

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

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QUARTERLY MEETING

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BEFORE: ROBERT W. SCHLEMMER, President
David J. Putnam, Vice President
Brian H. Hoover, Secretary
James J. Delaney, Commissioner
Ronald A. Weaner, Commissioner
Ralph A. Martone, Commissioner
Charles E. Fox, Commissioner
Timothy S. Layton, Commissioner
R. Matthew Hough, Executive Director

HEARING: Tuesday, April 8, 2014
8:31 a.m.

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

WITNESSES: Calvin DuBrock, Rich Palmer, Michael
DiMatteo, Matt Lovallo

Reporter: Rhonda K. Thorpe
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CHAIR:

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to call the meeting to order. Stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE RECITED

CHAIR:

Secretary, call the roll, please?

SECRETARY HOOVER:

President Schlemmer?

CHAIR:

Present.

SECRETARY HOOVER:

Vice President Putnam?

VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Present.

SECRETARY HOOVER:

James Delaney?

COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

Present.

SECRETARY HOOVER:

Commissioner Weaner?

COMMISSIONER WEANER:

Present.

1 SECRETARY HOOVER:
2 Commissioner Martone?
3 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:
4 Present.
5 SECRETARY HOOVER:
6 Commissioner Fox?
7 COMMISSIONER FOX:
8 Present.
9 SECRETARY HOOVER:
10 Commissioner Layton?
11 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:
12 Present.
13 SECRETARY HOOVER:
14 Thank you. Everyone is present.
15 CHAIR:
16 Thank you. Is there a motion for
17 approval of minutes of January 28th?
18 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:
19 So moved.
20 COMMISSIONER FOX:
21 Second.
22 CHAIR:
23 Properly moved and seconded. Mr.
24 Secretary?
25 SECRETARY HOOVER:

1 The motion is rendered. All those in
2 favor, vote by saying aye.

3 ALL AYES

4 SECRETARY HOOVER:

5 All those opposed? The motion carries
6 unanimously.

7 CHAIR:

8 Go ahead, Mr. Palmer.

9 ATTORNEY RAUP:

10 Thank you, Mr. President. The first
11 item to come before the Commission today comes from
12 the Bureau of Wildlife Management. It concerns the
13 adoption of proposed amendments to Section 139.4. To
14 effectively manage the wildlife resources of this
15 Commonwealth, the Game Commission proposed at its
16 January 28th, 2014 meeting to amend Section 139.4,
17 relating to seasons and bag limits for the license
18 year, to provide updated seasons and bag limits for
19 the 2014-2015 hunting and trapping license year. The
20 text of these amendments are given on pages three
21 through ten of your agenda.

22 CHAIR:

23 Do I hear a motion?

24 SECRETARY HOOVER:

25 So moved.

1 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

2 Seconded.

3 CHAIR:

4 Duly moved and seconded. Discussion?

5 All right. I'm suggesting we just go a page at a
6 time.

7 ATTORNEY RAUP:

8 Page three provides seasons and bag
9 limits with respect --- at least, as indicated on page
10 three, the start of squirrel season, ruffed grouse,
11 rabbit and ring-necked pheasants

12 CHAIR:

13 Comments or discussion?

14 ATTORNEY RAUP:

15 Page four, you'll find seasons and bag
16 limits for ring-necked pheasants, bobwhite quail,
17 hares.

18 CHAIR:

19 Comments?

20 ATTORNEY RAUP:

21 On page five, you'll find seasons and
22 bag limits for porcupines, wild turkey.

23 CHAIR:

24 Comments?

25 ATTORNEY RAUP:

1 On page six, you'll find references to
2 migratory game bird seasons, as well as crows,
3 starlings, and falconry seasons for small game.

4 CHAIR:

5 Comments?

6 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

7 Mr. President?

8 CHAIR:

9 Mr. Weaner?

10 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

11 I move to amend by inserting this green
12 handout that we have here that's a replacement for
13 page six.

14 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

15 I'll second that motion.

16 CHAIR:

17 Properly moved and seconded. Mr.
18 Secretary?

19 SECRETARY HOOVER:

20 Mr. President, it's seconded.

21 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

22 Mr. President, I've got it here. The
23 replacement page six adds the Eurasian collared dove
24 to the migratory game bird list. And it states that
25 the season will be concurrent with mourning dove

1 season.

2 And this will count in the aggregated
3 daily limit for mourning doves. The reason for this
4 is, the Eurasian collared dove is starting to appear
5 in greater numbers here in Pennsylvania.

6 They're relatively indistinguishable
7 from a mourning dove, from a hunter's perspective.
8 They're not going to know whether they've got one
9 until after you've got the bird in hand, probably.
10 And so, it makes sense our staff has recommended it to
11 us. And we just included it in the daily limit.
12 Therefore, that's that reason for the amendment.

13 CHAIR:

14 Thank you. Any further discussion? Mr.
15 Secretary?

16 SECRETARY HOOVER:

17 There's a motion on the floor. All
18 those in favor, signify by saying aye.

19 ALL AYES

20 SECRETARY HOOVER:

21 Opposed? No? The motion carries.

22 ATTORNEY RAUP:

23 Page seven, we will see the start of the
24 seasons and bag limits for white-tailed deer.

25 CHAIR:

1 Comments?

2 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

3 Yeah, Mr. President, I would like to
4 propose an amendment to page seven. So I'm going to
5 move 4A. And I can move it from concurrent to split.

6 CHAIR:

7 So again, it'll be 4A, concurrent split?
8 Do I hear a second?

9 SECRETARY HOOVER:

10 Second.

11 CHAIR:

12 Mr. Secretary?

13 SECRETARY HOOVER:

14 I'd also like to amend that motion to
15 add 4C to the motion, to move 4C to --- from
16 concurrent to split.

17 CHAIR:

18 4C? Do I hear a second on that?

19 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

20 Seconded.

21 CHAIR:

22 Second.

23 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

24 May I have a word, Mr. President?

25 CHAIR:

1 Mr. Weaner.

2 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

3 Are we amending the amendment, or what
4 are we doing here? We had an amendment on the floor.
5 And is there another amendment, or an amendment to his
6 amendment?

7 SECRETARY HOOVER:

8 I moved to him to add both, to add to
9 it.

10 CHAIR:

11 That's an add-on.

12 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIR:

15 Mr. Secretary?

16 SECRETARY HOOVER:

17 There's a motion on the floor. All
18 those in favor, signify by saying aye.

19 ALL AYES

20 SECRETARY HOOVER:

21 Opposed? The motion carries.

22 ATTORNEY RAUP:

23 On page eight, you'll see a
24 continuation ---.

25 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

1 May I have a word, Mr. President?

2 CHAIR:

3 Yes?

4 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

5 If his amendment amended his amendment,
6 we now have an amended amendment. And it must be
7 voted on.

8 CHAIR:

9 Okay. We'll take the vote. We'll take
10 a second vote on that. Mr. Secretary?

11 SECRETARY HOOVER:

12 The question was, is there a second
13 amendment. We will vote on the second amendment. All
14 those in favor, signify by saying aye.

15 ALL AYES

16 SECRETARY HOOVER:

17 Opposed? Unanimously carried.

18 ATTORNEY RAUP:

19 Then, on page eight, you will see the
20 final seasons and bag limits for white tailed deer.
21 You'll also see seasons and bag limits for bear.

22 CHAIR:

23 Comments?

24 ATTORNEY RAUP:

25 On page 9, you will see seasons and bag

1 limits for elk, as well as our fur taking and trapping
2 season for various animals.

3 CHAIR:

4 Comments?

5 ATTORNEY RAUP:

6 On page ten, you will see a continuation
7 of our fur bearer hunting and tracking seasons for
8 coyotes, possums, raccoons, bobcat. Our final
9 section.

10 CHAIR:

11 Any comments? Mr. Secretary?

12 SECRETARY HOOVER:

13 There's a motion on the floor to set the
14 seasons and the bag limits as approved. All those in
15 favor, signify by saying aye.

16 ALL AYES

17 SECRETARY HOOVER:

18 Opposed? The motion carries.

19 ATTORNEY RAUP:

20 The next item to come before the
21 Commission concerns the option of proposed amendments
22 to Section 141.47. To effectively manage the wildlife
23 resources of this Commonwealth, the Game Commission
24 proposed at its January 28th, 2014 meeting to amend
25 Section 141.47 to eliminate the 555 corridor safety

1 zone. The text of this amendment is shown on page 12
2 on your agenda.

3 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

4 So moved.

5 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

6 Seconded.

7 CHAIR:

8 Discussion?

9 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

10 Yes, Mr. President. I would ask
11 Director DuBrock to just offer some commentary,
12 basically, on why we're going to vote to support this
13 or not support it. There's got to be some history, I
14 think. The supporters will need to hear about before
15 we make a rebuttal.

16 DIRECTOR DUBROCK:

17 In January, when we proposed this, the
18 commentary directed that this corridor was established
19 when there was problems with road hunting and killing
20 of highly visible elk from public property and in
21 public places close to 555. Or the 555 corridor. In
22 consultation with the region and their officers there,
23 they feel that this designated safety zone, the issues
24 surrounding that have been a risk is no longer there
25 and that their corridor is no longer needed, and a

1 removal rollout harvests down animals that desperately
2 need to be harvested in the area.

3 And so, we spoke both for the
4 recommendation for the region as well as the Bureau
5 that this safety zone.

6 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

7 Thank you for your commentary.

8 CHAIR:

9 Further discussion? Mr. Secretary?

10 SECRETARY HOOVER:

11 There's a motion on the floor. All
12 those in favor, signify by saying aye.

13 ALL AYES

14 SECRETARY HOOVER:

15 Opposed? The motion carries.

16 ATTORNEY RAUP:

17 The next item coming before the
18 Commission is a proposed ruling to amend 58 Pa. Code
19 Section 133.6. Native to Europe and Asia, the
20 Eurasian collared doves were first introduced to the
21 Bahamas in the 1970s, made their way to Florida by the
22 1980s, and then rapidly colonized most of North
23 America.

24 The first PA collared dove sighting
25 occurred in 1996, with the first PA breeding

1 population established in 2004. The second PA
2 Breeding Bird Atlas, 2004 through 2008, found possible
3 breeding populations in 15 survey blocks within 8
4 counties.

5 Studies on the interactions between
6 collared doves and other species have not yet showed a
7 negative impact on populations of native birds,
8 including mourning doves. Though, this information is
9 preliminary and based --- largely based on species
10 interactions in milder climates where competition for
11 feeding and nesting resources may not be as strong.

12 As an introduced invasive species,
13 Eurasian collared doves are not protected under the
14 Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. However, they are
15 not designated as a game bird in Pennsylvania and must
16 be classified as a game bird in order to create a
17 hunting season concurrent with mourning doves.

18 Since Eurasian collared doves are
19 difficult to distinguish from mourning doves in the
20 field, a hunter inadvertently taking a collared dove
21 would be in violation of state law. Conversely,
22 designating collared doves as exotic species with year
23 round take could lead to mistaken mourning dove kills.

24 This situation would be remedied by
25 classifying Eurasian collared doves as a game bird,

1 with hunting seasons concurrent with morning doves and
2 part of a aggregate daily bag and possession limits.
3 We believe this can be best accomplished by listing
4 Eurasian collared-dove as a game bird and counting
5 their take as part of the aggregate dove bag.

6 The proposed classification listing can
7 be accomplished by amending 58 Pa. Code Section 133.6
8 as outlined below. The text of this amendment is
9 shown page 13 of your agenda, commentary.

10 CHAIR:

11 Motion?

12 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

13 So moved.

14 CHAIR:

15 Second?

16 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

17 Second.

18 CHAIR:

19 Properly moved and seconded.

20 Discussion?

21 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

22 Mr. President?

23 CHAIR:

24 Mr. Weaner?

25 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

1 On the surface this, maybe, appears ---
2 it may appear something like, didn't we just do that?
3 And we had to amend the section of the seasons and bag
4 limits and do this both to accomplish this proposal.
5 So we're not doing it any differently than we probably
6 just did. It's just --- this makes it all legal. So
7 therefore, everything's in here.

8 CHAIR:

9 Thank you, Commissioner. Further
10 discussion? Mr. Secretary?

11 SECRETARY HOOVER:

12 There's a motion on the floor. All
13 those in favor, signify by saying aye.

14 ALL AYES

15 SECRETARY HOOVER:

16 Opposed? The motion carries
17 unanimously.

18 ATTORNEY RAUP:

19 The next item to come before the
20 Commission comes from the Bureau of Wildlife
21 Protection concerning the adoption of proposed
22 amendments to Sections 131.2, 141.43, 141.44, 141.45,
23 and 141.47.

24 To effectively manage the wildlife
25 resources of this Commonwealth, the Game Commission

1 proposed at its January 28th, 2014 meeting to amend
2 Sections 131.2, 141.43, 141.44, 141.45 and 141.47 to
3 lengthen the broadhead length limitation from 3 inches
4 to 3.25 inches. The text of these amendments is shown
5 on pages 15 through 17 of your agenda.

6 CHAIR:

7 Do I hear a motion?

8 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

9 So moved.

10 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

11 Seconded.

12 CHAIR:

13 Properly moved and seconded. Is there
14 discussion? Commissioner Martone?

15 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

16 Yeah. I'd like to point out that this
17 was in response to almost just one single traditional
18 archer's request. And you can see how many sections
19 it applies to and the depth of the request. It shows
20 that we have been responsive to requests.

21 We did listen to this. I think
22 Commissioner Delaney brought it up originally. It had
23 took a little while to get through the system. But
24 again, it shows that we're paying attention. I just
25 wanted to point that out. Thank you.

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CHAIR:

Thank you, Commissioner. Further discussion? Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY HOOVER:

There's a motion on the floor, duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

ALL AYES

SECRETARY HOOVER:

Opposed? The motion carries unanimously.

ATTORNEY RAUP:

So the next item that comes before the Commission concerns the adoption of a proposed amendment to Chapter 147, Subchapter X. To effectively manage the wildlife resources of this Commonwealth, the Game Commission proposed at its January 28th, 2014 meeting to amend Chapter 147, Subchapter X, relating to the mentored youth hunting program, to create and implement a Mentored Adult Hunting Program in Pennsylvania.

This program will maintain the mentor-based structure of the Mentored Youth Hunting Program, but will have different species allowances, costs, and safety features. Adult participants will now be able to apply for and receive the Mentored Adult Hunting

1 Permit through the PALS licensing system at any time
2 that Commissioners ---.

3 Excuse me, the Commission's issuing
4 agent locations across the Commonwealth prior to
5 participating in the program. Permit application will
6 require participants to supply the required
7 identification information and pay a fee of \$19 for
8 residents and \$100 for non-residents, plus any
9 applicable transactional and issuing agent fees. The
10 text of these amendments is shown on pages 19 through
11 22 of your agenda.

12 CHAIR:

13 Do I hear a motion, gentlemen?

14 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

15 So moved.

16 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

17 Second.

18 CHAIR:

19 Properly moved and seconded.

20 Discussion? Hearing none. Mr. Secretary?

21 SECRETARY HOOVER:

22 There's a motion on the floor, and duly
23 seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

24 ALL AYES

25 SECRETARY HOOVER:

1 Opposed? The motion carries.

2 ATTORNEY RAUP:

3 The next item to come before the
4 Commission concerns the adoption of proposed
5 amendments to Sections 141.4. To effectively manage
6 the wildlife resources of this Commonwealth, the
7 Pennsylvania Game Commission proposed at its January
8 28th, 2014 meeting to amend Section 141.4, relating to
9 hunting hours, to replace the current hunting hours
10 table and migratory bird hunting hours table to
11 accurately reflect the dates and hours of legal
12 hunting for the 2014-2015 hunting license year. The
13 text of these amendments is shown on pages 24 through
14 26 of your agenda.

15 CHAIR:

16 Do I hear a motion for a hunting hours
17 table?

18 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

19 So moved.

20 CHAIR:

21 Commissioner Weaner?

22 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

23 Seconded.

24 CHAIR:

25 Properly moved and seconded. Mr.

1 Secretary?

2 SECRETARY HOOVER:

3 What about discussion?

4 CHAIR:

5 Any discussion on that file? I know
6 some of us use that for a file there, and I think it's
7 time ---. Mr. Secretary?

8 SECRETARY HOOVER:

9 The motion on the floor is duly
10 seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

11 ALL AYES

12 SECRETARY HOOVER:

13 Opposed? The motion carries.

14 ATTORNEY RAUP:

15 The next item to come before the
16 Commission concerns adoption of proposed amendments to
17 Section 141.62. To effectively manage the wildlife
18 resources of this Commonwealth, the Game Commission
19 proposed at its January 28th, 2014 meeting to amend
20 Section 141.62, relating to beaver trapping, to expand
21 the trap authorization to 10 inches in height to 12
22 inches in width, and additionally require a single
23 offset trigger positioned in parallel not more than 1
24 and a half inches from either vertical section of the
25 trap.

1 CHAIR:

2 Do I hear a motion?

3 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

4 So moved.

5 CHAIR:

6 Second?

7 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

8 Seconded.

9 CHAIR:

10 There'll be some discussion on this,
11 gentlemen. Commissioner Martone?

12 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

13 President Schlemmer, I'd like to propose
14 an amendment on page 28 Section 3, where it says, set
15 body gripping traps larger than 10 inches in height by
16 12 inches in width. I'd like to place a period after
17 the word width and strike the remaining clause that
18 designates the position for an offset trigger.

19 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

20 Seconded.

21 CHAIR:

22 Discussion? Commissioner Putnam?

23 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

24 I thought we had to have a discussion on
25 that. Do we have a trap that we can demonstrate what

1 we're talking about here? Oh, we have that.

2 CHAIR:

3 You brought it. Bring it up.

4 MR. LOVALLO:

5 You want it up at the table?

6 CHAIR:

7 Yes.

8 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

9 Take that safety device off and get it
10 up here.

11 MR. LOVALLO:

12 Did you want it up at the table?

13 CHAIR:

14 Actually, why don't you do it right
15 there, in front of the committee.

16 MR. LOVALLO:

17 Okay.

18 CHAIR:

19 Do it like that.

20 MR. LOVALLO:

21 Would you like comments from me?

22 CHAIR:

23 Yes.

24 MR. LOVALLO:

25 Okay.

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CHAIR:

I believe, yes.

VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

We want you tell us about this.

MR. LOVALLO:

Well, I think the regulation as originally drafted has two components. One deals with the actual size of the trap. When the original regulation was drafted, most standard beaver traps, standard 330 sized traps, were 10 by 10 inches.

They were square. Over the years, due to various manufacturers on the market, they've changed a little bit. And most of the commonly used traps are actually 11 inches wide by 9 inches in height. So the trap window, in terms of the square inches, is still the same. It's just, the configuration has changed. The other area or component in the regulation deals with the offsetting of a trigger.

That is, the center triggering device can be moved anywhere across the trap jaw. This regulation, as originally written, would require that it be set to the side, within an inch and a half of the side of the trap. And that gives you the measure of selectivity. For example, in New York State, in

1 areas where they have ongoing otter restoration
2 efforts, they have that in regulation. It's not
3 statewide. It's only in areas where they're seeking
4 to protect every otter they can in the restoration
5 effort.

6 Studies have shown that if you put this
7 trigger to the side, many otter will make it through
8 the trap without firing it. But what we've also seen
9 is that many small beaver can make it through the trap
10 without firing it, as well. So it's really selective
11 towards the size of the animal, more so than the
12 species of animal encountering the trap. And so,
13 that's an issue in terms of the effectiveness or
14 efficiency of the trap for beaver trappers,
15 particularly in recent situations where they're trying
16 to take every beaver within a column.

17 The other issue where this becomes an
18 issue of concern is that it alters the strike location
19 of the trap on the animal itself. Studies of trap
20 modeling in Canada have demonstrated that, in this
21 situation, the animal will actually go through the
22 trap further, resulting in a strike location further
23 along the back of a beaver or an otter.

24 And that's less efficient in terms of
25 dispatching the animal. The desired strike location

1 is right behind the neck in the first couple of
2 vertebrae. And so, those are two issues that weigh on
3 whether we would want to go with that type of
4 offsetting.

5 Behind all of that is the fact that,
6 despite expanding and increasing otter populations, we
7 really haven't seen a significant increase in terms of
8 the number of incidental otters taken by beaver
9 trappers each year. It ranges between 30 and 40 a
10 year across the Commonwealth. I think that we haven't
11 seen that increase too largely due to the fact that we
12 have regulations in place that limit the placement of
13 these traps on dams or lodges, where otters are likely
14 to encounter them and be caught.

15 I think that regulation alone,
16 restricting the distance a trap can be set within
17 those features, does more to protect otters in the
18 state than this type of trigger configuration that's
19 before us.

20 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

21 So would you hold that over the trap so
22 we can see it now? We had a comment today that it was
23 difficult, because of the design of the hump on the
24 edge of the trap, to get that within one and a half
25 inches of the outside edge.

1 MR. LOVALLO:

2 Well, it would be in its entirety. It'd
3 be close, yeah. Yeah.

4 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

5 And that's what we're talking about,
6 closeness.

7 MR. LOVALLO:

8 Yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

10 The other thing is, a beaver trapper
11 that is worried about otters can still offset?

12 MR. LOVALLO:

13 That's right.

14 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

15 If we eliminate that clause, he still
16 has the ability to make that choice?

17 MR. LOVALLO:

18 That's right. And we encourage that in
19 our digest. We have a picture of that and a
20 recommendation that, if you're likely to encounter an
21 otter, to do that. And as well, we know that many
22 beaver trappers who trap beaver in areas of the state
23 with restrictive bag limits where they can take
24 relatively few beaver, they're using this method to
25 take the larger beaver as a selectivity measure.

1 So it is being used. Whether we go down
2 the road of regulation, this is up to you guys.

3 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

4 Now one more question, then, would be,
5 if we implement that today and next year we have an
6 otter season, you're not going to want to use that
7 trigger configuration if you're targeting otters?

8 MR. LOVALLO:

9 You would not use that trigger
10 configuration for targeting otters.

11 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

12 You would have to provide ---.

13 MR. LOVALLO:

14 That would be correct.

15 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

16 So are you recommending to me the
17 flexibility to put the trigger wherever they want to?

18 MR. LOVALLO:

19 Yeah. I think in terms of the
20 efficiency of beaver trappers, that would be our
21 recommendation based only on that. But I understand
22 the intent. And I think expanding the trap window to
23 make all the 330 designs consistent with our
24 regulation is certainly a beneficial move. And we
25 thank Wildlife Protection for addressing that.

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VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

Thank you. That's all I have.

CHAIR:

Further discussion?

COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

Mr. President? Just a couple of comments here. Unfortunately, for those that are viewing this through the Live stream today, they missed a really good discussion yesterday with the President of the Pennsylvania Trapper's Association.

Quite frankly, personally, I haven't been happy, how this policy has been proposed to us. We see language here. And then, we hear our staff tell us, well, maybe we weren't right with how we set this up. But with that said, we heard from Brian Mohn yesterday from the Pennsylvania Trapper's Association. He had said to us, new trappers still are unaware of this policy change that we're proposing here.

I guess I understand. And Commissioner Martone, I think, brought to the Board's attention to the Board with regard to the trigger mechanism. And I support that. And I understand that, that we need to remove that from this.

But I'm still concerned --- and the President of the Trapper's Association said yesterday,

1 most of them still are unaware of this. This had
2 caught them off guard a bit. So I think there's a
3 whole lot more trappers out there that --- they may
4 want to weigh in on this.

5 With that said, there's two things I'd
6 like to see it accomplish. Number one, let the
7 trappers keep trapping the beavers that want to trap
8 the beavers and dispatch them appropriately. But
9 secondly, if the Board is looking to have a river
10 otter season, which is possibly next year, to make
11 sure we don't make a cumbersome policy today that we
12 have to reverse next year. So that's my commentary
13 prior to the vote.

14 CHAIR:

15 Further discussion? Hearing none, we'll
16 vote on the amendment. Mr. Secretary?

17 SECRETARY HOOVER:

18 There's a motion on the floor and duly
19 seconded to remove the second portion of the sentence
20 reading body gripping traps larger than 10 in height
21 by 12 inches in width. All those in favor, signify by
22 saying aye.

23 ALL AYES

24 SECRETARY HOOVER:

25 Opposed? The motion carries

1 unanimously.

2 CHAIR:

3 Mr. Secretary, now we'll vote on the
4 original.

5 SECRETARY HOOVER:

6 The original motion is the same motion.
7 So we'll amend it as a mandate. So we have a motion
8 and second and the amendment. So all those in favor,
9 signify by saying aye.

10 ALL AYES

11 SECRETARY HOOVER:

12 Opposed? The motion carries
13 unanimously.

14 ATTORNEY RAUP:

15 The next item to come before the
16 Commission concerns the adoption of proposed
17 amendments to Sections 141 and the creation of
18 Sections 147.681 through 147.687.

19 To effectively manage the wildlife
20 resource of this Commonwealth, the Game Commission
21 proposed at the January 28th, 2014 meeting to amend
22 Section 141 and create Sections 147.681 through
23 147.687 relating to special regulations areas,
24 purpose, permit eligibility and use, operation,
25 records and reports, suspension of baiting sites,

1 violations, and sunset clause, to implement a deer a
2 deer attractant permit to authorize limited baiting
3 activities on private properties in the southeast
4 special regulations area. The text of the amendment
5 is shown on pages 30 through 30 in your agenda.

6 CHAIR:

7 Is there a motion on the floor?

8 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

9 So moved.

10 CHAIR:

11 Second?

12 SECRETARY HOOVER:

13 Seconded.

14 CHAIR:

15 So moved and seconded. Any discussion?

16 Commissioner Hoover?

17 SECRETARY HOOVER:

18 I just want to point out that one of the
19 reasons that we proceeded with this regulation is to
20 enhance the opportunity for the hunters hunting in the
21 special regulations area, where it's very difficult to
22 get deer into range and into the properties where you
23 have actual permission to hunt.

24 Portions of this regulation also have to
25 deal with feeding and the position of --- and

1 positioning and use of bait. And hopefully, we will
2 get everybody to understand that this is a good
3 regulation. And if utilizing bait in the proper
4 method will enhance their success rate in a very
5 crowded area. And I appreciate everyone's support.

6 CHAIR:

7 Further discussion? Commissioner
8 Martone?

9 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

10 I want to point out one thing in this.
11 Well, make a comment. This applies only to the
12 southeast special regulation area. The other thing
13 is, Director Palmer, if you would explain? How does
14 this apply to other species besides deer? Is there
15 --- there would be concerns or cautions for hunters as
16 far as other species?

17 DIRECTOR PALMER:

18 Yes. Mr. Martone, the statutory
19 authorization, the original statutory authorization
20 utilize bait in the southeast region applies only to
21 deer. No other species are accepted. So the
22 prohibition on baiting, which is within the statute,
23 still applies to all other species.

24 So those areas that are baited, if
25 there's an overlap with the seasons, other species

1 would be prohibited to be hunted there.

2 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIR:

5 Further discussion? Mr. Secretary?

6 SECRETARY HOOVER:

7 The motion on the floor has been duly
8 seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

9 ALL AYES

10 SECRETARY HOOVER:

11 Opposed? The motion carries.

12 CHAIR:

13 Thank you.

14 ATTORNEY RAUP:

15 The next item to come before the
16 Commission comes from the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat
17 Management. It concerns the authorization of a
18 restricted surface oil and gas cooperative agreement
19 on Tract 164A-14 on State Game Land Number 164 in
20 Butler County.

21 XTO Energy of Fort Worth, Texas
22 requested the Commission offer its oil and gas rights
23 under State Game Land Number 164 for non-surface use
24 development. The proposed tract, containing
25 approximately 455.97 acres, is located in Donegal

1 Township, Butler County, as shown on Exhibit OGM 1 on
2 page 35.

3 XTO has a strong privately owned oil and
4 gas lease position surrounding State Game Land Number
5 164, has initiated an unconventional well drilling and
6 development programs in the vicinity of the proposed
7 tract, and has the ability to unitize and develop the
8 Commission's oil and gas reserve by horizontal
9 drilling with no surface use or disturbance to the
10 Game Land.

11 The Staff has negotiated the proposed
12 terms with the --- of the agreement with XTO in an
13 effort to safeguard the prudent development of the
14 Commission's oil and gas reserve and simultaneously
15 protect the wildlife resources and recreational use of
16 State Game Land 164.

17 The terms of the agreement are a five
18 year paid up non-surface use oil and gas agreement, a
19 \$2,000 per acre bonus, and a 20 percent royalty for
20 all oil and gas and other liquids or condensates
21 produced and sold from the proposed tract.

22 The approximately \$911,940 bonus may be
23 deposited into either the Game Fund or an interest-
24 bearing escrow account to be used for the future
25 purchase of wildlife habitats, lands, or other uses

1 incidental to hunting, fur taking, and wildlife
2 resource management.

3 Future rentals and royalties owed to the
4 Commission shall be directly deposited into the Game
5 Fund. Oil and gas development will be regulated by
6 the Commonwealth's oil and gas regulations and the
7 Commission's Restricted Surface Use Oil and Gas
8 Cooperative Agreement.

9 CHAIR:

10 Thank you, Commissioner. Is there a
11 motion?

12 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

13 So moved.

14 CHAIR:

15 Second?

16 SECRETARY HOOVER:

17 Seconded.

18 CHAIR:

19 Discussion? Questions? Commissioner
20 Putnam?

21 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

22 Michael, does this involve any on-site
23 disturbance?

24 MR. DIMATTEO:

25 There will be no disturbances to the

1 Game Land property. That's the purpose of the
2 adjoining property and property distance, who are
3 already permitted.

4 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

5 Okay. And while we have you there,
6 could you recap for us our drillers program? How many
7 wells do we have? And how many acres of surface?
8 You've been very aggressive in keeping the --- all the
9 drilling activities off our properties if that's
10 possible?

11 MR. DIMATTEO:

12 It's in accordance, in 2010, I believe,
13 the Board of Commissioners directed us to minimize
14 surface disturbance. The surface began by using non-
15 surface use drilling. Right now, through the whole
16 Marcellus shale, we've got about 625 acres of surface
17 for our Marcellus well path, both on State Land and
18 owned leases and private deep well leases across the
19 interested property line. I believe there's about 300
20 wells on Game Lands property right now.

21 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

22 Of those, how many of them are ones that
23 we negotiated and how many are on the property where
24 we did not own the gas rights?

25 MR. DIMATTEO:

1 I think there's about 75 wells that are
2 on the Game Commission's property, on our gas leases
3 that we have. And I can solidify that this afternoon,
4 when I go check our database. I don't want to give
5 you fat books. And I don't know the exact number off
6 the top of my head.

7 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

8 It's pretty close?

9 MR. DIMATTEO:

10 It's pretty close.

11 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIR:

14 Further discussion? Hearing none, Mr.
15 Secretary?

16 SECRETARY HOOVER:

17 There is a motion on the floor that is
18 duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying
19 aye.

20 ALL AYES

21 SECRETARY HOOVER:

22 Opposed? The motion carries
23 unanimously.

24 ATTORNEY RAUP:

25 The next item to come before the

1 Commission concerns the authorization of a Restricted
2 Surface Oil and Gas Cooperative Agreement Amendment on
3 Tract 35A-13, State Game Land Number 35, Susquehanna
4 County.

5 Southwestern Energy Production Company
6 of Houston, Texas has requested to amend an existing
7 Commission approved Restricted Surface Use Oil and Gas
8 Cooperative Agreement for Tract 35A-13 in Great Bend
9 and New Milford Townships, Susquehanna County.

10 The proposed amendment consists of
11 adding an additional 1821.8 acres in Great Bend,
12 Jackson, and Oakland Townships, Susquehanna County,
13 for non-surface use, as shown on Exhibit OGM 2 on page
14 37.

15 SWN has a strong privately owned oil and
16 gas lease position surrounding the proposed amendment
17 area, has initiated an unconventional well drilling
18 and development program in the vicinity of the
19 proposed tract, and has the ability to unitize and
20 develop the Commission's oil and gas reserve with no
21 surface use or disturbance.

22 The terms of the amendment are
23 consistent with the existing agreement, approved by
24 the Commission on June 2013. SWN has agreed to pay
25 the Commission a bonus of \$3,000 per acre and a 20

1 percent royal for all oil and gas and other liquids or
2 concentrates produced and sold from the proposed
3 tract.

4 The \$2,483,145.60 bonus may be deposited
5 into either the Game Fund or an interest-bearing
6 escrow account to be used for future purchase of
7 wildlife habitat, lands or other uses incidental to
8 hunting, fur taking and wildlife resource management.

9 Future rentals and royalties owed to the
10 Commission shall be directly deposited into the Game
11 Fund. Oil and gas development will be regulated by
12 the Commonwealth's oil and gas regulations and the
13 Commission's Restricted Surface Use Oil and Gas
14 Cooperative Agreement.

15 CHAIR:

16 Do I hear a motion?

17 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

18 So moved.

19 CHAIR:

20 Commissioner Martone?

21 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

22 Seconded.

23 CHAIR:

24 Mr. Weaner? Discussion? Hearing none,
25 Mr. Secretary?

1 SECRETARY HOOVER:

2 There's a motion on the floor that's
3 been duly seconded. All those in favor signify by
4 saying aye.

5 ALL AYES

6 SECRETARY HOOVER:

7 Opposed? The motion carries.

8 CHAIR:

9 Moving to the final page here on Page
10 38, I would like to move that we accept the Bobcat
11 Management Plan and the other management plan.

12 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

13 So moved.

14 CHAIR:

15 Second on that?

16 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

17 Second.

18 CHAIR:

19 Discussion? Mr. Putnam?

20 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

21 Okay. I always have a few words to say.
22 I think we have two plans here that we're voting on
23 the final document. Both of them are excellent plans.
24 And they're available to anybody that would like to
25 see them on our website.

1 I would encourage anybody that is
2 interested to take a look at them. And I think
3 overall, we've got a very minimal record of developing
4 wildlife planning in the State of Pennsylvania.

5 CHAIR:

6 Mr. Secretary?

7 SECRETARY HOOVER:

8 There's a motion on the floor that's
9 been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by
10 saying aye?

11 ALL AYES

12 SECRETARY HOOVER:

13 Opposed? The motion carries.

14 CHAIR:

15 The next item of business is elk
16 allocation. And I believe it's 108, 27 bulls, the
17 remaining cows. And I'd like to make a motion to
18 accept the elk allocation.

19 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

20 Mr. President, I move that we accept the
21 elk allocation that's been recommended to us by our
22 staff.

23 CHAIR:

24 Second?

25 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

1 Second.

2 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

3 You make the move.

4 OFF RECORD DISCUSSION

5 CHAIR:

6 Discussion?

7 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

8 Mr. President? Again, for people
9 watching on our live broadcast, there's not a lot of
10 discussion here. But there is plenty of information
11 on our website as how we arrived at these allocations.
12 Some of these allocations were based on complaints
13 that we received from local residents in the elk area.

14 The staff has redrawn some of the elk
15 boundaries to accommodate harvesting more elk in the
16 target areas. Again, all the information is available
17 on our website. And there's a discussion on our prior
18 broadcast about what we would need and our discussion
19 yesterday.

20 CHAIR:

21 Thank you. Okay. Mr. Secretary?

22 SECRETARY HOOVER:

23 There's a motion on the floor. It was
24 duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying
25 aye.

1 ALL AYES

2 SECRETARY HOOVER:

3 Opposed? The motion carries
4 unanimously.

5 CHAIR:

6 The next item of business is the
7 antlerless deer allocations, how we're going to handle
8 this, this year. The Secretary will call out the
9 unit. And the Commissioner who is responsible for the
10 areas will insert his recommendations. So at this
11 time, I would turn it over to Secretary Hoover.

12 SECRETARY HOOVER:

13 So we're going to go down every WMU. I
14 will ask the Commissioner to register their number of
15 allocations of does I'll record this. And in the end,
16 we will vote on the entire unit. Unit 1-A
17 Commissioner Martone?

18 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

19 On the Wildlife Management Unit 1-A,
20 last year, we issued 49,000. There was a
21 recommendation this year for 52,000. However, I
22 believe that area is a forested habitat, and
23 regeneration is good enough to support a slight
24 increase in the deer herd.

25 So I'm proposing in this unit, which is

1 a 12 day concurrent season, I'm proposing a number of
2 47,000.

3 SECRETARY HOOVER:

4 1-B, Mr. Martone. Commissioner Martone?

5 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

6 Thank you. Again, last year's number
7 was 31,000. The recommendation was 32,000. And we're
8 hearing a lot of interest in this area. And I'm going
9 to ask for 30,000 in this unit, which is 12 day
10 concurrent.

11 SECRETARY HOOVER:

12 Commissioner Schlemmer, 2-A?

13 CHAIR:

14 2-A, recommendation of 54. I'm getting
15 a lot of comments from boots on the ground that would
16 like to see a herd increase in this area. I'm
17 recommending 46,000.

18 SECRETARY HOOVER:

19 Commissioner Schlemmer, 2-B.

20 CHAIR:

21 We're going to hold pretty close to last
22 year on 2-B's special regs area. I'm recommending
23 60,000.

24 SECRETARY HOOVER:

25 2-C is Commissioner Schlemmer and

1 Commissioner Layton.

2 CHAIR:

3 I'll yield to Commissioner Layton.

4 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

5 Mr. President, last year, there was a
6 43,000 permits issue. The recommendation for this
7 year is 50,000. However, the WCOs that I've talked to
8 in that area have expressed some concern about the
9 size of the deer herd. So I'm going to recommend
10 38,000 for this year's applications.

11 CHAIR:

12 I'll concur on that.

13 SECRETARY HOOVER:

14 On 2-D is Commissioner Schlemmer and
15 Commissioner Martone.

16 CHAIR:

17 I'm recommending in that particular area
18 59,000. Commissioner Martone?

19 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

20 I'd like to negotiate that. The last
21 year was 61,000. This is one of the WMUs that's the
22 fastest-growing deer herd. There are a lot of deer
23 beyond the landscape there. The recommendation was
24 69,000. I would ask you to consider staying with last
25 year's 61,000.

1 CHAIR:
2 65.
3 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:
4 For last year's 61,000.
5 CHAIR:
6 What's that?
7 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:
8 61,000's last year.
9 CHAIR:
10 61,000? For this year?
11 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:
12 You were at 59.
13 CHAIR:
14 Then I'll go for 65.
15 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:
16 We're about there. I'm game.
17 CHAIR:
18 I'll go with your recommendation.
19 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:
20 61? Thank you. I appreciate your
21 cooperation.
22 SECRETARY HOOVER:
23 2-E, Commissioner Layton and
24 Commissioner Putnam. Mr. Putnam, that's you.
25 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

1 Last year's allocation was 22,000. The
2 current recommendation is 23,000. My recommendation
3 is 21,000.

4 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

5 I concur.

6 SECRETARY HOOVER:

7 2-F, Commissioner Martone and
8 Commissioner Putnam?

9 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

10 2-F is a seven day split season. Last
11 year, we had 29,000. There's a recommendation of
12 30,000. I did here from quite a few people including
13 Senator Scarnati to that herd from a lot of its
14 constituents. And I'm going to recommend 27,000 into
15 that.

16 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

17 I concur with that.

18 SECRETARY HOOVER:

19 2-G, Commissioner Putnam?

20 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

21 2-G, the elephant in the closet.

22 Actually, it's the elephant in the room. 2-G was our
23 largest --- or still is one of our largest wildlife
24 management units. We took out, a year ago, about
25 1,000 square miles of 2-G, which I think, in my

1 opinion, we've gone that far in the habitat of 2-G.

2 We allocated 28,000 last year. The
3 staff recommendation this year is 24,000, which is
4 significant in that it's 4,000 less than last year,
5 which would indicate that the staff could accept a
6 rise in the population, a modest rise in the
7 population of 2-G.

8 We get a lot of comments about 2-G,
9 mostly from Allegheny County in the southwest part of
10 the state. I get some comments from 2-G from local
11 people. And we have comments from our PGC comment
12 line.

13 In the last three months, we received a
14 comment from McKean County that said the deer were too
15 low, a single comment. We received several other in
16 that range. Cameron County had comments regarding ---
17 I guess it was three comments that came in regarding
18 Cameron County.

19 We're not getting a lot of comments from
20 the local people who say we need more deer in 2-G.
21 I'm born and raised in 2-G. I'm quite familiar with
22 2-G. I have a camp there. And I will tell you,
23 there's parts of 2-G that don't have a lot of deer.
24 There's other parts of 2-G that are doing very well.

25 So with all that being said, the

1 recommendation is 24,000. My recommendation is
2 22,000. We have one other Commissioner, Mr. Vacca
3 (phonetic), that does part of that.

4 SECRETARY HOOVER:

5 2-H, Commissioner Putnam.

6 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

7 Okay. 2-H, that's here. Yeah. 2-H is
8 about a mile to two square miles. It has a lot of
9 active forest management going on in there. It also
10 has a lot of D map, as does 2-G. And so, any
11 reduction 2-G or 2-H --- and 2-F, also --- we have a
12 --- that's our most active D map program in the state.

13 And my philosophy with these is that any
14 cuts in the unit allocation hopefully are our
15 cooperators can make up with that with the D map
16 program. So 2-H, the recommendation for 2-H, which
17 has a relatively low population compared to the
18 surrounding units, is 5,500.

19 SECRETARY HOOVER:

20 Commissioner Putnam and Commissioner
21 Fox, 3-A.

22 COMMISSIONER FOX:

23 3-A is an area that area above the New
24 York State border. I think we're looking at 18,000.

25 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

1 Yeah. I'll concur with that. And in
2 last year, 3-A had an allocation of 23,000 permits.
3 Staff recommended a decrease in the number of permits,
4 which means the staff is recommending an increase in
5 the deer population in 3-A.

6 And they recommended a decrease of 4,000
7 permits. And Mr. Fox's recommendation's a decrease of
8 5,000 permits. So I concur with that.

9 SECRETARY HOOVER:

10 3-D, Commissioner Fox and Commissioner
11 Delaney.

12 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

13 On my end, I'm going to recommend 33,000
14 compared to last year's allocation of 39,000. WMU
15 3-B, it probably has the second best forest health in
16 the entire state. The deer health is good. The deer
17 per square mile has dropped by four deer per square
18 mile from the previous year.

19 Our fawn to doe ratio is the same. With
20 my recommendation, it will certainly increase the herd
21 slightly. Of four WMUs that I had over eastern
22 Pennsylvania, this is one that I received most
23 complaints about.

24 And it's a very diverse WMU.
25 Commissioner Fox's area is quite different than the

1 area of 3-D that I serve. It's mostly State Game Land
2 and public lands.

3 SECRETARY HOOVER:

4 3-C, Commissioner Delaney and
5 Commissioner Fox.

6 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

7 WMU 3-C we've had some issues with, as
8 far as the deer population goes. But we can go back
9 to my allocation recommendation to start with. 32,000
10 is going to be the recommendation against last year's
11 allocation of 35,000.

12 But with that said, in 2013, the deer
13 population was 67,720. It drops from 2013 to 2014 by
14 8,795 animals. So it went from 67,720 to 58,925 in
15 one year. So that's a population drop. The harvest
16 increase in 2011 --- we harvested 9,943 antlerless
17 animals.

18 In 2012, we harvested 10,508 antlerless
19 deer. And in 2013, we harvested 12,383 deer. So in
20 2012 and 2013, we increased the deer harvest by 2,175
21 animals. So based on the population drop, we
22 decreased the tags by 2,000. And --- I'm sorry, from
23 33,000 to 32,000. That's my recommendation.

24 SECRETARY HOOVER:

25 On 3-D; correct?

1 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

2 No, that was in 3-C.

3 SECRETARY HOOVER:

4 That was in 3-C? So okay. 3-D, Delaney
5 and Hoover.

6 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

7 3-D, I'd say, is the most difficult WMU
8 in the entire state from my perspective as a
9 commissioner. The recommendation for 3-D is going to
10 be 25,000 antlerless allocations. 2013, the Board
11 approved 32,000.

12 The post-hunt deer per square mile is
13 just about the lowest in the state, at 13.9 deer per
14 square mile. That's the second lowest in the state.
15 Our staff proposed a significant increase to me, that
16 3-D, having the second lowest deer per square mile in
17 the state.

18 I've had to look at some other options
19 for there. And actually, the deer per square mile
20 went from 13.8 down to 12.9. So I think we're going
21 in the wrong direction with that. The antlerless
22 success rate was 15.63, the lowest in the state. It
23 took 32,000 antlerless tags to harvest 5,000 animals.
24 Our antlered harvest continued to go down in 2011.
25 It was 4,509 antlered deer. In 2013, it went from

1 4,509 to 3,446. That's a drop of 1,063 antlered deer.

2 The population trend continues to drop.
3 The population in 2011 was 30,250. In 2014, it
4 dropped to 25,127. So it dropped 5,123 deer. With
5 all that said, regeneration is still doing okay. It
6 went from --- in the last ten years, it went from 56
7 percent to 61 percent.

8 So when I look to draw on a number or an
9 allocation number for a WMU, all these factors
10 contributed to it, along with the customer base from
11 that area. So that's my recommendation to WMU 3-D,
12 25,000.

13 I didn't want to add one thing to WMU
14 3-D. We asked our staff to give us an idea of how to
15 D map WMU 3-D. When we did the allocations for last
16 year and we dropped them, one of the suggestions from
17 me and the rest of the Board was if someone at WMU 3-D
18 thought the population was getting too high, that they
19 would certainly use D map. But what I say is, why
20 would anyone want to use D map in WMU 3-D with the
21 second lowest deer per square mile in the entire
22 state?

23 In addition to that, I had thought maybe
24 DCNR would want to use D map, on which they'd force
25 them to WMU 3-D. They thought the allocations were

1 too high. They didn't take us up on that offer. So I
2 think 3-D is an anomaly. I think it's difficult. I
3 think if you look at all the numbers presented, it's a
4 tough WMU to handle.

5 And on the positive side, at least we
6 are seeing some regeneration in that WMU, a single
7 positive side.

8 SECRETARY HOOVER:

9 I concur. 4-A, Commissioner Layton?

10 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

11 I have to respectfully disagree with Mr.
12 Delaney. I believe 4-A's the most problematic WMU in
13 the state. WMU 4-A is --- has one of our most active
14 disease management area. For those of you that know
15 that disease management area is basically where I am.

16 Earlier on, I made a motion to change
17 the season from a 12 day season to a 7 day season,
18 simply because the areas surrounding 4-A are all 7 day
19 seasons. And I think this makes it easier for our
20 officers to control that hunt in this area.

21 Having said that, I'm still concerned
22 that we've had five positive cases of CWD in 4-A. And
23 the most recent one was announced at our last meeting
24 here. So having said that, I want to stick with the
25 numbers that staff has recommended for that area.

1 in that area after having a hunting camp in the area
2 myself, the original requested allocation was 37,000.
3 Last year, it was a 12 day season with 27,000. Well,
4 yeah, they're gushing about 12 percent in the number
5 of deer taken last year.

6 So when we reduced from 35,000
7 recommended to 27,000, I'd like to see that herd come
8 up a little bit more. So 25,000. 4-B, Commissioner
9 Putnam, Commissioner Fox, Commissioner Layton,
10 Commissioner Weaner.

11 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

12 I would like to say that I disagree with
13 the two previous commissioners who've spoken. Because
14 I think that's one of the most difficult units in the
15 state. And I say that because we have some of the
16 best limestone soils, which, if you read Aldo
17 Leopold's, he has a chapter in his book. He has a
18 chapter, They Grow in the Soil. And so we have some
19 areas that are very productive for all species of
20 wildlife that's living here.

21 We also have some of the poor soils in
22 that unit. And when we looked at --- is there a way
23 to pull them out? The valleys are long, skinny,
24 narrow valleys. And their ridges are long, skinny,
25 narrow ridges.

1 My recommendation is 33,000. And we have three other
2 commission that can weigh in on that.

3 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

4 I concur.

5 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

6 I concur.

7 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

8 And I guess I would ask, do you concur
9 that that's the most difficult unit?

10 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

11 No, I disagree with that.

12 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

13 I disagree with that also.

14 SECRETARY HOOVER:

15 4-E is Commissioner Fox, Commissioner
16 Hoover, Commissioner Delaney and Commissioner Weaner.
17 Commissioner Fox?

18 COMMISSIONER FOX:

19 We're going with 21,000. We're going
20 with staff. I would agree.

21 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

22 Yeah. I'm going to stay with that.

23 SECRETARY HOOVER:

24 5-A, Commissioner Weaner.

25 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

1 In 5-A, we've had 18,000 permits for a
2 couple of years. And they're recommending to us
3 26,000. And we don't have complaints. So I already
4 do have the area of 6,000. The forest regeneration is
5 good. And I'm going to hold this one at 19,000.

6 SECRETARY HOOVER:

7 5-B is Commissioner Weaner and
8 Commissioner Hoover.

9 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

10 With 5-B, we've had 50,000 for quite a
11 number of years. We had no complaints down there.
12 There's not enough deer. We have a lot of vehicles in
13 that area. The Commission or the staff is
14 recommending that we stay at 50,000. I believe we
15 concur and recommend that we stay at 50,000.

16 SECRETARY HOOVER:

17 I would request a reduction, if
18 possible. Did you have ---? We do get some
19 complaints out of 5-B. I think I got a small portion
20 here, a small portion of 5-B. But I do know that we
21 could get --- we did have quite a few complaints out
22 of 5-B. And know that the staff has come down to our
23 issue permit level of last year.

24 I think we've seen a reduction in the
25 number of the deer in the area. We saw a 3 percent

1 increase in the harvest last year, in the --- during
2 the 12 day season. But we're showing deer per square
3 mile in '13. It's 28.5. It's reduced down to 24.1
4 per square mile in 2014. And I understand this trend
5 will probably take over a longer period of time. But
6 I'd like to give it the opportunity to bring up a
7 little bit, anyway.

8 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

9 49.

10 SECRETARY HOOVER:

11 Thank you, sir. It works. 5-C is a ---
12 it's my WMU. And it has some very diverse habitat in
13 it. And one of the problems that we have seen in 5-C,
14 we're trying to control that, like changing some of
15 the seasons around so that we didn't have ---.

16 After the Christmas, we didn't have the
17 rifle season. We used to have the archery and longbow
18 season on there, in an attempt to try to get some of
19 the herd to move on the lower side. It's a diverse
20 environment down there.

21 And so we get a herd of deer to manage
22 in there. And we split 5-C up to try to remove the
23 outer county, the upper county there. I'm going to
24 reduce the unit. Last year, the recommendation was
25 108,000 and reduced to 103.

1 This year's recommendation is 105, and
2 I'm going to reduce that to 95,000, in hopes that we
3 can stir some people to come back down to the special
4 regulations areas and some of the lower counties that
5 are urban environments, try to get somebody to move up
6 there. It takes some of the pressure off of the
7 mountain deer that we have in Lehigh and Northampton
8 County on I-95.

9 And 5-D, again, is my WMU. And that is
10 strictly an urban environment down there. Staff had
11 recommended 18,000. We used 18,000 last year. And I
12 would remain at 18,000 this year. Again, looking for
13 some urban deer management plan, where we can focus
14 tag on some of the environments in an attempt to help.
15 And I know we passed the baiting regulations in here.

16 That will certainly lend a hand for the
17 guys that are hunting down in these smaller
18 communities that have a deer problem. It will help
19 further contain those deer a lot better. That is the
20 last of them.

21 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

22 Mr. President, I move that we accept
23 this list of proposals.

24 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

25 Second.

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CHAIR:

Properly moved and seconded.

Discussion?

COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

Commissioner President?

CHAIR:

Commissioner Martone?

COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

Commissioner Layton, I want to give you a chance to look back in 4-A. I don't want to catch you off guard. But during this commentary --- which was an excellent commentary, and I agree with it all --- you mentioned in there that you were going with the recommendation.

You've been switched from the 12 day concurrent to a split season 5-7. You mentioned you were going with their recommendation, which I have at 36,000. And yet, you made the recommendation at 28,000. I wanted to see if that was correct, if that was what you had intended.

COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

Yeah. On the numbers I have, the recommendation's 28.

COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

This ---?

1 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

2 Well, that's in the fall, basically.

3 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

4 Yeah, no. That's --- yeah. I wanted to
5 stay with that number anyway. Because I do want to
6 --- there's been concerns about herds out there.

7 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

8 Well, you could --- you're definitely
9 going to make a difference. I mean, you've got
10 to ---.

11 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

12 Well, you know, we'll look at it again
13 next year.

14 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

15 Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

17 So it is a concern. And that's why I
18 respectfully disagreed with that being the least of
19 the trouble spots, because there were many sleepless
20 nights that I spent looking over this. In
21 conversation with some of my fellow commissioners to
22 try to figure out what we wanted to do there.

23 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

24 I'm sorry. I didn't want to interrupt.
25 But Director DuBrock, would you have a comment on

1 this?

2 DIRECTOR DUBROCK:

3 This is my last dance on this
4 allocation. I think what the Commissioners are about
5 to do creates many sleepless nights for me, as well.
6 But that said, I would like to focus on 4-A
7 specifically. We noted that the population is
8 relatively stable.

9 But we're noticing more severe problems
10 in the area. An allocation of 28,000 will allow that
11 population to grow substantially. We believe the
12 allocation recommendation was much higher than that.
13 In fact, going from to a 12 day season to a split
14 season the recommendation of 36,000 would move to
15 42,000, rather than 28,000.

16 And so, this is an area where I think
17 the public's asked the Board, asked the senate, are
18 you serious about controlling or enforcing the deer?
19 Are you serious about managing the impact through at
20 least in the harvest.

21 And particularly, if we don't pass an
22 allocation at least stabilizing the population, it
23 doesn't allow it to grow. I think it's apparent,
24 based on our system, that we're going to continue to
25 --- this is our keep impulse of this.

1 We kept chronic wasting disease in a
2 larger area of origin. So I would really ask
3 Commissioner Layton and the Board to rethink an
4 allocation of 28,000. I could comment individually.
5 I will tell Commissioner Hoover that I live in 5-B and
6 I don't think we need any more deer than we have
7 currently. But I don't have a problem with the
8 49,000. I could comment individually for a long time.

9 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

10 That's fine.

11 DIRECTOR DUBROCK:

12 A particular concern is 4-A.

13 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

14 Well, 4-A is a concern. And then, I
15 addressed that. And I think that some of the things
16 that we have discussed moving forward would be to ---
17 those disease management areas are defined
18 specifically as the WMUs are.

19 There are roads that define that area of
20 disease management areas. And what I hope to do
21 moving ahead, even as far as now, is being able to
22 issue tags for, specifically, the disease management
23 areas. But that wasn't an option. You know, I didn't
24 do this overnight.

25 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

1 And I --- if there wasn't a CWD in the
2 unit, I wouldn't have any concerns. But again, a unit
3 with CWD and new growing cases --- I just had to
4 double check and make sure you ---. Because you had
5 said recommendation.

6 And then, you went with a different
7 number. I just wanted to double check. But I ---
8 again, my concern is the CWD at this point.

9 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

10 Well, I mean, and I agree with you. But
11 if this is going to be an issue, perhaps, maybe we
12 need to take a break and think about it. But I am,
13 again, just wanting an overhead consideration. It was
14 something that I have stressed about. I made calls to
15 a lot of my fellow commissioners in different places.

16 SECRETARY HOOVER:

17 Let me point out on that that I think we
18 had one actual CWD case this year. I think they've
19 put on two. I think we had two come in this year.
20 That's a 20 percent increase. It's super.

21 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

22 Mr. President, could I make a comment,
23 too? You know, Commissioner Weaner said, really
24 eloquently last year when CWD was in his area. And he
25 said, hunting is still going to go on this fall, you

1 know?

2 We want to go out. We want our
3 sportsmen to enjoy hunting this fall. But perhaps it
4 may be coming up that, whatever our next sports would
5 be, we ought to take a look at these disease
6 management areas that have specialized zones, to
7 harvest additional deer inside the disease management
8 area.

9 I think there's a lot of other things
10 that we can look at, too, to help fix this. The CWD
11 is here. I think our staff has dealt with it
12 admirably. But I think that there's definitely more
13 work to be done inside these disease management
14 committees.

15 CHAIR:

16 Mr. Layton, are you sticking with that.

17 COMMISSIONER LAYTON:

18 Yeah. I was staying with that.

19 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

20 Mr. President, also before we consider
21 this, I just did a quick calculation of many of these
22 numbers have been in the air. But the numbers that we
23 came up with total 14 percent less than was
24 recommended to us by our staff.

25 And it's approximately 7 percent less

1 than the number of licenses issued last year. Just
2 for a breakdown. Again, that's a quick calculated
3 number.

4 CHAIR:

5 Any further discussion? Commissioner
6 Putnam?

7 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

8 I have some standing input in the
9 discussion here. We received comments yesterday,
10 after --- during our meeting. The QDMA association,
11 they came in by email after our meeting had already
12 started. But I wanted to make a couple comments on
13 this, and then my own commentary. But Pennsylvania is
14 one of only six states in the US to harvest more than
15 300,000 whitetails annually. In 2012 Pennsylvania
16 harvested 2.9 antlered bucks per square mile.

17 This was higher than the average for the
18 southeast, which is 1.7. The northeast, 8.0. The
19 Midwestern states, 1.2 bucks per square mile. In
20 fact, three states shot more bucks per square mile
21 than Pennsylvania.

22 In 2012, for the fourth year in a row,
23 at least half of Pennsylvania's antlered buck harvest
24 was 2.5 years of age or older. And I would contrast
25 that with the number of comments that we're getting

1 that people want to go back shooting --- the good old
2 days, when you shot the scrubby little spikes and
3 basket 8 points.

4 In 2012, Pennsylvania hunters shot 5
5 percent more antlered bucks than in 2011. In 2011,
6 they shot 4 percent more bucks than during 2010. And
7 in 2010, they shot 13 percent more bucks than 2009.
8 There are a lot of good things about our deer program.

9 Our deer program is one of the best in
10 the country. We have naysayers who keep telling us
11 our numbers are not good. I personally asked every
12 one of them who tells me that, show me where those
13 numbers are not right.

14 We've had some head-to-head meetings.
15 I've emailed all our methodologies to statisticians.
16 And I get nothing. Not even a simple common fact on
17 where our numbers are wrong. We get a few who will
18 say, there's no way you can be killing 300,000 deer in
19 Pennsylvania annually.

20 It's just --- it's impossible. It can't
21 work. Well, then, show me where it doesn't work.
22 Show me which Wildlife Management Unit we need to take
23 care of. Take a small one. Take 2-H. Go through our
24 numbers. Call the people on the phone. Do your own
25 surveys. Nobody does that. They just sit back there

1 and say, your numbers can't be right. Some of the
2 discussion we're having today is a result of all of
3 this --- you can't be right. You can't be right.
4 It's impossible to be killing those number --- killing
5 that many deer. We are killing that many deer.

6 Recently, I drove to Florida, 1,200
7 miles. When I left Pennsylvania, all the way to
8 Florida, I never saw a single roadkill deer. I didn't
9 see any of the typical smears that we see on our
10 roads. And driving back, I saw a single deer in
11 Virginia laying on the side of the road dead. I get
12 to Pennsylvania, you all know what I saw. You know
13 what I saw in Pennsylvania.

14 Pennsylvania has a lot of deer. We have
15 issues with deer in our urban areas that we're
16 struggling to address. And so, some of this 300,000
17 --- I will surely be the first one to say, our
18 forested areas, our solid old forests don't have the
19 deer that they used have.

20 And they will not, no matter whether
21 there's a Game Commission or no Game Commission. We
22 can only support so many deer. There's only so much
23 food out there. We have a lot of other issues that
24 we're dealing with, this hot spot and cold spot issue.

25 How do we address that? Well, frankly,

1 some of what we're doing on the average --- we've had
2 some discussion about 2-D, where we had a really good
3 habitat and then a poor habitat.

4 Is it making smaller management units?
5 Is that the answer? Do we get out of the township
6 level? We have township level there. I've got it
7 right here. But it's impossible for us to make any
8 kind of reasonable management at the township level.

9 And even if we did, we would still not
10 be accurate all over that township. Because we're
11 going to have townships that have farmland on one side
12 and forest on the other. If we manage down to the
13 individual farm level, we're going to have the alfalfa
14 field on one side.

15 And we're going to have the forest on
16 the other side. Even at the individual farm level,
17 we're still not going to be right all over the farm.
18 So our management units are somewhat of a compromise
19 between large contiguous units that have similar
20 characteristics across all of them.

21 And where we split through county lines,
22 or we're splitting whatever, we're trying to keep the
23 habitats similar. If we only had one type of habitat
24 that was all the same, this unit issue would be moot.
25 We could just manage for one number statewide.

1 So it's a struggle to get these units
2 just right. And we --- our staff has done a very good
3 job. Now, we can have people argue about --- oh, and
4 we're arguing among ourselves about it.

5 Our deer program is one of the best in
6 the country. Maybe the best in the country. We know
7 more about our deer than any other state. Our studies
8 are vast compared to those studies. We have other
9 states that run check stations. West Virginia does
10 check stations. That's where somebody drives up by a
11 pickup truck, goes into a gas station and says, check
12 me off for two deer, and leaves. They don't check the
13 deer. They're not aging and weighing them.

14 We're handling more deer ---. Our
15 biologists and our foresters and our field staff put
16 their hands on more deer than any other state. Nobody
17 else touches as many deer as what we do. And yet, we
18 still get, oh, your numbers are no good.

19 Well, they are not precise. And you've
20 heard people --- and I saw Brett picking over there a
21 few times, when we're talking about 26.2 deer per
22 square mile. We don't have 22.6 deer per square mile
23 in any unit. We've got a range of numbers of it. In
24 some parts of the unit, we might have that. But when
25 we're talking these numbers, we're looking at trends.

1 So our numbers are not --- our numbers are very good.

2 They don't have the precision that we've
3 were implying here today, killing 342.7 deer per
4 whatever. But again, our numbers are very good. No
5 one has refuted them. They're published in the
6 scientific literature.

7 We have our naysayers. I'm not seeing
8 them publish anything in scientific literature. And
9 I'm going to tell you, as a biologist, if somebody can
10 come up with a way to prove that our system is wrong,
11 they'll be quick to publish it. Because that's way
12 scientists are. You know, if I can prove I'm smarter
13 than you are, I'm going to do it. And nobody's doing
14 it. Nobody statewide is doing it. We have other
15 issues. Chronic wasting disease, Lyme disease ---.

16 We're getting lots of --- no, I won't
17 say that. We're getting letters and comments. We've
18 got people testifying here about the impact of Lyme
19 disease. The group up here is the one that has to
20 think about --- are we going to raise the deer number
21 to make somebody in this side of the state happy?

22 Or are we going to raise it up to this
23 side of the state, where we're going to cause these
24 people to have more exposure to Lyme disease? We
25 talked about the disease management units. That CWD

1 is --- it's here.

2 And it's going to grow. And it's going
3 to be statewide one of these days. That's a density
4 dependent thing. The more chances they have, the more
5 bullets the fire out across the landscape with these
6 young bucks dispersing, the more chance we have of CWD
7 spreading across the state.

8 Should we try and reduce the numbers in
9 those units? I think we'd be wise to reduce them, at
10 least in the deer management units. And I don't ---
11 and I'll ask right now, if this is going to be
12 business, for the staff to see if we can issue permits
13 specific to our DMAs, our defined DMAs.

14 If we can, let's see if we can do it yet
15 this year. The Commissioners still have time to
16 discuss that that day. And if we afford more permits
17 into those DMAs, I think that we would all be in favor
18 of something like that. I think that's about all I
19 had for this round of comments. Until somebody else
20 may set me off again.

21 CHAIR:

22 Thank you, David. Further discussion?

23 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

24 Mr. President?

25 CHAIR:

1 Commissioner Martone?

2 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

3 And I'd like to coattail on what
4 Commissioner Putnam said. You know, it's obvious we
5 did not follow our staff's recommendations. To me,
6 that does not mean that we did not believe in our
7 staff's number.

8 I certainly believe in the numbers they
9 produce. I think they do an excellent job of
10 providing us with pure science in deer management.
11 It's our job to blend that with a little bit more of
12 the social or political end of it.

13 And that's where our differences come
14 in. It is not an indictment of the Deer Management
15 Team, the Deer Management Program. I still think it's
16 the best. And I agree with Commissioner Putnam that
17 it is the best in the country, and I stand behind
18 that.

19 Our job is to blend those numbers with
20 the hunters to keep the young hunters in the game.
21 And looking at the social aspect. But in no way, to
22 me, does the difference in the recommendation and our
23 numbers say that they were wrong.

24 I believe they were right,
25 scientifically. We just have a different job of

1 reporting to them. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

3 I have an additional end under new
4 business.

5 SECRETARY HOOVER:

6 I don't think we voted. We didn't
7 vote ---.

8 CHAIR:

9 Mr. Delaney, we have a motion on our
10 floor.

11 SECRETARY HOOVER:

12 I do want to point out that, other than
13 the special regulations areas, we are now at 6
14 concurrent WMUs and 14 non-concurrent WMUs. And it
15 seems to be a trend and a wish from the people that we
16 go to a separate procedure.

17 And we've seen that in some of the
18 comments that we got this year over the 3 day doe
19 season. And I guess it would be my request to the
20 staff just to look at what we would do if we took
21 everything but the special regulations areas to make
22 everything equal across the state into a
23 non-concurrent situation, where we would have all of
24 our units other than the three special regulations
25 areas, 5-C, 5-D and 2-B placed under that 7 day as

1 just a request to see what we would do to move in that
2 direction, if you so choose to do so.

3 CHAIR:

4 Commissioner Weaner?

5 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

6 Mr. President, I'll disagree with the
7 last comment here. A lot of our cooperators, people
8 up in the northwest that have spoken to us about the
9 inter-Department deer management ---. I'll repeat
10 information we got, again, just yesterday from QDMA.

11 They're all telling us and our staff are
12 all telling us to go to the 12 day per season. I'm
13 still a strong proponent of that. I'm not at all
14 interested in going to 7 days statewide. I'll never,
15 ever, ever consider going to the 3 day doe season.

16 And if we could just abandon all this?
17 I think this is a move in the wrong direction. We
18 talked about --- we wanted to offer opportunity to our
19 hunters. And that was the argument that was used, one
20 of the arguments that was used when we went to
21 concurrent seasons.

22 It's a valid argument. Well, it's a
23 valid argument, some people used to say, why did they
24 retract that and go back to the less days for various
25 reasons? My personal feeling is, we need to be

1 looking at more than 12 days concurrent statewide,
2 rather than the other way around.

3 SECRETARY HOOVER:

4 I'd just like to ---. Of course, you're
5 going to see that there are disagreements on the
6 Board. Not all of us agree on any one particular
7 direction to take. Dave, you see, there was some
8 discussion on the 3 day season.

9 And it generated a lot of discussion out
10 there in the field. The 7 day season was --- and it
11 had been through the entire central portion of the
12 state. Almost WMU from the northeast to the southwest
13 is now in the 7-day non-concurrent season.

14 The benefit of doing that statewide
15 would be to put --- it would be an economic and a
16 social decision. The social decision is that we now
17 have an opening day. We would then have an opening
18 day for doe season on a Saturday where everyone,
19 including their children, could get out there.

20 And we'd have the most people in the
21 field and the most deer on the ground, on the
22 landscape, that have the opportunity to take a doe.
23 The second part of that is the economic decision. And
24 that part is if you put more people into the field,
25 you put more people into the restaurants and the

1 sporting goods stores and the hotels on a given
2 weekend, as a second opening day.

3 That's just a thought. And it's my
4 thought. And like you see, there's going to be
5 commissioners that don't agree with it. There's going
6 to be commissioners that do agree with it. It's
7 something we're putting out there.

8 We'd like to hear from our people. I
9 mean, on the sporting goods, the state of Pennsylvania
10 does not mean that this effects. We want to know what
11 they feel. Do they think this is a good idea? Do
12 they not? I think it's a good idea. That being said.
13 That's all I have.

14 CHAIR:

15 Any other comments? Mr. Martone?

16 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

17 This is off that subject, a new topic.

18 CHAIR:

19 We can bring it up on our new business,
20 then.

21 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

22 But Commissioner Putnam mentioned ---
23 and I want to mention it for WMU 2-F, that we did
24 reduce the allocations in 2-F, that there's a lot of
25 major landowners, including Ken in here, the

1 cooperative up there.

2 And I would encourage them to use D map,
3 control deer on their property. I think that's a
4 valuable tool. And what we do here can be
5 supplemented by what they do there. So I would
6 encourage those groups up in there in 2-F to look at
7 this number and then decide what they want to do with
8 D mapping and reevaluate their D map program.

9 CHAIR:

10 Thank you. Mr. Secretary, there is a
11 motion on the floor.

12 SECRETARY HOOVER:

13 There's a motion on the floor that's
14 been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by
15 saying aye.

16 ALL AYES

17 SECRETARY HOOVER:

18 Opposed? The motion carries
19 unanimously.

20 CHAIR:

21 Thank you very much. Gentlemen, moving
22 on, we've covered a lot of this, so ---. But we're
23 moving onto other new business. And I call on
24 Commissioner Delaney to talk about that.

25 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

1 Thank you, Mr. President. I wrote down
2 just a couple of thoughts here. And I'd like just to
3 read it so that I get it right and proper. Executive
4 Director Hough and the Wildlife Management Staff ---
5 in my seven years as a commissioner, I have heard the
6 concerns of many sportsmen across the state in regards
7 to the predator effects on the white tailed deer.

8 Several times over the last several
9 years, we have had some short discussions on the
10 subject. But now, there is a credible wildlife
11 biologist, Kip Adams from QDMA, that has wrote an
12 article, Fawning Time Equals Lunchtime for Predators.

13 Kip's article will have the data to
14 support predator impact on deer fawns. He also
15 mentions that forest health is good in WMA 3-A, as
16 well as the deer health. He also mentions they see
17 antlerless adult deer, but do not see any fawns.

18 Now, I fully understand that PGC's own
19 study sponsored by Pennsylvania Game Commission
20 discusses some extremely high percentages of deer fawn
21 mortality caused by predation. This study was done in
22 2000-2001.

23 I've also read that many biologists that
24 realistic fawn predation number is about 20 percent by
25 bears, coyotes, bobcats --- and bobcats, among other

1 predators. But the 2001 study shows predation numbers
2 much higher.

3 The study I mentioned speaks about the
4 predation of deer fawns, but the agency deer team
5 thinks that the number is just not high enough to hurt
6 deer herds. Many think differently. These last 15
7 years, the coyote population has exploded from 1,000
8 in 1987 to over 18,000 in 2013.

9 The bear population has grown to over
10 18,000 animals. I would recommend the agency staff to
11 discuss this issue at the next working group meeting
12 and prepare study information in preparation for a new
13 fawn study in Pennsylvania.

14 A lot of predator population dynamics
15 has changed since the last study was done statewide,
16 including a number of habitats. I do believe there is
17 strong support from the Board members to move this
18 issue to vote at the next Board meeting. And agency
19 staff feels that this is warranted and necessary.
20 Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

21 CHAIR:

22 Thank you, Commissioner. Commissioner
23 Martone?

24 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

25 I'm not quite as official as

1 Commissioner Delaney. But I have three small items
2 under new business. One is I would like to ask the
3 Bureau of Wildlife Management to study and report back
4 to the Board on the feasibility of concurrent archery
5 deer and archery bear season, to overlap those by a
6 week.

7 They'd either decide to add a week to
8 bear season and have a two week archery season that
9 falls within the archery deer. Or just move that
10 archery bear season by a week, that I hope ---. I
11 think there's a big recreational value.

12 And we've shown that we have plenty of
13 bear out there to offer our archers. Another item, I
14 would like the Bureau of Information and Education to
15 look into incorporating a lesson on Lyme disease into
16 our hunter trapper education course. And the third
17 item I would like to encourage Executive Director
18 Hough to continue and advance the Game Commission's
19 partnership with the Hunters Sharing Harvest Program.

20 I think these doe tags we just issued,
21 there is a great opportunity to provide this excellent
22 source of venison to food banks and the needy and the
23 hungry there in Pennsylvania. And our sportsmen have
24 risen to the occasion year after year since the early
25 1900 --- 1990s, when the Hunters Sharing Harvest

1 Program was implemented. And I would like to see the
2 Game Commission take a bigger role in that program.
3 And I would encourage Executive Director Hough to
4 investigate that. Thank you.

5 CHAIR:

6 Commissioner Putnam, you had some
7 discussion about D mapping reporting?

8 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

9 I've got a whole book here

10 CHAIR:

11 All right.

12 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

13 Okay, I'm up. The first thing I'd like
14 to do is comment on the predator study. People
15 believe that we don't consider predators. And I know
16 there's a famous quote that someone called our office.
17 And they said we don't care about coyotes.

18 The truth is, we do care about all
19 mortality. All mortality is summed up in how many
20 deer are still alive. So whether it was predators,
21 whether it was pneumonia, starvation, road kills ---.
22 It is really all summed up in our numbers. So to say
23 that we don't care about predators is not accurate.
24 We do care about predators. We just don't have a
25 specific predator factor in our calculations.

1 The other thing about predators are, we
2 controlled the deer herd by the number of allocations.
3 And what we're doing is, we're allocating to harvest a
4 certain number of antlerless deer after everybody else
5 has taken their shot at it, and after the coyotes and
6 the bears have taken the fawns.

7 But I do think there's an issue with
8 predation, in that a large number of fawns coming out
9 of the population reduces the resiliency of the deer
10 herd to rebound after a large harvest, after any kind
11 of event. And so, I do think it's important for us to
12 have a little better handle on the predation than what
13 we have right now.

14 I'm also just almost always interested
15 in things. So I think it would be extremely
16 interesting to all of us to redo the 2001 predator
17 study. And there's a lot of new technology that's out
18 there since the last time that predator study was
19 done. I would like to see the --- a little throw
20 camera on some of our predators out there, so we could
21 see just what we got.

22 We're tagging a lot of bears right now.
23 And I don't know what the cost would be to put a
24 camera on that bear as opposed to just a radio collar
25 or a GPS collar. But that's just one suggestion that

1 we might want to consider as we develop plans for new
2 predator studies.

3 Regarding Lyme education, I surely
4 support Commissioner Martone's additional education on
5 Lyme disease. I think it might even be prudent to put
6 something in our book, in our digest, to further
7 advise our hunters out there. Lyme disease is a real
8 problem. And again, even when we set our allocations.
9 We keep Lyme disease in the back of our mind.

10 The bear archery --- our bear population
11 surely can stand some more harvest. I would support
12 that, as well as ownership in the harvest.

13 Okay. We received a lot of comments.
14 Sometimes we receive a chain letter, and sometimes we
15 receive large petitions. We also receive individual
16 comments that are very meaningful. I mean, I would
17 emphasize that anyone who wants to comment to us,
18 they're more than welcome to --- well, we're more than
19 willing to hear your comments. The Commissioners
20 respond to a lot of them individually. We don't
21 respond to all of them, and especially when 500 that
22 are exactly the same. We don't respond to those that
23 much.

24 One of the comments we received at our
25 last meeting with regard to the use of electronic

1 calls for various wildlife species, including turkey,
2 deer, predators, whatever. We had a request to
3 consider that. And I'm going to request that staff
4 prepare recommendations for our next working group on
5 what types of wildlife --- what type of electronic
6 calling might be suitable, so that we might change our
7 regulations.

8 We do support fair chase. That's the
9 basic preface of most of the hunting regulations in
10 Pennsylvania. So that will be a major part of any
11 consideration, is, does this violate the fair chase?
12 Waterfowl are not permitted by federal regulations,
13 except for snow geese, I guess.

14 So I'm going to ask the staff to prepare
15 a discussion for our next working group regarding the
16 use of electronic calls for various wildlife. This is
17 also a notice to the --- if anyone wants to provide
18 comments before or after that working group meeting,
19 this will be something we'll discuss for a while. So
20 be advised that we will be discussing the increased
21 use of electronic calls in Pennsylvania.

22 Another thing that we get a lot of
23 comments on is our reporting here. And I know that
24 Brett's over there quivering again. And our reporting
25 rate --- we get so many people telling us, you can't

1 know what you're doing. You only have 33 percent
2 reporting. The scientific answer to that is, it
3 doesn't matter what the reporting rate is as long as
4 we know what it is.

5 And we do have a fair --- we have a
6 reporting rate than anyone else, because we handle so
7 many deer. When we handle more than 35,000 deer ---
8 and I'm not sure of the exact number. Calvin, if you
9 could tell me how many we handle?

10 DIRECTOR DUBROCK:

11 It's between 25 and 26,000.

12 VICE PRESIDENT PUTNAM:

13 26,000 deer --- we've got a very big
14 sample size. So we have a pretty good handle --- I
15 would say a very good handle --- on the reporting
16 rate. Nobody is happy with the reporting rate. And
17 as Commissioner Martone said, there's also --- there's
18 a scientific side.

19 There's a social side, political side to
20 this, to these issues. And the social and political
21 side has --- it's bearing on the Commissioners to
22 increase the reporting rate. So we've had some
23 discussion on about it.

24 And I've asked some staff to prepare for
25 our next working group meeting all the alternatives we

1 can do for increasing reporting rates. One of the
2 biggest problems with reporting rates is our current
3 postcard system, which I think is in the statute.
4 It's a ten day reporting rate statute.

5 So we can't change --- the Commissioners
6 cannot change the ten day reporting rate without going
7 to the Legislature to change that. Before we go to
8 the Legislature to change that, I think we have to
9 have our own discussions about what we would like to
10 do. And if we want to propose regulations, we can
11 have that discussion. We would like the public to
12 comment on that as well. But I think we're going to
13 need to set a goal that we can maybe come up with at
14 the next meeting.

15 If we can increase the reporting rate to
16 50 percent, then we would not have to go to
17 Legislation. If we can't, then we're going to have to
18 talk about it. You know, the threat currently, if we
19 don't --- I mean, we're not prosecuting any people for
20 non-reporting, because all they have to do is sign an
21 affidavit that they mailed in their card. And that'll
22 remove the chance of prosecuting.

23 Now, we talked about the concurrent
24 versus non-concurrent. Mr. Hoover talked about that.
25 I think we hear many claims, including from my good

1 friend Commissioner Hoover, that there will be an
2 economic impact from this aspect of what we do, a
3 positive impact, a negative impact.

4 And I believe it's time for us to look
5 at that, have the staff look at that, whether we're
6 going to have --- I'm getting an off the floor here.
7 Yeah, I want to look at the social and economic
8 impacts from a professional standpoint, as opposed to
9 someone from Allegheny County telling me that what we
10 do with the deer program is going to influence small
11 businesses in Potter County.

12 We had a deer hearing up in Potter
13 Center sponsored by the legislature. And there were
14 --- seven or eight people testified at that meeting
15 about the economic impacts on the deer program in
16 Potter County. But none of them were from Potter
17 County. And nobody that testified was even from the
18 north central, regarding the economic impacts on the
19 deer program on the north central.

20 We're throwing a lot of numbers around.
21 I think I'd like to see some more --- some of our own
22 surveys to talk about those kinds of things. With
23 reporting rate, I guess I would include a discussion
24 of the D map in that discussion, the D map reporting
25 rates as well. We had mandatory for D map in the

1 early days, back when the D map program was mandatory.
2 But we --- again, we couldn't enforce it, because
3 we're using the mail-in postcards.

4 And then, the last thing --- well, maybe
5 not the last thing. But towards the bottom of the
6 list is, can we come up with a D map --- no, DMA
7 permits this year? Would it be possible for us to use
8 an existing program, whether we want to call it red
9 tag, D map, whatever. But would the DMA permit that
10 would be issued through the PALS system apply to those
11 --- to our disease management areas? If we can't do
12 it, I guess we shouldn't talking about doing it in a
13 future year. But that'll make me feel much better
14 about some of our --- those southern units, 4-A, where
15 we have the --- where we have chronic wasting disease.

16 It's going to allow us to react much
17 more quickly when we identify chronic wasting disease
18 in the area. That would be a good point at some point
19 not too far in the future when we've got it on a
20 statewide issue than a focused area. If we could come
21 up with that as an alternative to trying to lower the
22 entire unit, focusing more on the units that are we
23 going to need the help, I think we --- that was what I
24 would recommend.

25 CHAIR:

1 Thank you, Commissioner Putnam.

2 COMMISSIONER DELANEY:

3 Could I have just one quick follow-up to
4 the harvest reporting? In my experience, no one saw
5 --- or maybe a few saw the discussion yesterday with
6 Director DuBrock saying 70 percent of our sportsmen do
7 not send their harvest report card. And that's
8 insulting to me, as a sportsman.

9 We talked about harvest reporting at our
10 last working group meeting. And we said we wanted to
11 take some action this meeting. And now we're saying,
12 well, let's talk about it at the next working group
13 meeting. Let's get serious about this and try to get
14 something done, whether it's the 24 hour reporting or
15 whatever. But we had the discussion at our working
16 group meeting. Director DuBrock brought out the
17 numbers I gave yesterday.

18 Now we're saying, well, let's do
19 something definitive at our next working group meeting
20 to be prepared with what direction. Do we have to the
21 legislature to change this? I mean, the Legislature
22 is a big part of telling us, what you guys are doing
23 is not working. So let's take some action on this,
24 finally. Instead of talking about it, let's do
25 something about it. All right.

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CHAIR:

Secretary?

SECRETARY HOOVER:

I have two things under new business. I'd like to --- again, we've been giving the staff a lot of work to do for the next year, to get a head start on what we want to look for the following --- for next year's hunting season.

I'm seriously looking at realigning 5-C and 5-D. We've had discussions about that in the past. And for the for it to work, to even work, we either split 5-C or do a complete realignment of the two, so we get it closer to where it needs to be.

And I'd also like to propose, for the 2015 season, and have the staff do some work and let me know if it's a viable solution or not, or propose a new tag to be utilized in conjunction with the urban deer management plan we've been working on, whereby the sportsmen in the special regulations area would be allowed to purchase a specific tag where the special regulations were urbanized.

Not necessarily special regulations, but for our urban environments where it would come to two doe and a single buck, a single any buck. Because when we get into the urban environments, where we

1 have, literally, houses sitting next to each other on
2 a 50 by 100 foot lot, the environment is not where we
3 want to see a large deer population where the
4 sportsmen would be able to purchase at tag specific to
5 that environment, which would include two buck, two
6 doe, and any buck. We're not looking to grow some
7 monster bucks in the middle of Chester or some of the
8 surrounding communities. And that would also be
9 allowed to be used in conjunction with the regular
10 archery ---.

11 Not regular archery, but regular buck
12 tags that they would purchase statewide. This tag
13 would be focused, again, similar to it being a name
14 tag, your management, would be focused on an area in
15 an urban environment where we would be trying to
16 remove as many deer as we possibly can. That's just
17 something I'd like to put out there for next year,
18 that we can get a look at it, see what it will do, and
19 if it's even a possibility.

20 CHAIR:

21 Commissioner, before we proceed, I'd
22 like to throw something out here. Possibly, you just
23 mentioned to me that prosecution doesn't necessarily
24 work on the reporting. And maybe increased incentive,
25 by possibly having giveaway, raffle, what have you,

1 for people who send in their reports; okay?

2 Just to include a thought that was
3 handed down to me here. So you might want to consider
4 that. All right. Moving on, in regard to something
5 that's previously happened in the past several weeks,
6 there have been letters received by all the
7 Commissioners.

8 I would like to say, on behalf of this
9 Board, that we have done everything above Board and
10 with counsel. And we're not going to dwell into
11 personnel matters here. But on behalf of the Board, I
12 would like Commissioner Hoover to make a statement.

13 SECRETARY HOOVER:

14 On behalf of the Board, I would like to
15 begin by making this statement. Last year, the Board
16 began steps with Carl Roe regarding whether he should
17 continue as the Executive Director of the PGC.

18 While we all respect Mr. Carl Roe and
19 appreciate the work that he did for the PGC, we
20 questioned whether he was the right individual to lead
21 this agency forward. At Mr. Roe's request, the Board
22 entered into an agreement with him whereby he would
23 receive a payment in exchange for not filing any
24 potential claims he could have regarding the
25 termination of his employment.

1 The Board also took into account a
2 variety of other factors and acted in what it believed
3 to be the best interest of the PGC. The Board also
4 --- we directed the PGC Chief Counsel to treat the
5 agreement as any other contract and submit it to the
6 Attorney General's office and the Governor's Office of
7 the Chief Counsel for review.

8 It was during this process that the
9 Governor's office notified us that they would not
10 process the agreement for payment. We have since
11 notified the Governor's office and Mr. Roe that the
12 PGC will take no further step toward finalizing the
13 agreement.

14 We regret the attention that this matter
15 received, as it --- and has distracted from the public
16 appreciation of the unmatched work done by the PGC for
17 the betterment of the state's wildlife population and
18 its sportsmen and women. And it is to the mission we
19 stand committed.

20 CHAIR:

21 Thank you, Mr. Secretary. We'll have no
22 further comment as a Board on this subject. Moving on
23 here, we'll be having --- any more new business at
24 all? I'm sorry. Okay. Moving along, we'll have a
25 working group on the 19th of May.

1 And I would like to have a motion to
2 accept June 9 and 10 of 2014, September 22 and 23 of
3 2014, and January 25, 26 and 27 of 2015 for our
4 upcoming meetings. Do I hear a motion to accept?

5 COMMISSIONER WEANER:

6 So moved.

7 CHAIR:

8 Second?

9 COMMISSIONER MARTONE:

10 Seconded.

11 CHAIR:

12 Mr. Secretary?

13 SECRETARY HOOVER:

14 There's a motion on the floor that has
15 been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by
16 saying aye.

17 ALL AYES

18 SECRETARY HOOVER:

19 Those opposed? That motion carries.

20 CHAIR:

21 That concludes this meeting. And I
22 thank you, everybody. In 15 minutes, we will have a
23 press conference in the cafeteria. Thank you all for
24 attending.

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MEETING CONCLUDED AT 10:15 P.M.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings,
hearing held before President Schlemmer was reported
by me on 4/8/2014 and that I Rhonda K. Thorpe read
this transcript and that I attest that this transcript
is a true and accurate record of the proceeding.

Rhonda K. Thorpe
Court Reporter

