

14 Four to three?

15 MR. PUTNAM:

16 Four to three. It's my mistake.

17 PRESIDENT WEANER:

18 And the abstention was Commissioner
19 Isabella. The motion fails. I mean --- excuse me,
20 the motion does pass. Yes, he's correct. Four to
21 three vote. Are there any other items of new
22 business? Okay. One thing I'd like to --- a couple
23 of things that we need to take care of yet. First of
24 all, Executive Director Roe yesterday brought this
25 item up, and I'd like to bring it up again on the

1 official record today. We have a very important
2 person in our midst here, Kathy Wilson, who's the
3 executive secretary to Director Roe and to the Board
4 of Commissioners. She is retiring with 30 years of
5 service to the Game Commission, effective tomorrow,
6 and we're all kind of bummed out about that. We are
7 going to miss her, but we offer our congratulations to
8 her. We offer our thanks to her. She's done an
9 outstanding job in her tenure here at the Game
10 Commission, and we would just publicly like to say
11 thank you very much. Kathy, would you like to stand,
12 so that we can all see you.

13 APPLAUSE

14 PRESIDENT WEANER:

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

18 MR. RAFFENSPERGER:

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

24 It goes, whereas, the House of
25 Representatives of Pennsylvania is always proud to

1 acknowledge these individuals who, through
2 professional excellence, bring great credit to
3 themselves and this Commonwealth; and whereas, Kathy
4 Wilson is being honored upon her retirement from the
5 Pennsylvania Game Commission, concluding 30 years of
6 committed state service; and whereas, Ms. Wilson
7 established her career with this Commonwealth in the
8 Department of Labor and Industry. She also was
9 employed with the Pennsylvania Historical Museum
10 Commission and the Department of Community Affairs.
11 In 1988, she began her tenure with the Pennsylvania
12 Game Commission and is retiring as executive secretary
13 to the executive director. Throughout her service,
14 Ms. Wilson has demonstrated remarkable knowledge,
15 ability and integrity in carrying out her many
16 responsibilities, thus earning the respect and
17 gratitude of all those who receive the benefit of her
18 timeless devotion to duty.

19 Now, therefore, the House of
20 Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
21 congratulates Kathy Wilson upon her well-deserved
22 retirement, heartily recognizes her exemplary record
23 of service in keeping with the highest ideals and
24 traditions of this Commonwealth and directs that a
25 copy of this Citation, sponsored by the Honorable John

1 R. Evans, on June 23rd, 2011, be transmitted to
2 Kathleen Wilson. And on a personal note, I would just
3 like to say thank you, Kathy. It's been a pleasure to
4 work with you over the years and sorry to see you go.

5 APPLAUSE

6 MR. RAFFENSPERGER:

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

10 MR. WILSON:

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

16 OFF RECORD COMMENT

17 MR. WILSON:

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

1 governor, as well.

2 APPLAUSE

3 MR. WILSON:

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

7 OFF RECORD CONVERSATION

8 APPLAUSE

9 PRESIDENT WEANER:

10 The next item is the detail from
11 yesterday. Yesterday, if you were here, you heard the
12 presentation from --- the retiring addresses from
13 Commissioner Boop and Commissioner Isabella. The
14 transcripts of those presentations will be attached to
15 the official transcript of our meeting today as
16 Attachment One and Attachment Two. You'll notice on
17 the agenda booklet here, that our October meeting is
18 listed for October 3rd and 4th. And traditionally, we
19 have traveled around the state to various locations
20 for this meeting. Since I live in Adams County, I
21 didn't feel it was --- we had a lot to be gained by
22 going an hour down the road. So we will meet in
23 Harrisburg here on October 3rd and 4th, and we're
24 still working on the dates for the January meeting.
25 Are there any other Commissioners that have any last

1 comments or any items for the good of the order?
2 Hearing none, we stand adjourned. And we will have a
3 press conference in the cafeteria in the training
4 school in about ten minutes. We are adjourned.

5 * * * * *

6 MEETING CONCLUDED AT 9:09 A.M.

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CERTIFICATE

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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.

17

Jolynn C. Prunoske

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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 WRPA'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 SGL 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 SWORE TO UPHOLD 8 YEARS AGO.

BEING A PA GAME COMMISSIONER WAS A GREAT PRIVELEDGE 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 SWORE 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 & DENISE. 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

PGC Farewell remarks –

June 27, 2011

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 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 become 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 huntable 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