BEFORE THE
PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

BEFORE:
Stanley I. Knick, Jr., President
Michael F. Mitrick, Vice President
Kristen Schnepp-Giger, Secretary
Scott H. Foradora, Commissioner
Charlie E. Fox, Commissioner
Dennis R. Fredericks, Commissioner
Timothy S. Layton, Commissioner

HEARING: Saturday, April 10, 2021
10:18 a.m.

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Reporter: Kelly Gallick

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APPEARANCES

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ALSO PRESENT:
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MATTHEW SCHNUPP, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
JASON L. DEocoskey, DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF WILDLIFE PROTECTION
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PROCEEDINGS

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: The Board's formal agenda begins with the Call to Order by the President.

PRESIDENT KNICK: I'd like to bring to Order this April 10th, 2021 Game Commission Meeting. Madam Secretary, will you call roll, please?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER:

Commissioner Knick?

PRESIDENT KNICK: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER:

Commissioner Mitrick? Commissioner Mitrick, are you present? Commissioner Schnepp-Giger, present.

Commissioner Foradora?

COMMISSIONER FORADORA: Here.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER:

Commissioner Fox?

COMMISSIONER FOX: Here.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER:

Commissioner Fredericks?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Here.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER:
Commissioner Layton?

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Here.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER:

Commissioner Mitrick?

MS. NEELY MITCHEL: He may be having trouble with the audio. I do see that he is in attendance.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have a quorum?

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: There is a quorum present, if you want to continue with approval of the minutes.

PRESIDENT KNICK: At this time, I'd like to get a motion to approve the January 23rd, 2021 minutes?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: So moved.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do I have a second?

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Second?

Madam Secretary, would you please call roll?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER:

Commissioner Knick?

PRESIDENT KNICK: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER:

Commissioner Mitrick?
COMMISSIONER MITRICK: Commissioner Mitrick is present.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Commissioner Schnepp-Giger is present.

Commissioner Foradora?

COMMISSIONER FORADORA: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Commissioner Fox?

COMMISSIONER FOX: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Commissioner Fredericks?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Commissioner Layton?

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Yes.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Thank you, Commissioners.

Moving onto the Bureau of Administrative Services.

The first item concerns adopted rulemaking to amend 58 Pa. Code Section 143.1 and add Section 143.5a relating to definitions and digital licenses, to define and authorize the use of hunting and furtaking ellicenses.

This authorization will also extend to
certain permits similarly sold through the PALS Systems, such as mentored permits, bobcat permits, range permits, et cetera.

The text is shown on pages three and four of your agenda.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do I have a motion?
COMMISSIONER FORADORA: So moved.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Second?
COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Second.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Madam Secretary, -
ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Commissioner, -
PRESIDENT KNICK: - would you call?
Yes, go ahead.
ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Commissioners, if I may interrupt. There is a floor amendment that has been proposed by staff for page four regarding internet license sales.

If the Commission desires to introduce that, wants to have a motion and second, Mr. Raup could discuss what the purpose of that is, if that would be all right?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: So moved.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have a second?
COMMISSIONER FOX: Second.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Madam Secretary,
will you call the role?

ATTORNEY RAUP: I thought I was -?

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Mr. Raup was going
to explain that.

PRESIDENT KNICK: All right.

ATTORNEY RAUP: Thank you, Mr.

Bechtel.

This amendment - and I'll go ahead and
display it on the screen here, is in addition of the
highlighted text. And it is the result of comments
received on this proposal that update with this
additional provision that is necessary to be included
in this rulemaking to avoid this section falling out
of harmony with each other.

Future form and legality approval of
this rulemaking is contingent upon the preferred
proffered for amendment, the text that is highlighted
in yellow on your screen.

I'm happy to answer any questions that
the Board may have.

But quite honestly, this additional
text is only to harmonize the existing proposal with
the existing text found in 143.11 so that those
sections match each other in operation.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Any other comments
on the amendment?

Do we have a motion on the amendment?

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: We do, sir.

PRESIDENT KNICK: All right.

Madam Secretary, would you call for a vote?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Thank you.

So with the amendment, we would have comments and vote then on the actual adopted rulemaking itself that has been moved and seconded.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: The next item before the Commission is to amend -

PRESIDENT KNICK: Brad -

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: - back on page five of -
PRESIDENT KNICK: - pardon me, Brad.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: - of your agenda.

Yes.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Brad?

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Commissioner Mitrick is on the phone. And he can hear us.

COMMISSIONER MITRICK: I can hear you.

I'm on. I'm alive.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: All right.

The next item is on page five of your agenda. This is to amend 58 Pa. Code, Sections 143.45 and 143.52 relating to completing and submitting applications and procedure for unlimited antlerless licenses to authorize unlimited over-the-counter sales of antlerless licenses in any open or unexhausted wildlife management unit, on the second Monday in September until these quotas are exhausted, the text as shown on page six of your agenda.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Move to accept.

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Madam Secretary, will you call the vote, please, - or any comments, please?
COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: This is Commissioner Schnepp-Giger. I'd like to make a motion to amend this. And I understand that there has been a floor amendment prepared.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Second the motion to the floor amendment.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Recall for the vote, Madam Secretary.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: With the acceptance of the amendment, we would then be ready to have comment and vote on the item in the agenda.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Any motion?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Commissioner Fredericks, I move to accept.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Is there a second?

All right.

Call for a vote, Madam Secretary.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?
ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Moving on in the agenda to page seven of your agenda. This item comes from the Bureau of Wildlife Management. It concerns proposed rulemaking to amend 58 Pa. Code, Section 141.62.

Beaver and otter trappers are currently limited to using no more than five traps or snares. And no more than two devices may be body gripping traps, in any Wildlife Management Unit during an open otter trapping season.

This regulation was originally developed to minimize the chance of a trapper exceeding the season bag limit of one otter in a day.

The limitation on the number of beaver traps extends for five additional consecutive days after the close of the otter season. The five-day extension was put in place to allow for an otter trapping season extension if warranted.

No otter trapping seasons have been extended since the first season was established during 2015. Longer trapping seasons rather than a year-specific season extensions will be proposed by
the Commission in areas where more otters can be
trapped sustainably.

The Commission is proposing to amend
Section 141.62 relating to beaver and otter trapping
to eliminate the restriction on the number of traps
that beaver trappers can set during the five-day
period after the closure of the otter trapping
seasons.

The text of this proposal is shown on
pages seven and eight of your agenda.

PRESIDENT FREDERICKS: Move to accept.
COMMISSIONER FORADORA: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Any comments?
No comments heard.

Madam Secretary, would you call for a
vote?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in
favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Thank you.

And moving to page nine of the agenda.

This concerns adopted rulemaking to amend 58 Pa.
Code, Section 139.4 relating to seasons and bag
limits for the license year, to provide updated seasons and bag limits for the 2021 through 2022 license year.

The 2021 through 2022 seasons and bag limits have been amended to reflect current available scientific data, population and harvest records, field surveys and professional staff observations, as well as recommendations received from staff, organized sporting groups, members of the agricultural community and others interested in the management of the wildlife resources of this Commonwealth, the text is shown on pages 10 through 19 of your agenda.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do I have a motion?
COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: I believe there's a floor amendment for page 17 -.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Not yet.
ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Not yet.
COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Oh, not yet?
Okay.
Any comment?
COMMISSIONER LAYTON: No, we need to make a motion.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: So moved.
ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Yeah, for - for the
benefit of - thank you.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: So moved.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Second?

COMMISSIONER FORADORA: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: All right.

Any comments?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: I believe there's a floor amendment for pages 17 and 18.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Can we go - can we go over them page-by-page?


DR. SCHNUPP: Mr. President, this is Matthew Schnupp, our Director of Wildlife Management Bureau.

We do have a floor amendment on page 17. The amendment adds Saturday, November 27th and November - Sunday, November 28th to the 2021 season. bear season with no changes to the end dates.

This change applies to the four WMUs, where the extended season runs until December 11th.

And the 12 WMUs, where the extended season runs until
December the 4th.

The intent of this is to make the season more consistent with its historic structure, simplify regulations and provide additional opportunity -.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Move to accept the floor Amendment for page 17?

COMMISSIONER FORADORA: Second that.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have any discussion? All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

PRESIDENT KNICK: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

PRESIDENT KNICK: Page 18?

DR. SCHNUPP: Mr. President, this is Matthew again.

So, we have another one on this page as well. The amendment corrects a formatting error in the preliminary approval seasons.

So the hunting for the four species is allowed day or night during their open season, except during the overlap with firearms deer season, when they may be hunted only at night.

On the January agenda, the season dates were inadvertently formatted in a way that
would have closed night hunting for these furbearers during the firearm season.

The floor amendment will correct the error to achieve the original intent, so no change to the season structure for these furbearers, except for opening three Sundays, November 14th, 21 and 28 to hunting. Hunting would continue to be allowed day or night for most of the season and only at night during the overlap with firearm season, firearm deer.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Motion to accept the Floor amendment on page 18?

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: I’ll second that motion.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have a roll call on that motion, Madam Secretary?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

PRESIDENT KNICK: Page 19? Can we call for a vote, Madam Secretary, on Season –

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor on seasons and bags through page 19?

AYES RESPOND
PRESIDENT KNICK: Opposed.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed.

PRESIDENT KNICK: I'll go along with all except the concurrent doe season. I have to go against that one. So it's a no.

Motion passed.

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Thank you.

The next item for your agenda appears on page 20. It is to amend 58 Pa. Code, Section 147.673 relating to eligibility and application for DMAP to make July 1st the deadline for DMAP applications.

The text is shown on page 21 of your agenda.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Motion?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Motion to accept.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Second?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Any discussion? Madam Secretary, would you call for the vote?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE
COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Moving onto page 22 of your agenda. The next item is to amend 58 Pa. Code, Section 141.45 relating to turkey, to eliminate the use of rifles during the fall turkey season. The text is shown on page 23 of your agenda.

COMMISSIONER FORADORA: I'll make the motion.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Any discussion?

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Mr. President, if I could?

This is Commissioner Layton.

We had a - this has been decision that has been most difficult for me. After talking to several hunters, I realize that we're taking away almost a culture from some of these people that - that are rifle hunters in the fall turkey season.

However, I do kind of take some comfort in talking to one of the hunters who said to me, basically if you take rifles away from us, we're still going to be able to kill turkeys.

So without eliminating this season and providing them the opportunity to hunt with shotguns,
at least for now, until we can see what the data actually spells out as far as what the kill is with rifles in the - in the fall turkey season, I have to go along with this and support it.

We had some other options. I know Commissioner Schnep-Giger had come up with some ideas that we kind of ran through our legal department. And they weren't - we weren't able to do anything with them right now, because they were just kind of too big of a change.

So, as of now, with - either - if our options are either to eliminate the season or to allow people to go out and hunt with shotguns, I have to go along with the opportunity to hunt and just make this tough decision to eliminate rifles during that fall season.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Commissioner Mitrick -.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Commission Layton, can I proceed?

PRESIDENT KNICK: Thank you,

Commission Layton.

COMMISSIONER MITRICK: This is Commission Mitrick.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Any other comments?

COMMISSIONER MITRICK: I'd like to say something. I think a lot of the people, a lot of our hunters felt that we were doing this to for safety purposes, so that people wouldn’t be shot with rifles. But the truth of the matter is, this is strictly to help improve the population of the turkeys. It was not ever discussed because of a safety issue with the rifles.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: This is Commissioner Schnepp-Giger.

I'd also like to add in there, that the main objective that we're looking at is reducing hen harvest in the fall. At a time when hen harvest is an additive mortality to a species that is declining across a lot of the Commonwealth.

So this decision, while it doesn't sit well with every Pennsylvania hunter and can be argued that we took some opportunity away from folks who truly value their tradition of fall turkey hunting.

The larger grand scheme of things is that we're able to keep the fall season open. And offer rifle hunters an alternative implement, such as a shotgun to still pursue the game that they would like to pursue within the resource, and what it will
sustain and what it will allow hunters here in the Commonwealth.

COMMISSIONER MITRICK: This is Commissioner Mitrick again. I want to say one other thing.

Some people feel that this is going to be a permanent elimination of rifles during the fall turkey season. That's not necessarily true. The Board fully intends on reviewing this and seeing what the data shows after two or three years, and we'll look at this hard again.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Any other comments? Madam Secretary, can you call for a vote, please?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Thank you.

The next item comes from the Bureau of Wildlife Protection. And it appears on page 24 of your agenda.

It concerns proposed rulemaking to
amend 58 Pa. Code, Sections 131.2 and 141.1. Section
141.1 relating to special regulations areas currently
provides a general restriction prohibiting the use of
single projectile firearms in possession of single
projectile ammunition while hunting game or wildlife
within areas designated as special regulations areas.
The section thereafter provides a
multitude of exceptions for various firearms and
their associated ammunition. These firearm and
ammunition restrictions are intended to address
safety-related concerns in the predominantly urban
and developed areas of the Commonwealth. This
general firearm restriction serves as an effective
ban on the use of firearms that utilize straight-
walled cartridges.
The Commission is determined that
these firearms afford no greater risk of safety in
the special regulation areas, than concurrently
exempted shotguns and muzzle-loading firearms. The
Commission has also determined that a reorganization
of Section 141.1 is necessary to address its unwieldy
and confusing structure.
The Commission is proposing to amend
Sections 131.2 and 141.1 to define and authorize the
use of firearms that utilize straight-walled
cartridges within most areas designated as special regulation areas. And also reorganize Section 141.1 to provide a clear and more seamless construction within the section itself. And with related arms and ammunition provisions.

The text is shown on pages 23 through 24 through 27 of your agenda.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Motion to accept.

COMMISSIONER MITRICK: Second.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have any discussion?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: This is Commissioner Fredericks.

I'd like to greatly thank our Bureau of Law Enforcement folks. I know they spent a lot of time of these, weeding their way through all these regulations. Resulted in improved opportunity, and recreational use, and firearms for our hunters and simplified, dramatically simplified our regulations for special regulations there.

So, a shout out to our Bureau of Law Enforcement and Jason DeCoskey for working their way through this. Good job.

PRESIDENT KNICK: All right. Thank
you, Commissioner Fredericks.

Madam Secretary, would you call a vote, please?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL Respond AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: And moving onto page 28 of your agenda. There is a proposal to amend 58 Pa. Code, Section 147.804.

Since the mentored hunting program's initial inception in 2006, the program has gradually grown and expanded to allow the hunting of many additional species of game and wildlife.

With each progressive expansion of species eligibility, the mentored hunting program has come into closer alignment to the Commission's traditional hunting license structures.

The Commission is now proposing to amend Section 147.804 relating to general, to expand species eligibility for the mentored hunting program to include participation in waterfowl, bear, and expanded spring or special turkey seasons.

Existing regulatory structures will
authorize mentored youth over seven years of age at the time of application, and mentored adults to make application for bear licenses and special wild turkey licenses as a direct applicant.

Mentored youth under the age of seven years of age at the time of application will be authorized to receive the harvest tags from bear and special wild turkey licenses by transfer from a mentor in a similar fashion to other big game harvest tags.

The text is shown on pages 28 and 29 of your agenda.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Motion to accept.

COMMISSIONER MITRICK: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have any discussion?

Madam Secretary, will you call a vote, please?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: And on page 30 of
your agenda, there is adopted rulemaking to amend 58 Pa. Code, Section 141.4 to replace the current hunting hours table and migratory bird hunting hours table to accurately reflect the dates and hours of legal hunting for the 2021 through 2022 hunting/trapping license year.

The text is shown on pages 31 through 33 of your agenda.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Motion?

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Motion to accept.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have any discussion?

None heard. Madam Secretary, will you call a vote?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Moving to page 34 of your agenda. There's a proposal to amend Sections 143.203, 143.203a and 143.206 relating to random drawing elk licenses, special elk conservation
license, elk auction license, and validity of elk
licenses and to add Sections 139.18 and 143.23 - 203b
relating to elk management area, and hunt zones and
special license fundraiser elk license, to define the
elk management area and elk hunt zones, better
delineate and describe the three available elk
licenses, and lastly, close all elk hunting in any
elk hunt zone that does not receive an allocation for
a given hunting license year.

The text is shown on pages 35 through
38 of your agenda.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have a motion?
COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Motion to
accept.

COMMISSIONER FORADORA: Second.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Any discussion?
With none heard, Madam Secretary, will
you call a vote?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in
favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: With that, we'll
move to the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management on
This concerns real estate and an acquisition. Contract Number L3779, State Game Land Number 148 in Lawrence County. Joseph A. Schweikert and Bonnie L. Schweikert are offering 12 plus or minus acres of land in Shenango Township, Lawrence County, adjoining property donated from the Estate of Mary Joan Pavlich and approved by the Board of Game Commissioners at the January 29th, 2019 Commission Meeting.

This is shown on Exhibit RED 1 on page 41 of your agenda.

The option price is $30,000 lump sum to be paid with funds from the Game Commission's Restricted Account, other cost sharing funds. Access is from Denny Drive, T-429 and from Cochran Hill Road, which is an abandoned township road.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have a motion?
COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Motion to accept.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have a second?
COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Any discussion?
Madam Secretary, will you call a vote, please?
COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?
ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?
NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Moving to page 42 of your agenda is Contract Number L3780, State Game Land Number 141 in Carbon County.

Mary Ann Kruslicky is offering 6.38 plus or minus acres of land in Nesquehoning Borough, Carbon County, an interior in State Game Land Number 141, as shown on Exhibit RED 2, on page 43 of your agenda.

The option price is $30,000 lump sum to be paid with funds from the Game Fund. The parcel is located within an existing State Game Land. And therefore, the Commission may exceed $400 per acre, under Section 705(b) of the Game and Wildlife Code.

Access is from SR 93 or Hunter Street.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have a motion?
COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Motion to accept.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Second? Do we have a second?
COMMISSIONER MITRICK: Second.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Any comments?

Madam Secretary, will you call for a vote?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: Moving to page 44 of your agenda, there's an exchange, Contract Number L-3781. State Game Land Number 44 in Elk County.

Matthew J. Diemer is offering to exchange one plus or minus acre of land in Spring Creek Township, Elk County, an interior within State Game Land Number 44 to the Commission in exchange for 0.29 more or less acres of State Game Land Number 44 in Spring Creek Township, Elk County. Both is shown on Exhibit RED 3 on page 45 of your agenda.

This exchange will resolve an encroachment upon State Game Land Number 44 from Mr. Diemer's camp. Access to the one acre parcel is from existing State Game Land Number 44. The proposed exchange is in the best interest of the Commission.

COMMISSIONER FORADORA: Motion.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Second.
PRESIDENT KNICK: Is there a second?

Any discussion?

Madam Secretary, will you call a vote, please?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

ATTORNEY BECHTEL: And Commissioners, that completes the formal written part of the agenda. We would move to other New Business.

I just want to remind the Commissioners, that the antlerless allocations in the elk allocations are traditionally part of this meeting that will be voted upon under new business during this meeting.

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: So Mr. President, this is Commissioner Layton.

So I would like to make a motion that we accept the antlerless allocations for white tail deer as they were presented by the staff.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Any discussions?

Madam Secretary, would you call for a
vote?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Mr. President, again this is Commissioner Layton. I would like to offer a motion that we accept the elk allocations as they were presented by staff.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Do we have a second? All right. Okay. Any discussion? Hearing none. Madam Secretary, would you call a vote?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

AYES RESPOND

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed.

NO RESPONSE

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Mr. President, Commissioner Layton one more time. I would like to call on Dr. Matthew Schnupp, who is the Director of Wildlife Management. And I would for him to talk to
us just for a minute or two about and to give us an update on CWD in the state.

Dr. Schnupp.

DR. SCHNUPP: Yes. Thanks, Commissioner Layton. This is Matthew. So we had a busy year, as you well know. We have our Response Plan Implementation. We have had a lot of successes this past year. We've been able to roll out our visualization dashboard where folks can view the data. Our turnaround time went down to days rather than weeks, for samples submitted by hunters. Got great collaboration with Department of Agriculture. We've done some great new research with our CWD detection dogs.

Our optimization of surveillance and management tools through the Wildlife Futures Program has really taken off. And then our outreach, our collaboration with the National Deer Alliance has been a great product-driven relationship.

Our new Marketing Bureau has done a great job working with them to put out some region meetings that we hope to get out in front of folks this next month. And basically let them know how we did.

Let me, you know, follow-up and make
sure that they know how we've done as an agency and -
and how much we appreciate the support that the
hunters and - and the general public have given us
during this process. So that's the good.

And I think there is a lot of good.
And I'm really proud to be part of all that good
stuff. But there's also, unfortunately, some pretty
dire issues at hand as well.

So we were one of the states that were
able to maintain surveillance during this past year.
So we collected over 12,000 samples with the support
of Agency Staff and the hunters.

And unfortunately, out of those 12,000
samples, 218 were positive, that's up. But really,
where that focus comes down to is in our established
area, which everybody knows that initial area that
has - that has basically become the Blair, Bedford,
Huntingdon and Fulton County area.
And unfortunately, last year in that established
area, we had a sampling prevalence of about 7.6
percent. So still high. Concerning, obviously.

We've done a lot of try to manage
that, as I just mentioned. But unfortunately, we
jumped up to 13.8 percent this year. And that was a
real punch in the stomach, to be honest with you.
And - and is a real grim reality check, that we have to continue to work together to manage CWD.

We see some - from other states, that these - these numbers will continue to rise without some direct management. And so, we ask the hunters, the general public and the support of Agency Staff to continue and - and so that we can - we can manage this disease and make sure that the Agency is doing everything we can to fight it.

So, thanks for bringing this up, Commissioner Layton. And happy to take any questions on that further or answer anything.

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Thank you, Matthew. I would like to just make a statement, if I may.

Today, more than ever we must realize as hunters and outdoor enthusiasts, that working together is crucial for the future of wildlife conservation here in Pennsylvania. The PGC has asked for help from sportsmen across the state for their help in managing CWD, which has become a larger problem every year. Conservation is a big word. And it's crucial that we all work together as one using the best science on a statewide level.

As we look back at 2020, the CWD
incident rate increased once again, in the
established zone. Without PGC and hunters uniting
efforts to combat this disease, the future and
increase of CWD is imminent.

The Commissioners and the Agency face
a tremendous amount of resistance when it comes to
CWD. In fact, almost half of the states are battling
CWD. We need to show the whole country what being a
Pennsylvanian hunter is all about.

Our Agency has been a leader in
wildlife conservation efforts since its inception 125
years ago. We need your help more now than ever to
unite, and battle this disease together and cooperate
to protect the future of our incredible wild white
tailed deer herd.

I want to thank you for your support
and thank you for being a Pennsylvania hunter. Thank
you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Thank you,
Commissioner Layton.

Do we have any other comments?
At this time, I would like to
recognize Commissioner Fox, Charlie Fox. This will
be his last meeting. Thank you, Charlie, for
supporting this Game Commission and for all you've
done for it. And it has been a pleasure to meet and serve with you.

COMMISSIONER FOX: And thank you. It has been an honor and a privilege for me to represent the sportsmen of Pennsylvania. And I thank you for your cooperation, and all of the Board and the Agency.

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: And Charlie, this is -

PRESIDENT KNICK: Any comments?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: Charlie, this is Commissioner Fredericks. I'd like to thank you for your service to conservation throughout your lifetime. As much as we appreciate your service on the Commission for the last eight years, we all know that your commitment to sound conservation has been a lifetime passion of yours. And I want to thank you and congratulate you. And be well.

COMMISSIONER FORADORA: This is Commissioner Foradora. Thank you, Charlie for your service. And I echo Commissioner Fredericks' comments.

Thank you, Charlie.

COMMISSIONER MITRICK: Commissioner Mitrick. And Charlie, I just want to say you'll be
missed. And thank you so, so much for all you've
done for the Commission, and for the state of
Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania hunters.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: This is
Commissioner Schnep-Giger. I enjoyed working with
you, and picking your brain many of times and gaining
knowledge from your wisdom.

So, I thank you for the mentor that
you have become to me. And look forward to
continuing our friendship even after you've completed
your term here on the Board. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER LAYTON: Charlie, it's
Commissioner Layton. So you know, there's not enough
time to say everything that needs to be said about
your service to the Commission.

But one of the things I just want to
bring out is, your love for the youth population in
Pennsylvania and all that you've done for youth
hunting, that is truly the future of the Pennsylvania
Game Commission.

And I just want to thank you for your
support. And nobody has any idea how much time you
spend with the youth. And I just want to thank you
for all the time that you've dedicated to them and
conservation in Pennsylvania.
Thanks, my friend.

PRESIDENT KNICK: With that said, the next Commissioner meeting will be July 23rd and 24th here in Harrisburg. And that will conclude this Pennsylvania Game Commission meeting.

Motion to adjourn?

COMMISSIONER FREDERICKS: So moved.

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Second.

PRESIDENT KNICK: Second? Madam Secretary?

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: All in favor?

ALL RESPOND AYE

COMMISSIONER SCHNEPP-GIGER: Opposed?

NO RESPONSE

PRESIDENT KNICK: Thank you.

MS. NEELY MITCHEL: And that concludes the meeting today. Again, this session has been recorded. And we expect it to be uploaded to the Game Commission's YouTube channel early next week.

On behalf of the Board, the Executive Office and the rest of the staff at the Game Commission, we'd like to thank you for taking time out of your weekend to join us. And we hope you're able to get outside and enjoy some of Pennsylvania's
great outdoors.

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VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:02 A.M.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was reported by me on 4/10/2021 and that I, Kelly Gallick, read this transcript, and that I attest that this transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceeding. This notarial act involved the use of communication technology.

Dated the 7th day of May, 2021

Kelly Gallick,
Court Reporter