BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION
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BEFORE:       RONALD A. WEANER, President
Ralph A. Martone, Vice President
David J. Putnam, Secretary
Gregory J. Isabella, Commissioner
Thomas E. Boop, Commissioner
David w. Schreffler, Commissioner
James J. Delaney, Commissioner
Robert W. Schlemmer, Commissioner

HEARING:      Tuesday, January 24, 2012
8:30 a.m.

LOCATION:     Pennsylvania Game Commission
2001 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA  17110

Reporter: Jolynn C. Prunoske

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APPEARANCES

MARK TERNENT

CAL DUBROCK, Director of Wildlife Management

RICHARD PALMER, Director of Wildlife Protection

BILL CAPOUILLEZ, Director of Wildlife Habitat Management
INDEX

DISCUSSION AMONG PARTIES

5 - 101
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NONE OFFERED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MR. WEANER:
The meeting will now come to order.
We’re holding a public meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. I would like you to all stand and join me with a salute for our flag.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE RECITED

MR. WEANER:
Again, I would like to remind everyone to turn off or disable your cell phones. And in a housekeeping matter, I was forced to get a new e-mail address because we got finally high speed internet. Down here on the stage is a couple of business cards, especially for members of the press, or anyone at all, it has my new e-mail address on it. At this time, Mr. Secretary, will you take the role?

MR. PUTNAM:
Commissioner Boop.

MR. BOOP:
Present.

MR. PUTNAM:
Commissioner Schreffler.

MR. SCHREFFLER:
Present.

MR. PUTNAM:
Commissioner Putnam. Present.

Commissioner Weaner.

MR. WEANER:
Present.

MR. PUTNAM:
Commissioner Martone.

MR. MARTONE:
Present.

MR. PUTNAM:
Commissioner Delaney.

MR. DELANEY:
Present.

MR. PUTNAM:
Commissioner Schlemmer.

MR. SCHLEMMER:
Present.

MR. PUTNAM:
Commissioner Isabella.

MR. ISABELLA:
Present.

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, all Commissioners are present.
MR. WEANER:

Thank you very much. And this will also be the last time that this group is all present. Okay. I’ll turn it over for just a minute or two here.

MR. ROE:

I just want to take this opportunity to get it on the record, the official record for all posterity that we’re having two Regional Directors who this will be their last meeting with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Regional Director Denny Dusza from the Northcentral Region and Regional Director Steve Schweitzer from the Northeast Region. They’ll be retiring here. So I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank them for their combined almost 80 years of service to the Pennsylvania Game Commission and to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. And Denny and Steve, we’re certainly going to miss you. And thank you for all the great things you’ve done for the wildlife resources of the Commonwealth. Thank you.

MR. WEANER:

Okay. Thanks very much. Since we’ve met last, we have the minutes from our October Board meeting and the December 20th meeting to approve. Is there a motion to approve these minutes?
MR. DELANEY:
So moved.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a second?

MR. SCHLEMMER:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Moved by Commissioner Delaney, seconded by Commissioner Schlemmer. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, we shall proceed to vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Those opposed say no. Mr. Secretary?

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, the minutes are approved.

MR. WEANER:
The motion passes. Thank you very much. We will just continue through the agenda as it’s written before you. We’ll move on to page number two, Bureau of Wildlife Management.

MR. BECHTEL:
The first item to come before the Commission today is the Bureau of Wildlife Management. It concerns a proposed rule making amending 58 PA Code
Section 139.4. And to effectively manage the wildlife resources and provide hunting and trapping opportunities in this Commonwealth during the upcoming license year, the Commission is proposing to amend Section 139.4 relating to seasons and bag limits for the license year to provide updated seasons and bag limits for the 2012 to 2013 license year. These changes appear on pages 4 through 11 of your agenda. The seasons and bag limits have been amended to reflect current available scientific data, population and harvest records, field surveys and professional staff observations, as well as recommendations received from staff, organized sporting groups, members of the agricultural community and others interested in the management of wildlife resources of this Commonwealth.

There are two changes for small game. First, it is proposed to open WMUs 2A and 2B to the hunting of pheasant cocks and hens. This is related to the Pike Run Wild Pheasant Recovery Area. The second change concerns reducing the porcupine daily bag limit to three and establishing a season limit of ten per hunter. This proposal is based on a growing concern for commercial exploitation of this species. An expansion of bear harvest opportunity
is also proposed. The taking of black bear by
properly licensed hunters during all deer seasons from
September through mid-December in Wildlife Management
Units 1A, 2B, 5B, 5C and 5D will be allowed.

Changes to beaver trapping regulations
follow the recently implemented beaver management plan
and changes are proposed for WMUs 3A, 3D and 5D. WMUs
3A and 3D are proposed to reduce the season bag limit
to 20 beavers in these WMUs. But the nuisance
complaints in WMU 5D are currently the fourth highest
in the state. It would help alleviate these
complaints in WMU 5D as it’s proposed to increase the
beaver bag limit to 20.

The addition of WMU 4C in the 2012-2013
bobcat hunting and trapping season has been proposed.
This is based on expanding population numbers and a
trend of increasing incidental captures of bobcats in
WMU 4C.

In addition, two WMUs, 2G and 4D, are
proposed for fisher harvesting. This is based on an
expanding fisher population and increased numbers of
incident captures in these WMUs.

MR. WEANER:

Okay. At this time, is anyone interested
in making a motion which will adopt the bag limits as
explained on page 4 through 11?

MR. SCHLEMMER:
Mr. President, ---

MR. WEANER:
Yeah.

MR. SCHLEMMER:
--- I would like to make an amendment.

MR. WEANER:
First we have to get a motion on the floor. Would you like to make this motion?

MR. SCHLEMMER:
I’ll make the motion.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a second?

MR. BOOP:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Schlemmer moves, Mr. Boop seconds the motion to adopt raising the seasons and bag limits on pages 4 through 12. Now, during the discussion period here, what I’ve proposed to do is go through like a page or two at a time. If anyone wants to offer discussion or amendments on those pages, this will be the time. The amendment will be discussed. It will be voted on. If it passes, it becomes part of the
motion. If it fails, we move on. We will go through it in kind of a systematic way here.

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, ---

MR. WEANER:
Yes, sir.

MR. PUTNAM:
--- if I may comment before we go past page three.

MR. WEANER:
Go ahead.

MR. PUTNAM:
For the record, I think it’s important. We talked about the Pike Run Wild Pheasant Recovery Area last year at one of our meetings. Just briefly, I need to say that we did have a discussion with regards to Pike Run yesterday afternoon. In fact, an extensive discussion with Biologist Clinger in that regard. So, I’m hopeful that as we go through and we discuss the seasons and bag limits, the sporting public understands that we did have some pretty decent discussions and some commentaries from Commissioners yesterday with regard to Pike Run.

MR. WEANER:
Thank you. Okay. Let’s a take a look at
pages four and five. And at this time, I will entertain any discussions relative to pages four or five.

MR. SCHREFFLER:
Mr. President, ---

MR. WEANER:
Go ahead.

MR. SCHREFFLER:
--- I wish to make an amendment changing the last day of certain seasons. The first one is under squirrel on page four, the second line. I would like to change the last day from December 22nd to December 24th. The next that I am proposing is for ruffed grouse. And on ruffed grouse, the second line, I would like to change the last day from December 22nd to December 24th. The third is rabbit, cottontail. And it would be the second line again. I would like to change the last day from December 22nd to December 24th. And on page five, under ring-neck pheasant, male or female, the second line, I would like to change the last day from December 22nd to December 24th.

MR. WEANER:
We have a motion to extend these small game seasons for squirrel, ruffed grouse, rabbit and
ring-neck pheasants. Slash out December 22nd and put in December 24th. Is there a second?

**MR. DELANEY:**

Second.

**MR. WEANER:**

Okay. Moved by Commissioner Schreffler, seconded by Commissioner Delaney. Is there any discussion on this motion? Go ahead.

**MR. BOOP:**

Mr. President, I, like everyone else who hunts, like increased opportunities. And I appreciate that children are available from school, college students are home and families are together, but I just don’t think this is --- when we balance everything that’s involved, I just don’t think that extending one day is a good idea for the following reason. Currently, the season would end on a Saturday the 22nd. This would take it to Monday the 24th. Monday is Christmas Eve. Our WCOs and our PO people, we count on them to be out there from September through mid-December. And I just don’t think it’s fair that we ask our limited staff to have to work on Christmas Eve when they have an opportunity to be their family. Just imagine for a WCO what this is going to mean if he has an HRSI or a hunting accident
at noon on that Saturday. So, yes, I would like to see the increased opportunity, but I think, being sensitive to staff and having an opportunity to be with their families across the state, I just think outweighs the benefit of one additional day after we have hunting basically from September on. So, I will vote against the proposed amendment.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Martone.

MR. MARTONE:
I have the same concerns as Commissioner Boop, but I also would like to believe in consistency. This year, the 24th fell on a Saturday. It would have been an excellent day to add to that season. And we had it closed that day. And just for consistency, I’d like to just start a consistent pattern of ending on the 24th. So, I will be voting for it. And I would encourage my fellow commissioners to do the same.

MR. WEANER:
Further discussion?

MR. DELANEY:
Mr. President, ---

MR. WEANER:
Go ahead.

MR. DELANEY:
--- one point I would like to make, too.
The sportsmen say that we don’t listen to them enough.
Many members of this Board heard from sportsmen across
the state not being able to hunt this past Christmas
Eve on a Saturday, many of them wanting to get their
kids out. So, I’m supportive of this and concur with
Commissioner Martone. We can’t keep changing things
every other year. So, I think we lost some
opportunity this year and hopefully we can get it back
next year.

MR. WEANER:
Further discussion? Hearing none, we
shall vote. Again, the motion to extend squirrel,
ruffed grouse, rabbit and ring-neck pheasant seasons
from the 22nd, expand it one day to December 24th.
All those in favor of this motion, signify by raising
one hand.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Hands down. Those opposed, raise one
hand, please.

NAYS RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Hands down. Mr. Secretary?

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, the motion passes by a vote of seven to one.

MR. WEANER:
And Mr. Boop was the one no vote. Everyone else voted yes.

MR. BOOP:
I’m used to that, Mr. President.

MR. WEANER:
Thank you. Are there any other amendments or discussion on page four or five?

MR. SCHLEMMER:
Mr. President, ---

MR. WEANER:
Yes, sir. Go ahead.

MR. SCHLEMMER:
--- after discussions yesterday, I would like to move 2A, WMU 2A to male pheasants only for the upcoming season.

MR. WEANER:
This is on page five, right in the middle; right?

MR. SCHLEMMER:
Yes.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a second?
Second.

Moved by Commissioner Schlemmer, seconded by Commissioner Boop to move Wildlife Management 2A from the male or female season to the male-only season as seen on the middle of page five. Any discussion?

Mr. President, that should cover the youth hunt as well as the normal --- the regular hunt. There’s two places where it needs to be ---.

Okay. That was your intent, Commissioner Schlemmer?

Yes.

I concur.

Then that’s the way the motion will read then. Thank you. Any other discussion? Hearing none, we shall vote on this. All those in favor of this change, signify by raising one hand.
Hands down. All those opposed, raise one hand.

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, the motion passes eight to nothing.

MR. WEANER:
Thank you very much. Any other questions or any other discussion or amendment to page four or five? Okay. Turn the page. Let’s go to page six. Is there anything on page six that we wish to address?

MR. MARTONE:
Mr. President, ---

MR. WEANER:
Go ahead.

MR. MARTONE:
--- on page six, I would like to --- under turkey, male or female, I would like to eliminate the first category of WMUs 1A, 1B and 2A and add those down to the second --- third category down where it says WMUs 2C, 2D, 2E, 4A, 4B and 4D to include 1A, 1B and 2A.

MR. WEANER:
So the gist of your motion is that those areas, 1A, 1B and 2A, will allow rifles in fall turkey season?
MR. MARTONE:
Yes.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a second?

MR. ISABELLA:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Seconded by Commissioner Isabella.

Discussion on this? Go ahead, Mr. Boop.

MR. BOOP:
And I guess maybe this is a personal observation, but I’m just not sure with this particular resource if we really need to be hunting turkeys in the fall with rifles. I mean, I haven’t had an opportunity to vote on that in quite some time, but the recommendation here is to not allow rifles in these three WMUs. And this situation, I just feel, for the reasons stated, the safety issue, the sport, the fair chase aspect of hunting wild turkeys in the fall where there may be snow on the ground, I just think that I’m inclined to follow the recommendations of our biologist and not support this proposed amendment.

MR. WEANER:
Okay. Other discussion? Mr. Martone.
MR. MARTONE:

You know, I did ask the biologist yesterday if there was any biological concerns with this move. And at that time, I was told there is no biological concerns. Being from 1A and from this area, I understand the addition of rifles to this season, but we used high-powered rifles for big game hunting in this area, for deer and bear. And I just believe --- one of my biggest interests is simplification of the regulations. This not only simplifies the season, but it also across the board simplifies fluorescent orange regulations, which are somewhat of a nightmare at this point. So, any simplification in those senses is good to me. And I would encourage other commissioners to support this. Thank you.

MR. WEANER:

Commissioner Putnam.

MR. PUTNAM:

Regarding the safety issue, I don’t believe we’ve ever had a hunting-related shooting incident where a hunter wearing orange was visible to the shooter has ever been shot by a turkey hunter with a rifle. Rifles are very deadly, but we have not shot any turkey hunters who were wearing orange that was
visible to the shooter.

MR. WEANER:

Further questions or comments? Hearing none, the motion again that we are voting on would allow rifles to be used for fall turkey hunting in Wildlife Management 1A, 1B and 2A. All those in favor, signify by raising one hand.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:

Hands down. All those opposed, raise one hand.

NAYS RESPOND

MR. WEANER:

Hands down.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion passes with a vote of seven to one with Commissioner Boop being the negative vote.

MR. WEANER:

Thank you very much. Are there any further changes or discussion about page six? Hearing none, let’s move over to page seven. Anything on page seven? Seeing none, let’s turn over to the next page. Let’s take all of page eight and the top of page nine, the things that deal with whitetail deer. Go ahead.
MR. SCHREFFLER:

Mr. President, I have an amendment to propose. And many of the hunters in the Wildlife Management Units with split seasons have been traveling to hunt in those with concurrent buck/doe seasons. In essence voting that they’re in support of the concurrent seasons. And this is a result of an additional pressure on hunting grounds and the units that have concurrent seasons, especially apparent in Unit 4A, which is surrounded by units with split seasons. Hunters have given various reasons for this. The best chance for youth off from school to harvest any deer, work schedules, the split seasons limiting their opportunities, and out of state hunters especially also paying a lot for their licenses can’t hunt a lot of times in those days.

I would offer the following amendment to help our hunters in this situation. I would like to add Wildlife Management Unit 2C to the deer regular firearms, antlered and antlerless, November 26th to December 8th and remove Unit 2C from deer regular firearms antlered only November 26th to December 8th.

MR. WEANER:

So, the gist of your motion would be to add 2C into the concurrent season category?
MR. SCHREFFLER:
That’s correct.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a second?

MR. ISABELLA:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
It’s been properly moved and seconded. Commissioner Isabella with the second. Is there any discussion? Go ahead.

MR. MARTONE:
I always like to defer to the commissioner from that area. And Commissioner Schreffler has some good ideas. However, I have concerns about this because 2C just moved into the split season. And I think it’s not fair to our sportsmen to keep making changes year after year. I would like to see this stay where it is for at least three years. Get some idea of how things are actually working in this WMU. Get the feedback from the sportsmen after three years and then reconsider it. So, at this time, I’m not in support of this.

MR. WEANER:
Further questions or discussion? Go ahead.
MR. SCHREFFLER:

I have something to say. And that is that we tried it a year, we’ve gotten a lot of response back from hunters. And this Board has in the past changed things after one year, as a precedent. So, it wouldn’t be unusual. And I think it would be very easy for the hunters to adapt to this already because most of them are already coming over to the 4A to take advantage of the concurrent seasons.

MR. WEANER:

Further discussion?

MR. DELANEY:

Mr. President, ---

MR. WEANER:

Go ahead.

MR. DELANEY:

--- Commissioner Schreffler just said that most of the hunters are going over to 4A to hunt. I don’t know what accuracy there is to that.

MR. SCHREFFLER:

I’ll relent to that.

MR. WEANER:

Further discussion? Hearing none, we have a motion to add 2C into the category of concurrent seasons. All those in favor, signify by
raising one hand.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:

Hands down. All those opposed, raise one hand.

NAYS RESPOND

MR. WEANER:

Hands down.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion failed by a vote of five to three. Commissioner Putnam, Commissioner Schreffler and Commissioner Schlemmer voted ---.

MR. WEANER:

They voted in the affirmative. And the other five voted in the negative. The motion failed. Is there further discussion or any amendments to the deer section?

MR. SCHREFFLER:

Mr. President, ---

MR. WEANER:

Go ahead.

MR. SCHREFFLER:

--- I also would like to amend it to add Wildlife Management Unit 4B to deer regular firearms
antlered and antlerless, November 26th to December 8th
and remove the 4B from deer regular firearm season
antlered-only from November the 26th to December 8th.
In other words, 4B would move into the concurrent
season category.

MR. WEANER:
Okay. So, this is the same motion as
before except we’re now talking about 4B; correct?

MR. SCHREFFLER:
That’s correct.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a second?

MR. ISABELLA:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Isabella seconds.

Discussion? All those in favor of this, signify by
raising one hand.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Hands down. All those opposed, signify
by raising one hand.

NAYS RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Secretary?
MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion fails with two affirmative votes, Commissioner Isabella and Commissioner Schreffler. And all the rest of the votes were negative. The motion fails.

MR. WEANER:

Thank you. Any other questions or any other discussion, comments, amendments on deer?

MR. PUTNAM:

Yes, Mr. President.

MR. WEANER:

Mr. Putnam.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, I have concerns about Unit 3A. But I will not make any recommendations --- or make any amendments at this time. I would like to have --- wait until we see the numbers for this year come in. But I will tell you I have heard more comments from the eastern side of 3A concerning problems than I have from virtually any other area in the Northcentral.

MR. WEANER:

Okay. Commissioner Schreffler.

MR. SCHREFFLER:

Yes, Mr. President. I would like to
amend to add Wildlife Management Unit 4D to the deer regular firearms antlered and antlerless, November 26th to December 8th and remove Unit 4D from the deer regular firearms antlered-only, November 26th to November 30th.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a second?

MR. ISABELLA:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Isabella seconds the motion. The gist of your motion would be to make 4D a concurrent ---?

MR. SCHREFFLER:
That’s correct. Yes.

MR. WEANER:
Okay. Same motion different --- WMU 4D is the one in question here. Any other discussion? Hearing none, we shall proceed to vote. All those in favor of this motion, signify by raising one hand.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Hands down. All those opposed, signify by raising one hand.

NAYS RESPOND
MR. WEANER:
Hands down. Mr. Secretary?

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, the motion fails by a vote of five --- of six to two. Commissioner Schreffler and Commissioner Isabella voted in the affirmative. All the others vote negative.

MR. WEANER:
Thank you very much. Any other discussion or amendments on deer? Hearing none, we’re going to move on to black bear. Black bear is just on the bottom of page nine. Commissioner Martone?

MR. MARTONE:
Under black bear, the extended, which would be the category black bear extended November 26th to December 1st. I would like to eliminate both the paragraph beginning with the portions of WMU 3B and portions of WMU 2G and move those two units to the very bottom of the page where it says black bear extended firearms November 28th to December 1st, which would now read 3B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 2G and 3D.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a second?

MR. PUTNAM:
Second.
MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Putnam seconds the motion.
Okay. Before we go on to discussion, the gist of your motion, again, is items — or WMUs 3A and 3C in their entirety would move down to the bottom category.

MR. MARTONE:
No.

MR. WEANER:
Restate your motion.

MR. MARTONE:
Okay. The first category, bear extended firearms November 26th to December 1st, the first line will remain the same, WMUs 3A and 3C. The rest of that will be eliminated. The portions of, the portions of, those two will move down to the last category on that page, bear extended firearms November 28th to December 1st, which will now include 2G and 3B.

MR. WEANER:
The motion’s been properly moved and seconded, but go ahead and offer your discussion as to clarify it for us, please.

MR. MARTONE:
Well, after several discussions of these types — first of all, my first objection was these
paragraphs become very, very difficult for anybody to identify the areas, except if you lived in one you could probably figure out where you’re at and where you’re not. And in discussions with Mark, the biologist, these were acceptable changes to those two WMUs. And so I feel that, for statistics' sake and to better manage our deer, those are acceptable moves.

MR. WEANER:
Thank you. Other discussion?

MR. DELANEY:
Yes. I have two concerns regarding bear. And the first, directed to Rob. I would ask, on page nine, there’s two paragraphs in there with regard to 3B, 2G and portions of. And I wonder if you can offer an explanation why it’s in the agenda and what are our rationalization to have those two in here that have been there for years. I just need to know what that rationalization is if we’re going to remove it.

MR. DUBROCK:
The two subunits, if you will, or portions of a Wildlife Management Unit that have been identified in the past are areas where there have been chronic problems with bear/human interactions. And the idea behind this at the time was to allow us to identify small areas to focus attention, to focus
hunting pressure on those particular areas to eliminate bears from those portions of the WMU rather than the WMU as a whole. That recommendation came out of staff discussions and interactions with our regional staff. They’ve been on the books for a number of years now. Since that time, we’ve implemented our suburban bear study, which has illustrated that bears move quite a bit and that while we may harvest bears in those areas, those bears are also available outside the area during regular hunting season as well. So, I think that’s all I have to say at this point about the background. I would defer --- we do have Mark Ternent here, who is our bear biologist. If Mark has anything to add to that.

MR. TERNENT:

I think that’s pretty accurate for the history.

MR. DELANEY:

Okay. The second is a follow up with regard to WMU 3D that’s on page nine. While I’m not prepared to offer an amendment, we just had an excellent presentation from Biologist Ternent yesterday with regard to our bear program. And the only thing that stuck out to me as a Commissioner from Northeastern Pennsylvania was the harvest in 3D was
only ten percent compared to 30-some percent in 3D and
3C. It just seemed really, grossly out of the
ordinary. And we had some good discussions with that
relative to that yesterday. I remain concerned about
the bears that may be in downtown Scranton and
Wilkes-Barre and some of the gated communities across
the Pocono region. But I trust Biologist Ternent’s
judgment. We’ve had some good discussions on it. I
would just ask us to be vigilant as we go into the
next season to monitor WMU 3D very closely because, as
we said, that is an out of the ordinary thing.

MR. PUTNAM:
Commissioner Boop.

MR. BOOP:
Again, it was referenced yesterday in our
policy manual to constituencies. And we already had
the comment regarding the turkey hunting on the
western part of the state. And I think as
Commissioners we have to look at the whole picture,
but yet we have to be sensitive where we’re from.
And I’m from this area. Both part of 2G
and 3B are in my district. And I certainly understand
what Commissioner Martone is saying and the argument
for simplicity. But having been on the Board a long
time, it was --- a lot work went into these, what Mr.
DuBrock has referred to as subunits. In Lycoming County particularly, at the WCOs, we’re just having very, very difficult problems with the bear concentrated in those areas where these subunits are delineated.

We want to have bears in certain parts of the state. And certainly, I would think 2G and 3B are where we want to have bear. And I’m just little concerned, number one, that we’re throwing out an awful lot of work that Mr. Dusza and the WCOs involved did in developing what I think has been a very successful approach in those areas. And the big groups that organize and drive for bears and are very successful, if we open all of 2G and all of 3B, they’re not going to concentrate into these areas. And we certainly have the potential to see the kind of harvest we saw in 3A last year and not focus on the bears in these particular areas.

So, I know we want to avoid this in the future, and we don’t want to see a lot of other WMUs and have this type of language, but this has been in place for a number of years and it’s worked well. And by voting in favor of this, we’re just going to throw out a lot of hard work that I hate to see happen.
MR. WEANER:

Other comments? Commissioner Martone?

MR. MARTONE:

And I do agree with Commissioner Boop that a lot of hard work went into this. And I understand that it was at one time designed to solve a problem. But I think since then the science has changed. And if I’m not mistaken, Mr. DuBrock, this --- can you tell us, does the science still support these smaller units, or has it told us that we could be just as effective upon the WMU scale?

MR. DUBROCK:

I’m just wondering how the transcriber is recording my laugh. I’m not certain how to answer that at this point. I think it’s difficult to say. We know that bears move around the landscape quite a bit. And so they’re moving in and out of these smaller areas. It’s more a reflection of where folks hunt and what’s available to them and what’s in season at the time. Bears are being taken in these small areas that are causing problems in those small areas. They’re also being taken outside those smaller areas as well, because they do roam around the landscape. We’ve made no secret of the fact that from a hunting opportunity point of view and a management point of
view, we prefer the management, the WMU level, rather than fractured units. So that is the Bureau’s position. And we believe we can address the issues on the landscape that, by doing so, we’re not overly persecuting or devastating bear populations in the remainder of the management unit when we keep an entire unit open.

Concerning 2G and extending the entirety of it, that does give me some pause for reflection. And I’m not saying it’s a horrible idea. I’m saying that we do want to reflect on that a bit. It is the core of our bear range in central Pennsylvania. It’s an area of low human population density, very low conflict with bears. And the bear population is healthy, and it has been steadily growing. So, could we take more bears and possibly stabilize that bear population? Probably. What will be the effect of a four-day season in the entire management unit for a deer season? It would simply be conjecture on our part. We can attempt to predict, but until it actually happens, it would be difficult to know. So, I think given the proposal, should this amendment pass, we’re going to take a harder look at that and try to give you some additional information between now and April when a final decision is made. But that
is something that, as Commission Delaney said, the staff will remain diligent in reviewing the data and try to provide the best possible data we can for your deliberations.

MR. WEANER:
Thank you. Further discussion? Hearing none, we shall vote on Ralph’s motion. For the record, Ralph, would you just restate your motion?

MR. MARTONE:
Under bear extended firearms, WMU 3A and 3C November 26th to December 1st will be all that’s under that category. At the bottom of the page, bear extended firearm November 28th to December 1st will now read 3D, 4C, 4D, 4E, 2G and 3B.

MR. WEANER:
Thank you very much. We shall now proceed to vote. All those in favor of this motion, signify by raising one hand.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Hands down. All those opposed to this motion, raise one hand.

NAYS RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Mr. Secretary?
Mr. President, the vote is four to four.

And the four voting yes?

The four voting yes are Commissioner Putnam, Commissioner Martone, Commissioner Schlemmer and Commissioner Isabella.

And the rest voted no. A tie vote fails.

The motion to amend has failed. Is there any other amendments on black bears or discussion on black bears? Okay. Turning over to the next page, elk. Anything on elk? Furtaking trapping information on page 10 and page 11? Okay. Hearing nothing here, we have an amended motion, and the amended motion makes these various changes that we’ve just gone through here, I will not restate all of them, but a vote right now is on pages 4 to 11 with the amendments that have passed. And this, of course, has to be voted on again for final adoption at the April meeting.

And one thing I will interject here, one of the reasons why we go this way is to give people an opportunity to provide input. So, we’re hoping that the public out there reads this stuff, hears this
stuff and provides us input because nothing is cast in stone until we vote in April again. So, we’re now voting on the amended motion, pages 4 to 11, with the amendments. All those in favor, signify by raising one hand.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Hands down. Any that oppose? Secretary?

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, the motion passes eight to nothing.

MR. WEANER:
Unanimously, all voting yes. Thank you.

We are over on page 12 of your agenda.

MR. BECHTEL:
The next item to come before the Commission is an amendment to 58 PA Code Section 141.1. Agricultural deer damage continues to be a challenge in the Commonwealth’s more developed areas. Special hunting regulations exist for these areas, but hunting and permitted control provisions at times create conflicting regulations. The amendment to Section 141.1(d)(6) will permit hunters to legally harvest deer during any deer season through the use of bait on properties authorized under a valid deer
control permit known as red tag farms in WMUs 5C and 5D in the southeastern Pennsylvania special regulations areas. The text is shown on page 12 of your agenda.

MR. WEANER:
Thank you. Is there a motion to approve this?

MR. SCHREFFLER:
So moved.

MR. ISABELLA:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Schreffler moves. Commissioner Isabella seconds the motion. Discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor of this, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, the vote is passed unanimously.

MR. WEANER:
Thank you.

MR. BECHTEL:
The next item is the amendment of 58 PA Code Section 141.28 concerning the Pike Run Wild Pheasant Recovery Area. This study area in southwestern Pennsylvania has concluded unsuccessfully. Habitat patch analysis shows the Pike Run meets only one of five habitat targets in the pheasant model. Pheasant densities are at one hen per square mile, far short of the ten hens per square mile objective.

In light of the area’s habitat characteristics and low pheasant densities, and in keeping with the pheasant management plan, it is proposed that this area be open to either-sex pheasant hunting and stocking of game farm pheasants being reinstated beginning with the 2012 to 2013 season. To complement this proposed season change, Section 141.28 will need to be amended to delete the Pike Run Wild Pheasant Restoration Area description as illustrated on page 13 of your text. Additionally, amending Section 141.28(b)(2) to include crows along with waterfowl and woodchucks to the list of species that can be hunted within WPRAs from the first Sunday in February through July 31st is being proposed.

MR. WEANER:

Is there a motion to approve this?
MR. ISABELLA:
Motion.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Isabella moves. Is there a second?

MR. PUTNAM:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Second by Commissioner Putnam.

Discussion? Commissioner Delaney?

MR. DELANEY:
There’s just language that conflicts with proposal 139.4. So, I’m just not sure how we proceed from here. According to this, either-sex pheasant hunting it says is open in Pike Run. Yet in 2A, under season of bag limits, we made it a cock bird only area. So, Mr. President or Executive Director, can you address that?

MR. WEANER:
Yeah. The commentary, we’re not voting on the commentary. It’s just an explanation. As you already amended it, these are the bag limits. You’re voting on removing Pike Run as a Wild Pheasant Restoration Area. That’s the change in the regulatory process.
MR. DELANEY:
Yeah. And my only concern is that it reads this area to be open to either-sex pheasant hunting.

MR. WEANER:
And you’ve already amended that situation in the seasons and bag limits. And you’re not voting on the commentary.

MR. DELANEY:
Good enough for me.

MR. WEANER:
Other discussion? So everyone is clear here, we are simply with this motion, if it were to pass, it simply eliminates Pike Run as a Wild Pheasant Recovery Area. It doesn’t affect what we did back in seasons and bag limits. And it adds crows and waterfowl and woodchuck. And other discussion? Hearing none, we shall vote. All those in favor of this, signify by raising one hand.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Hands down. All those opposed?

Secretary?

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

MR. WEANER:

Thank you. We’re now over to page 15.

MR. BECHTEL:

The next item concerns the amendment 58 PA Code Section 141.62. To comply with the beaver management plan, two regulation changes are needed in 58 PA Code Section 141.62. The 15-foot trap placement restriction near beaver dams and lodges should be enforced statewide, which will simplify regulations and help protect juvenile beavers in the colony. This will be accomplished by deleting references to the Wildlife Management Units 3B, 3C and 3D as indicated below in the text on page 15.

Secondly, the body-gripping trap limit of ten should only apply to WMUs with high relative harvest complaint density and with bag limits of 40 beavers per season. The purpose of this change is to lift the two body-gripping trap limit only in WMUs with high relative beaver harvest and complaint densities. Limiting body-gripping traps also creates beaver trapping opportunities for the maximum number of trappers. This change can be accommodated as noted in Section 141.62(b)(4) on page 15.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a motion?

MR. ISABELLA:
Motion.

MR. SCHLEMMER:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Isabella moves.

Commissioner Schlemmer seconds the motion. Is there any discussion here? Hearing none, we shall vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Those opposed, say no.

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

MR. WEANER:
Thank you.

MR. BECHTEL:
The next action is the amendment of 58 PA Code Section 147.804. The National Wild Turkey Federation and others have continued to express an interest in having the Commission expand mentored youth turkey hunting opportunities to include fall turkeys. Commission staff has expressed conditional
support so long as fall turkey harvest would not increase. The Board has the ability to modify 58 PA Code to allow for the transfer of a mentor fall turkey tag. This action will not significantly increase the fall harvest or negatively impact the ongoing fall hen harvest rate and survival study and is consistent with the goal of providing additional mentored youth hunting opportunity as identified in the wild turkey management plan for Pennsylvania. The changes are shown on page 16 of your agenda.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a motion to approve?

MR. ISABELLA:
Motion.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Isabella moves. Is there a second?

MR. MARTONE:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Martone seconds the motion.

Any discussion?

MR. DELANEY:
Yes, Mr. President. I just want to offer one point. I want to give Commissioner Martone some
credit here, too, because I believe he’s the one that actually stimulated the thought based on what the National Wild Turkey Federation had to say. But really we had some good discussions going. So, I just wanted to commend him for at least getting this on the table and getting the conversation started.

MR. WEANER:

Other discussion? Hearing none, we shall vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:

Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion passes unanimously.

MR. WEANER:

Thank you.

MR. BECHTEL:

The next action proposes to amend 58 PA Code Section 135.50, which currently defines the term ATV, All Terrain Vehicle, for the purpose of restricting the type and design of off-road vehicles that may be operated on State Game Lands under applicable allowances. Section 135.5 contains specific reference to sections of the Vehicle Code to
aid in defining this term. The relevant portions of the Vehicle Code were changed on June 25th, 2001 and changed the meanings given to the terms All Terrain Vehicle and ATV. The 2001 changes to the Vehicle Code were never incorporated into 58 PA Code Section 135.5. The Commission is proposing to amend Section 135.5 to eliminate references to subsection three of the Vehicle Code, which no longer exists under Title 75, and replace them with a generic exclusory reference. This proposal is non-substantive and is not intended to further expand or further limit the types of off-road vehicles that may be operated on State Game Lands under applicable allowances.

**MR. WEANER:**

Is there a motion to approve?

**MR. ISABELLA:**

Motion.

**MR. WEANER:**

Commissioner Isabella. Is there a second?

**MR. SCHLEMMER:**

Second.

**MR. WEANER:**

Commissioner Schlemmer. We have a motion and a second. Director Palmer, do you want to just
give us the gist of this? Basically, it’s no change; right?

MR. PALMER:

Yes, Mr. President. Essentially it’s just a housekeeping item. The section of the applicable law, Title 75, was amended and the regulations never caught up with that amendment. If you look, it’s basically the paragraph of the section that changes it from item three to item one. It’s purely an administrative amendment.

MR. WEANER:

We’re not going to have the Game Lands overrun by ATVs.

MR. PALMER:

That’s correct, Mr. President.

MR. WEANER:

Thank you. Go ahead.

MR. ISABELLA:

I just realized. Does this mean that I can’t take my ATV on 326 anymore?

MR. PALMER:

That’s correct.

MR. ISABELLA:

I’m only kidding.

MR. WEANER:
Any other discussion? All those in favor of this motion, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:

Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion passes unanimously.

MR. WEANER:

Thank you.

MR. BECHTEL:

The next item the Commission is proposing to amend is Section 141.4 of 58 PA Code to replace the current hunting hours table and migratory bird hunting hours table to accurately reflect the dates and hours of legal hunting for the 2012-2013 hunting license year. These tables are shown on page 19 and 20 of your agenda.

MR. WEANER:

Do we have a motion to approve?

MR. ISABELLA:

Motion.

MR. WEANER:

Commissioner Isabella moves.

Commissioner Schlemmer, do you want to second this
motion?

    MR. SCHLEMMER:
    Second.

    MR. WEANER:
    Thanks, guys down there at the end of the table. We have a motion and a second. Any discussion? Seeing none, we shall vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

    AYES RESPOND

    MR. WEANER:
    Those opposed, say no.

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

    MR. WEANER:
    Okay. Thank you. This moves us up to page 21.

    MR. BECHTEL:
    Yes. On page 21, the Commission proposes to amend 58 PA Code Section 141.43 and 141.44. On January 27th, 2009, the Commission adopted amendments to those sections relating to deer and bear that, inter alia, authorized the general use of crossbows during archery deer and bear seasons. The crossbow amendments in these provisions are subject to a sunset
provision that expires on June 30th, 2012. The Commission is proposing to amend those sections to eliminate the sunset language to effectively make permanent the authorized general use of crossbows during archery deer and bear seasons. The text is shown on pages 21 and 22 of your agenda.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a motion to approve?

MR. ISABELLA:
Motion.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Isabella. Is there a second?

MR. MARTONE:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Martone second. Discussion? Mr. Boop?

MR. BOOP:
We’re on crossbows. We knew we were going to get here.

MR. WEANER:
Yeah.

MR. BOOP:
Crossbows has not been the sport’s finest
hour. I think that most of us who have been serving on the Board would agree. I have a lot of concerns about this particular agenda item. Other than just sort of the general deer situation, which is a whole other matter, I don’t think anything in my tenure has generated as much emotion and has caused as much difficulty for this Board. I’m particularly concerned I guess in several areas. Number one, I have a lot of acquaintances and people I’ve come in contact with who say you ruined my sport. We’ve heard that here on Sunday. And I’ve heard it numerous times. And I don’t know what we say to those people other than it was just a decision of the Board and that we need to move on. But I do feel for those people, including one very good personal friend of mine, who every time I see him says you ruined my sport.

The second issue that concerns me with crossbows generally is that --- now, I’ve heard all the arguments that there’s really no difference between a crossbow and a compound bow or a traditional or a recurve, but I think we only need to look at the statistics we saw yesterday for the success in the archery bear season and to see what percentage of the bear were taken by crossbows as opposed to compounds. A lot of people argue pretty persuasively that they’re
a short range gun. I’m not going to be here, but I think this Board is going to have to take a look in future years at where these harvest numbers are going because we’re all hearing, as Commissioners, from the rifle hunters, is there going to be anything left for us. As we’re approaching 40 percent of the buck harvest coming from the archery season. And I think we can all look at the numbers and argue the numbers. Like it or not --- and I think our biologists tell us at almost every meeting that our rifle hunters are our most efficient way of managing our deer. And if we want to preserve camp life and the traditions that we all have been a part of, there’s going to have to be something left for the archery hunters.

So, I think long term, the use of crossbows probably is going to mean, unfortunately, the shortening of the archery season as the kill goes up because if you look at any paper across the state in the fall and you look at the bucks being taken, not only is it approaching 40 percent, but some of the best ones that are out there. And does it interfere with the breeding ecology? I think that’s something the biologists have to answer. We do have the junior bucks out there. And certainly they’re capable of doing the breeding. But this is something that’s
going to haunt us, I think, for a long time.
And having said all that, for those families that bought crossbows for their children and the people that went out and bought them and the retailers that stock them in their stores all across the state, I can’t in good conscience vote against allowing them to continue. But I think this is going to be an issue that’s going to dog the Board for years to come. And I wish it had been different, but it wasn’t. And I think we’re going to just have to deal with it as we go forward.

**MR. WEANER:**

Thank you. Commissioner Isabella?

**MR. ISABELLA:**

Tom, we’ll have to disagree one more time.

**MR. BOOP:**

We always do, Greg.

**MR. ISABELLA:**

Well, we entered the sunset three years ago. We heard a lot of concerns of what was going to happen. 200,000 to 300,000 rifle hunters were going to come over; that didn’t materialize. There was going to be a massive harvest of bucks; that didn’t materialize. The breeding bucks were not damaged,
that didn’t materialize. One big advantage --- two big advantages that this happened is we got some of the older hunters to stay active and continue to hunt because they’re hunting now in the archery season where maybe in the wintertime they wouldn’t be hunting. That’s a positive.

We were talking about retention. When you go to these youth field days, you’re going to see an archery area. You’re going to see eight- or nine-year-olds shooting junior compound bows just to stir up their interest and hoping that they either get in a venture like a few years down the road or they acquire a hunting license. Most importantly, which is not being talked about, is the excise tax that is coming from the purchase of a crossbow or related accessories because of the Pittman Robertson Fund. And that goes right back into hunting activities. Lastly, the states that I know that have been in crossbow hunting, a lot of these concerns have not materialized. So, yeah, I’m leaving the Board also, and I’m sure that our deer team will be monitoring the situation. And let’s just hope that this was a good activity for deer hunters. Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. WEANER:

Go ahead.
MR. MARTONE:

Those are two tough acts to follow, but I would like to weigh in on this. Commissioner Boop’s right. We are watching the harvest closely, but it has trended upwards, even before crossbows. The archery season is one of the places we sell more licenses consistently. We’re adding more archers every year prior to crossbows. And it just continued when crossbows were added. One thing I looked at was the hunter’s survey for 2010-11. It showed archers spent 2,726,908 days afield. Rifle hunters spent a little bit more at 3,181,711 days afield. When you look at the harvest, archers spent about 9.4 days to harvest a buck, where rifle hunters spent 3.4. That’s almost three times as much time in the field to harvest that deer. And excuse the pun, but that’s a lot more recreational bang for our buck when it comes to providing recreation for archery. And if the archers are choosing crossbow, then I think we’ve done the right thing. Thank you.

MR. WEANER:

Further comment?

MR. SCHREFFLER:

Yes.

MR. WEANER:
Go ahead.

MR. SCHREFFLER:

I would just like to comment about my concerns with the increasing harvest of bucks. It seems that more bucks are being harvested of course, and that somewhat the habits of the deer have been changed by added pressure. And I think it concerns our rifle hunters. They seem to be sort of the last ones to get added opportunity. And here when we see the pre-rifle season numbers increasing, numbers of harvesting bucks are increasing, and I think this really requires our Bureau of Wildlife Management to practice a great deal of vigilance on this because these are concerns that I have. But I, too, as Mr. Boop, hear a lot of people in the rifle season saying we’re the last ones to be considered for a lot of opportunities. And it seems like a lot of good bucks and a lot of deer are taken before we have our opportunity. So, I think we have to keep that in mind as we go through this.

MR. BOOP:

Just one aspect I didn’t touch on. I don’t want to repeat anything. This has gone on a little bit anyway. But both on this Board and as a municipal solicitor for almost 40 years, I just have
not had a good experience with sunset provisions. And I just would like to make that comment for whatever the Board wants to --- how they want to consider it. I think in this case, the sunset provision was put in to try to sell this to get the last vote three years ago. But my experience, both as municipal solicitor and here, you can’t get something and then come back three years later and take it away. So, I just think that future initiatives come up in the future, you know, just we have not had a debating situation earlier in the southeast. Just the sunset provisions don’t work very well.

MR. WEANER:

Any other comments?

Mr. Weaner:

One last comment I would add is my views on this issue have not changed. I agree with Commissioner Boop mostly 100 percent on this issue. And I also agree with him that the battle was lost in 2009, and to think that we could take crossbows away now would make a firestorm that none of us ever want to even think about. So, I’m going to be voting in favor of this motion as well.

MR. WEANER:

And last comments?
MR. DELANEY:
Yeah.

MR. WEANER:
Mr. Delaney?

MR. DELANEY:
I feel like I’m the caboose on this discussion. But I voted no for the first round, but I learned I think over the last several years that crossbows are good for the sport of hunting. There are a lot of folks that say but you perceive this and you perceive that. I think we deal in the facts. The facts are that the harvest has increased with the use of crossbows. Not necessarily just because of the crossbow, but because of the crossbows and the SRAs. In general though, the harvest has increased. I’m from the Northcentral Region --- I’m sorry, the Northeast Region, and we do have a lot of camps. And I believe that rifle deer hunting drives the Pennsylvania Game Commission like football drives Penn State University. I think we have to watch the harvest and find the balance in how much is too much. But in general, I’m not going to oppose it. I agree with what most of us said here. You know, we’re into this. Too many folks have bought them and they have done a lot of good. A lot of kids use them. A lot of
adults use them. So, I think it’s been very good for us, but as we move forward, I think we need to be really cautious and watch the deer harvest. Thank you.

MR. WEANER:
Okay. We’re going to vote in this motion. A yes vote on this motion will make permanent the use of crossbows. All those in favor of this motion, signify by raising one hand.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Hands down. Those opposed? Secretary?

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

MR. WEANER:
Thank you. We move over to page 23.

MR. BECHTEL:
The next items concern acquisitions. Contract number 3596, State Game Land number 235 in Franklin County. Ricky and Arlin Wadel are offering for sale 60, more or less, acres of land in St. Thomas Township, Franklin County, adjoining State Game Land number 235 as shown on Exhibit Red One on page 24. The option price is $117,436, lump sum to be paid from
the Game Fund. This indenture into State Game Land number 235 is forested. Broad Run, which is a Class A wild trout stream, runs through the northwest corner of the property.

Contract number 3597, State Game Land number 207 in Luzerne County. The Earth Conservancy is offering for sale 406.55 more or less acres of land in Hanover and Fairview Townships, Luzerne County, adjoining State Game Land number 207 as shown on Exhibit Red Two on page 25 of your agenda. The option price is $243,930, lump sum. The option reserves all coal, oil, gas and other minerals, but not including uranium or any other radioactive minerals. The Earth Conservancy, however, shall not enter into any sale or lease for removal of coal, oil, gas or other minerals through the surface without the written consent of the Game Commission. After January 1st of 2032, the coal, oil, gas and other minerals shall revert to the Game Commission with 50 percent of any future revenue received by the Game Commission being allocated for Earth Conservancy. The property is forested with mixed oak on top of the mountain and northern hardwoods in the lower areas. The timber has been cut in some areas with early successional habitat. The property shall be paid for with third-party
commitments for compensation of habitat and
recreational losses.

Contract number 3598, State Game Land
number 106 in Berks County. Lennia Kutz or Kutz
(changes pronunciation) is offering for sale 27 more
or less acres of land in Albany Township, Berks
County, adjoining State Game Land number 106 as shown
on Exhibit Red Three on page 26. The option price is
$42,120, lump sum. There has been much interest
expressed by the National Wild Turkey Federation and
local sportsmen’s groups to contribute to the purchase
of this property. The remainder shall be paid from
third party commitments for compensation of habitat
and recreational losses. The property is forested.
And acquiring the property will provide protection for
two species of special concern, one under the
jurisdiction of the Game Commission and the other
under the jurisdiction of the Pennsylvania Fish and
Boat Commission.

MR. WEANER:
Okay. We have these three land
purchases. Is there a motion to approve?

MR. ISABELLA:
Motion.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Isabella moves.

MR. SCHREFFLER:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Schreffler seconds the motion. Any discussion?

MR. DELANEY:
Yes.

MR. WEANER:
Go ahead.

MR. DELANEY:
Real quick. Particularly the properties in Luzerne County, in the Northeast Region, and Bill can put this together, but the proposed acquisition coming from the Earth Conservancy, I just need to give them accolades, too, because they are a company that had a lot of coal properties that in addition to them offering this sale for us, they have more than 1,000 acres in the public access. So, they’ve long been a good partner for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. And personally, as a sportsman from northeastern Pennsylvania, that the value of this additional 406 acres in Luzerne County is phenomenal with the watershed and the habitat values that are in that area. So, good work.
MR. WEANER:

Other comments? Go ahead.

MR. ISABELLA:

Bill, this will be my last time talking to you up here. I just want you to know that you, the team and the regional directors over the past eight years have really brought together some excellent property. You stole some. But you got some excellent properties for these hunters of Pennsylvania. And they really have to realize what you bring to the table here, you and your team, and the properties that you brought over to the Game Commission. I’m going to miss your reports, but other than that, I want to give you and your guys a thumbs up.

MR. BOOP:

I guess I might as well make a comment now. I’m not sure if Greg was kidding with the comment stolen, but you certainly had made some very good acquisitions that have been in favor of the Commission and the sportsmen and women of this state. And as someone who does some of this in another life, I’m always impressed with what you bring to the table with you and your team. And this is just another example. And I know different people have made the comment you can’t go wrong buying or acquiring dirt.
And you certainly acquired a lot of dirt during the last eight-plus years I’ve been here, you and your department and your predecessors. And that’s true pretty much of all the folks here in the agency that I have to pile on with Greg on this one. It’s a rare chance where I get to agree with him. So, I couldn’t let it pass.

MR. WEANER:

Other comments? All those in favor of these --- of approving this motion, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:

Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion passes unanimously.

MR. WEANER:

Thank you. We’re over on page 27, land exchange.

MR. BECHTEL:

Next we’re looking at two land exchanges. The first is with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. They are offering 65.38 acres of land in Somerset and Black Townships, Somerset County
adjacent to State Game Land number 50 as a replacement for land for 22.14 acres of State Game Land number 50 as shown on Exhibit Red Four on page 28 of your agenda. An additional 21.508 acres shall be vacated back to the Commission upon completion of the project. In addition, 25.19 acres shall become part of a future PennDOT land bank. The conveyance to the Commission contains mixed hardwoods recovering from a clear cut with two small, old reverting fields. And a small tributary, headwaters to Laurel Run, runs through a section of the property.

The other exchange is with the Department of Conservation and National Resources. DCNR is offering 291.43 more or less acres of land adjacent to State Game Land number 311 in Benezette Township, Elk County in exchange for 291.36 acres of State Game Land number 311 as shown on Exhibit Red Five on page 29 of your agenda. The two agencies have negotiated this exchange to enhance the two separate agencies’ abilities to meet their independent objectives and benefit the general public’s use of these lands. The tract conveyed to DCNR is detached from the main portion of State Game Land. And the tract being transferred from DCNR adjoins existing State Game Land number 311. The exchange will also help the DCNR
alleviate an existing dangerous condition where horseback riding has been occurring along a narrow busy section of Highway Route 555. No horse trails are on the acreage being conveyed to the Game Commission. Both tracts are forested. And the acreage DCNR is transferring to the Game Commission has three herbaceous openings that are currently being maintained by the Game Commission’s Food and Cover Corps.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a motion to approve this?

MR. SCHLEMMER:
Motion.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Schlemmer. Is there a second?

MR. DELANEY:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Delaney seconds the motion.

Discussion? Go ahead.

MR. MARTONE:
I’d like to point out this land exchange with DCNR. We did a very excellent land exchange with the Clarion River exchange with DCNR that came out in
favor for both agencies. And I think the Pennsylvania Game Commission benefited greatly from that. This is another example of how the two agencies are working closely together. And I have to give Director Capouillez a lot of credit. These are not easy things to do between state agencies. The bureaucracy, I’m sure, is somewhat of a nightmare. But when both agencies can benefit so much, and this type of exchange up in the elk country is beneficial to us. It’s certainly beneficial to DCNR. They have to be commended for making this happen. And I want to say thank you.

MR. WEANER:

Other discussion? We are now going to vote on the motion to approve these. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:

Those opposed, say no. Secretary?

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, the motion passed unanimously.

MR. WEANER:

Thank you. We now move over to page 30.

MR. BECHTEL:
Yes. Page 30. Subject to certain limitations, Section 135.241 of 58 PA Code authorizes the director to bid on real estate, oil, gas or mineral rights at auction or tax sale and to request down payment checks to bid on property at auction. Successful bids must be made known to the general public at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

On August 19th, 2011, the Game Commission was the successful bidder at a tax sale held at the Cambria County Courthouse and purchased the mineral rights or fractural interests thereof on nine tracts, ten different control numbers, located in Blacklick, Reade and Dean Townships, Cambria County under State Game Land number 79 as shown on Red Six on page 32 and 108 as shown Exhibit Red Seven on page 33. Each of these tracts had a different price. Each tax parcel number and the price and the fractional interest is all detailed in your agenda on page 30.

On Contract number 3594, State Game Land number 88 in Juniata County, on August 26th, 2011, notice was received from the Southcentral Region that the estate of George M. Stewart was offering for sale five separate tracts of land totaling 369 more or less acres in Spruce Hill Township, Juniata County at a
public auction to be held September 24th, 2011. The property adjoins State Game Land number 88 as shown on Exhibit Red Eight on page 34. The Game Commission was the successful bidder on tract number three, totaling 65.96 acres with a bid of $400,000, which was paid with escrowed funds from the land exchange on State Game Land number 176 with the Pennsylvania State University and required approval from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The property, located on the northern slope of Tuscarora Mountain, provides access to a large inaccessible portion of State Game Land number 88. A five-acre portion of the tract is an herbaceous opening currently managed as a hayfield. A diverse hardwood forest is present with hickory, white oak, red maple, black birch, sugar maple, tulip poplar and a scattering of conifers. Headwaters of an unnamed creek flow through the property.

MR. WEANER:
Is there a motion to approve this?

MR. BECHTEL:
These are informational items, Mr. President.

MR. WEANER:
Let me ask one question while Director
Capouillez is here. These fractural interests in ---
that we bought, why is that important?

MR. CAPOUILZE:

Those areas had surface mining and deep
mining coal in the past. And we did not own that
ccoal. And in particular, that was a strategic play on
the Game Commission’s part to acquire those
outstanding interests. With coal prices fluctuating
up and down and now coal-bed methane gas starting to
be more prevalent, surface usage, description of
non-minerals, all those things are really starting to
be picked up on in tax sales. In particular, some of
that gain was on 108. There’s an upper coal seam
there, which is a very nice coal seam. It’s only
about 18 inches thick, which we were able to purchase
that. Had we not been able to do that, that entire
interior of the Game Land could have been subject to
surface mining and we would have had no control in
that area. And that’s why some of those bids actually
went pretty high. There were intents for people to
acquire that and to start to move towards mining.

MR. WEANER:
Okay. Thank you. We’re now on page 35.

MR. BECHTEL:
The last item before the Commission is
the Gob Gas Production Agreement on State Game Land number 223 in Greene County. Alpha Natural Resources, Alpha, has requested an agreement to market natural methane gas from an existing gob vent borehole from under a portion of State Game Land number 223 in Greene County, Southwest Region as shown on Exhibit OGM One on page 36. Alpha drilled the gob vent borehole for the purpose of venting gas to the atmosphere in order to protect underground mine workers. However, Alpha has the right to drill gob vent boreholes under mining regulations for the safety of miners.

The only surface disturbance for the project will consist of the installation of approximately 1,100 feet of two-inch diameter gas line which will generally follow the existing access road. The agreement will be limited to the gob vent borehole. Alpha will pay the Commission a 12.5 percent royalty of the wellhead price per MCF of gas produced and sold from the existing gob vent borehole. All royalty proceeds shall be deposited into the Game Fund.

Development will be regulated by the Commonwealth’s oil and gas regulations and the Commission’s standard gas production agreement. The
agreement will include the Commission’s standard wildlife and protection measures.

Alpha currently owns approximately 1,100 acres of surface lands in Greene County which are enrolled in the hunter access programs.

MR. WEANER:
Motion to approve?

MR. SCHLEMMER:
Motion.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Schlemmer. Is there a second?

MR. SCHREFFLER:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Commissioner Schreffler seconds the motion. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, we shall vote. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Those opposed, say no.

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

Thank you. We’re over on page 37. Is there any other new business that any Commissioner wishes to bring forth at this time? Hearing none, I will alert you to the proposed Commission meeting dates. You can see them there. One significant change is that instead of having a meeting in October, the middle of archery season —— this is my legacy as Board President. We have moved the meeting to September, September 24th and 25th. And we hope that tradition continues. Anyway, at this time, we have a number of other things to do here, as you can see, but this is actually the last and final time that we are going to have the privilege of being with two of our Commissioners. So, I’m going to offer them the platform if they wish to make any parting comments. Mr. Isabella.

MR. ISABELLA:

I went first the last time.

MR. WEANER:

Mr. Boop?

MR. BOOP:

Your name is printed first on the agenda.

MR. ISABELLA:

Well, it was a long journey. Took about
nine and a half years of my life. And I can remember going up to Penn State, being interviewed by the counsel, the Sportsmen’s Advisory Counsel. I had never attended a Game Commission meeting prior to that. When I attended my first Commission meeting, I was kind of in awe. I said oh my God, what am I getting myself into. It was the feral cat and the orange issue. But I got through that one year. When I became the Commissioner, you know, I understood the three-legged issue of species management. I can tell you then and now that all my votes were entered with the science aspect only. I came in without an agenda. My votes were not tainted with an agenda. And I’m leaving without an agenda. The most important oath and obligation I took was when I was sworn in and I was told to defend the resource for all the citizens of Pennsylvania. I believe I did that.

At the Pennsylvania Game Commission, deer isn’t everything that we do here. We’ve had extended bear seasons, extended waterfowl seasons. We had pheasant reintroduction. Some areas are working. Some areas are not. We’ll see what happens. We had hunter education training now done by computer, which I think is a big help because a lot of people just don’t have the time like they used to years ago. We
had, over the eight years, thousands of acres that we have now only the State Game Land system. I can remember during the crossbow debate, the head of the Ohio DNR was at the podium. And he said that one of the things Ohio did not do which they should have done was what the Game Commission did, buy land for the hunters. And I never visited all these. Maybe I’ll have some time in the next few years to go out and visit some of these properties that we’ve acquired for the hunters.

Lastly, this is to our critics, there is no boogieman giving us secret signals and communications to vote for UN treaties. I have got to be honest with you. I said it before the last time. When the critics come up here and attack the Game Commission and make personal attacks, you’re only hurting our sport because we are only about eight percent here in the Pennsylvania state, and we are dwindling because of attrition. Now, the baby boomers are going to start hitting that age where in five to ten years they may not be able to hunt anymore. So, when you’re over there attacking our sport, the opposition sitting in the back hitting on a computer, sending out messages to people, asking them for money and attacking us. So, think about that when you’re
attacking the Game Commission and our sport.  
Other than that, I went through five cars. I do drive a lot with my business. I went through five cars. That was a trip. I had a personal incident. You know, my wife was sick, and it took about four and a half years of time while I was a Commissioner. And fortunately that worked out good. And I’m actually going to miss my colleagues. I’m going miss staff, Carl, staff, all the good times I had here intermittently. And one last thing, during the --- I used to have coffee gossip with a couple employees about the Sopranos. And they’re not here. So, Linda Adams and Joan French, I used to go over there and talk to them about the Sopranos episode. We would talk about who got whacked and who was going to get whacked next. So, that was good Monday morning gossip. Other than that, it was a good eight-year run. I’m glad I did it. And thank you, everybody.

**MR. WEANER:**
Okay. Tom, I’ll turn it over to you.

**MR. BOOP:**
Well, again, it’s like being a country minister. I realize I’m preaching to the choir here and the audience today in the auditorium. I guess I may direct my remarks a little more generally to those
who might be watching these proceedings today. I’d
like to think I’m a fairly private person, but I’ve
had now little over --- well, six months to reflect
upon this, serving out the six-month extension. Greg
and I came on the same day. And our terms were
officially --- the eight years were up in July, but
because of the way the law is written, our successors
weren’t appointed. So, we’ve been able to continue to
serve since that time.

The other thing that happened to me,
since many of you know it anyway, but in April 29th
--- or on April 29 of last year, I had a fairly
serious heart surgery to correct an aortic valve
problem that was a birth defect that I knew eventually
was going to have to be taken care of. I just didn’t
think quite so soon. And when the surgeon tells you
you have a seven chance of ten of surviving the
surgery, it makes one a little bit reflective. But
fortunately everything went well. I’m back to the gym
and back to full activity with an excellent prognosis.
But it does tend to concentrate one’s thoughts a
little bit.

It’s sort of interesting. I grew up on a
dairy farm in western Union County and have been a
hunter since I was age 12. In fact, some of us did a
little bit of hunting before age 12 back in those days when you lived on a farm. But not many Pennsylvania sportsmen and women have an opportunity to be a Commissioner. It’s an eight-year term. We have a million plus or minus over the years. And it’s a great opportunity. It really is. And as Greg has noted, it’s not without its problems. You get a lot of grief from a lot of people. And I think if I were telling people what’s the number one criteria for being a Commissioner, it’s you have to have a pretty tough skin because if you don’t, you’re not going to enjoy this very long. And I think Greg and I are both qualified in that regard. And I think most of the other people up here do as well.

But as you reflect on it, I have a lot of different thoughts. I had a friend who recently died I had some conversations with. His comment was some of the best days of my life I spent hunting, fishing, being in the outdoors. As I reflect back on my own experiences, my grandfather died when I was a year old. So, I didn’t really have a relationship with my paternal grandfather. My maternal grandfather lived out of state. So, I really didn’t have much contact with him on a regular basis. But I would have never had been able to have the relationship with my uncles
and even my own father without the experience of hunting. It was a unique opportunity, particularly with my uncles, to spend a lot of time with them. In this day of fragmented families, a lot of those opportunities just don’t exist. And when I had my own children, I had that opportunity. At this point, I do most of my hunting with six 30-year-old-somethings. And I’m the old guy now, but with my sons in particular, particularly my son-in-law, I wouldn’t have the relationship that I have with them if we didn’t spend eight or ten days hunting together. And those are experiences that you just can’t get in many other ways.

And we get a lot of comments over the years that there are poachers out there and there are other people that detract from our sport. And the popular media is very quick to lump all hunters with jack riders and other less desirable elements in our population. But if you pick up a copy of Ned Smith’s Gone for the Day and you look through that, Ned made a few comments about that. And he said those kind of people don’t last long in our sport. They are not going to stand out on a mountain in the rain for three hours and they’re not going to put the effort and the time that it takes to become an outdoors person.
And I go around the local counties and I select a lot of juries for trials. And when I select jurors, you have grand jury challenges that you can eliminate people for no reason at all off the panel. And if I know someone is a hunter, I’m very quick to respect that person as a juror because I think most of those people have the common sense, they’ve had the lifetime experiences. And I sort of have a joke among my staff and other lawyers that I will take any hunter or truck driver I can find. I don’t want any passengers or nurses. It’s just I’ve had bad experience in those regards. I don’t think there’s anybody out there that has better judgment. And I certainly don’t mean that necessarily all hunters are truck drivers, but I’ve had very good experiences with truck drivers knowing what they know of the world because they’re out there every day.

So, the other thing that I would like to make is a point that sort of generally relates to that is that as parents, as mentors, as grandparents, we have an opportunity many times to have an impact on somebody else, whether that’s our child, our nephew or the person we meet at the local rotary club or wherever. And we have an obligation as members of this community, the outdoor community, I believe, to
pass the experiences along to other people. When
you’re retired or sick or you’re reflecting back on
your life, no one’s really going to care how many
hours you worked. No one’s going to care really about
the promotions that you got. But if you can have a
positive impact on somebody else’s life, that’s a very
rewarding experience. And I can’t think of a better
forum to teach a young person, or not necessarily a
young person, about ethics, about life. You have that
situation where you have your child and you walk up to
the first animal that they’ve taken. And there’s some
pretty conflicted emotions that occur in that
situation. So, I think teaching people about the
outdoors --- I’d like to think there are eight or
night people that hunt today that probably wouldn’t be
hunting if they hadn’t had experiences with me over
the years.

But if we want this to continue, which I
think we do, I think we all have an obligation to
share with others what we’ve learned, experiences
we’ve had. And you don’t get into the personal issues
so much with faith and community and all of those
things, but you’re out there in the spring on the side
of the mountain turkey hunting, and the world starts
to come alive at 5:30 in the morning, it’s a little
hard to be an atheist for me. And I don’t mean to be 
emotional about this, but it’s just some of the things 
that I feel. And I think those are important 
situations.

And my sons are all Eagle scouts. And I 
think that they learned a lot through scouting. But 
they’ve also learned a lot through hunting as well and 
the outdoor community. So, if you have that chance 
--- and it’s not Saturday afternoon at the range. I 
mean that doesn’t do it. I think the studies show if 
you’re going to successfully mentor someone, it takes 
a two to three-year period to do that because one year 
is not enough. You can expose them, but you’re not 
going to hook them, so to speak, to use a pun, on that 
type of limited experience.

So, I think those things are important. 
I think those are obligations that we have as members 
of this outdoor community. We have a wonderful 
agency. I like the system that we have. We certainly 
have our disagreements, but --- you know, how does New 
York do it? How does Ohio do it? All those kinds of 
questions coming come up almost every meeting. On the 
long run, I would stack Pennsylvania up against 
anybody else in this agency, the way we do business 
here in Pennsylvania.
You know I can’t let the opportunity go by, but I made my farewell remarks in June, they’re part of the record. I’m going to sort of stand on those. These are sort of ad lib comments today. But for the most part, I have been in agreement with our policy except I suppose my legacy and signature issue is going to be my longstanding criticism of the deer management program. You know, that started before I came. It’s going on after I leave. And as I reflect on it, I don’t like to think of myself as reactionary. We sit around at dinner at night and someone will proudly tell you they never shot an antlerless deer in their life. On last count, I shot close to 40 of them. So, I think I shocked my fellow Commissioners when I told them that I was going to probably demount one of my properties this next year. So, I don’t think that I have a closed mind on the issue of what we need to do to manage deer.

In looking back over the last eight years, I can’t help but make the analogy to a government program. On a national basis, on a government program, we identify the problem and what do we do? We throw money at the problem thinking that the problem is going to go away. And a lot of times we just make the problem worse. And I think in many
respects that’s what we’ve done with our deer management program. I mean we said --- and certainly I appreciate the fact that many areas of the state we have too many deer. We had too many deer in the late ’90s when we embarked on this current program in 2000. But throwing tags at the problem hasn’t really solved it. And I think it’s probably made it worse. It’s going to be up the rest of the people on this Board and the people that come behind to continue to address this problem. But I would like to think some of the votes that I lost, seven to one or six to two, that some of those ideas may come to fruition in the future.

And I think we do have to manage different areas of the state differently. I think we have to manage private land differently than we manage public land. And you know, I know that’s not going to be easy. And I know it’s much more convenient just to have this sort of one size fits all. And all that’s really done is ripping down the deer in the areas where people can hunt them. It’s done very little to address the problem that they’re too abundant, have been too abundant historically. So, I hope that we can take a serious look at public versus private forms of management. I hope we can take a serious look at
the size of some of these management units. And it’s really not about the deer. We know how to bring the deer back. We could bring the herd back. It might take five years or more in some areas, but we know how to institute policies that bring them back. We know how to take a herd down. I mean it’s a simple matter of having the concurrent season and gaining the access. We had the concurrent season but we haven’t gained the access. And those are the things we have to do.

My biggest fear, however, is not the deer. It’s what happened to our hunters. I think all of the studies that you’re going to read, if we lose a hunter for two years, we’ve lost that hunter. And I’ve been very disappointed, quite candidly, with some of the statewide agencies that support our hunters and those men and women out there. So, I think we all just need to do a better job. I think the problem is solvable, but it’s not easy. If it were an easy problem, we would have already solved it. But we haven’t. And I’m not sure we’re any better off today than we were 11 years ago. In fact, I think you could make the argument that we’re worse off on deer management today than we were. And I know there are people that would argue to the contrary.
The final point that I would like to make sort of going back to my remarks before is whether you’re a parent or grandparent or an aunt or an uncle or you’re just --- you happen to know that young person down the street or across the block from where you live, get them to take hunter safety. I mean, I don’t think there’s a better course out there or better way to introduce people to what we’re all about. Even if they don’t want to go hunting, the familiarity with firearms, I’ve had not a lot but I probably over the course of my professional career, I’ve had four or five situations where the young person is over at the neighbor’s house. And the child at that house gets out dad or grandpa’s gun and shows them the gun and it accidentally discharges. And we’ve had a few really tragic situations under those circumstances, but get them to take hunter safety. And then try to get them a hunting license and get them out there. I did that with my daughter. My daughter hunted a couple years. And I don’t want to direct this just to boys as opposed to girls because we have a lot of very capable women hunters out there. But someone who takes hunter safety, or if they hunt for a year or two, even if they don’t continue with the sport, I think are much more likely to be
supportive of their children and grandchildren hunting
than someone who’s never been exposed to it.

So, it’s been a great eight and a half years. And I have other things to do. So, I’m
looking forward to doing some of those. And I’m
probably not going to be back any time soon, but for
the rest of these Commissioners up here, I have your
e-mails or I know how to get your addresses to hound
you a little bit with some of my thoughts on some of
these issues. So, some of you are probably going to
hear from me in the future. But it’s been a great
opportunity to serve. I’ve appreciated it. And I’ve
met a lot of people that I consider friends and
acquaintances that I wouldn’t have otherwise had an
opportunity to meet. I think that’s somewhat ironic
that Denny and Steve are leaving at the same time I
am. They’re the two regional directors that I’ve
worked the most with. Denny for the whole time I’ve
been a Commissioner and Steve for about half of that
period. But they’ve done a good job, too, but none of
us are irreplaceable. I’m sure there are good people
to replace the two of you just as there are good
people out there to replace me. So, it’s been a fun
ride, people, and I’ll see you in the woods. Thanks.

MR. WEANER:
Just speaking for the Board, I would say that both of you will be really missed a lot. It’s going to be really odd to be here in April and not have you here joining us. I told some people last night I’ve been a school board member for 16 years, and we met twice a month. And I never got to know any of those people half as well as I know all these guys up here. I mean, we truly do have a lot of good times together and have made lifelong friendships. And we hope that you guys all keep in touch with us. We appreciate what you’ve done for the Commission.

The next item on here is the election of officers. And before I start into this, I just wanted to say one or two things about my year as president. And I have thoroughly enjoyed the support of the rest of the Board for being president this year. And you know, I’ve met a lot of people that I wouldn’t have met otherwise. And they say oh, wow, this is really important. You’re the president of the Game Commission. Well, I’m a Commissioner. And the officers are really not that much more important than anyone else. We have an election every year so that we can run our meetings and be organized. But they’ve entrusted this authority in me this year. I’ve appreciated it. I’ve had a good working relationship
with the staff and with Carl and with everyone here. And I would just like to say thank you for the confidence that you had in me this year. And I look forward to some excitement to those that we elect to be officers for the next year.

Tom Boop and I are on the nominating committee. And our nominating committee report is as follows. For president, we have nominated Ralph Martone. For vice president, we have nominated Bob Schlemmer. And for secretary, we have nominated Dave Putnam. We will open nominations. We’re going to do one officer at a time starting with president. And we will conduct our election here. So, at this point, I will open nominations for the office of president. Ralph Martone has been nominated already. Are there any further nominations? Hearing none, is there a motion to elect Ralph Martone as our president?

MR. BOOP:
So moved.

MR. WEANER:
Tom Boop moves. Is there a second?

MR. ISABELLA:
Second.

MR. WEANER:
Greg Isabella seconds. All those in
favor of electing Ralph Martone as president, signify
by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

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

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, Ralph Martone is elected
president unanimously.

MR. WEANER:
Congratulations.

MR. MARTONE:
Thank you.

MR. WEANER:
I’ll finish this and then I’ll turn it
over to you.

MR. MARTONE:
I’m not so anxious.

MR. WEANER:
Bob Schlemmer has been nominated for vice
president. Are there further nominations for vice
president? Hearing none, is there a motion to elect
Bob Schlemmer as vice president?

MR. PUTNAM:
So moved.

MR. DELANEY:
Second.

MR. WEANER:

Moved by Commissioner Putnam. And Commissioner Delaney seconds the motion. Any discussion on that? All those in favor of electing Bob Schlemmer as vice president, signify by saying aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:

Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:

Mr. President, Commissioner Schlemmer is elected vice president unanimously.

MR. WEANER:

Thank you and congratulations. We now are to the office of secretary. Dave Putnam has been nominated. Are there further nominations? Hearing none, is there a motion to elect Dave Putnam as secretary?

MR. DELANEY:

So moved.

MR. WEANER:

Commissioner Delaney moves.

MR. ISABELLA:

Second.
MR. WEANER:
Second, Commissioner Isabella. Any discussion? All those in favor of electing Dave Putnam secretary, please say aye.

AYES RESPOND

MR. WEANER:
Those opposed, say no.

MR. PUTNAM:
Mr. President, Commissioner Putnam is elected secretary unanimously.

MR. WEANER:
Congratulations, Mr. Putnam.

MR. PUTNAM:
That was pretty easy.

MR. WEANER:
I will now turn the gavel over to ---.

MR. MARTONE:
Thank you.

MR. WEANER:
You can take my seat here.

MR. MARTONE:
You’re a little too anxious I think.

Evidently he’s taller than I am. I would particularly like to thank President Weaner for the year he has spent. Anyone that’s heard me speak at meetings is
probably worried right now. And so I took time to
write a few things down. So, if you don’t mind, I’m
going to read them. I would like to thank Ron Weaner,
Jay Delaney and Greg Isabella for the excellent job
they did as president of the Board since I joined as a
Commissioner back in 2009. These men taught me a
great deal about what it means to be an effective
leader. I’m especially thankful to both Tom Boop and
Greg Isabella for their hard work and leadership on
behalf of the sportsmen and women of Pennsylvania. I
cannot think of two men with more diverse
personalities being willing and able to sit and
rationally discuss issues and solve problems. They
have set an example for all sportsmen across the state
in working together for the common good.

This year, like every year, the
Pennsylvania Game Commission faces many challenges,
including the ongoing challenge of balancing the
scientific management of wildlife, the needs and
desire of our licensed buyers and the concerns of the
citizens of the Commonwealth. Several issues I hope
to address as Board president in the coming year
include a more proactive and comprehensive urban deer
management program, a plan to promote and implement an
adult mentor program and working with our law
enforcement officers in developing new and innovative methods of combat the growing problem of ATVs on State Game Lands.

As the Pennsylvania Game Commission prepares to seat a new class of recruits, the Board recognizes the training provided to our officers is the best in the nation. In the coming year, the Board hopes to work with Executive Director Roe, Deputy Director Hough and Bureau Chief Palmer to make certain our officers are the best equipped in the nation.

Also, in the coming year, I will ask the Board to work with me on simplifying the fluorescent orange regulations. With the Board’s guidance, I would like to set up a Citizen’s Advisory Group consisting of representatives from our conservation partners and members at large to study and make recommendations on changes to fluorescent orange requirements.

And last but not least, while I would like to give credit to Bob Frye and Jeff Mulholland for stimulating changes in the way the Board conducts business, I have to give credit where credit is due by acknowledging Commissioner Delaney. Jay has been promoting this idea for several years. And while I can’t offer any details at this time, I can state that
the working group meeting prior to our April Board meeting and future meetings during the coming year will be open to the public. In closing, I would like to thank the Board for the confidence in me, and I promise to work hard in the coming year to justify that trust. Thank you. And at this time, the meeting is adjourned.

MR. SCHLEMMER:
Mr. President.

MR. MARTONE:
I’m sorry. I screwed up already.

MR. SCHLEMMER:
I’d just like to make one comment. I’d like to recognize some very special person here today, Barry Moore (phonetic). Barry’s sitting in the back of the room. He was my second mentor. He’s a retired Southeast regional director. And Barry, I would like to thank you for putting me on the right track, my friend. Okay.

MR. MOORE:
Thank you for putting me on the right track.

MR. MARTONE:
That had to be quite a task putting Bob on the right track.
MR. BOOP:

I would just like to make two quick comments. I’d like to personally and generally thank Commissioner Weaner. Being president of this organization, I can attest, is not one of the easiest jobs one can have. And Ron has certainly served diligently and with dignity this past year. He’s had some health problems, too, which some of you are aware of. And he just has done a good job. And he passes it off a little too easily. But we were well served this past year, just as I’m sure we’re going to be well served in the coming year by Ralph Martone being the president. And as someone who’s going off the Board, I’d like to applaud Ralph and the Board. I think opening the working group meetings is the way to go. And I think that we all have a little trepidation maybe about how that’s going to work out. But I think ultimately it’s going to benefit all of us, including all those people and stakeholders who are interested in what we’re about and how we do business. So, I’m looking forward to again --- after I throw the paper down and stomp on it, I still read your articles. So, I look forward to you reporting on what happens.

MR. MARTONE:

Commissioner Delaney.
MR. DELANEY:

Yeah. I would like to thank Commissioner Weaner for his guidance this last year. Ron is a very humble guy, but he really has allowed the Commissioners to offer their commentary. At times when there was some disagreement, he found a way to blend it out. So, I am thankful for his year of leadership. And I’m really excited with the new leadership that is in place for next year.

And just to wrap up the final commentary that was mentioned last night by someone that Commissioner Isabella and Commissioner Boop really cancel each other out with their opinions, but I wholeheartedly disagree with that. I, as a Commissioner for the last several years, I think, have grown because of Commissioner Isabella and Commissioner Boop and what they both offered to me as a Commissioner. So they certainly don’t cancel out. I think they offered a lot of really --- they had a huge impact on our sport. They’re both very emotional in what they do. So, we have a tremendous loss as we lose Commissioner Isabella and Commissioner Boop. And I’m just thankful for their service to us and the sportsmen across the Commonwealth.

MR. MARTONE:
Any other comments? Okay. Now I think I can adjourn the meeting. Thank you. This meeting is adjourned.

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HEARING CONCLUDED AT 10:26 A.M.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings, meeting held before President Weaner, was reported by me on 01/24/2012 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