

**Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 12, 2023
Great Plains Nature Center Auditorium
6232 E 29th St N, Wichita, KS
including a
Virtual ZOOM Meeting Option**

Approved Subject to
3/9/23 Commission
Approval

The January 12, 2023, meeting of the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission was called to order by Chairman Gerald Lauber at 12:00 p.m.

Chairman Lauber – This is the first time in a while we started meeting at noon. We have a public hearing as the first business item; we don't have any today, then general public comments on non-agenda items.

Chairman Lauber and Commissioners Troy Sporer, Phil Escareno, Lauren Queal Sill, Warren Gfeller and Emerick Cross were present. Delia Lister was absent.

II. INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSIONERS AND GUESTS

The Commissioners and Department staff introduced themselves (Attendance Roster – Exhibit A).

III. ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS TO AGENDA ITEMS

Sheila Kemmis – Revised agenda to add Free Park Entrance and Free Fishing Days by Secretary's Resolution to the Public Hearing, Stuart Schrag will present. (Agenda - Exhibit B).

IV. APPROVAL OF THE November 17, 2022, MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Lauren Sill moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Warren Gfeller seconded. *Approved* (Minutes – Exhibit C).

V. DEPARTMENT REPORT

D. Public Hearing

1. Free Park Entrance and Free Fishing Days Secretary's Resolutions - Stuart Schrag, Assistant Secretary, presented this update to the Commission (Exhibit D). I will not go over these in detail with every date. This covers 2023 free park entrance and 2023 free fishing days, June 3 and 4. The free park entrance events run through all the months for different parks. There is no action to take other than the Secretary's signature on both of these.

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ben Bickel - I fish at Glen Elder. The water is not running in right now. The chumming needs to stop. Guides are cleaning the lake out and don't have to pay to fish there. Should be charged for that. I gave you some pictures (Exhibit E). Goes on 3-4 times a day every day during channel catfishing. They have 8-10 guys on a pontoon. They have soybean piles all over in different parts of the lake and they chum every day and night. If you sit on the bank, you won't catch anything. Been going on for 30 years. It has two rivers running in, they put a post up on one side of the river so you can't drive down there anymore, you have to walk about an eighth of a mile. Things need to be done at that lake. They have a pipe going into the lake when they grind the fish and it needs to go in farther. The chummers run the fish grinder all the time just for them and that is why it is always wore out. You need to charge the guys doing the chumming and guiding up there. They are all over the lake and they need to be paying something. Chairman Lauber – Part of the problem is that is a federal impoundment, which Glen Elder is, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and we have no ability to regulate activities. That has to come from the feds. We can encourage but not much we can do. As far as fish cleaning, it was my understanding that KDHE has some involvement in fish cleaning stations and try to minimize inappropriate discharge. One at Lake Perry has been shut down for several years because of continued use by the catfisherman, who have it figured out with soybeans. I don't know if having no chumming across the state (is the answer), not sure what we can do. Have staff look into this and see if (there are) things we can do to minimize this. Not the first person to make this observation. Not breaking laws, but not guilty of modest harvest. Secretary Brad Loveless – Bryan, our fisheries chief, could you speak to that? Bryan Sowards – This has been brought to our attention before and we've asked staff to look into it. We're looking at it from a population standpoint, I'm not sure on the fish cleaning side of things. In terms of catfish harvest, we have looked at it over the years and are still looking at it. So far, catch has been steady from year to year, it has dropped a little bit overall but size has increased. Quality fish are increasing but numbers may be increasing. Recruitment is maintaining every year. We have tools in our toolbelt, which would be to decrease the limit from 10 to 5, or something like that... We try to stay away from getting rid of opportunities whenever we can. Looking at it from a population standpoint, so far, it's fairly healthy. Commissioner Cross – Is there a limit on how much you can chum? Sowards – Not to my knowledge. Assistant Secretary Schrag – We have a BOR coordination meeting in March and will bring this up at that meeting. Chairman Lauber – At one point, I was told by biologists that on a productive reservoir, anglers don't have much effect on total number of channel catfish. That does not mean you are not right in your analysis. Give this a look and also see what the Bureau has to say about guiding on their public lands.

Norman Mantle, Salina – What authority do you have over fish on federal waters? Do you have any enforcement powers? Chairman Lauber – Yes, we have state laws. Go ahead with questions, I may have you direct more specific questions to appropriate staff. Mantle – Issue about trail cams, it is about trophies, about records and bragging rights... Why is this being allowed to be done? Another issue, selling wild game meat on page 6 of your pamphlet... When is it wild game and when is it processed game? Chairman Lauber – To me that is obvious. Mantle – Why are we allowing them to shoot and kill wild game if it's illegal? Chairman Lauber – Go on to your next question. Mantle - When do I get an answer? Chairman Lauber – We will see how many of these you have. It is my experience you are not bashful and have lots of things to talk about. Mantle – Why don't we give wildlife the respect it deserves? Chairman Lauber – I think we do. Mantle – We don't. It is about money and greed. We need to stop this. You need to read a documentary on Damnation, about dams, not only in Kansas. On the west and east coasts, they

are taking them out. They are a contradiction on the laws of nature, wildlife and aquatic life cannot migrate upstream. They took out some in Washington and Oregon; there are four in northern California and southern Oregon and they are taking out one this year and the other three are coming. All of these dams in the United States should not be there. They are taking them out in Maine, it's not just West coast issue. The dams in Kansas will all come out; they are appropriating the money and lawsuits are being filed. I watched it and they put 800 pounds of dynamite in the dam in Washington, the Klamath Dam; it is in the December 19, 2022, issue of the Western Livestock Journal. Camping, stop camping, everyone should have equal opportunity to obtain camping spots, it is public property, taxpayer's property. You are denying everyone the opportunity to obtain a camping site. Let's close the parks and put buffalo and elk in there. Chairman Lauber – Are you serious? Mantle – Yes, it is being done out west. Chairman Lauber – There is not any way we are really going to be able to answer these and I encourage you to direct (your comments) to Secretary Loveless and Assistant Secretary Schrag, rather than the Commission, because there is no way to answer some of these. Mantle – I know it is about politics. You will be fighting an uphill battle. Chairman Lauber – Thank you. Secretary Loveless – We will exchange numbers. I know a lot of this is your perspective but there are some questions in there, so we will share information and follow up.

Barry Raugust, Wichita – I am a bowhunter. I support use of e-tags and e-permits, a wonderful addition to what we have as hunters to not only document harvest but give that information to wildlife biologists to use. I would like to discourage use of printable tags. We have given poachers a tool to appear to be legitimate when they harvest an animal. You can print multiple copies, go out and affix a copy to the animal and take it home and if not stopped by a conservation officer on the way home, you are safe; you grab another copy, go back out and repeat. The only chance of them ever being detected is if they are stopped more than once by a conservation officer, which is not going to happen. I have been checked by a conservation officer once in my 50 years of hunting. The only other possibility of being caught is to brag on social media and post pictures of more than one animal, more than you have tags for. Every sportsman I have talked to is willing to pay extra to have a notch-able tag. If it is about saving money, sportsmen are willing to pay extra to have a tag that can only be used one time. If convenient, I'd like to have a tag we can put on a mount as a keepsake of the hunt. It is hard to hang on to a paper copy in the field and keep it affixed on the carcass if it's raining or you're dragging through the woods. If it is about convenience, I know there is something about instant gratification but there is also something to be said about planning ahead and not doing it at the drop of a hat or an ill-prepared hunt at the last minute. Plan ahead and harvest effectively. Please do away with printable tags, an inconvenience and convenience and cost savings are at expense of our Kansas wildlife. Chairman Lauber – I don't think any of us have received a call that someone likes the new system. I understand why we had to do that and we have printers all over the state trying to keep up. If you go to a place where you traditionally buy a license and that printer doesn't work, then they can't give you a permit. Encourage staff to look into something with more solid material. I tried to write my name on it and punched holes through it. A work in progress. Secretary Loveless – We have had all those conversations and continue to have them. Glad to mark this as an agenda item for next time and share what we know and what other states are doing and come up with the best solution. We're not at an end point but we're trying to make progress. Comments help us. Chairman Lauber – I would like to have that be an agenda item. Commissioner Sill – What are other states doing that use the same vendor? Raugust – You could

mail the tags before the season starts. Chairman Lauber – Are other states using tags or printed paper? Jason Dickson – A lot of states are moving to printed paper and there has been some talk in different states of using pull tab, hard-card-type where you the clip tabs off and tag deer. Many states are moving to e-tagging and printable tags. On ours, like the gentleman mentioned, from a nonresident standpoint that is what we do: we send them something different, not on green paper but it is different when they apply and win the draw. Paper tags are for residents, we have always had paper tags if you bought it online anyway. When the new system came up, there was a push because of so many printer issues with green paper printers at our agents, there was a push to do that, so went to 8 ½ x 11 paper. We are looking at it internally and seeing what it would take to go in a different direction.

Matt Shook, Bentley – Keep tele-check/e-check, to get rid of problems with printed tags you could mass produce sticky back tags, or a notch tag like used in other states, wrap that around the animal. All it is is a carcass tag. If they get stopped and an animal has a carcass tag, they can check to see they checked the animal correctly online. I love e-check, gives biologists a lot of great information on what is being harvested, when and where. I don't like the paper tag. They can be mass produced, can be dated or not so they can be reused. They are a waxed, sticky back tag that can be picked up when purchasing a tag. A lot better than the system we have now. I'd like to talk about mule deer. Any push to ever, with advancements in technology, make archery and muzzleloader a draw with mule deer? You can still shoot a mule deer doe but you have to use your primary tag. The last record I looked at from 2021 was that 128 mule deer does died. I've seen a lot of social media this year; guys were getting roasted for shooting does, but the consensus was not to go home empty handed. Ten years ago, I could have shown you 300 mule deer on a 20- to 25-acre section area. This year? Four does. K-State had a study, the big thing was the stress and pressure we are putting on them. Mass migration of eastern hunters who chase mule deer for 3-4 days... If they had to buy a mule deer stamp, that would help. Western Kansas folks don't go east to hunt whitetail. I like to go out but every weekend there is 50-60 guys running mule deer and they are so spooky; and taking does. Draw for archery and muzzleloader on mule deer and somehow on big game permit don't make it either species, either sex, give mule deer their own tag. They are in such a decline they are not going to be here in 10 years. Chairman Lauber – In decline and the more decline, the more the demand and numbers are dropping. I don't know how much is harvest and how much is other factors, but we will consider that. Levi might have something to add on whether either-sex tags are affecting the population. Levi Jaster – Related to going to a draw for any mule deer tags, we have been having some internal discussions, so we're continuing that. Either-sex tags for mule deer, the number is low and relative to population for does. I don't know if it's a local issue for high numbers in an area but if spread across the range, it's not been identified as an issue. K-State did identify some things going on. A big one was grasslands; any fawn that survived in that study was in grass knee to waist high. Go to western Kansas and find fields like that. Our deer population tracks well with CRP and when it increased in Kansas, growth rates between deer populations and CRP acres increased and match well. Going to a tag specific to mule deer presents other problems. In western Kansas, you can kill a mule deer if you're not particular about which mule deer. If we give people a tag specifically for mule deer, they will kill one, but having that either-species tag, often times, they will fill with a whitetail deer instead. A hunter is happy he killed a deer but he has not killed a mule deer. That doesn't mean people don't get that tag and their goal is a mule deer only. Look at immensely restrictive tags if specific and possibly a separate season to keep harvest down to where we are or reduce more. Shook – The reason I was asking for a stamp or draw for archery and muzzleloader season is to possibly reduce stress off of mule deer, they may still chase them and if they don't get one, they will go whitetail hunting. They get pushed off of

prime habitat. Some areas there is a vehicle every mile, during rut and rifle season and put stress on the animals at a time they don't need to be stressed. Looking for way to reduce hunting pressure so they're not so stressed. Jaster – Hunters do have to sacrifice for muzzleloader or rifle tag, if they draw a rifle tag as a resident, they are limited to those zones. That is one thing with an archery tag, they have statewide privileges. Shook – Guys I know that don't draw, they just go out and buy an over-the-counter muzzleloader tag. Put archery and muzzleloader in a draw. Jaster – To help with stress, we need to be getting more grass on the landscape; deer in western Kansas heavily use CRP fields and that tall grass structure to hide. We had a tough year last year and concerned with this next year. I have talked to landowners in western Kansas and they feel the same way. It's about being able to have grass on the landscape, and we need rain. That's one of biggest things that came out of that study, how to put that back out there and protect what we've got because that has exacerbated some of these issues. Getting habitat back out there is the key to recovery. And we'll work on the other stuff as we can. Commissioner Escareno – Had Kyser family farms contact me, he had a trophy buck he had been watching for 3-4 years, felt it was time to shoot it. I didn't realize we go out and count deer at night and use spotlights. He complained that when we count, we spooked deer out of his farm ground and had issues with all the deer moving from his property and he felt we were at fault for spooking them out. I visited with Levi on this and tried to explain it to him. Thought it would be a good time to bring that up so we know this happens at night. I felt they should have given him respect and given him a call that they would be on his property, so he knows that is happening and that it's not someone poaching. Chairman Lauber – Aren't those done on public roads? Jaster – That is done on public roads. We've tried that on certain routes if we can. Crews change each year and full time staff do the same routes every year. The number of people we would have to contact is too many and I would have to hire 2-3 more people just to call each one. It has not been my experience that deer flee and stay away. I would be concerned that something else is going on beyond that because I have gone back and spotlighted the same route multiple nights in a row and the deer are still there. Some deer run away from lights but come back. In the Western half of Kansas, deer home ranges are huge, we are talking 10-12 square miles for home range for whitetails and mule deer. There is a limited resource if they have to spread out that much. When you start thinking about an average home range being 10-12 square miles, some are up to 20 square miles. Most people don't own that much property to keep deer's entire home range on one property. It's possible they are moving around to whatever resource they need. We try to minimize impacts, we go down the road, see deer, collect data and move on. We have been investigating other techniques for eastern Kansas urban areas, like trying thermal equipment to not have to shine a light, but the problem is expense. Crews talk to a lot of people at night. It is one way we can cost-effectively get a population estimate every year or so... We're trying to address issues that have arisen and will continue to do so.

Kyle Adams, Wichita – Thank you for all you do, a thankless position... I've seen proposals shot down at the state level and we see that as sportsmen. Also, I want to say "thank you" to wardens and biologists who are spread too thin and doing the best they can. My question revolves around the "Stop the Spread" campaign. I want to know if there have been any proposals or thought given to elimination of baiting statewide for cervids. It is rampant, not just CWD but baiting. Secretary Loveless – That conversation has been evolving lately. Jaster – We've discussed this lately and are investigating it deeper. It is probably the goal but how do we get there from here? At one time, we did not bait in Kansas at all. Assistant Secretary Schrag – When we opened to

nonresidents, prior to that, we didn't have a culture of baiting before that time. Jaster – It is a complicated topic, not just from the wildlife biologist opinion or wildlife disease standpoint, but because it has become a cottage industry for feeders, corn and other grain, so how do we address that? Not just shut down right away and being told “We can't do that if it comes from the legislature.” We need to get landowners on board, too. We can address it on public land but not on private land, so how do we build support, or even 50% support, to limit it? So, we have to address that through education, “Stop the Spread” ads were mostly related to CWD but that was part of that. After September, when we had a morning panel discussion on CWD, we talked about building an educational campaign to try to get more information out and into hunter's hands, so they understand why it is important and this is something we need to address. Adams – If there's anything we as sportsmen can do to facilitate that, I know several that would be interested. Secretary Loveless – To Levi's comment, if we talk with you and tried to make “no more baiting” after a certain date, it would be a huge mess... (We're focusing on) education and working to start down this road and start with people who will voluntarily do it and give people plenty of warning that it is what we are thinking. We are having those conversations and will use everybody's best advice on how we can constructively move ahead. It wasn't that long ago that there wasn't good science on the connection between baiting and CWD. That has changed and with that, and good science, we will change our policy.

Jackie Augustine, executive director for Audubon of Kansas – We are supportive of wildlife license plates. Curious if that is part of updates today. We were excited about Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) and how that was emphasizing greater focus on nongame wildlife. Now that it didn't make the last federal budget, we hope the Commission still has focus on nongame wildlife.

Matt Yancey, Sterling – It's in the regulations now that you can use a drone to scout for hunting, but not hunt for 24 hours on that property. Why isn't recovering animals same as that with the same exclusion of not being able to hunt? Secretary Loveless – Why can't you use a drone to recover an animal to find an animal after you shoot it; I don't know the exact answer to that, we will follow up on that. My speculation would be that every time we put a regulation in place, we have to figure out how to effectively enforce it. If drone use is closely related to a hunt, the worry would be that you wouldn't be using it to locate an animal that has been shot, you may be trying to blur the line. Officers have a difficult time being fair in the field and they want to be fair. We're worried about hunters misusing that drone and using it to actually hunt. We can get your contact information and have a conversation with law enforcement about that and get back with you. Yancey – Even if blurring the line, at that point, it goes back to scouting regardless, and you shouldn't hunt that property for 24 hours after any drone flight whatsoever. No way to really blur it. If you wounded it at that point, you are scouting. Does that make sense? If you fly with intention of locating an animal wounded or not wounded, it would fall under same statute of a 24-hour ban from hunting the property once you put up the drone. Secretary Loveless – You are saying you shouldn't be able to use a drone for anything after scouting? Yancey – Whether scouting or recovering, either way. If you wounded an animal, a warden could say you are scouting at that point and if not mortally wounded, it is still a 24-hour ban with no hunting. It would be tough to know when a drone left the air and what a 24-hour period is. Like e-logs, you could log it in the drone and register to fly it, but still a 24-hour ban. Chairman Lauber – We will review those issues when this comes up again. Sometimes things seem fair and easy to pass and then you get a group of knowledgeable people who come up with lots of reasons it may not work. We will give it consideration.

Tyler Grauberger (online) – CWD and what the plan is moving forward. I'm an out of stater, who comes to Kansas to hunt deer every year for over 20 years now; seeing CWD on the rise. My deer I shot in November tested positive and I just got the results. Not only am I out \$600 on a deer tag now, I'm out the money to process the meat and I don't know what to do with the meat. Do you have anything moving forward that is going to reassure that you are taking the appropriate steps to manage herds so this doesn't keep happening? Chairman Lauber – Like to see instant test and there aren't any. There is not a lot we can do. Secretary Loveless – We're doing what we can, as well as other states we are working with, to speed up that testing. A lot of us have dealt with the same thing. To your point of trying to get rid of CWD, we are changing management and had a good discussion in September and are figuring out next actions to reduce levels of CWD. There's no technology to get rid of it unfortunately but we are working on a management plan to keep it low enough to not become catastrophic. A faster test is what everybody needs and we're working as hard as we can on that. Chairman Lauber – We neither encourage nor discourage consumption of that meat if an animal tests positive. There are no known cases where it has jumped from a deer to a human. And there's no way to solve that problem or to quantify what we do if that happens. It's a risk if you shot a deer and it was feverish or had internal organs damaged... Tyler – An officer was explaining to me that there was a monkey that contracted CWD from consuming meat in the past 6-8 months. His suggestion was to not eat it because there were concerns that it might be mutated more towards Mad Cow Disease. It is discouraging when I spent close to \$1,000 to come to your state and hunt. I was told they were sorry that it had been two months and I had paid for processing, better luck next year. Is the two-month delay because of the number of tests you are submitting or based on the number of tags? What is the two-month delay? Chairman Lauber – That doesn't have anything to do with tags. You get a test, send it in and labs are a two-week turn around. Tyler – So it took six weeks for my test to get there? Chairman Lauber – I am unfamiliar with that. Tyler – I am from Colorado, here we have a reimbursement program because of the delay. Nobody is going to keep deer in their freezer on bone two months to see if a deer tested positive, it's a waste to me. Colorado has a reimbursement program if your deer tests positive, they suggest you throw it away. Is that something Kansas may move towards to help take care of the hunter in this situation? Jaster – Some of the delays had to do with lab staffing. Even the best time we have had, as well as other states with their own labs, has been two weeks turn around. A week of shipping and week in the lab is the ideal conditions. It takes time to set up the test. Bare minimum of a lab technician getting their hands on the sample to having the sample results ready has been 72 hours. The processes take time. Now we have more issues, lab staffing, enough for the number of samples, switched labs with one of our research projects from doing it in Missouri to a Colorado state lab because of the time it takes; Missouri lab was taking a month. There are new tests coming around that may be faster but they're not ready to go into production, they're in the trial phase of figuring out how to mass produce them and test them. The last few years there have been major developments in CWD research from this standpoint, so we'll see where we are going. It is disheartening but there is not a lot to be done at this point. States address this in different ways. Every state has to look at the best solution they can put into place for the conditions they have. Commissioner Gfeller – Labs in Kansas are not Wildlife and Parks managed? Jaster – No, they are mostly the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, outside of our current research project, is where our samples go. Hunters are also welcome to submit samples directly to them, but they would be responsible to pay for that themselves. Going into a new year, so prices will probably be changing... We have no lab that is KDWP-controlled. Most

of that is several millions of dollars to set up. Commissioner Gfeller – Samples have to be cultured before tests are final? Jaster – The process for the test, they have to get lymph nodes, sliced thin and dyed; dye has to set and then a technician has to look at that. What they are looking for is clusters of the prions. They have to do more than one sample to be sure it's not an anomaly, and it takes time for the dye to set and to slice them thin. Most labs, to be cost effective, have to do them in large batches, too. In talking to researchers in other places, sometimes even if they only have one or two samples to look at, that may delay it because they wait for more samples to come in. Some of the medium they deal with you pay the same amount whether you do one sample or 50 samples. Commissioner Gfeller – Until there's a reliable field test with instant results there is not much we can do to speed the process. Right? Jaster – Yes. In the last couple of weeks, we have seen some presentations on preliminary research results that are exciting on some new testing, but they're still in early testing phases. If that comes about, that will help. A potential field test is what everybody is looking for.

Kaitlin Lospinoso (online) – I moved to Kansas a few months ago from North Carolina. I have slowly been getting into hunting and trapping and getting the lay of the land. I was out on Tuttle Creek Wildlife Area last Saturday, off of McIntyre Creek Road, and I was intending to set a trap line but walked across a field and found where a hunter had been out that morning and there were about 100 crow carcasses left all over on the field. He was using a downed tree as a blind and had a bucket for a seat, surrounded by all of his empty shot shells he had left. He had piles and piles of carcasses left on a piece of public land. Some of the piles were rotting away and some were fresh. This is probably something he does weekly out there. I wasn't sure of the rules on wanton waste in Kansas. I contacted Ben Jedlicka, my local warden, he came and talked to me. I used the guy's bucket to pick up some of them and found two crows still alive, only 15-20 yards from his blind. If they made an effort, it would have been easy to find them. One was with a broken wing, and one with a broken leg. I took them home and one died before I could take it to a rehabber, Operation Wildlife. Ben came to my house the day before yesterday and asked me to come speak at this hearing. He gets a lot of calls about these crows. Crows are considered webless migratory birds, they have season dates but no bag limit. They're treated like game but regarding carcass disposal and wanton waste, there is no regulation on them. They can be disposed of in any manner and wanton waste laws don't apply to them as far as making sure you put down crippled or wounded game, and clean carcasses and dispose of them in a respectful manner. In addition, there is no non-toxic shot requirement for crows, even on public land where there are no restrictions for toxic shot; Tuttle Creek is one of those wildlife areas with no toxic shot requirement. You are talking about an animal with no bag limit, no non-toxic shot requirement and no carcass disposal laws. That was a field full of 100 crow carcasses filled with lead shot that are sitting there. Some were in the nearby creek, so lead shot was in the creek because carcasses are rotting in the creek. They are all left out where raptors or whatever else could pick on the carcasses... My main concern, left on public land, it can have its own restrictions; it is statewide the crow regulations are such that hunters can leave crow carcasses out and not clean them up, not use non-toxic shot and do whatever. That could be a statewide regulation but with regards to public land, there are people out there who are not hunters or trappers, they're just going out to enjoy nature. Then they come across something like that. Most people don't mind hunting and trapping if done according to regulation and done respectfully. What I came across was enough to turn anyone against hunters. It was enough to make me frustrated at who did that and at the regulations allowed that to happen. Ben said the only thing he could go after was littering, for left shot shells and not for the carcasses. I wanted to understand if there is anything we were missing with the regulations and that is behavior that is legal to do? If so, is that something that can be changed? If we could get more regulation on

disposal and non-toxic shot at least on public land, if not statewide. Chairman Lauber – We will give that consideration, Rich Schultheis, our webless waterfowl manager, will look at that. Thank you for bringing that to our attention. Assistant Secretary Schrag – We haven’t had a meeting in a while between public lands and the law enforcement division due to the pandemic, but we plan to start those coordination meetings back up. That is a topic that would be a good discussion. We will undertake that.

V. DEPARTMENT REPORT (continued)

A. Secretary’s Remarks

1. Agency and State Fiscal Status Report – Brad Loveless, Secretary, presented this update to the Commission. Our 2023 budget year started July 1 and are just under \$99 million for all divisions. Report is through end of December. Park fee fund (PFF), is derived from entrance and camping fees and annual vehicle passes at state parks. The total year to date revenue is \$4.3 million. This is approximately \$2.7 million less than same period last year. Obviously we have come through COVID and that was an unusual time for us. What we are doing with PFF, as well as our other funds, is tracking them based on comparisons to last couple of years and looking at pre-COVID levels to be realistic in comparisons. We will be analyzing this and having internal discussions based on longer term data. Cabin revenue, from parks and public lands, is under half million dollars, down about 40% from previous year. There is about \$245,000 less than previous three years in comparison. Wildlife fee fund (WFF), comes from sale of hunting and fishing licenses, big game permits, tags, etc. WFF revenue for fiscal year to end of December is about \$7.1 million, a third decline from previous year. This includes \$2.7 million deficit in month of July due to delay in reimbursement, to unsuccessful big game applicants. Ordinarily that reimbursement would have occurred earlier but because we changed our licensing system it fell in different year. In long term we will develop an accurate perspective. WFF cash balance was \$22.5 million, \$11 million down since beginning of fiscal year. That fund is always being added to and subtracted from, basically a bank account. The fact that we are about \$10 million down isn’t alarming, the question is timing of the reimbursement. Boat fee fund (BFF) is revenue from boat registrations and what we use to provide boating safety education and access infrastructure to support boating public. FY 2023 receipts through the end of the year are \$480,000, a decline of 26% from previous year. Again, COVID boat activities were higher than usual. Governor’s budget recommendation released this morning. We made proposals to the Governor, review with staff starting tomorrow on how we are doing. For the future we have requests for higher spending authority as well as funds from State general fund (SGF) or from EDIF lottery revenues for running our department. We will update you in the future. Right now, they are just out and we will be analyzing them in next couple days.

2. Legislative Update – Dan Riley, Chief Legal Counsel, presented this update to the commission. Legislature just got rolling this week. One bill introduced of interest and potential direct impact on us. HB 2006 (Exhibit F), line 29, has language that states, “it would be unlawful for any person to”, do a number of things related to spotlights, headlights or artificial light sources. Also, on page two, line 6, states “Any rule or regulation promulgated to the contrary is void.”. As introduced this bill would have a direct impact on existing regulation 115-5-1 (Exhibit G), section d, adopted by you in August 2020, which provides, from January 1 through March 31

there is a special hunting season for coyotes that allows artificial light sources. So, bill is directed at that particular regulation. Chairman Lauber – Is this a desire to take away our ability to have those rules, or to take away our ability to have any rules? Chief Counsel Riley – Hard to infer intent from the language. It appears to be fairly clear that language would have intended impact on that provision in that regulation. What intent to do so, I couldn't say. Commissioner Sporer – Who is Carmichael and why would he present this? Chief Counsel Riley – He is a legislator that is familiar to us and historically has been friendly to our issues. Chairman Lauber – Where is he from? Chief Counsel Riley – From Wichita. Commissioner Sporer – 92nd district. Chief Counsel Riley – It is difficult to infer intent from a piece of legislation. We can connect dots to see what impact it would have on our regulations but wouldn't want to infer what someone's purpose was. It would definitely impact 115-5-1. Commissioner Gfeller – The way I read this, artificial lights, scopes, thermal imaging, night hunting is still ok as long as it is not done from a vehicle or done on public lands. Am I reading that right? Under (d) (1), (2) and (3). Commissioner Sporer – Does this document have anything to do with the House bill or is this a separate issue? Chief Counsel Riley – This is our regulation because the language in the bill will directly impact that. In terms of the direct impact and intended application of the language, I don't know that it only applies to use of devices from a vehicle. I didn't read it that way but I haven't dissected it line by line either. I've not dug into it much, because it was just introduced this week. Chairman Lauber – At first glance you would think it means they want to protect coyotes but that doesn't make sense. Chief Counsel Riley – Not much, no. I would be hesitant to infer any intent. Historically Representative Carmichael has been an ally of ours when we needed support. He is on the rules and regs committee, so I deal with him frequently there and has been someone who has been good for us to work with. We wanted to make you aware of it and we will keep an eye on it. Commissioner Sill – Could you address the license plate issue that Ms. Augustine brought up? Update the public on where we stand with those. Chief Counsel Riley – As everyone is probably aware, we did get legislation approved to authorize four license plates. The second phase of that process is submitting designs to the Department of Revenue. What we found was that the plate design itself had to be reviewed for clarity. It was explained to us that the license plates purpose was to identify the vehicle so clarity is a major issue. The Department of Revenue has a multi-layer process, in terms of establishing that and part of that includes being reviewed by the Highway Patrol. When our four plates were reviewed, the comment was that they were beautiful but unfortunately some of our designs diminished the clarity and we didn't pass that test. Before we can move into the next phase we will have to redesign to some extent to increase clarity to get it approved. We are hung up at that point right now until we meet the standards of visibility and clarity.

B. General Discussion

Assistant Secretary Schrag – Follow up on deer carcass tag issue and comments from two gentleman. Everything they brought up has been part of our conversations. What it boils down to is validating legal harvest, even with green Tyvek tags or the printable at home tags there has always been a means of not doing things legally. You could have affixed that Tyvek tag to an animal, not filled out the information, cut off and reuse it. Our officers dealt with that. We need to address validating that legal harvest in manner that is beneficial not only for the hunter but the officer in the field checking that. Along with e-tagging and transporting that animal home legally and what that looks like. Some states require as simple as just a wrap of duct tape around the animal with the e-tag confirmation number written on it. That is a way to validate it was a legal harvest. It gives the hunter a piece of mind that they are transporting a legal animal. The

processor that animal might be delivered to as well. I wanted to reassure you we will make this an agenda item and that will be part of conversation.

1. Commissioner Permit Update and Drawing – Stuart Schrag, Assistant Secretary, presented this update to the Commission (Exhibit H). Done once a year and up to seven big game permits are drawn and issued each year to raise money for conservation. One elk permit, one antelope permit, or up to seven any deer permits may be issued through a lottery draw. The first permits were awarded in January 2006, when seven conservation organizations applied and drew one elk and six deer permits. Now we are averaging around 200 applications from these conservation organizations. Since 2006 we have raised almost \$1.5 million for conservation efforts. A beneficial program. In 2022, seven deer permits were issued to several conservation organizations, which included Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Safari Club International and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Those permits sold for a record average of \$43,500, with the highest one selling for \$55,000, the highest price ever for a deer permit. Money is raised for conservation programs like “Bring Back The Bottoms,” the Pheasant Initiative, youth programs, and things like that.

Drawing Winners (Exhibit I):

Commissioner Emerick Cross – (1) – #32, Ducks Unlimited, Derby #065 (deer)

Commissioner Warren Gfeller – (2) – #2, Ducks Unlimited, Salina #015 (deer)

Chairman Gerald Lauber – (3) – #137, Ducks Unlimited, Smoky Hill #083 (deer)

Commissioner Lauren Queal Sill – (4) – #162, RMEF Tri-Rivers/Salina #16326 (deer)

Commissioner Phil Escareno – (5) – #143, Ducks Unlimited, NKC Shooters #090 (deer)

Commissioner Troy Sporer – (6) – #183, Ducks Unlimited, Marais des Cygnes Valley #038 (deer)

Commissioner Delia Lister (drawn by Chairman Lauber) – (7) – #120, Ducks Unlimited, Western Kansas #006 (deer)

Sheila Kemmis – Permits are numbered as they come in so there may be a group of Ducks Unlimited chapters that comes in, then other organizations, then another group of Ducks Unlimited. There are more DU chapters in the state than any other organization. That is why it leans toward DU.

2. Webless Migratory Bird Regulations – Richard Schultheis, assistant director of wildlife division, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit J). Here to introduce process for webless migratory game birds for 2023/24 regulation cycle. Regulations for doves, cranes, snipe, rails, woodcocks and crows must adhere to federal frameworks similar to process we follow for waterfowl. Unlike waterfowl, stability in federal frameworks allows us to include webless migratory bird seasons and bag limits in our permanent regulations. For the 2023-24 season there have been no changes to those federal frameworks. We are not anticipating any proposed changes to webless regulations as far as seasons and bag limits, but final staff recommendations will be presented at the March commission meeting. Summary of proposed season dates is in the briefing item. The issue that came up earlier about crows and wanton waste on public lands is not a new issue. It is a difficult issue to wade through as far as regulations and interpretations. I would be happy to discuss further with individual who had the question and talk to commission about it in the future. Always happy to look at better ways to resolve some of those issues. Commissioner Sporer – Looking on the internet and under crows it says, legally taken crows can be possessed without limit and time and disposed in any manner. Secretary

Loveless – Larry Hasting, captain with law enforcement here and Rich here and a lot of folks with experience. How often do these kinds of things come up? Schultheis – Every few years or so we will have a question about crows, specifically on public lands where you have multiple users. The issue that comes up is leaving them on public lands and how that is interpreted. As far as regulations, it is correct that crows are handled differently than most of our migratory birds we hunt, as far as wanton waste issue. Regulations are different than if duck or pheasant or something like that but there are still some things that pertain to them as far as leaving anything out on a public wildlife area, shell hulls, lunch garbage or anything. I think there are some things that could be done on that. It has come up in the past and similar situations on public lands.

Commissioner Gfeller – Is this time and place to consider crow disposal question? The comments the person made are valid, even if rare, one time visible to visitors on public lands is an impression that is not a good one and not helpful to ethics of hunting. If situations rare, want urgency on dealing with something like that. When and how do we go about doing something about that? Assistant Secretary Schrag – On public lands, unfortunately it is not just crow issues. Public lands are the dumping grounds for a lot of things. The best manner in which we discuss this and move this forward to address this is public lands and law enforcement officers getting together, talking about this issue and what the best process. If we should look at amending regulations, adding regulations and enforceability of that. If commissioners advise amending that we will discuss in our LE/PL meeting. Chairman Lauber – I think that makes sense to go ahead and do that. Assistant Secretary Schrag – We can do that. Like Rich said, it depends on the county attorneys and how they view trash or littering and things like that. We can try to enforce that under our littering regulation. Obviously the other trash we do. There is still some gray areas on shell hulls in some counties. That is an issue public lands has been talking about. If it is a severe case like that we can always make the case and present it to the court and let them decide if a pile of crows like that is littering along with totality of the evidence with other trash.

Commissioner Gfeller – That is a good plan but the language Commissioner Sporer read, is there any way to take away no disposal required by any means? Can we remove that language and then deal with public lands issue. Schultheis – As far as crows that is something we can look into. There is wanton waste in crows in the history of crows, depredation, control, sport hunting; a long history as far as crow hunting and some complex issues there. But we can certainly take a look at that, provide background and come up with the options. Commissioner Gfeller – Intent of the language is you don't have to eat them if you don't want to. That doesn't mean leave then lay either. Commissioner Sill – I believe the implication is that they will be disposed of and not left lying. They can go in your trash can instead of the fridge. To me there is an implication that you will be responsible in addition to the ethics of it. Commissioner Cross – Any other animals we deal with like that? Rich – The one that comes to mind for me is components of animals in furbearer circumstances. Matt Peek – There is wanton waste law but there are others that may be disposed in that way. Chairman Lauber – Maybe language like, be disposed of in any manner but not left in the field, or something like that. Look into it and see what you can do because it merits some discussion. Assistant Secretary Schrag – Public lands and law enforcement will include Rich and his staff in this conversation as well.

Chairman Lauber – Tom, could you reiterate the time sequence, or timing of when this gets from workshop to public hearing and what meeting those are so we know how much time we need before we have to vote. Bidrowski – Today is our scoping meeting, staff recommendations will be presented at March commission meeting, then put to consensus vote for April meeting and season dates are due to the Fish and Wildlife Service May 1. Chairman Lauber – We will vote on ducks in April and in March have first staff recommendations. Bidrowski – Correct.

3. Waterfowl Regulations – Tom Bidrowski, waterfowl program manager, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit K). Presenting waterfowl bag and possession limits and seasons. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), with input from Flyways, annually develops frameworks from which states are able to establish migratory game bird hunting seasons. These frameworks establish maximum bag and possession limits, season lengths, and earliest opening and latest closing dates. States must operate within these frameworks when establishing state-specific migratory game bird seasons. A briefing item was prepared for the commission packet regarding development of Kansas 2023-2024 waterfowl seasons. Included are the proposed USFWS frameworks and other background materials. There are no proposed changes in federal frameworks from previous years. This is scoping meeting and staff recommendations will be presented at March meeting. Chairman Lauber – Have other commissioners received complaints from southeast Kansas this winter? I have not. *Commissioners all stated they had received none.* Bidrowski – We had a little different migration this year and we have gone to framework for how staff recommendations so it does have shifting season framework. Next year will be slightly different than this season. That is covered on third page of briefing item. Chairman Lauber – Have you heard anything Troy? Commissioner Sporer – I haven't heard anything from the southeast Kansas boys. We are still getting pressure on public lands. I went from harvesting 800 ducks a year at Cedar Bluff to three years ago I had 80, last year I had 40 and I am at 14 this year. My duck hunting career is just about over. Nonresident plates around the lake are ten to one, only one local hunter on Cedar Bluff the rest were nonresidents. I went so far as wanting to rent my cabin and my side-by-side. Commissioner Sill – Anything helpful for us to know about in preparing for recommendations from next meeting? As far as impacts of drought, impacts of Cheyenne Bottoms being shut down; did that push hunters to other places? How has that impacted things? Is there history we need to know today to help us be prepared to be wise as we listen at the next meeting? Bidrowski – I will provide a season synopsis of this year. Drought conditions through most of Kansas. We just finished mid-winter waterfowl survey and even in southeast Kansas only about 40% of the wetlands have water in them so that displaced a lot of hunters and displaced ducks and geese as well. Ducks were seen in abnormal places and that was partly due to the drought and weather patterns but also hunting pressure. A lot when into our migration. We had weather events that moved birds earlier in the year and those birds quickly wised up when they came to Kansas, for the ones that stayed around. Commissioner Sill – Did those factors impact situations like Mr. Sporer is seeing with pushing hunters to places where the water was and ducks were. The guys and gals that normally hunt Cheyenne Bottoms; did they just take a year off or hunt someone else? Did that exacerbate what he has been seeing in his pocket of the world? There are multiple factors but I am curious, especially on Cheyenne Bottoms thing, where did they go? Bidrowski – Hunters are highly mobile; they go where the ducks go and that was based on permanent water sources like reservoirs and other places in the state with more reliable water sources. That did displace them. We did see a drop in number of nonresident permit sales, from 42% last year to 34% this year, which is where it was about five years ago. The Bottoms usually has about 12,000 hunters that got displaced this year. This is the second time in 15 years it has been dry. Commissioner Sporer – The people that normally would go to the Bottoms ended up at Cedar Bluff and they will tell you that. Generally speaking, the Bottoms would close the second weekend in December and those people hunting there would then come to Cedar Bluff, Wilson or Webster. What has changed with waterfowling and the pressure is so intense on public lands that ducks become nocturnal earlier in the season, maybe before Thanksgiving and maybe before

that in first week of the season. They will set on refuge and not come out to feed until sunset. It is an un-huntable population of ducks. It has changed the whole idea of waterfowling on public lands because of so much pressure. I value a duck, but 30,000 ducks on Cedar Bluff that sit on refuge all day and feed at night, that is not duck hunting that is bird watching. Until we curb pressure nothing is going to change. Commissioner Gfeller – I have a request. Last time we did this you brought good data on resident/nonresident and specific data on waterfowl areas in the state and the pressure. I know we will have that discussion again. I ask that you refresh that data, update it where you can and make it part of your presentation. Assistant Secretary Schrag – Due for another roundtable discussion to include updated numbers and Ryan Stucky will be talking about this under public lands regulations. We will have some comments and hopefully some of the items you mentioned will be addressed better shortly.

4. Furbearer Regulations – Matt Peek, furbearer research biologist, presented these regulation to the Commission (Exhibit L). We are opening up furbearer regulations back up for discussion for review and public comment. These are permanent regulations that are not brought forward every year. They were last year but are being brought forth again this year to fulfill the Department's commitment to review the night vision coyote hunting season following the third open season. The third season is currently open until March. Our timeline is we will conduct hunter survey in early April, analyze data and have discussion in house and bring back to the commission at the April meeting and have recommendations. The Furbearer Committee will also be looking at other aspects of furbearer management and furbearer harvest, particularly looking for ways we might facilitate the harvest of furbearers given the comments and interest expressed in time of low pelt market. We are not yet making recommendations but want to notify the Commission and the public that these items will be under review soon. From first two seasons of night vision permit. Between first and second year, the number of night vision permits sold decreased 25%, from 5,776 to 4,351. The reason for that is a lot of people either bought permit and didn't hunt or weren't successful like they thought and didn't purchase it the second year. About 80% of permit hunters are active, about 3,500 active night vision hunters out of total 35,000 total estimated coyote hunters in the state, about 10%. The night vision hunters are more effective than day hunters, they took an average of 7.8 coyotes total during night vision season where average daytime hunter in recent years would take 3.5 to 4 coyotes. I say it appears that they are more effective, but it is certainly likely they are more committed and dedicated coyote hunters who would have harvested more than daytime hunters. More analysis could be done. The effectiveness of nighttime hunters increased from first to second season because use of equipment changed from 24% decreased of using lights and number of hunters using nighttime permits used thermal imaging equipment instead, it increased by 21%. Hunters who are buying the permit are gravitating more towards the most effective lighting technique, which is thermal imaging equipment. More information from survey I will present at a future meeting. There is a lot of interest by the people who have these permits in expanding their opportunity to more than just coyotes, for more than three months, on more than just private land. They basically want this completely opened up whereas there is some opposition to this out there. This House bill was news to me. Heard from daytime coyote hunter who felt it was harder for him because of nighttime hunting. Not everybody out there supports it. We will have a lot of different things to consider in the coming meetings. Chairman Lauber – Anecdotally, I heard this week that Iowa is considering opening raccoon season year-round. Are you aware of that? Peek – I had not heard that. Chairman Lauber – Maybe worth checking into. I think they are responding to comparable problem with too many raccoons. Commissioner Sporer – What happened to fur trade and what is economics of it? Peek – I think foreign relations with China and Russia have not been good and the worldwide economy, as a result of COVID is very detrimental in some cases is a luxury

item. In other cases, like our raccoons, would primarily go to Russia for a utilitarian coat for warmth in extremely cold climates, so there is a utilitarian component. There is all types of worldwide market and trade things that go into this. Also, I think that the opposition to fur may have gained some traction in some places. For several years there was a good coyote market, primarily going to Canada Goose coats and Canada Goose quit using wild fur on their jackets and now the coyote market has crashed. There is a couple of good things in the market, one decent thing, as result of Yellowstone series there is an interest in Stetson cowboy hats, which are made of beaver pelt. Probably still below the cost of production but you have a decent market for beaver. Little things like that crop up. Bobcats decent in Kansas because they are being used in bedspreads that heavier western cats are too heavy for, so little things like that makes ups and downs for individual species. As a whole, the large scale fur trade has a lot to do with what was going on in other countries. When the market was good ten years ago, China was a major buyer of almost all wild fur. It is also worth mentioned that the North American fur auctions, originally the Hudson Bay Company that had been in business for 350 years, went bankrupt a few years ago. So, we lost one of the two major North American auction houses, a big hit to the industry. COVID issue resulted in depopulating mink farms, which you might think of as competition to the wild fur industry but a lot of the worldwide pro-fur marketing was funded by ranch mink industry and ranch fur industry constitutes 85% of the worldwide fur trade. So, when some of those countries lost \$17 million mink they also lost money into international fur federation and some of the groups that promote fur use worldwide. Series of things going on that are mostly detrimental, except Yellowstone series is good for business. Commissioner Sporer – My concern is upland game; we are going to be in a fight for our lives to keep upland game at a huntable level in next few years with the drought. I am concerned about increased population of raccoons and depredation of nests. I would like to hear in a future meeting how true that is and how big a deal that is. Are the coons getting our turkey, pheasant and quail eggs? Is that viable situation, is that something we need to take over as far as night vision to take some of the stress off of upland game? Chairman Lauber – I would be interested in a more refined analysis of it. The short answer is they have an effect. Whether it is the reason it is hard to say. There is certainly a balance problem between raccoons and game birds. Secretary Loveless – Follow up with discussion, if you list to our biologists, most start with habitat and whether it is adequate then predators have difficult time hunting, so room for birds to nest safely and raise young. As you squeeze the habitat it is easier to work by single coyote or raccoon so it makes a tough situation worse. We typically talk long and hard about better habitat and if you look at programs we do on our own lands and private lands across the state that is always our focus, better and more habitat. I promise we will loop back on this and have better discussion next time on the role of predators, because they do play a role. And our perspective on best approach to manage. Commissioner Sporer – We don't have any control over rain but maybe there is an opportunity to take a piece of property that maybe had 3-4 coons on it that now has 30-40 coons on it. Maybe that is the only opportunity we have to control this, is predation. I get the habitat issue but it is something we can't control. Chairman Lauber – Reduced habitat coupled with more nest raiders is a bad formula. Commissioner Sporer – When more coyotes than pheasants I believe that is an imbalance. Secretary Loveless – A couple years ago South Dakota was passing out traps to encourage people to trap more, there budget was \$1 million and they quickly spent that but didn't notice any changes that I am aware of. We visited with a landowner in Butler County who had considerable land holdings and was concerned about upland nest predators for almost 20 years, they actively trapped nest predators consistently and saw consistent harvest but it never

knocked them down. What happened was they harvested predators, but when you create a vacuum the neighboring predators come in. They were not able to get below baseline level even though they worked hard at it. Chairman Lauber – Don't know if we harvest enough coons to make a difference. We can liberalize the season and take some but that would show we are doing something. Come up with recommendations and discussion points. Commissioner Gfeller -There is a direct relationship between habitat shrinking and predation problems increasing because safe zones are smaller and predators have an easier job. Curious how you deal with that? I assume habitat is what it is and influenced by federal programs, CRP and other things so maybe we have to assume the worst and manage for that. Secretary Loveless – We are glad to talk about our Habitat First program which is a great way to put more habitat on the ground with cooperating landowners. Glad to address that. Commission Sill – I would like to see that expand to look at not just silos, habitat goes across the board, but we have upland and furbearers and there is more to the discussion and some hard topics to discuss like deer feeders, whether bait or feeding, what impact those do. You have decreasing habitat and increasing congregation and food resources within that habitat, habitat decreasing, food sources are rampant. Please address the full scope of it, not too many siloed approaches. Matt, back to night vision and coyotes. The demographics of those night vision hunters. Are they spread equally across the state or do they tend to be concentrated in specific regions of the state; what is that demographic? Peek – I have not done any analysis on location. I can do that. Commissioner Sill – I would be curious as to where they are hunting and being successful if statewide or in certain pockets. Peek – I believe statewide based on people I have talked to who have mentioned it going on around them, from far east to far west. I know there are some people statewide but whether that is group of coyote hunters as a whole I don't know. Commissioner Sill – Thank you and thank you for explanation of fur trade, that was interesting.

5. Public Land Regulations – Ryan Stucky, public lands assistant director, presented these regulation to the Commission (Exhibit M). This is the time of year we propose new changes or updates, edits or additions to the public lands regulations. We don't have anything for today. We still have four that have workshopped seven times. We are having internal talks on several issues and one of the main issues being discussed continues to be the concern. Too much hunting pressure on public lands and relative to negative impacts on the resource and hunter satisfaction. Stuart wants to mention a couple things he has been working on over the last year or year and half on reaching out to other states to see what they are doing. Assistant Secretary Schrag – When conversation started a few years ago, when we started seeing influx of nonresidents and over-pressure issues started to come to light, we made decision to not make knee-jerk decisions, we are about evaluating things and looking at numbers, listening to staff in the field and continue to evaluate and look at it over coming years. One question was, is this because of pandemic or is this the new normal? From what we are hearing we feel it is new normal. Here we are new Arkansas when it comes to waterfowl hunting and need to look at taking some action. Staff continues to discuss this. At point now, want to emphasis this is not an overcrowding issue, but overpressure issue It is not that we have too many hunter bodies in the marshes, it is a switch in the culture. Seeing an influx of a group of 6-12 individuals from out east that stay 30-50 days or come out every weekend and are there every day all day, never leave the marsh and are shooting constantly and creating issues for the resource ducks, like Commissioner Sporer said. Making them more nocturnal and that circles back to hunter satisfaction too. We are at the point where staff is passing around ideas for recommendations. For transparency, I have heard shot shell limits per property, days per year that nonresidents can hunt, allotting the first couple weeks of each segment to residents-only. A whole host of things that have been discussed. One of the things we have to take into consideration if we are going to

make recommendations is that going to be through the commission process at regulation level or have to occur at legislative level under state statutes, which would be more time consuming and could take longer to get passed and implemented on the ground. Commissioner Sporer – Saw numerous times this year, on several different areas; a group of nonresident hunters would come in, two pickup loads of guys, and 4-6 guys would hunt public lands for 4-5 days. They would have a day or two they were successful and go back home and have another circle of friends that came behind them and they were dropping pins as to where the good spots were to hunt. So scouting wasn't even part of it, they would step in and start hunting immediately. Technology has changed how those people do that versus me going to another state and has to scout for a few days then hunt for two days. It is difference in technology and how they hunt. If they are not hunting they are hunting for a place to hunt by getting in motorized boat and drive the banks of the lake and push the birds out of what would be a good hunting spot and move the birds around and then the birds end up on a refuge where there is basically no hunting. I had one situation this year. I spent a couple days looking and finally found a couple hundred mallards in a cove on Monday. Went to check on them on Tuesday in my vehicle so I didn't scare them but there were already hunters from Arkansas there hunting them, so obviously I didn't get to hunt. It is an aggressive style of hunting, and it doesn't take a lot on a 6,000-acre reservoir, it only takes one or two groups hunting that way to put birds into a situation where they become nocturnal and impossible to hunt. Nocturnal birds didn't just happen this year, they have been doing it for years but used to not happen until around Christmas. Today, as some of refuge managers last year in the roundtable commented that birds were already nocturnal when they got to their area. It is a relatively new concept but coming on. It is something we need to address because it is different than it used to be. Assistant Secretary Schrag – Where do we go from here then? We have been talking with other states, Arkansas, the Dakotas and getting dialog on what is working or not working for them to help us move this forward. What I foresee is getting to a point where internally we have had the conversations and vetted it through myself and Secretary Loveless, Rich, Tom and everybody that should be involved to have a sound plan in place with some potential recommendations whether regulatory through the commission or state statute. Then have another panel discussion to bring those forward to discuss. We have made some changes over the last couple years, with boating regulations at the Bottoms and entering the marsh times at Neosho so we have been making some successful impacts. If we truly believe this is the new norm than we need to take that further and keep this moving forward. Commissioner Sporer – I have been trying to get you to stop waterfowl counts since I got on this commission and I haven't been successful I encourage commission and staff to dig into waterfowl counting system and how refuge managers do that. You go to the website, click on hunting, go to reports and forecasts and then you can look at each region and what you see is if you have a public lands area where the public lands manager is a duck hunter the counts are soft balled, virtually don't have a count. Then others give a conditions report and then you have one land manager that lists 20,000 to 30,000 every week consistently. Where are you going to go if you are a hunter from Arkansas? Are you going to go to Tuttle Creek where they are counting 800, go to Jamestown with no count; Travis and Monte are not counting at Neosho, they quit counting last year. You get that one person that gives a big count and it causes that public land to get over-pressured quickly. I think it is time to stop waterfowl counting. I know there was a concern last year about what happens to the secretaries in the offices when all the hunters are calling wanting to know how many ducks or geese are in the area? It is simple, say you don't know and quit responding to it. Tell them to come scout and look for themselves. That is the way the local people do it. I am

disheartened about why we continue. Having a conversation about over-pressuring wetlands and then you have big numbers come out and it makes it worse. It is not helping our cause. Assistant Secretary Schrag – That conversation continues to occur within the public lands division and is part of this conversation and decision making as we move forward. We have varying opinions amongst our wetland managers on waterfowl reports. It is discussed frequently and will be part of this project moving forward. Commissioner Sporer – I think that is something you could do tomorrow, you don't have to have legislative or commission approval, you just do it. Assistant Secretary Schrag – We would also get a slew of complaints if we don't post those numbers too. We have to weigh all the arguments in the discussion. Commissioner Sporer – Obviously it is not important to the numbers because over half of the refuge managers aren't posting the numbers they are just giving a conditions report, just say hunting is poor.

Break

6. Military Deer Seasons (KAR 115-25-9a) – Levi Jaster, big game biologist, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit N). This regulation first introduced today and typically voted on in June. Done separately than KAR 115-25-9, which is statewide seasons to allow for setting the seasons around the military needs on those units in case they have something going on that would prevent access. Smoky Hill ANG has requested to have deer hunting seasons at the same dates as the seasons established in KAR 115-25-9. A deer hunter in Smoky Hill ANG subunit 4A may use up to five white-tailed deer antlerless-only permits. Fort Riley has requested the same seasons as those established in KAR 115-25-9 with the following exceptions: additional days of firearm hunting opportunity for antlerless white-tailed deer only, from November 24-26, 2023; regular firearm season dates of December 16-23, 2023; follow statewide seasons otherwise, a change from past years; and a deer hunter may use one white-tailed deer antlerless-only permit in Fort Riley. Fort Leavenworth has requested the same statewide deer hunting seasons with the following exceptions: the open firearm season for the taking of deer shall be November 11-12, 2023, , November 18-19, 2023, November 23-26, 2023, December 2-3, 2023 and December 9-10, 2023; still 12 days like regular statewide season but different dates; an extended firearm season for the taking of antlerless-only, white-tailed deer shall be from January 1-21, 2024; and utilize extended archery season for the taking of antlerless-only, white-tailed deer shall be from January 22-31, 2024; and a deer hunter may use up to five white-tailed deer antlerless-only permits in Fort Leavenworth, subunit 10A.

7. KAR 115-2-1 Amount of Fees – Jake George, wildlife division director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit O). No specific recommendations today, those will be in subsequent meetings. I would like to lay some of the groundwork for the reason we are looking at some specific fee increases as well as what we have been doing in the past to keep things going in light of revenue shortfalls we have been seeing for several years. We are a fee funded agency, meaning the funds we have to work from are generated from our hunting, fishing and furharvest license sales. We have seen increasing costs just like everyone has. Between vehicles, increased costs on vehicles such as fuel costs and construction costs, ween labor shortages and increased materials costs a lot of our capital improvement projects, which we have a significant backlog of at the moment, bids are coming in anywhere from two to four times of what was originally estimated and budgeted. Some projects are being reprioritizing or putting those on hold and others we are attempting to move forward. In addition to that, necessary and appreciated, cost of living adjustments we received, increased costs to us; they don't come with additional cash, utilizing same revenue for those increases. Those are appreciated from recruitment and retention of employees in the current job market but another increased cost.

From budget planning standpoint, we attempt to identify the needs for developing our fee fund requests. The way that process works is we put together what we anticipate for need for salaries, O&M and capital improvements; those requests go to the legislature as well as the Governor's office for approval; we get an appropriation from that. That gives us the spending authority to utilize a certain amount of those funds in any given fiscal year. The last several years we have not been spending the full amount of our spending authority or appropriation from the wildlife fee fund (WFF). On average we have only been spending 85%. The reasoning behind that is because our annual revenue is less than our appropriations. The easy way of looking at that, if we were to expend the full amount authorized by the legislature we would be slowly chipping at the WFF balance we are currently maintaining. As fiscally responsible individuals we have been limiting ourselves to what we have been bringing in for revenue and keeping it fairly neutral and not eating away at that WFF balance and in contrary have been able to build it up some of the last several years to spite rising costs. Some of that is identified in the briefing book narrative is due to us using other funding sources, either to fund projects or fund some staff time to alleviate pressure on WFF. Long story short, what we have is a revenue shortfall. If we are attempting to accomplish what we have identified in any fiscal year we are currently running salaries, O&M and capital improvements at a revenue shortfall of \$4 to \$6 million on an annual basis; and have been for the last several years. I was tasked with identifying solutions to this shortfall and that brings us to discussions on the fees we are currently charging, the sole source for WFF revenue. The statutes which were included in briefing book specify both caps and specific levels we can establish fees for licenses and permits. The initial task was to review statutes and identify and compare to where current fee regulations are set for specific licenses and permits, where we have ability to make increases and where we can't. An interesting exercise. Out of that came both pluses and minuses. The plus was, there are not many of our current fees that are at the statutory cap with the exception of resident hunting and fishing and furharvesting licenses. We do have room for increases essentially across the board to some extent. The downside is that leaves options for fee increases and as something that is never popular. Being faced with a lot of options we don't want to go across the board increase. We didn't feel that would be appropriate. Because of this we will be developing specific recommendations that consider several things, including impacts to residents versus nonresidents, current level of demand for specific licenses and permits and those are what we will be coming forward with in future meetings, those specific recommendations. In the meantime, what we would like to do is alleviate the shortfall. For several years we have been implementing cost cutting measures to make ends meet and trying to be fiscally responsible in respect to the WFF. At some point something is going to have to give the increasing prices and that \$4- to \$6-million shortfall we need to make up if really only going to get us to where we need to be now, but not where we need to be in the future. This will not be the end to some of these discussions rather the beginning and hopefully a more frequent review of what we have for regulations on fees going forward. To give you a little history, 2015 and 2016 is when we reviewed and made some of the last major changes to licenses and permits. Prior to that the last time the actual fee caps were changed with the legislature was in 2002. Prior to the changes to permit types, such as resident deer and turkey permits, those were modified in 2015 and implemented in 2016. The last time those were changed before that was 1986; 30 years is a long time to go with no increases even when you are talking about normal inflation when it is your sole source of revenue. Need to do better monitoring and keeping up with that. Commissioner Gfeller – A big increase is more noticeable than a little one, obviously, so a more regular approach to this with small incremental increases will be better received than one big

one. We can't change what we have done but as we move forward, make more frequent review. Chairman Lauber – I agree but, my first boss would have referred to this as cutting off dogs tail by inches instead of all at once. You have a certain amount of flack every time you raise it and sometimes better just to raise it all at once and move on. I don't know what the answer is. Commissioner Gfeller – Make it so it is not noticeable. Chairman Lauber – Make is so not noticeable, painless and brings us money.

C. Workshop Session

1. Antelope 25-Series Regulations – Matt Peek, furbearer research biologist, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit P). Change since last presented, a technical edit in the way season dates are described. Rather than providing actual calendar dates in this regulation we would like to describe a season framework in a way that is not year specific. For example, rather than listing firearm season dates of October 6, 2023, through October 9, 2023, we would list them as the first Friday in October through the following Monday. They would not be year specific. We are making this recommendation due to changes in the way in which regulations are going through. The season would be able to proceed even if we had some unexpected delays to the regulation process. In addition to the seasons still being held we would still be able to go ahead with the printing of our regulations summary and publications and would be able to advertise season dates. Again, if some type of delay happened we wouldn't be stuck without an established season date for the coming year. It is a technical thing and season dates will remain the same as they have been but will allow us to work in the current system with a lot more confidence. The one substantial change, that I did present at last meeting, was we are proposing to eliminate the late archery season which opens up typically around October 15 after the firearm and muzzleloader seasons have concluded. It is easy for us to reduce harvest of limited permits by reducing permit allocations. If we want to cut harvest of firearm permits we just issue fewer firearm permits. As long as archery is unlimited we have to come up with some other way to address them and this is a good way to still retain unlimited archery opportunities but cut back on harvest by 8%. Other components of this regulation are standard relative to previous seasons and we will come up with permit allocations at a later date. Barry Raugust – Is it possible to cut back on animals harvested by restricting crossbows and keeping the second season for archery, but limit crossbows? They account for 28% or 29% of archery harvest. Peek - With only 8% of harvest coming from that late season, by limiting them I am assuming that would only amount to one or two animals a year, so that wouldn't get it done. If other bow types are responsible for 70% of remaining harvest then 70% of that 8% would still be taken, six of the eight, or whatever it is. Raugust – If you move crossbows to second season only that would reduce there. Peek – At this time I don't think we are ready to make any type of move on separating out archery equipment types. They are all bows and all the same season. Until success rates or stuff like that separate out more we are still dealing with all the bowhunters as a single group. Raugust – My concern was that at some point they would affect the number of days that more traditional archers would be able to hunt. This would be the ramifications of that. If we could separate that out would be more satisfying to me. Peek – The number of traditional archers is more than doubled of what it was, so traditional archers are having a substantially larger impact on harvest than what they did before. Crossbows are adding to it but not solely responsible. As I have mentioned before, the modern compound bow is a lot different than what it was 15 years ago as well.

2. Elk 25-Series Regulations – Matt Peek, furbearer research biologist, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit Q). We are proposing the same technical edit to the

season structure as I presented for pronghorn. So, if unexpected delay in the regulation process and getting this through the commission this season would already be set and we would be able to handle things as we currently do. As far as other components we are not currently recommending any changes to season structure, bag limits or permit types. All aspects of the proposed regulation are standard relative to recent years. No change other than technical edit to the way seasons are being presented in the regulation itself.

3. Big Game 4-Series Regulations – Levi Jaster, big game coordinator, presented these regulations to the Commission (Exhibit R). This is the permanent regs for big game, I will focus on KAR 115-4-11, the only one with a proposed change. You should have also received a handout (Exhibit S) that I put out earlier. These are some technical edits to clarify language in this regulation. Current text with the second and third pages that we are making changes to and the second page is what the technical edits will be. I have highlighted the parts to show you the location where edits will be and the highlighted areas will be corrected. Some language left in when edits were made in the past, what it was supposed to change to is there but some of the old text was left. We are also removing some of the unnecessary underlines. The other change is, as Matt mentioned earlier, edits to remove actual dates, such as number seven on the first page, where it says October 30; if you look at number seven on the second page that would be replaced with “the last day of the season.”

4. Deer 25-Series Regulations – Levi Jaster, big game coordinator, presented these regulations to the Commission (Exhibit T). The 25-series sets our season dates for deer statewide. Typically, this was the last workshop and was voted on in March but we are behind in process now. Generally, following what we have done in the past, we have saved that in certain unit specifically DMU 12, there is an option for proposed extended pre-rut whitetail antlerless season, which includes the normal three days, October 7, 8 and 9 and extends it through the next Sunday so it makes it nine days. Generally, that season is one that is heavily used by residents. Nonresidents only account for about three percent of hunters that take advantage of that season. This is to help with additional harvest landowners would like to see down in that area. Otherwise, the youth and disability will be, September 2-10, 2023; early muzzleloader, September 11-24, 2023; archery, starts concurrently with muzzleloader on September 11, 2023 to December 31, 2023; regular pre-rut whitetail-antlerless-only (WAO), October 7-9, 2023, three days; and extended pre-rut whitetail-antlerless-only (WAO), October 7-15, 2023; regular firearm, starts traditional Wednesday after Thanksgiving, November 29, 2023 to December 10, 2023; first extended WAO, January 1-7, 2024; second extended WAO, January 1-14, 2024; third extended WAO, January 1-21, 2024; and extended archery (DMU 19), January 22-31, 2024. Commissioner Sill – Will these go to dates that are not specified, like first Wednesday after Thanksgiving? Jaster – Yes, we are moving in that direction.

5. KAR 115-8-1 Department lands and waters: hunting, furharvesting and discharge of firearms – Ryan Stucky, public lands assistant director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit U). Jason Deal, public lands regional supervisor out of region 3, covering central, south-central and southeast Kansas, will also speak. Workshopping reference document requests for the seventh time. It didn't join the rest of them because I wanted to talk about them and questions brought up at the last meeting. We talked about most of public lands department managed lands and waters, wildlife areas and state fishing lakes, excluding Maxwell Wildlife

Area and Big Basin Prairie Preserve and all the state parks into the electronic check-in and check-out system. Since we moved from i-Sportsman to Brandt we have been experiencing some growing pains. So, we are still working on some of the issues that came up in transfer from one vendor to the other. At this time, we are asking to not make any changes to our check-in/check-out system as far as adding any properties. We would like to leave them as they are now and as an item to be discussed in the future. Until we can get some of the issues worked out with the new we ask that not be included. The second item is we were asking to add two refuge areas down in the Cherokee Lowland just south of Mined Land wildlife areas and just north of the town of Chetopa. The two properties are the Perkins East and Bogner. The question was why we want to put two areas in as refuge areas and Jason is the one who was working with this in the past and working with his managers and he can explain better than I could why these have been requested to be put in as refuges. Jason Deal – Not all wildlife areas are created equal but it is our typical management strategy on public wildlife areas to have designated refuge areas. I am glad the pressure and stressed animals was brought up earlier in the discussion because that is the reason why we have refuge areas because wildlife areas receive a lot of pressure. That gives the animals a place to escape, rest avoid some of the pressure and remain on wildlife area landscape rather than being pushed off to other properties. As it pertains to Cherokee Lowlands wildlife area, Perkin and Bogner, Neosho Wildlife Area is in close proximity to the north where we have a refuge designated as well. Cherokee Lowlands is primarily a wetland and waterfowl area and waterfowl don't typically hang around very long unless there is an area for them to rest, refuel, recharge and escape pressure. Unlike Neosho, where approximately a little over 24% of that area is refuge area. When we designate these properties on Cherokee Lowlands, Perkins and Bogner are approximately 18% of the wildlife area will be designated as refuge. It also serves not only as an escape area for waterfowl to keep them on the landscape and provide an opportunity to hunters but primary goal, when it pertains to waterfowl, is to give them an area to rest, refuel, recharge, maintain good body condition so they can continue their migration. That is primary goal for refuges on waterfowl areas.

Norman Mantle – In reference to what Mr. Peek said about capabilities of compound bows. We need to reduce capability of compound bows, reduce capability of firearms. Guys come out here with a 300 Weatherby and shoot a little 250-pound deer. In the military, I learned one kill, one shot. Chairman Lauber – We have had this discussion; this is a different topic.

6. Pending Regulations – Dan Riley, chief counsel, presented this information. No presentation on these three items they have been presented multiple times (Exhibit V). We have nine on the list of pending regulations. As we discussed previously these regulations are not being actively workshopped anymore because they have been to the commission multiple times already. I will tell you where these regulations are in the process:

KAR 115-8-23 Baiting; (Public Lands Regulation)

KAR 115-8-9 Camping (Public Land Regulation)

KAR 115-8-25 Trail (Game) Cameras and other devices (New Public Land Regulation)

These are the public lands regulations that deal with a prohibition on baiting, regulations related to camping and prohibition on trail cameras and other devices. These are in public comment period now and open for public hearing at the March 9 meeting, beginning at noon. I want to emphasize again, that public comment period is open now. Anyone that wishes to make public comment on these three regs, this is the time to do so.

KAR 115-25-5 Turkey; fall season, bag limit and permits

KAR 115-25-6 Turkey; spring season, bag limit and permits

KAR 115-4-11 Big game and wild turkey permit applications

The turkey regulations are in the review process. Just completed the first phase of that process at the Department of Administration and will now be headed to the Attorney General's office. No hearing date established for those, as that doesn't happen until we finish the review process.

KAR 115-25-14. Fishing; creel limit, size limit, possession limit, and open season (and associated reference document)

KAR 115-18-10. Importation and possession of certain wildlife; prohibition, permit requirement, and restrictions

KAR 115-7-10. Fishing, special provisions (and associated reference document outlining reference document K.S.A. 2019 Supp. 32-807--Kansas ANS Designated Waters)

The fishing regulations are in process, in the works, and have not been submitted to the Department of Administration. We're still making internal changes at this time as well as the reference document associated with 7-10. Chairman Lauber – Will any of these be workshopped at the next meeting? Riley – No, these have all moved into the next category in the process. The next time you see any of these will be in Public Hearing.

7. Annual Camp (KAR 115-2-3) – Linda Lanterman, parks director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit W). Last time I had Steve introduce our annual camp permit process. As we are looking at those, and starting a new year, we have had some complications with the annual camp program. Have a PowerPoint (Exhibit X). The annual camp permit was implemented in Kansas state parks in the 1980s. That was done because we needed to get people into our system, camping not as high as today. The thought was people would not use it as often as they are doing it today. There is only two states with annual camp program, Kansas and New Mexico. We started to see a change and our reservation company is able to track those permits. We are able, with our reservation system, to track that on and our 14-day. In the past used paper permits and self-pay and it was hard to get a handle on it. We know now, and through the pandemic, that a significant number of users started using the annual camp permit. This is good but with inflation and other things we are starting to see increased costs, so annual camp deserves another look. In 2020-2021, 4,500 permits were sold, in 2021, those permits, which are \$200 if bought before March or \$250 after March. In 2022 it came down to normal, maybe a little less than previous years. Annual camp revenue, in 2021 we had a significant increased revenue, just for the permit only and in 2022, when permits went down we reduced that amount. You take the number of people that bought those times the \$200 or \$250 and that is the cash revenue we received. If you look at use this is for camping only, not utilities. Average nights used by someone camping; in 2022, those fewer people who bought them started using them at an average of 60 days. That wasn't the intent when we put annual camp in there. You are looking at a significant rise in people coming to our state parks and camp, which we are tickled they are there, but the use and number of nights used, we are a losing significant amount of money. Looking at unrealized revenue by us having that annual camp for 2022, we are well into \$1.2 million in unrealized revenue from that annual camp permit. As salaries go up and we continue to put more amenities in our state parks, it is not a feasible option for us anymore. We use that annual camp for our seasonal camp program, which allows somebody to have a 30-day contract with us, March through November. It is through a draw, they buy an annual camp and then they also pay by the month, these fees. For smaller parks, one utility only costs \$371 a month, for bigger parks, three utilities is \$600 a month and they also have to buy annual camp. If we did away with annual camp, we would be looking at these fees again because it would be reduction

in seasonal program. I had Alan pull participants of our seasonal camp program; it went down in 2022 to about 350 users. The revenue for them buying annual camp in addition to this was over \$70,000, not a lot of money in reality but it is O&M and pays for utilities for someone so it does become significant. Our thought is we would look at a different type of permit for these individuals and still have a fee and possibly do away with our annual camp. We have a 14-day we are looking at, which is a \$2 a night discount. Looking at other states and what they charge for daily camping. I looked at Oklahoma, Nebraska, Missouri, Colorado, Arkansas, Iowa and Wyoming, the states that surround us. We are \$10 a night camping, we raised it 5-6 years ago; it is the same as Corps of Engineers charges. We are a little bit different situation because somebody has a choice; they can go to the Corps of Engineers as opposed to Kansas state parks. When look at other states we are significantly lower. The lowest primitive rate was Arkansas, Nebraska and Missouri at \$15. Their utilize, when you look at site that has electric only and camping we are still \$2-3 a night less than them. We are \$10 a night less than some other states. I wanted to present this as it is something we need to look at. Jake brought up today about fees and we are no different. What we did through the pandemic was keep our fees low so people could participate, which brought out new users. Many of them didn't know how to use an RV and went and bought one, but we want them to come back. We will have some, if we raise our fees or get rid of annual camp that won't come for a while. When I look at comparisons to other states and their number of camping public it continues to be high. I think it is an option we ought to consider. Commissioner Sporer – Are you still doing the program where they can get in and sign up the after New Year's Day, to make reservation? Lanterman – We did that in December. I heard your comments earlier about people coming in and not using those sites. I think doing away with the annual camp that will make that harder for them to do. When we do a launch in our reservation's system they will buy the annual camp and make multiple reservations throughout the year. They may not do that quite as much because it will cost them a little more. They would have to pay that up front which is good for us. We do have the lowest reservation fee in the nation. Doing away with that annual camp and look at 14-day also. The nice thing about it is the 14-day does give us an option for a discount for some people. That would eliminate so many reservations because have to pay for camping. Commissioner Sill – Do you track when reservations are made and people don't show? Do you track if annual camp or reservation? Who tends to not show? Lanterman – We are doing an analysis right now on when they come in . Still running some reports. When we look at that it is interesting that we have a high rate of people that don't come and don't get their money back. Typically, if they don't come they are going to want some type of refund. The ones doing the no-shows are not getting refunds. We are going to look at exactly that, how many are annual camp or 14-day campers. Then if we could change that refund window and reservation window where it would be more appealing to let us know and give them some type of refund back. Commissioner Sill – You probably talked to the same person I did, the complaint was they had to have a 14-day notice to cancel. The impression I got was why should the state benefit from keeping my money and getting someone else's money. There didn't seem to be any compassion for the next camper who uses the site. Like it was punishing the parks department when it is just punishing other campers. Is that part of this same conversation? Lanterman – It is. Other states across the nation have reservation systems, I have asked Aspira to look at what other states are doing and what that window is of cancelation and what they give them as far as a refund. Also, can we decrease that window to where they still get a refund and they let us know. Some of it needs to be on our team to call if we can get ahold of them. We are still pulling reports and will be making some changes in business rules for sure. Commissioner Sill – Do you have sites that are non-reservable for travelers? Lanterman – We do have some walk-in sites and also looking at same-day reservations. So, they can make a reservation right then, kind of like a hotel system. Staffing is a

problem. It would happen in prime season only. Jackie Augustine – Comparing to Army Corps of Engineers, are your facilities comparable or better than those sites? Lanterman – I would like to think we have better facilities but it is in the eye of the beholder. The Corps of Engineers receives quite a bit of federal funding so they put in a lot of new facilities. If you talk to managers that share those areas they will always tell you that they don't want to be priced out. As a management tool, we need to look at everything. Good question but I am not sure I can answer who is better. Kansas state parks has done an incredible job. Augustine – What do you know about annual permit users, if staying 60 days. Are they retired folks or are they people who can't find affordable housing? Lanterman – The latter. That is what we are starting to see. We will see nonprofits or churches buy annual camp permits for individuals to come out into state parks. I want to be careful what I say because they are still our users. It needs to be affordable and what that does is takes up a site that is available for somebody else that camps for recreation. When we go back to our vision of what we are, we are a recreation area not a housing area. That will be one tool we hope can help minimize some of those purchases. Norman Mantle – What do you base fees on? Based on size of vehicle that comes in or what? Pay more for bigger vehicles, depending on size and weight. There is a source of revenue. Lanterman – We don't do that today, this is a different permit system, that is vehicles, not camping. The vehicles when they come in they have one set fee and you can get that at your DMV when you renew your tag. I encourage you to do that. Mantle – Some of these people have a \$150,000 camper, they can afford more money. Lanterman – I don't judge them that way, they are still campers. Mantle – It is about revenue, that is what our government is.

VII. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Matt Shook – Fort Riley elk, my son drew a tag. A question about Fort Riley elk tags is last year there was a hunter mortally wounded one and was able to keep pursuing another bull. Those are really hard tags to get. Any chance to write a stipulation that if you draw blood on Fort Riley that tag is punched, instead of wounding one, then another and finally getting a bull? That was a real hot topic on social media. The guy said he shot one and wounded it and asked if he should have punched his tag or not. It had 50,000 comments. Secretary Loveless – The person knew the animal was mortally wounded? Shook – Yes. Secretary Loveless – That is unethical hunting. Shook – I agree. I think they were upset the guy kept going. If we could write a provision in there somewhere. I don't know if that is possible. On Fort Riley, that special of a tag, if you wound a bull and draw blood, like in Alaska, your hunt is done. Chairman Lauber – The problem you are going to have is everybody shoots and someone says that they didn't draw blood, that they missed. It didn't stop the Facebook talk. Shook – Here is what happened when my son drew a tag. You end up meeting everybody that has hunted there, they all call and want to give you advice, a pretty tight knit group. I would think that 90% of the hunters, if they draw blood, are going to a hold of somebody. It would be pretty hard to keep that a secret. Chairman Lauber – You have a good point. Shook – With that being such a limited tag, I don't know if they could write a provision that if they draw blood, that was their tag and they are done. I know that was a contentious deal with everybody that had drawn a tag at Fort Riley before. We didn't get a chance to hunt that much, but meeting everyone who had hunted there previously was a big deal to stay in stay in contact with everybody. When this happened, it caused a firestorm. Secretary Loveless – We can discuss that.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Future Meeting Locations and Dates

March 9, Topeka, Ramada Inn Downtown Convention Center

April 27, Kansas City area, Wyandotte County Historical Museum at WY Co Park, Bonner Springs

June 22, Milford, Acorn Lodge (planned events for Milford Lake area)

Chairman Lauber – The new meeting time didn't seem to inhibit any discussion.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 3:30 p.m.