

**Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 9, 2023
Ramada Hotel and Convention Center
Grand Ballroom
420 SE 6th St, Topeka, KS
including a
Virtual ZOOM Meeting Option**

Approved Subject to
4/27/23 Commission
Approval

The March 9, 2023, meeting of the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission was called to order by Chairman Gerald Lauber at 12 p.m.

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

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 – (Agenda - Exhibit B) Terry Bruce will be presenting the legislative update instead of Dan Riley.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE January 12, 2023, MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Warren Gfeller moved to approve the minutes, Commissioner Delia Lister second. *Approved* (Minutes – Exhibit C).

V. DEPARTMENT REPORT

D. Public Hearing

Chairman Lauber – We will start with Secretary’s Orders for deer which is a non-voting item.

1. Secretary’s Orders for Deer - Levi Jaster, big game biologist, presented this update to the Commission (Exhibit D). Set season quotas for upcoming season and number of doe permits that can be used in each unit. Statewide archery no changes, still over the counter; whitetail either-deer is also over the counter, open availability; and hunt-own-land is over the counter. Western mule deer for residents for firearms is a draw permit and includes deer management units (DMU) 1, 2, 17 and 18; quota for 2023 is 1,170 permits, decline of 90 from last year. Eastern mule deer zone permits – Units 3, 4, 5, 7 and 16 – is 75, a decline of 5 from last year. That brings the total resident mule deer permits to 1,245. For antlerless deer, no change from last

year as far as number allowed. Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 and Urban Unit 19 still allow five total; Units 6, 8, 9, 10 and 17 allow only one permit; Unit 18 has no antlerless deer permits allocated. Nonresident permit quotas are done by Unit. Unit 1, 585 permits, decline of 77, habitat and fawn survival has been poor, and it also had 35 mule deer stamps allocated, a decline of 5 from previous year. Unit 2, 379 permits, a decline of 40, and 27 mule deer stamps, a decrease of 3; populations are down, and habitat is in poor shape. Unit 3, 902 permits, 50 less than last year and 5 mule deer stamps, same as year before. Western Kansas suffered with drought, so low habitat and low populations. Unit 4, 494 permits, 27 fewer and 1 mule deer stamp. Unit 5, 712 permits, 12 fewer, and 1 mule deer stamp. Unit 6, 544 permits, 16 more than last year, no mule deer hunting. Unit 7, 1,582 permits, 67 less than previous year. Unit 8, 1,900 permits, 48 fewer than previous year. Unit 9, starting to see a little population growth so that resulted in 1,132 permits, 87 more than previous year. Unit 10, slight population increase, 1,296 permits, 26 more than previous year. Unit 11, 3,360 permits, no change from last year. Unit 12, 2,243 permits, 19 less than last year. Unit 13, 587 permits, 25 more. Unit 14, 1,961 permits, 10 more. Unit 15, 1,584 permits, 65 more due to some population growth and increase in deer/vehicle accidents. Unit 16, 1,814 permits, 34 less than last year and no mule deer stamps. Unit 17, 656 permits, no change for whitetail and 45 mule deer stamps, 5 (less than in) 2022. Unit 18, 258 permits, no change, and 20 mule deer stamps which is no change. That brings total nonresident permits to 21,989 permits, which is 145 permits less than last year, due to changes in western Kansas. Total mule deer stamps available is 134, which is less than 147 available in 2022, largely due to population changes and poor fawning due to poor habitat. Last year we saw an increase in applications, which brought overall draw rate to 73.9% for the state.

Commissioner Sill – How many nonresident hunt-own-land permits get sold on average? Jaster – I don't have a specific number with me, but I would guess a few thousand. Commissioner Sill – Is that number going up steadily, down or staying the same? Jaster – It has bounced around year to year, up and down. I know law enforcement folks have put in more effort to police those. It changes a little every year, so it is hard to say. Commissioner Sill – When we calculate what percentage of nonresidents make up all of our deer hunters, does that include hunt-own-land?

Jaster – Yes. Chairman Lauber – What percent of deer hunters are nonresidents? Jaster – Just under 25%. Commissioner Escareno – Did I understand you to say it is 79% of licenses we take in is the permit ratio? Jaster – The rate of 73.9 is the percent of folks who successfully drew a tag. Commissioner Escareno – Do we have any permits that are untaken? Jaster – We have not had any leftovers in several years. Two years ago, our applications jumped immensely. We went from about 24,000 applications in 2021 for draw of 22,000, so draw rate is around 95%.

Commissioner Escareno – What do you attribute that to? Jaster – Some of it may have been COVID, with borders being closed and people couldn't travel outside the country to hunt. There was some renewed interest in hunting, folks had more time on their hands and could work remotely. There were also some changes in several western states with their draw systems, and people were looking for other places to go. Last year, total applications were 29,960. We are still offering roughly the same number of permits we had then with a few changes per unit to deal with population changes or to address other issues occurring. That change in draw rate was due to increased applications.

Commission Consensus, signed by Secretary Loveless.

2. KAR 115-8-9 Camping - Ryan Stucky, assistant Public Lands director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit E). Workshopped at least seven times. This does not affect state parks or any part of the regulations that affect state parks. This is just for state fishing lakes and our wildlife areas. This regulation is to reduce the consecutive amount of time you can

camp in one area from 14 days to 7 days. There is an option for the manager to extend that stay for an additional seven days but not more than 14 days total. Once that threshold has been met, the camper and the property has to be removed from the area for five days.

Commissioner Phil Escareno moved to approve KAR 115-8-9 as presented to the Commission. Commissioner Emerick Cross second.

The roll call vote to approve was as follows (Exhibit F):

Commissioner Cross	Yes
Commissioner Espinoza	Yes
Commissioner Gfeller	Yes
Commissioner Lister	Yes
Commissioner Sill	Yes
Commissioner Sporer	Yes
Commissioner Lauber	Yes

The motion to approve KAR 115-8-9 passed 7--0.

Chairman Lauber – The next item is 115-8-23 and we have a problem with this one on baiting. For reasons we are unsure of, the proposed language had an omission that makes the regulation problematic. What we would like to do is propose we vote “no” and come back with appropriate revisions.

3. KAR 115-8-23 Bait; hunting - Ryan Stucky, assistant Public Lands director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit G). We were proposing to prohibit baiting for all activities on wildlife areas and public lands. When we sent that through the promulgation process, the part that would strike out “while hunting or preparing to hunt” was not taken out. The way it is written currently and posted for hearing is really no change at all to the current regulation. Therefore, the intent of what we wanted to do is not really changing this regulation. We request vote of “no,” so we can bring this back with proper edits and go back through the process again. Chairman Lauber – Somebody needs to make a motion and a second and then all vote “no,” if so inclined.

Commissioner Warren Gfeller moved to approve KAR 115-8-23 as presented to the Commission. Commissioner Lauren Sill second.

Commissioner Sporer – Does this mean that this next deer season it will still be legal to bait on public lands? Stucky – That will depend on the timing of this and getting it through the process again. In talking with our legal counsel, and Terry talking to the Department of Administration and the Attorney General’s office, since they have already seen this, the process might be expedited a little bit. Assistant Secretary Schrag – A “no” vote today leaves the regulation as is. So, this fall hunting season it will still be as it is now and be unlawful to bait while hunting or preparing to hunt on public lands. If we don’t get the intended language changed prior to that, it will still be as is. Commissioner Gfeller – When it comes back with the adjustment, will we have to workshop it. Assistant Secretary Schrag – From our understanding, we can bring this back in April and in the meantime, between today and then, we will resubmit it through the process with

the correct strikeouts we originally intended. Terry has talked to some of the folks involved in that approval process and they thought it would be an expedited process to get it changed to the way we wanted it. Chairman Lauber – Hopefully it’s available for next season. Assistant Secretary Schrag – If not, the current prohibition on public lands for hunting or preparing to hunt still stands. We want to change it to where placing bait for any reason, any time of the year, is prohibited on public lands.

The roll call vote to approve was as follows (Exhibit H):

Commissioner Cross	No
Commissioner Espinoza	No
Commissioner Gfeller	No
Commissioner Lister	No
Commissioner Sill	No
Commissioner Sporer	No
Commissioner Lauber	No

The motion to approve KAR 115-8-23 failed 7--0.

4. KAR 115-8-25 Trail (Game) Cameras and other devices – Chairman Lauber – We have gotten good feedback from this one (Exhibit I). Sean Miller, resident of Shawnee County and a public land hunter, mostly upland bird hunter but also archery deer hunter in Shawnee and Douglas counties primarily. I hunt on Clinton WA, and due to its urban nature, it is one of the heavier traffic wildlife areas in the state, along with Hillsdale and a few others. I provided a letter a few weeks ago to Dan Riley and he shared it with you. I’ve worked with parks and wildlife for most of the 20 years I have been in this state, I volunteer at the Capitol, work on Veteran’s hunts and helped with a number of different things, some fun and some not. I have been fairly active and have never appeared before you until today. That says a lot about your staff because I have always been able to go with them and talk to them about something, get a tweak or have them explain why what I think is wrong. This is first time I haven’t gotten resolution. Not opposed to regulation of trail cameras on public or private grounds in the state, it makes sense and I have seen some of the conflict you are trying to deal with in this regulation. I received a statement after my letter from staff that dealt with a number of issues also included in my letter. I heard trail cameras are being inundated on WIHA and public ground, I don’t doubt that. I don’t hunt on WIHA very much for deer and I have no problem regulating WIHA as that is private land, they allow us to go on there and I appreciate those folks and whatever the landowners want. Camera inundation on wildlife areas is immediately leading up to the season or during the rut and that is the pressure points. That does lead to some conflict, wildlife areas in general are a conflict magnet, not because they are not amazing but because Kansas is 97% privately owned and 3% public and all of us who aren’t lucky enough to own a piece of ground are lucky to have at least 3%. The conflict is not just putting a trail camera on that tree; the conflict is I want to squirrel hunt, but it is November 4, and some deer hunter is going to get mad at me; duck hunters mad about fishermen or mushroom hunters messing up turkey hunters’ hunts. Everyone has a right to be there, and you can be frustrated but need to let it roll off their back because each of them has as much right to be there as I do. I don’t think limiting trail cameras is going to limit conflict on the wildlife areas. The second this is something I share concern about as well, the role fair chase plays in the North American Wildlife Conservation Model; It is important to protect that. I don’t own any cell cameras, but my buddies do, and we have had many discussions on whether or not cell cameras should be allowed. I am not weighing in on that today. I think if we ban or prohibit this during the season, in the way many other states do, a trail camera placed in June or July does

very little to help kill that deer in November or December. I agree with the fair chase aspect, if that is really a concern, we ought to be considering that on private land as well. I think the big reason for this is a lot of movement on and off of wildlife areas to check trail cameras, and is disrupting the flow of wildlife, impeding other people's hunting. During the season I don't disagree with that. Someone is coming in to check the trail camera in the middle of the day and I am in the tree, that is frustrating, but not a problem and solved if we don't allow cameras during the season. During the summer, and what pressure that might have on brood rearing, fawn retention and those sorts of things, for serious hunters, I am able to put a camera in a high traffic area, check once or twice a month. I try to check a rainy day or hot day when animals aren't active and slip in and out. If I am not able to put a trail camera up, I am going to go out two to four times a week, go to the food source to check where that deer is because that is the only way to find it and learn their patterns and their location. I have to get in there to put my eyes on them to know what it is. I don't know if we are accomplishing the goals you want out there. Not a lot of people are going to do that but not a lot of folks are checking their trail camera 2-3 times a week either. We don't run into a lot of trail cameras in July but starting September 1, we do. The response I got back said we were not the only state doing this, it said Montana and Nevada were doing this. My letter talked specifically about Nevada and Arizona. It is well known there that the way you get cameras and get big mule deer there, you find the one water source and put a camera on that water source. In some places you run into 40-60 trail cameras on a single artificial water source. There is no doubt that explodes the deer movement in that area. They simply don't want to come to water anymore. We don't have that situation in Kansas, we have a lot of water. Almost all of our wildlife areas are around impoundments fed by rivers, so not that kind of bottleneck. Parks and Wildlife and landlord tenants who do a good job of farming their ground to provide food in a spread-out area, so we don't see that kind of limitation. It was mentioned that Montana, New Hampshire and Alaska do some of this or that and they do, and they do exactly what I am asking you to do, which is prohibit trail cameras during the active big game season. Because there are seasons all throughout the year that would be difficult to say just during big game seasons. I would suggest something from maybe August 15 to March 31 we prohibit trail cameras on department owned and managed lands. That would give the deer a month to settle down. Their velvet is coming off, they will break up their patterns and move to different areas. Then it gives us a period of time afterwards in January, February and March where it is really cold and that is the stressful period, we don't want to be bothering those deer. I realize people use trail cameras for more than deer, I occasionally move one to a woodchuck hole to get some fun pictures, but if you ask the general public, 95% of trail cameras are used for pictures of deer. I appreciate the opportunity to address you today.

Justin Whitten – I don't have much to add beyond what the previous commentor said, I appreciate his remarks. I have a similar sentiment and I also hunt public land around Clinton Lake Wildlife Area and a piece of WIHA near that property. I agree with the sentiment that an "all or nothing" approach is a little too strong. I have looked at other jurisdictions and got anecdotal feedback and there is a more measured approach. Perhaps like Nevada where there is a restriction on trail camera usage during the season but not a year-long ban. Also, the regulation could be tweaked in such a manner that it is not "no trail cameras at all;" The problem is perhaps hunters are abusing it or non-hunters are abusing it and inundating areas with trail cameras. Some reasonable number of limitations on that could be a simple fix in the language: no more than three or five, some reasonable amount. I understand administratively that probably would be

difficult to enforce. How would you know if it was someone's fourth or third trail camera? I am relatively new to bowhunting; I got into it later in life and have been fortunate to get to know the bowhunting community in Minnesota and Wisconsin, where I am from and a little here in Kansas. I like to think that the broad hunting community does a good job of self-regulating and if a reasonable rule is in place, they would respect that. Thank you for the great work, for being here and hearing my comments.

Chairman Lauber – Those comments and scenarios make some sense. If we have a regulation, we need to be able to enforce it as effectively as possible. Having them available part of the year and law enforcement sees a camera, how do you know who it belongs to? It would be simpler, from an enforcement standpoint, to have “all or nothing.” The regulation as presented doesn't allow easily for an amendment. The AG's office and certain state authorities are cracking down on making amendments that haven't been fully posted and publicized. I don't see a lot of middle ground. There is a lot of deleterious issues regarding trail cameras; maybe not in the Clinton area, but in some places, cameras are used to spy on other hunters and some people recoil from having a camera. They are private and don't want someone to have their picture or have it show up on Facebook, something they would find embarrassing. I understand what you are saying but we have a hunting season almost every month of the year. Then we would have to say, “Trail cameras are strictly for big game hunting,” but you have bird watchers and people who just like to get outdoor pictures. You are probably right, from a practical standpoint, a lot of people aren't going to go out in thick timber and setting up trail cameras on July 15. It may help resolve this from a practical standpoint, but not everyone is going to follow the rules the right way and the more you leave a gap, the more unintended usage comes in and creates problems. This is not a regulation that has been brought up by us without feedback from the public. I wish we could accommodate you and I like the way you made your presentation; I just don't see how we can.

Commissioner Gfeller – Question of the first gentleman, you mentioned the fair chase perspective and you understood the problems during the season but a trail camera in June doesn't necessarily give you an advantage. So, why would you want the trail camera out there in the first place? Miller – I said it doesn't help you kill it in November or December. It tells you that deer is alive in June or July; identifying the deer, with binoculars or scouting but this is scouting from places that are hard to see into without putting a lot of pressure on, and potentially driving game off, the wildlife area. Patterns are different in summer, particularly in velvet when on a feeding pattern than September when velvet comes off, bucks split up out of bachelor groups and scatter to the four winds. I don't even know if that deer lives in same section of ground anymore. I don't want to say it doesn't help at all because it does, it tells you the deer exists or at least existed in the summer, but summer patterns and fall patterns are very different. We talk about the proliferation of TV shows that show the deer is on its way because it triggered that camera that showed up on my phone and now here it is. Theoretically, that is illegal under Kansas law already, you can't use electronic means to chase a deer and I agree with that wholeheartedly. There is a wide valley of difference from a picture of a deer in June or July and a picture of a deer on November 1 as I am walking into the stand and pulling that camera card. It does offer you advantage of knowing deer was there in the summer but different than knowing the deer was there yesterday and is likely to make another loop. I talked to staff about the difficulty to enforce regulations and that is why I think a certain date is the way to go. If there on August 1, it is legal, there on August 2, it is not legal. That lets me and law enforcement game wardens know what it is. I had also discussed requiring statements on cameras, the way we do tree stands. That would be difficult to enforce, and I would be willing to do that, but how do you know if that is someone's second or fifth camera? We run into that with our two-stand limitation right now.

Chairman Lauber – Cameras are like tree stands; people put them up to stake out territory. You

mentioned maybe they shouldn't be allowed on private land but that is a battle I am not prepared to fight. We are going to have a battle in next 24 months on what to do with baiting on private land and we will have a lot of hollering over that. The scientific evidence is drifting towards no baiting is better. You have 97% owned by private landowners and many of them have an independent mindset. We can only try to take our 3% of the state and manage in a way that seems to be the best for all. Our option is to pass this regulation or vote it down. I don't see how we can do an amendment and get it into effect. I would recommend, if it passes, we consider having staff look into whether or not we could amend it later to allow a couple months for trail cameras. It is a little bit of an advantage in July but doesn't sound like much. What you are asking for doesn't sound like a lot, but we need to pass or vote down this regulation and bring back a modification later. We workshopped this so long to get this in effect for fall hunting season. That is my position. Suggest we pass it. Commissioner Escareno – Do cameras have numbers on them that you can identify them by? Miller – They do not have serial numbers, they have a model number so it's the same for every model of that camera. There is no manufacturer or standard vin number like you would a car. Chairman Lauber – If there were a future amendment to allow them, name and address isn't a good idea. I am not saying we will even do that. Have Stuart and his people consider it. They may find it just isn't workable. Assistant Secretary Schrag – Based on your comments, “yes or no or can we amend;” we have to vote “yes” or “no” today. If you are asking us to go back and take another look at this based on these two gentlemen's comments, we would look at that. You talked about August 1 through March 1, and we would have to extend that to include turkey season, which goes to the end of May. That would leave only June and July as open months. Like tree stands, we would have to tag them with their name, address, KDWP number as well. Commissioner Sill – When we look at cameras out in spring and summer and the traffic, I get concerned about impact on fawning and does and traffic that way. Levi, can you explain how traffic during those months is going to affect fawning success and those types of issues? Jaster – Not aware of any research done on that. Any activity in that area could potentially have affect. Folks would have to make an effort not to spend any time if they do happen to see a fawn because they could lead a predator right to it. I am not aware of research. Chairman Lauber – Every time you step into the woods you have some effect on nature's balance, but we have to allow some of that.

Kurt Ratzlaff, Chair, Kansas Chapter of Back Country Hunters and Anglers – We are made up of primarily public land hunters and when this discussion first started, we had discussions with our board about it. I would call them very lively debates. Even within our group we have diverse points of view. We have guys that use those all the time and guys that never use them; we have both ends of the spectrum. The thing we came down to was that there was an enforcement issue. We didn't feel comfortable in breaking periods of time out and still have valid enforcement. That was not a unanimous opinion. You are in a tough spot. I wanted to let you know that we went through the process in thinking about this. We are a public lands group and hunt on public lands all the time. We see the cameras out there. Generally, our opinion came down to that this was mainly an enforcement issue; what could be enforced and what could not.

Commissioner Sporer – I don't see how you could split it up. Whitten – I was already under the impression I don't know if I read something wrong or confusing something in my conversations with the Army Corps of Engineers folks and what they require. I thought a trail camera already required you to have your name, address, phone number and KDWP number on it. I think the

enforcement issue is a real one. I think there is some effort to be said for voluntary compliance, although not perfect, you could have people put phone numbers and hunting license number. For reference, from what I have been told by Kyle Brucker, Army Corps of Engineers at the southern part of Clinton Lake, they allow two weeks before deer season and two weeks after deer season but found a middle ground and don't allow cellular cameras that are directly transmitted to someone's phone. That goes to some of the fair chase issue of should you be able to hunt in the woods from your phone, getting texted images whereas going into the woods to retrieve a strategically-placed trail camera card from reasonable number of trail cameras, three to five. Commissioner Sporer – How would you tell the difference between a card camera and a cellular camera? Chairman Lauber – I have no idea. Commissioner Sporer – That is my point, how would law enforcement be able to direct that when they really don't know? Miller – The current models have a transmitting antenna on them. I was not recommending cell cams, only trail cams. Because of enforcement, a date certainly is the way to go. You can tell by looking at them externally, at least the current models, but who knows what will be developed in the next couple of years. If you get into those kinds of divisions, you make life miserable for the folks wearing a badge. Pick a day, before day, not cameras, after the day, allowed and pick a closing day. That is easy to understand for the general public, date certain is as simple as it gets. Chairman Lauber – Today we can't amend this, too many things we would have to have to satisfy all the issues. Vote one way or the other today.

Commissioner Warren Gfeller moved to approve KAR 115-8-25 as presented to the Commission. Commissioner Sporer second.

Chairman Lauber – We do have a soft commitment to look into some modifications down the road with no guarantees. Assistant Secretary Schrag – We will do that. I want to address Mr. Whitten's question about Corps versus our regulations. The Corps properties that we do not lease under a lease agreement have their own set of federal regulations and we do not have a specific trail cam regulation, that is why we are here today.

The roll call vote to approve was as follows (Exhibit J):

Commissioner Cross	Yes
Commissioner Espinoza	Yes
Commissioner Gfeller	Yes
Commissioner Lister	Yes
Commissioner Sill	Yes
Commissioner Sporer	Yes
Commissioner Lauber	Yes

The motion to approve KAR 115-8-25 passed 7--0.

Commissioner Gfeller – As we consider this, this leads to a broader discussion about technology and how rapidly it is changing. It seems like every change in technology is always to advantage the hunter. It is coming faster and faster, so I would like to have an opportunity to have a morning discussion on this, like we did on some other topics. Get a big picture view of this and have a discussion around technology and hunting methods, and anything like that, in context to fair chase. Secretary Loveless – We will put that on our list.

VI. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Kin Hickman, Federation of Houndsmen – The topic I have is on the agenda, but I need to leave early. Chairman Lauber – Go ahead and come up. Hickman - Times changing and management of resources is changing as well as agriculture management. I am here not necessarily representing the Houndsmen, but to ask for increased management for furbearers. Especially nest raiders, raccoons, possums and skunks, as populations of these continues to climb as well as depredation. In the Dakotas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas all have increased the take if not opened it up year-round. Our extension at the end of February was great and we appreciate that, but it isn't enough for the population. I saw 15 finished coon hides this weekend sell for \$2 apiece. The Kansas Furharvesters' Auction, which was held on Saturday, they averaged \$2.53 apiece. In my relationships through the years with people from all walks of life, through my animal damage control permit, the complaints are mostly on raccoons but skunks too. They are defecating in boats, houses, garages, on cars, raiding coolers at campgrounds and chewing through roofs and soffits. They are killing cats and chickens and basically terrorizing people in their homes at times. Not to mention the many farmers who are complaining continually about crop damage and other damage, mainly with racoons. I ask you today to increase management of these furbearers and use of tools you have to manage them, the Houndsmen, trappers, ADC permit holders and others. If the fur market comes back at some point, I believe we can turn this around if we increase the take. Just as with deer and turkey seasons, we could go back and forth on this. The coons are worth so little right now and so few people taking them and warehouses are full of them, and this is creating imbalance. Even if the market comes back, the warehouses are still flooded with them. I think you would actually see a benefit to the health of the population. Chairman Lauber – Pendulum slowly swinging in your direction. You have an excellent point. There are other issues on the other side.

Commissioner Sill – Had phone call on my drive up, he was going to try and Zoom in. Felix called on bill in legislature last year about Ornate Box Turtle. This gentleman has a passion and concern for those and wondered what the status was of any changes regarding regulation of those in captivity. Secretary Loveless – That emerged a year ago in the legislature, had hearing and discussion about it. That moved to our nongame wildlife committee, which is comprised of agency staff as well as a lot of folks from around the state. They advanced a recommendation to reduce the numbers allowed, so that is what we are moving forward with. If you have contact information for that gentleman, we will reach out to him. Commissioner Sill – Is that a recommendation that comes to us for a regulation and do you have a timeframe? Secretary Loveless – It will. We have started that process, I can't give you an endpoint on that, but we will be glad to update the Commission as well as that gentleman on that timeframe. Commissioner Sill – I will share contact information so somebody can give him a better update.

V. DEPARTMENT REPORT (continued)

A. Secretary's Remarks

1. Agency and State Fiscal Status Report – Brad Loveless, Secretary, presented this update to the Commission. Revenue in the Park Fee Fund (PFF) is derived from entrance and camping fees from our state parks as well as annual vehicle passes. Total year-to-date revenue for PFF for FY 2023 is \$5.74 million as of the end of January. The balance as of March 8 was \$5.8 million. Cabin net revenue, parks and public lands combined from rental of cabins located

there, through January was approximately \$570,000. Wildlife Fee Fund (WFF) is derived from sale of hunting and fishing licenses, big game permits, tags, etc. for hunters and anglers. WFF revenue for fiscal year through January was \$8.8 million. Cash balance for WFF as of March 8 was \$18.7 million. Boat Fee Fund (BFF) is revenue derived from boat registrations and we use this money to provide boating safety, education, access and infrastructure to protect and support the boating public. FY 2023 receipts in BFF through January are \$522,000. Current balance in BFF is \$2.28 million. Last thing I will mention is status of conversations with legislature on our budget. Our FY 2024 budget has had initial consideration in both the Senate and House with minimal changes. The recommended changes that have occurred so far are related to enhancement requests; new items that included two positions for Parks division connected to the Flint Hills Trail as we continue to expand that to the west. Those were removed in the House, but funding retained. The other thing they changed slightly was we had money in the budget for transition of our law enforcement officers to Kansas Police and Firefighters (KPF) retirement. We are lucky to have Representative Doug Blex, he is a career member of our agency who retired and is serving well in the legislature in the House. Doug has been diligent the last few years in submitting a bill to move our law enforcement officers over to KPF retirement. That is a huge benefit for us for recruiting and retaining officers in the future. This has been a challenge for us because a lot of our neighboring states have that retirement and we do not. We have been working on this for years and Doug has been diligent, and we have advanced this farther this year than ever before. Doug not only introduced the legislation, but he also testified persuasively in both the House and now the Senate. We appreciate his work, and I would like to publicly thank him for his efforts. The status of that is they said, as opposed to approving that in our budget, they would delay and add that at end of the session when they do clean up based on the bills that actually passed. If the bill doesn't pass, there would be no need for it in our budget, so moved it to later part of the process legislatively, so once it passes, they will add it in to make sure funding is there to match legislation that is passed. Commissioner Sill – Is there a way for the public to view what happens with budget discussions? You can pick up bills and look at them on legislative site and seeing hearings and get minutes. That budget stuff is really hard to find. Where can the public find that so constituents can be up-to-date on things going on? Secretary Loveless – We have done a lot in the last few years to provide more information on our website about legislation proposed that would have an impact, positive or negative, on our agency. Our public information group has done a good job of putting that information in. We typically don't get into the weeds on the budget process. We will have to think about that. We will have to discuss how to effectively do that because if you sat through a budget hearing, they are really complex and there is a lot of details. We are happy they have suggested very few changes to our budget so far, but we have to figure out how we can express that to the public in a way that is helpful to them. I will follow up with you after today and see what you are thinking and see how we can do a better job on our website.

2. Legislative Update – Terry Bruce, Legal Counsel, presented this update to the Commission. Sheila passed out the legislative update (Exhibit K), the March 6 edition. We are fortunate this year that we don't have a large number of bills to keep an eye on. The report is up to date, and I will give you stuff that is not in that update we handed out. The 29th of March is going to be the final deadline for all non-exempt bills. We are hoping to keep an eye so that all the things we want make that deadline and things we are opposed to don't. On April 6, will be first adjournment of the legislature and they will come back April 26 for veto or wrap up session. Some of our legislation will be considered on two tracks, one is substantive law, and the other is budget. If a substantive law change occurs during the regular session, the legislature will come back in wrap up and pass a separate budget called the omnibus budget which will go back, and

fund those substantive law changes adopted before April 6 break. There are a lot of moving parts. It is very difficult to track budget items because those committees have a report that is usually prepared the morning of a hearing where a committee would vote on it and ask that it be recorded into the omnibus budget or the mega-budget. Things that have changed in this update. Yesterday there was a hearing on HB 2198, KPF bill and it appears the chairman released on his agenda for next week there could be final action on March 15. There is going to be an informational meeting on March 13 on HB 2331, the bill designating Lehigh into the state park system, just informational, not formal process, but is step forward. SB 116, NRA Eddie Eagle bill, they have a program for 9-year-olds and younger with firearm safety. It doesn't conflict with what we do but have to keep an eye on it to get some word changes to it, so we are still free to offer our Hunter Education and similar courses to a more mature audience. Typically, we focus on 11-year-olds and older. Possible final action on that bill on March 16.

Jackie Augustine, Audubon of Kansas – I am representing myself as a constituent of Topeka and a 20-year prairie chicken researcher. I was disappointed that the resolution condemning the listing of the lesser prairie chicken in the Endangered Species Act was passed as a resolution against it in both the House and the Senate. I encourage the Commission, I know you are already doing a lot on the species in western Kansas, but I think that kind of legislation is not helpful. Chairman Lauber – This time of year there is an ominous cloud over our heads. We make a lot of decisions it takes us months and we have a lot of feedback and a lot of discussions and have a lot of people who are subject matter experts in the field bringing us recommendations. Then out of the blue, somebody heard an anecdotal remark that there ought to be a law and then we have to try to put out the fire to stop further damage. I don't see it will stop happening. From my prospective, legislative session is always a black cloud over your head. I am glad when it is over. Secretary Loveless – We share those kinds of frustrations. The thing that helps to balance that are folks like Representative Blex who really advocate for us over there and give us a heads up when things are coming down the pike that they don't think are constructive for conservation in Kansas. They advocate for good decisions and our experts within the legislature. We need more folks like Doug and Will Carpenter, an ex-commissioner who is also a Representative. They serve us well and we are thankful for them. Chairman Lauber – We are extremely grateful for them. My first meeting I voted for change in upland game season, biggest mistake the Commission ever made and as long as I am here, we are never going to change an opening date of primary hunting season. It was a mess and we changed it back after being yelled at for two years.

B. General Discussion

1. Printable Tags - Jason Dickson, chief information officer, presented this update to the Commission (Exhibit L). Last meeting discussion came up about our change to plain paper printable tags and move from durable paper. Datamax printers and going to all agents and everything. Part of what we determined was we would come back with what other states are doing, ideas and different aspects of what we are looking at and doing internally. Give history of how this came about. In 2005, we went totally automated with the licensing system. We added Datamax printers to every agent in the state and you got green tags. Back in 2018, we changed regulations to start using e-tagging. In 2021, we signed new contract with licensing contractor, and made change and internal decision to move to eliminate durable stock printers at all

locations and allowed 8 ½ x 11 plain paper; that started May 2022. Shanda Knapic, our licensing section chief, is online to help with this because she helped put this stuff together. In checking with other states, a lot of them are moving to plain paper. Florida still uses durable stock at their tax collectors, what we would call our county clerks. Rhode Island does plain stock for everything but commercial marine licenses. Tennessee has some vendors that do durable stock printing. Most on the list (AL, AK, FL, MT, MO, NE, OK, RI, TN, VA) went to plain paper or e-tagging. Missouri and Oklahoma have app for e-tagging. Oklahoma has been plain paper since 2012, they did start a new testing phase this year, a field tag option, when you purchase e-tag or paper tag you can purchase a hard card with tear offs on it, it is mailed to you, and you can tear off one and put confirmation number from e-tag on it and attach it to the deer. We have looked at that also. Nebraska and Missouri are both paper tags. It goes here and there from that aspect of it. Alaska is plain paper everywhere but do book licenses as well at remote locations. Several states still do durable stock but are moving to plain paper. Durable stock states: CA, CO, IL, NJ, NM, NY, MN, PA, TX, UT, WY. New York, Minnesota and Utah are transitioning to plain paper from durable stock in a process form. Colorado, which currently has the licensing system we used to have, use same Datamax printers and durable stock we used to have. Minnesota started transitioning. One of the things we saw in 2021, when we starting to move to the “go live” data in 2022 was the supply chain issues. That is why Minnesota is transitioning to plain stock, because they are having issues trying to find the Tyvek paper and printers are back ordered. One of other reasons that during that timeframe that we decided to push, since going to more e-tagging anyway, to go to plain paper. HP printers are cheaper, and it allows major box stores to use their own printers and computers and we did not have to provide printers to Walmarts and stores like that. That helped us from a security aspect because they have high security stuff as well. A couple of things we have been looking at is regulation 115-4-2, which is possession and how you tag the animal. We are going to try and standardize the aspect of the e-tag process and paper tag process. We are looking at on paper side of it is that you don’t have to tag deer with paper tag, have to fill it out and put unique ID on that paper tag so you can attach that to the deer in any means possible. Like we have been telling people with the e-tag to attach the confirmation number to the deer so they can take it to the processor. One of the other aspects we discussed internally, is all online deer tag purchases will be just e-tags and can’t print a tag at home. From a law enforcement prospective, they can’t print more than one or make copies. It is an e-tag, they are logged into the system and get the e-tag, go back in and fill out the harvest report. That is one other aspect of it. We have had discussions to broaden that out even more. Looked at 8 ½ x 11 durable paper. The paper we send nonresidents deer through the application process, is a security paper but not waterproof. It is a little heavier and has security feature where if they try to copy it, that it prints “VOID” all over it and that is another law enforcement way of handling people copying licenses and trying to duplicate that. We have also talked about tagging deer with something that has “KDWP” on it, some external thing that is waterproof but still looking through logistics on how that might happen, like a zip-tie type tag. One question is: Do we give them to agents to provide and hunters can write their confirmation number and zip tie that tag, or do we use a waterproof card sleeve where they can fill out paper form and slide that into the sleeve and attach that to the deer? Chairman Lauber – Assuming a long time before 50% of hunting public uses e-tags? Dickson – It will be. Right now, online purchasing last year was about 38,000 that did e-tag; 23,000 did paper tag online. It is turning that direction. If they go to an agent, it has been big that people chose paper tags. Chairman Lauber – 23,000 out of a total of how much? Dickson – About 131,000 tags if you count both e-tags and paper tags. Chairman Lauber – Part of the problem was the fact that old green tags were user-friendly, and they didn’t deteriorate in wet conditions. I tried to tag a doe this year and it got wet and then tried to write my name on it and went through the paper, it was not an artful ending but managed to get the tag

signed and attached. It has not been popular. I get it and same problem with card stock, same problem at Walmart, because their employees will not know the difference. Keep thinking because it is not popular. Probably other states are having the same complaints. Dickson – Other states have had e-tagging longer than us, so more have moved to that. Tennessee has a harvest report, not really e-tagging; you can get a paper license which is an excel spreadsheet type of thing, you answer your questions and then tag deer with whatever you have but have to go online and give harvest report, so they have that confirmation number. Tennessee was one of those that, as long as you fill out the tag, whatever you put on the deer with that confirmation number or unique ID of that tag on it, you didn't have to put that whole paper and attach it to the deer. Where Oklahoma was going with tear-off hard card, it was giving their deer harvesters another aspect, it is voluntary there. They do charge for it, but I don't know how much. It is a fulfillment thing... with theirs it was a three-tag tear off and if you only had one tag, ordered it, you would still have two other tags, which was a no-go when we started talking about law enforcement. Looking at the orange tag I showed earlier, our problem is: How do we do this logistically and get it out to the public? The people that had the questions were the ones that were trying to do it lawfully. They want to make sure deer in the back of the vehicle was tagged with an agency-type tag, so they don't run into any issues and the same with processors. Commissioner Sill – Good news is some of us who hate technology will eventually be dead and it will be a non-issue. Until then, we need to find something that makes lawful people feel good about being lawful. It is crappy to be out there knowing you are an unwilling violator and that is where some of us were this year. We don't have to do what other states do. Part of the reason we have the quality deer herd is, when the regs were written in 1964, they chose not to do what other states were doing. I would encourage us not to just follow the trends because it is what is being done, we can do better sometimes. Commissioner Escareno – E-tagging, is that tagging a deer with your phone? Explain that. Dickson – What you do with an e-tag is, you have an app on the phone or do it on the web, you purchase that and after you harvest it, you open the app, fill out the questions, like what county you shot it and date you harvested it, buck or doe, and then you upload a picture. You get a confirmation number and that is what they attach to the deer when they take it to the processor. If they throw it in the back of the truck to take it home, they are supposed to attach that confirmation number and if you are pulled over, an officer can put that number in his law enforcement app and see the picture and see that was the deer you took the picture of. Being the first year with new system, we did have some issues with the uploading of pictures, we worked those out, so in the future it should be handier. We also do a harvest report that allows even a person with a paper tag to fill out the harvest report so they can butcher the deer in the field and take it across state lines. For that, we require two pictures, they have to take a picture of animal and picture of the animal with the tag attached to it and upload those two images. They can just have it on their app. Commissioner Escareno – Is there any communication education-wise as far as YouTube or something showing you how to use that e-tag process? Dickson – Yes. We do have a video out on the website on how to walk through the app and how to do an e-tag. We will work with Public Affairs staff to get that more marketable out there for next season to get more communication out there. Commissioner Escareno – I have had numerous complaints from folks about that paper tag. Dickson – I have heard plenty. Commissioner Escareno – Encourage you to keep looking for something different and do what you can. Dickson – It is a lot about logistics and how we handle it as well as different discussions around the agency on how to handle it. We are in middle ground, we don't want to hinder somebody from going somewhere and purchasing something and going out that day, but some feasibility things too, providing different paper in

different places and making sure that is what they are using to do those type of tags. There is still a lot of stuff we are working out. Commissioner Escareno – Thank you for efforts and keep looking. Commissioner Sporer – I personally witnessed two harvests by friends and family, one antelope and one deer, and watched e-tag process. In both instances it went fine and there were no problems, it was very easy and no problems. I was concerned about it with the complaints I had heard so I wanted to get involved. I am not a big game guy, so I wanted to see it. In the department's defense, in both instances, it worked just fine.

2. Habitat First Update - Wes Sowards, Wildlife division assistant director and private lands program, presented this update to the Commission (Exhibit M, PowerPoint – Exhibit N). I want to provide a history of where we have been with habitat on private lands in the state and build up to where we are now. Brought me back to SASNAK program, started in 1973, 50th anniversary of doing private lands habitat management in the state. Proud to be a part of that. In 1972, meeting in Hutchinson of sportsman, that took offense on how Department was spending license dollars. The discussion let into utilizing license dollars and Wildlife Fee Funds to work on private lands. Extremely important to sustain viable populations. In 1973, the Department developed the SASNAK program which put a lot of key things in motion on private lands and with our Fisheries division and Law Enforcement also had a lot of big changes. A quote from Fish and Game magazine from 1973 from director at the time, Richard Wettersten, "To utilize the private landowners' basic interest in wildlife and to maintain good supplies of game species for 95 percent of our hunters..." A survey was done and 95% of hunters hunted on private lands and that has changed a little bit to private and public almost interchangeably, but private is still a big percentage. "SASNAK calls for the implementation of a private land development program. Working with State and Federal farm programs and directly with landowners we can be assured that those bulldozed hedgerows will be replaced elsewhere. Furthermore, they will be replaced in a manner compatible with farming and ranching operations." This was the start of our understanding of what we needed to do on private lands to sustain wildlife populations. Fifty years later, we are still there with successful programs. In early stages of this program, question was asked: What this would mean and how it would be rolled out? "A fisheries biologist will be assigned to each of the 20 reservoirs in the State..." That relates to fish harvest at 50% of reservoirs. "Game biologists will be employed on a district basis to work primarily with farmers and ranchers." We still have that basic structure they are called district wildlife biologists and we have area wildlife biologists, as well. They do that exact work while also working with our public access programs like WIHA and iWIHA. A lot of the early work focused on shelter belts, wind break establishment and a lot of planting of food plots. This progressed over time from a state-funded perspective to what we call Kansas-WHIP, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. Shortly thereafter, we developed a contributory agreement with the Kansas Natural Resources Conservation Service, which then also created area biologists that were stationed in the five NRCS areas to assist them directly with implementing wildlife habitat and building specifications and things like that. We still have that contributory agreement to this day although it has changed a little bit. Another turning point was the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in 1985. We started to become heavily involved with that as need for management was recognized. When CRP first came into place, it was really idle ground and there was no plan for management at that time. The need for management came a few years later when they recognized improvements could be made to CRP for wildlife. We got into a lot of CRP maintenance and still do a lot of that; amending CRP contracts and adding in beneficial practices that weren't identified up front. Then came the 1996 Farm Bill, which created the USDA-WHIP federal program. That brought a lot of financial assistance to all the states to work directly on wildlife habitat and Farm Bill. That was beneficial. Our biologists worked independently within NRCS,

in their offices and had access to hardware and software and it worked well. We were able to annually spend all the money given to Kansas and reach out for more at the national level. Basic tenants of WHIP program were to promote restoration of declining or important native wildlife habitats; protect, restore, develop or enhance wildlife habitat of at-risk species, candidate species and state- and federally-listed threatened and endangered species; reduce impacts of invasive species on wildlife habitats; and protect, restore, develop or enhance declining or important aquatic wildlife species' habitats. All encompassing dealing with wildlife habitat resource concerns out there. It did come to an end. In 2002, the Farm Bill increased authorized funding to \$345 million nationwide. In 2008, it increased further to \$425 million. At that point in time, there were more than 640,000 acres enrolled through 3,400 contracts. Then they reauthorized the WHIP program through the end of September 2012 and then it ended abruptly. In 2014, Farm Bill changed up and transitioned that wildlife program, WHIP into EQIP, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. It is their biggest program, even bigger than CRP, with billions of dollars at the national level directly implemented for farming and ranching operations. Our contributory agreement with NRCS changed at that time. From WHIP focused agreement where we were utilizing their offices and running these contracts through on our own to more of a general technical service provider (TSP) program. We help them on a full gamete of farm bill programs like building specifications, writing conservation plans and those sorts of things. The big caveat to EQIP was that it did designate and legislatively mandated 5% of funds must be used on beneficial wildlife practices. For several years, 2014 on through 2019/2020 we weren't spending those mandated dollars but are now and it has since increased. This is the largest agriculture conservation financial assistance programs for working lands in the entire nation. In 2014, a little over \$15 million and grew to almost \$30 million in 2022 and next year over \$40 million. With other implementations, like Inflation Reduction Act that is being discussed we will increase this program by \$25 million and \$20 billion nation-wide. Pretty substantial money coming in right now that will affect our contributory agreement and we have to find some ways to help NRCS deliver this amount of funding Our Working Lands for Wildlife program is under umbrella of EQIP, and it provided targeted programs, ranking pools for specific wildlife in Kansas. We have three, monarch, lesser prairie chicken and northern bobwhite quail, which we will be starting in the next few weeks. It gives us the ability to focus time and energy directly on programs that benefit wildlife and some of those critical wildlife species. Talk about our traditional, old school, habitat program that developed over the years, Kansas WHIP. This was just state wildlife fee funds and no other budget. That was based on having flexibility and not being attached to PR necessarily and having ability to deliver habitat on private lands, a difficult task to do through PR. We were doing \$100,000 to \$150,000 of work per year. We had to do something to get more habitat on the ground and spend more money on the land. SASNAK utilized partnerships and grant opportunities to expand available funding and we needed to do that. Traditionally we used RC&D Councils, which is rural conservation and development, that provided increased funding for habitat conservation projects. We used state funds but in order to round a lot of projects we had to grab additional funding opportunities. We had agreements with the Department of Ag Soil Conservation Districts across the state and a number of other programs. LIP was through federal PR program and state wildlife grants program out of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Also, we utilized a lot of partner funding opportunities like Pheasants Forever (PF), National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), Ducks Unlimited (DU) and are constantly working with other entities to do a lot of these bigger projects. In 2015, we took a deep dive as a division in an effort to try to rebrand our Kansas WHIP program, in east referred

to upland game habitat management program and it didn't really have a statewide identity. So, landowners had a difficult time connecting with it and our partners had a difficult time promoting the program because it was somewhat unrecognizable. We created what is known now as the Habitat First program, our keystone wildlife habitat conservation program for private lands in the state and it has been highly successful. From promotions standpoint and getting it out to landowners and getting interest going. Some of the things we did was promotions, but we created a standardized cost list for practices. It is up front on what they are getting into and what it is going to cost and gave list of what we would offer. We created job sheets on card stock, so, they could see timeframe of when practices should be implemented, how difficult they are to implement and some information regarding the goals of those practices. We have a call-in hotline, as well as other promotional opportunities we have done over the last eight years. Big change in 2018. From administrative level the change allowed us to utilize wildlife fee fund dollars to more limited extent than in the past. We tied Habitat First to Pitman Robertson funds, given increased allocations and increased baseline funding for private lands habitat conservation work almost three-fold, from \$150,000 to \$600,000 a year being spent in first three years. In 2021, another shift from a three-year grant to annual reoccurring awards and were able to increase that to \$1.1 million and \$400,000 to \$450,000 annually on contracts goes directly to private landowners to implement practices in Habitat First program. The unique thing about all of this is we raised it to \$1.1 million annual while keeping our wildlife fee fund match the exact same as it has been for 20 years or more; at least 10 years. We are able to put more habitat on the ground with private landowners. A lot of acceleration with promotion. Our biologists do 6-8 trade shows statewide on an annual basis to get the brand out there. It is recognizable in the conservation communities now. Put ads in hunting atlas and regulation summaries. Success of the program. In the first three years we did an incredible amount of work across the state, but in western Kansas not as much. A lot of that has to do with implementation of the walk-in hunting program. We have the same biologists working on both programs plus a myriad of other things and over time that has been one of those things we need to balance access programs and habitat programs to make sure we are getting beneficial habitat on the ground. A lot of good work being done the first three years of the program. Some of the main practices we provide include prescribed fire, one of the most beneficial practices out there in a state that has seen rapid succession from prairie dominant landscape to encroachment of eastern red cedars and other trees on the landscape. We burn 15,000 to 20,000 acres a year. We have been big in cover crops, do projects on walk-in hunting areas but not restricted to WIHA; do brush removal and brush management, our big one; we do a lot of range planting, grass and forbs on crop land, which is one of our biggest priorities; and vegetative chemical control to change status of some of those grass species from cool season dominant to more forb component. Over the last 50 years, there has been varying measures of reporting all we do with habitat. In some cases, we did a little bit more and a lot more than in late 1970s and 1980s to direct assistance to some of these projects. Our biologists are helping on the ground planting shrubs and things like that. We still do a little bit of that but our main thing we want to do is provide technical assistance, help them get started, let them know what they are going to have to overcome and send them on their way to land stewardship ethic and biologists don't have to hold their hand the whole process and we are able to move onto the next landowner. We have gotten good at reporting the things we are doing out there, whether working with federal Farm Bill program, state program, direct assistance or a new program we started with habitat specialists. The treated acres of habitat by year, since we have been tied to the PR program, spent about \$300,000 in first couple years to \$455,000 we sent to landowners last fiscal year; we are growing in a big way. Anticipate seeing that continue into the future. In 2018, in response to need for that implementation, we struggled to find contractors all the time, so we went to PF, pig-backed on public lands model of having these habitat specialists

and created three new positions, we are up to four now as we added an additional one in 2023. A lot of this came to be when we were seeing bigger PR allocations and were able to go this route and had good support to do that. We were trying to target from spatial scope and practice priorities into ecosystems and a priority for our department to manage those. The first three were focused in the Smoky Hills, around Wilson, to get after tree encroachment. We have spent about five years up there doing a lot of brush management on eastern red cedar and in response to that have gotten more acres in the WIHA program from direct communication with these people. It has been successful. We have one in Dodge City to work on playa landscape, planting grass, disking and things like that. We now have one in southeast Kansas in Mined Land area working on wetland reserve easements that have been encroached by lots of different things and have a lot of real conservation issues. Recently added one in southern Flint Hills, similar situation as the Smoky Hills, getting succession slowed down on cedars and woody species. On all of these prioritizing our walk-in-hunting lands to do a lot of the work. We have a good list of landowners to work with, but priority is for WIHA cooperators to get a better habitat situation. Moved northern position a little farther north. We have been doing a lot with these programs, at about 4,000 to 5,000 acres a year. Starting slow with these positions but getting a lot accomplished on the landscape. One other thing we work on is the Farm Bill, our priorities are, work with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and I am our state representative on several working groups within that. We lay out our priorities for Kansas, which will eventually get pulled into the AFWA Farm Bill platform which is still in draft form at this point. A lot of Kansas priorities are front and center in that document. As far as lobbying goes, AFWA is our go-to for that. To understand what we are dealing with when we talk federal Farm Bill, we are dealing with only the conservation title of the Farm iBill, 7% which is roughly \$29 billion of \$428 billion. This is not a bill that gets created and everyone is in agreement with it, this one goes all the way through and maybe gets extensions on the back end. Our piece is small but \$29 billion is not a small number and it goes to a lot of great programs. This is a 15–20-page document and our main priorities are to improve the conservation reserve program and increase those acreage caps defined in the Farm Bill, right now 29-million-acre cap and we want to expand that; make improvements to EQIP, anywhere from \$40 million to \$65 million just to the state of Kansas to deliver that program. There are some tweaks we need to make in that. One has made positive improvements in Kansas, EQIP is very agricultural and a lot of years we have had difficulties spending money on lands where agriculture is not being produced, some of those waste acres and people who buy land and don't have an interest in farming and ranching and this program has not been able to meet their needs. That is something we want to delve into and already made some progress. We want to increase funding for agricultural conservation easement program which would include those wetland reserve easements. The funding for that is limited so want to see an increase there. From public access standpoint, the only component in the program is the Voluntary Public Access Habitat Improvement (VPA-HIP). We have gotten three of these, 2012, 2016 and 2020 and spent about \$8 million and there is no match requirement at this point in time. This has been astronomical benefit to WIHA program. With this money we are tying to long-term access, we will take a CRP contract that is 15 years and do a 15-year access contract; pay all money up front and guaranteed to 15 years. That has been great at keeping us over one million acres in WIHA. Big piece in next Farm Bill. We are asking for no less than \$150 million over five years. It has been highly successful for Kansas and has helped some Midwest states start private land access program. (Showed 5-minute video)

Break

Secretary Loveless – Appreciate Wes’s description of the program and sense of history that he gave us. In state that is 98% private, if our agency is not working effectively with private landowners and others, we are not getting things done. That is a critical program for us and the success of the state going forward. Wes mentioned the Farm Bill, he is our expert on that. I was in Washington DC three weeks ago talking with Senator Marshall and other senators on the Senate Ag Committee about the Farm Bill and things we were hoping for in there to help us improve our ability to conserve wildlife in Kansas. We work on that level also to help steer federal legislation in a way that benefits our state. NRCS is an agency we work closely with, but our relationship hasn’t always been as constructive as it is now. That is a credit to staff and respect for those agents administering the Farm Bill and respect goes both ways. It is a credit to them that they are fighting through differences and challenges to make it a more effective program. Pheasants Forever is another important partner, and those technicians are important for us, those we contract are vital to us and we end up hiring them. One of beauties of this program is ease of use. Our folks have taken me out and I have met with some of those landowners, they are conservation minded and all brag about how it is so much easier than it used to be. Again, a credit to federal and our state folks in moving that forward. Saw remarkable growth and that starts with good relationships. As you meet our folks from around the state, led by Jake George and Wes, they are as sharp as they come technically but are also the kind of people you want to sit down and visit with and work with too. They are effective salespeople because of their expertise and personality, so proud of this program. It is a tribute to our high-quality folks.

3. Upland Bird Populations, Predators, and Furharvest – Matt Peek, furbearer research biologist, presented this update to the Commission (Exhibit O, PowerPoint – Exhibit P). At the last commission meeting Commissioner Sill asked for a more comprehensive overview of some of the issues around furbearer populations, upland game populations and predator control. The other commissioners were in agreement that you would like more information. So rather than having the small game biologist or myself talk individually, we put together a talk that all three of us are going to take on a specific section of. Jeff Prendergast will start talking about small game ecology, I will take about furbearer ecology and harvest, and Kent Fricke will talk about predator control and impacts on upland game populations.

Jeff Prendergast, small game and upland game coordinator, presented this update to the Commission. Kansas is important upland game bird state, and they are an important resource to us and concerned with current status of them. Predator removal has never been a strategy we would recommend as a way of improving upland game bird populations because it is largely ineffective. It is treating the symptoms not the source of the problem. Growth factors, upland game birds have a high rate of growth but limited by carrying capacity. When you have new habitat, and you start a new population it is growing slowly until you can get to a level where you can reach that high slope of growth. They will grow rapidly until they hit carrying capacity or maximum amount of what habitat can support. That carrying capacity can increase or decrease depending on the amount of habitat and quality of habitat. We are currently in a drought in several areas and that reduces the carrying capacity. With upland game bird growth rate that population will adjust quickly to that new carrying capacity. Population dynamics are complex system and predators make up a small portion of it. There is a whole host of other factors impacting the upland game bird populations and making them fluctuate. The conservation reserve program (CRP) is program that takes low producing farm ground and converts it into permanent native grass cover, an important habitat component to us. In 2007, the acres peaked in

Kansas and across the country and since then we have lost over half of the remaining acres in Kansas and nationally. Seeing less most productive types of CRP and are getting more of the less productive types of CRP, a quality issue on the remaining acres. One example is pasture grass that is still being grazed. In current landscape CRP is our most productive habitat for birds. When you consider the amount of CRP we are losing and birds key in on that for nesting cover you can see why decline. The agricultural landscape has changed as well. In 1982, pheasant harvest peaked with 1.5 million pheasants and since then we have lost over 50% of our wheat acres and 23% of milo acres. As you shift more to row crops you get a lower peak in pheasant abundance. We are seeing crops on the landscape are less productive at producing pheasants and there is a quality issue with the type of agricultural practices and doing more intense and less productive as well. Smaller habitat patches are less productive than larger ones. As you get closer to the center of a bigger field nest success goes up as you near the center. The smaller patches of CRP are still important and useful, but not as important as larger patches, primarily because of the distance from edge which impacts amount of predation on those nests. Kansas upland game birds are grassland birds. We have had large tree expansion across the state at high rates and trees provide resources to predators that reduces the effectiveness of prey from getting away from them. As a hawk perches, it is more effective, and trees provide for nest predators. The further away from a tree you get the higher overwinter survival of upland birds. Less trees in surrounding five kilometers the pheasant numbers respond more positively to CRP, than if you have 5% of the landscape in trees. We have greatly increased the distribution of surface water on the landscape, maybe not as much as needed and increase of windmills and wells and guzzlers, which are rain catch devices, to provide water for wildlife in CRP has increased predators because they require open water sources, but upland game birds do not. Wildlife feeding increases predator density artificially and increases nest predation. Open access to food provides the resource that creates those predators in the vicinity of feeding sources and produces artificially high rates of predation. Raccoons may not be searching for nests, but they are going to eat everyone they find stumbling around. The main take away is that there is lot of things we can do that can reduce predation as a whole but removing predators themselves is addressing the symptom not the cause.

Matt Peek, furbearer biologist – Furbearer harvest, you have all heard the idea that nobody traps anymore so being overrun by raccoons, opossums and skunks, so we will look at furbearer harvest. Since about 2000, the raccoon harvest has declined in the last eight years for several of these species. Raccoons were at an average of about 90,000 and has dropped to 40,000; opossum has dropped from 40,000 to 16,000; skunk from 14,000 to 6,000; and coyote has gone up, it was pretty stable at 94,000, however coyotes can also be taken by licensed hunters and the others have a much smaller user group; coyotes were 94,000 and went up to 124,000. As the market for other species dried up, the coyote market got hot so more interest in pursuing them by furharvesters. Recently we also added night vision hunting and that has helped harvest stay up there since price has come down. It is true harvest has declined. The populations increased due to changing harvest. I am focused mostly on raccoon, possum, and skunk. Our best furbearer survey in in the form of an index, so we don't know how many individuals we have of each species. We do know how these species have changed over time. For raccoon this goes back to 1980 and other species are since 1986. We have over 35 years of data on them and over 40 years on raccoon. Possum and skunk have remained stable over time; it is not true that these species have increased significantly as a result of changing harvest levels. The raccoon has been in a long-

term increase. When you look at other species, bobcat, badger and red fox are in the report as other furbearer species. Red fox are mainly confined around cities; badger are an open prairie species; and bobcat market harvest is hot enough that it does have impact on bobcat harvest. If there is a good bright spot in the fur trade, the recent bobcat auction in Kansas they averaged over \$90, so there will be a lot of harvest pressure on them. Coyotes are more like raccoons and have continually increased but other species have stayed stable. The focus is primarily on next predators. What would it take to impact the population? Proposal by some people is that we need to increase harvest to drive populations down so upland game birds can respond. Again, we don't exactly know how many of each of these species we have. If we assume there are 10 raccoons per square mile, higher in some areas, lower in others. There are 82,000 square miles in the state would give us 820,000 raccoons. The number of individuals you would need to remove to impact the species ranges from 20%, based on population monitoring on otters and swift fox, up to 70%, based on coyotes. If we assume for raccoons, it is around 40%, you would have to remove over 300,000 raccoons from the population to drive it downward. Keep in mind our raccoon harvest during good years since 2000 has been in the 90,000 range, so it is a long shot to use harvest to drive populations downward. Relative to impact of harvest on these populations that the coyote and raccoon populations continued to increase during time periods when harvest was high as well as low. With possum and skunk, they didn't respond with an upward movement when harvest dropped off. So, factors limiting the populations is not necessarily related to harvest. To talk about things, you might be up against, like bounties; Arkansas went through a process of considering what it would take and estimated if they invested \$1 million, at a \$10 a head bounty, they could remove 100,000 raccoons out of a population of two million raccoons; 5% of the population. That would not leave a meaningful effect in the population survey. The next year's reproduction would have made up for it and would not detect a difference with that type of an action on your population curve the next year. If you had that \$1 million a year it would be better spent elsewhere, so not talking about bounties but that is a good example of what we are up against in terms of harvest needed. This doesn't mean harvest attempts are futile, there are benefits to harvest. Any animal that is removed during one fall, that animal is not present as an adult and potential nest predator during the next nesting season. Although the population may remain high after reproduction, when you have a harvest of 40,000 raccoons, you have some number of fewer raccoons that survive to the nest season. We do, and always have, supported in-season harvest as a way of not just to address direct problems but as a time period to go in take raccoons if you feel there are too many. We have heard complaints that way too many raccoons and species, the one group I don't hear these complaints from is trappers. It seems odd that there are obviously enough raccoons in the population, that we could, and are considering various ways to increase harvest of raccoons. There are plenty of raccoons out there. The question is, why isn't it completely obvious that we open things up on them. Some of the concerns about that are orphan young from animals taken after young are born that are left to starve to death or die of exposure, which is not typically a favorable way for animals to die and not favorable to kill something and not use it. It is debatable how much demand there is for these, Kin mentioned \$2,50 averages and I heard of a person who sold their raccoons for \$9 a piece recently too, so debatable how much demand there is. One thing for sure, if you are talking about taking them in April and May there is no market value for them, some market in season. Expansion of a season outside the traditional fur season undermines legal harvest as a method of choice for dealing with furbearer damage. With all game species this has been our system. If deer problems on your property the first thing we want you to try is to get legal hunters out to solve the problem, same with furharvesting animals. The furbearer buys a license, that supports the department, and that is how our whole system of management, and the department is funded and based on. This will also establish a user group of people who may come in, probably for hire, if going to do it will be

either recreational or for a fee. It will establish a user group that we think will be hard to undo. I will use the night vision coyote hunting as an example. We are going to review that process in the coming months and if the department comes forward and says we don't want to see that season any longer, my guess is there will be a lot of strong opposition to that. It will be hard to take away. We are considering a similar issue here of establishing a user base it may be hard to undo. Also, the real dilemma here, what department and furbearer committee are thinking about, is what is the benefit of doing this. Those are the things we are weighing. This debate should not be framed as no harvest versus year-round harvest, we do allow harvest opportunity for these species already. Ironically, we are here to talk about this because demand for furbearer harvest is so high and yet our harvest information data says harvest demand is lowest it has been in 20 years. We are not prohibiting harvest of species, even under current state. There is a whole host of things that can be done to facilitate harvest and that we will take into consideration.

Kent Fricke, small game coordinator, presented this update to the commission. The discussion around predator control has been around for a long time, well over 100 years, so nothing new from a wildlife management standpoint. Address this with turkeys. Last fall in Chanute we had a discussion on turkeys and several of the topics we discussed were about nest predators. There are a myriad of predators for turkeys, for nests, poults, juvenile and adult birds. We discussed how nest success was around 25%, but there was large spatial and temporal variation in that, just with any other upland bird. Poult success is relatively low, even in a good year. Of that nest success those mortalities of nest failures in study done in 2011, in northwest Kansas, 65% were due to predators and other 35% was due to abandonment. We have known on all these species that in every single year that nest predators and predators of adult birds are major factors, always have been and always will be. Predators are always going to be part of the discussion on what effects the ecology and dynamics of these ground birds. Overall, predator control, they are primarily source of nest loss for ground nesting birds; predator/prey relationships are complex; we recognize predators are an important part of all ecosystems; and reduction of a particular species to protect another species almost never works. At the same time, we recognize that at certain times, for limited purposes, predator control can result in increased nest success. In terms of damage control, we need to consider that and recognized that removal of individual predators might be justified for specific damage problem; specific individuals as opposed to large landscape successes. Quality habitat is the key, we need to focus on habitat. Recognize established literature and scientific research out there that predator removal does not result in increases in upland bird populations at a landscape scale. In terms of broad or statewide or regional regulations or discussions around predator removal it has not been shown, through multiple studies, to be effective at large scale. Highlight 2003 article in Ducks Unlimited. The quote was "A closer look at large-scale predator-control programs reveals that they are counterproductive to the long-term benefits of waterfowl and waterfowl hunters" and we can say the same thing for pheasants, quail and turkey. However, there are studies that show that targeted predator removal at small scales can be successful in improving upland bird populations. There are examples of study in U.S. on northern bobwhite demographics and Europe looking at predation of grouse population; quote, "Our results suggest that predator control is likely to achieve short-term conservation benefits for grouse if well-designed and rigorously conducted. We suspect, however, that the majority of control programs conducted for conservation do not meet this standard." There is a myriad of studies that demonstrates this as well. We would like to be clear that the question to Matt, and the three of us, was specifically related upland bird nest

success and what the impact of nest predators on upland birds. There may be other reasons for trying to increase harvest of raccoons or other nest predators. The request to us, was can this be successful for increasing upland birds. This is the check list, if at small scale you were to design something the first thing that needs to be present is abundant high-quality habitat already in place. It doesn't do any good to say, here is a crop field, I want to do good things for quail, let's start hammering the raccoons and then we will start planting grass. It does not work that way; the quality habitat has to be there first. Research has shown that at that small scale, if goal is increasing upland bird nesting success, the removal of predators must be prior to and continuing throughout the entire nesting season, April to June, in terms of turkey, quail and pheasant populations. Logistically, it has to include full-time effort. Occasional removal of individual animals by hunters and trappers has very little impact on predator populations. If you are just going out and trapping or shooting a few raccoons once every few months, it will not work in terms of increasing upland bird populations. It has to be systematic, intensive and needs to be long term for any chance of success. Furthermore, it needs to include all legally harvested predators; there are many that are not legally harvested like fox, owls, snakes and other things that impact nests. Habitat management is key, having high quality habitat is mediating factor of wildlife management and that is true for upland bird populations. Whether it is overcoming drought conditions, flooding or predators, more and higher quality habitat is always going to be the key. We did a good job of reiterating what we, as wildlife biologists, talk to landowners about and help them with to increase upland bird populations. We don't have to worry about the complexities of predator/prey dynamics, these are the things that work. In summary, overall upland bird population are affected by many factors, predators are one of them. The large-scale reduction of furbearer populations resulting in large-scale increases in upland bird populations is unlikely. If we want to get to 25% removal of raccoon population in the state, we will have to harvest 300,000 raccoons. For pheasant harvest we typically harvest between 200,000 and 400,000 pheasants per year and to give you an idea of what the effort would have to look like in terms of removing that many individuals. Furbearer removal can result in improved upland bird populations, if done appropriately at small scales. Again, abundant high-quality habitat already has to exist and removal efforts that are intensive, consistent and long-term. There are significant concerns with increasing fur harvest outside traditional fur harvesting seasons. Habitat management is the key. Chairman Lauber – Good presentation.

Casey Kirkham – Understand data is over last 20 years as far as population increase of raccoons, coyotes and feeding baits. What have we done in last 20 years, as a department, to track any sort of impact management or are we still managing off the same seasons and regulations we have used for the last 20 years on furbearers? Peek – We just expanded the season by two weeks this year. Regulations have changed over time to facilitate fur harvest. Kansas is known as one of the best states in the country as far as being fur harvester-friendly and letting people use the equipment that is needed to be effective under different circumstances. We have always had fairly long season dates but now they are expanded to the entire time periods when fur is sellable for most species. As far as monitoring them, we have a lot better population data going back over 40 years, than what most other states have, so we are lucky to be able to say what they were back then. As you know fur harvest has largely been a market-driven activity and the market has always fluctuated up and down. The catch here is that it has stayed down for a period of time, probably COVID related to some degree. There are some bright spots in the fur market right now and who knows what could happen. Kirkham – What are active things you have done in the last 20 years; the answer would be you have added two weeks to end of the season? Peek – I would have to think about that a little. That would be the main thing. Kirkham – From trapping and hunting aspect, would you say that two weeks is the best time of year to take the optimum

amount of game? Peek – Season is already open during the optimal times, so it continues through some additional time which is fairly optimal for some species like bobcat and skunk, which come out in late February. Kirkham – Question is, are those two weeks in the optimal time for harvest? Peek – Yes, for some species it is. Kirkham – For the raccoon? Peek – The raccoon is already open mid-November through mid-December which is the optimum time to harvest raccoons. Our season dates have always been based on optimum time to harvest raccoons. So, we expanded beyond that some to give people more opportunity to harvest more racoons as well as other species. But yes, it has always been open during optimal time period for raccoons. Commissioner Gfeller – If habitat is the key, what can you do for that? Prendergast – The Farm Bill has been one of the biggest contributors to our habitat. From studies done on private lands program that is most active, but what we can do with our program is a drop in the bucket compared to number of acres impacted by agricultural decisions. When upland game birds do the best is when they are active in byproduct of agriculture. When we had best pheasant hunting before CRP was when we had a lot of weedy wheat fallow on the ground because that created some of the best habitat out there. Myself, and other biologists, work on national working groups that is pushing for better CRP regulations, increased rental rates and those sorts of things, to help make those habitats and programs more attractive to farmers. We are somewhat at the mercy of the agricultural markets and other deciding factors by private landowners. We don't control enough area to do something on our own at landscape level scale. Commissioner Gfeller – You really don't have much ability because CRP is dependent on federal dollars. Jackie Augustine, Audubon of Kansas – Do we know anything about the raccoon populations, are they increasing evenly throughout the state, and does it have anything to do with woody encroachment? Peek – It probably has something to do with woody encroachment. Jeff mentioned several other things like water sources, but we really don't know precisely what active feeding has on their survival but can find a lot of raccoons around deer feeders. That may or may not impact their survival. I don't think of food as limiting factor because diet is so diverse. They are increasing in all regions of the state. Commissioner Sill – We see pictures of deer feeders surrounded by 20 to 30 raccoons. I am one that says deer feeders don't help us in many regards. One of my thoughts was it does provide artificial food source for raccoons, therefore making life easier and increasing the likelihood they are going to do well and reproduce well. The deer feeders, change deer patterns, bring raccoons in, turkeys feed off that. Is there a concentration in areas where there are large numbers of feeders that then makes that predation problem worse? Prendergast – Presentation I showed talked about exactly that, it showed distance and proximity to food source as hubs of a wheel, the closer you were to the hub the higher the predation on the nests. Commissioner Sill – If there were no deer feeders, recreational baiting or whatever, the deer, turkeys, upland birds and raccoons would all be more dispersed, and could that change predation patterns? Or not enough to make a difference? Prendergast - On upland birds it probably depends on the associated habitat, so birds are making decisions based on habitat factors and whether or not they are close to deer feeders. If close to CRP it is going to impact the predation rate on nests in that CRP field. Likely, but a lot of variables in that question. Peek – You could reasonably assume it would disperse raccoons to other food sources, but don't know of any other food sources that is persistent that occurs in an area smaller than this room. It would disperse them out of a certain area. I look at those feeders as an opportunity and great place for people to get rid of raccoons, a target area. Three and a half months already exists to go to feeders and take all the raccoons you want, and some guys already do that. Prendergast – One of my concerns with deer feeders is the timing when that corn stops flowing. If you are concentrating coons in an area like that and then

that corn gets shut off right about the time, we start nesting season. There is no data to back that up, it is just an observation. Chairman Lauber – There is no visible benefit to upland game or turkeys by having feeders. How bad is it? Prendergast – It is potentially a detriment; aflatoxin corn and birds are susceptible to. The parts per billion when marketable so some of those corns tend to be higher aflatoxin and you can get some of those poisoning impacts as well.

Commissioner Lister – This isn't landscape level, but I get lots of call about orphan wildlife. My worry is if we are taking raccoons when the young are there more people are going to be worried about that and want to take them home and make them pets and then they are going to get diseases all kinds of problems are going to arise from that. Peek – About orphan wildlife and taking species in, there is a whole range of things we can do, somewhere between a closed season and a year-round open season and using every possible technique. That fact that we are here talking about too many raccoons and people are rehabbing them and putting them back into the wild is somewhat counter-productive in a lot of ways. That is one of the things of this that may contribute in some small degree to the raccoon population issue. Commissioner Lister – My concern is somebody from the general public picking one up. Peek – In most cases they wouldn't find them, they would be underground and in den trees and stuff like that. It would probably be rare. Commissioner Lister – I certainly get calls about them. They have them in their laundry basket in the house. Peek – In some cases, especially later on these animals are big enough to climb out of the den and be found. You are right, it is not just animals that are immobile and depending on what time frame you open that up it could have animals big enough to get out and be found. Chairman Lauber – From chronological and hunting season perspective, while we do not want to encourage orphan animals, it is something we shouldn't spend too much time on because there are many we can't help anyway. I don't know if that is a good reason to minimize harvest. Commissioner Lister- I am not saying minimize harvest it is an image thing I think, and we don't want to put out an image that we are heartless people. Commissioner Sporer – There is no doubt that Jeff and Kent identified landscape in upland is most important part of this entire process. Habitat First the department has done is gladly appreciated but still on a small scale compared with the big scale of USDA, Farm Bill and CRP programs. I have an old-timer that has thought about this his whole life, and he made statement to me that without USDA CRP program and high rental rates to combat production agriculture we are never going to have CRP and habitat we need to grow upland birds. There is no doubt and that is out of our control. Brad can go to DC, and we can lobby the best we can but until we get higher rental rates for CRP that is not going to happen. Matt identified furbearer, particularly coons and coyotes are at all time high populations. Jeff and Kent, what are the populations of pheasant, quail and turkeys in comparison to the last 20 years ago? Prendergast – Today is extremely low but is largely impacted by current weather patterns and drought. If we go back even five years ago our bobwhite quail populations hit a modern-day high. In 2017, we recorded the highest quail index we had ever done on our spring whistle survey. Around that same time, coming out of a drought, we had a spike in pheasants in the southwest corner of the state. They are still there and still responding to habitat when it is on the ground, but currently low. Fricke – Turkey has declined, peaked in late 2000s, on year 14 or 15 of a long-term statewide decline. But at the same time that is also the trend in all the southeastern and Midwest states in the U.S. as well, so Kansas is not unique in that aspect. There are a number of things turkeys are not responding to in terms of weather patterns as we would have expected. There are a number of reasons, discussed many times in the turkey biology world that may be affecting those populations. Commissioner Sporer – We have all-time high furbearer populations and historic low upland game populations. Our landscape and habitat is shrinking, does that increase percent of nest predation by having, more predators, less habitat and less nests to raid? Fricke – I understand the logic. Jeff did a good job of laying that out in terms of what happens when you have lower quality habitat and smaller

hatch sizes. The logic you lay out is potentially sound, but at same time we recognize what impacts may or may not have, we are not sure and if anything at landscape scale we are not likely to see any positive impact. Primary concerns from biology and ecology standpoint, is where do we want to focus our efforts, in terms of what we do about that. That is why we bring up habitat management side of things. Does decreased amount of habitat, decreased hatch size and increased number of predators, have potential to increase nest predation, certainly. I understand the logic behind that but there are so many other things we can do to positively impact those populations rather than just predator removal. Commissioner Sporer – I would think of it in this numbers game, just say there was a quarter section of CRP that had 10 nesting pheasants on it, how many of those nests would be raided? Prendergast – On a quarter section there are up to 80% success rates on a quarter section, the graph where I talked about patch size. Between 55% and 80%, on smaller 40, between 54% and 76% success. Commissioner Sporer – So 20 to 30 to maybe 40% of those nests don't make it. Now today we only have two nests on that quarter section, what is the percent of those two nests are going to get raided? That is my point. You don't have to answer the question I am putting non-theory type stuff out here. My point is, we have got landscape going, you guys are working on habitat, working on Farm Bill, trying to get CRP rates better, what else are we doing to help upland game? One aspect I can see is we have the tools at hand to somewhat help, with predator removal. I know you said it doesn't matter, but we have to do something and be proactive and we have the tools in place that we could do more. Peek – Defer to upland bird biologists on what affect that might have. I can say that we can look at status of raccoons and say it is not unreasonable for anybody to look at our data and suggest that we would be wise to consider other ways to increase harvest. The furbearer committee will be doing that. There is a wide range of options out there we will be talking about and may come back with recommendations to expand seasons. Whether or not that actually results in any difference in upland game bird populations I can't say. From furbearer side of things, we can look at options that might increase harvest a little bit. The population of raccoons can withstand it. If there are ways we can work around those concerns or determine if not big enough concerns to prevent, additional activity is the type of things we will be weighing. Commissioner Sporer – Do that in April? Peek – April would be the earliest. Current night vision season ends at end of March, so plan was to try and get a quick survey out to a portion of those hunters to access all the characteristics of that season, analyze it and get the furbearer committee together. We will at least have some early information on how the night vision season went, so we won't proceed with any type of furharvesting recommendations without having that data. Chairman Lauber – Encourage furbearer committee to really you to look at some of these items and come up with your best recommendations. Secretary Loveless – We have been looking into this for a while, with a comprehensive approach. I appreciate that presentation and I know I benefited from that. One task was to look at predators relative to bird production, but let's not lose sight of the bigger picture. When you improve habitat, everything from bees to bobwhite quail and other ground nesting birds in that area, as well as mammals and deer and other animals benefit too, as well as broader ecosystem health like soil quality and water quality. There are broad benefits in areas we are charged with and beyond to do habitat work. There are layers and the benefits to us as a state when they do this work. Habitat is the answer we keep coming back to. We appreciate the presentation.

4. Wanton Waste Update – Colonel Greg Kyser, law enforcement division director, presented this update to the Commission (Exhibit Q). Here to give a brief presentation on wanton

waste issue recently brought forth to the commissioner. Law Enforcement every year deal with game that is dumped, deer, waterfowl and coyotes recently. We have had some discussions with the Secretary and Assistant Secretary. I want to touch on constituent complaint about the wanton waste of crows. They are covered under their own regulation, 115-20-1 and while they are a migratory bird, they are not a migratory game bird by definition of wanton waste. Under that regulation can't be sold, bartered or traded but can be disposed of in any manner, which means they can be left to lay. A lot of people use public lands for other things than hunting, bird watching and what have you. If you have a bunch of dead crows laying there that is not really the image we want to portray, like the hulls of their shotgun. I'm sure we will be having further discussions on that. As far as wanton waste we do have a viable regulation and it states sportsman have to make reasonable effort to retrieve their game, retain for processing or consumption and then it has to be transported to residence or commercial preservation facility, a taxidermist, or a commercial processor or locker plant. My staff started researching what other states have for wanton waste, but that is ongoing and so far, we have found a wide range of regulations. Some are minimal, some very intense and go into detail about processed game, birds need to be breasted out, big game quartered, etc. We don't go into detail in our regulations. In discussions with the Secretary, we will have more in depth discussions amongst management team on how we can look at what other states are doing and if we need to make changes, we can come back to you with ideas. Commissioner Sporer – What happened to duck dumping picture we all saw online? Kyser – That is ongoing, I am not in a position where I can comment on that, it is an ongoing case.

5. CWD Updates - Shane Hesting, wildlife disease program coordinator, presented this update to the commission (Exhibit R). Update from last season as I gave the history on August 4. It is the dark ominous cloud that you talked about. When we don't have statewide surveillance, we do a zone a year and we have five zones. Missouri University was doing a study which is done but they have to analyze their data. They collected 1,819 samples and found 181 positives, 10% of samples. There were sampling everywhere in the state but the south-central zone because the department was sampling in that zone. We found 12 positives out of 328 samples. The 12 positives we found were not in the south-central zone, 10 of them were sick and suspect animals in the northwest and two were tested accidentally from the north-central zone. We didn't detect any positives in the south-central zone, but Missouri found two, one in Cowley and one in McPherson counties. We are interested in how many private submissions are submitted by hunters themselves that are willing to pay for their own test to get a quick result. It has always hovered around 200, last season 192, which is less than we thought it would be with people concerned about CWD and potential health effects. Of those private submissions, 35 positives, 18% of them. Those folks know they are hunting in areas where there is CWD and want to know faster so they can get meat processed. Total sample size was 2,339, with 228 positives, 10% rate. Most of those positives are in the northwest, but we are seeing sparks again. Missouri is done sampling and analyzing data now, hope to get something from them in a few months. We continue to sample through May, as an agency, the sick and suspect animals and we send them to Kansas Veterinary Lab in Manhattan. Finish up in May so get billed in June and we want to be finished before the new fiscal year start on July 1. New counties added this past season, Saline, Smoky Hill Bombing Range, Marshall County, close to Blue Rapids. To protect hunting areas and maintain trust we don't give specific coordinates or locations to the public. McPherson County, northwest county; Sedgwick County, northwest corner; Shawnee County, northwest of Topeka; and Rice County, no location, so we put it in the center of the county. We share a map with the public every year and I just keep adding dots and shows from 1996 to right now. We are up to 966 positives; of top 10 counties, Sheridan, with 83 positives, is number 1, in the

northwest. They have had it longer and natural dispersal of sick animals and a lot of reasons why this disease spreads. Smith is concerning because that is the north-central zone at number 3 with 76, and Phillips is number 5. There are 562 positives in these 10 counties and explain 58% of the total positives. Of the 966 positives, 602 in last three years, 729 positives in last four years; this is called exponential growth, they start out slow and go for years and then all of a sudden, numbers shoot up, that is how most diseases operate and how wildlife populations operate. It is a nature thing. Why so bad in northwest Kansas is the question we get. We have some ideas on that, and the Missouri study is going to look at these variables, see if correlations with prevalence and variables and come up with models. Clay banks has no humous in it and prions bind to clay particles and become 700 times more infectious when they do. There was a paper done on that maybe 20 years ago. Prions never go away they are dumped on the ground, and this is one example of why it may be bad in northwest Kansas because of high clay content and less humus; Humus is getting some hype about denaturing prions, and it does, but you have to have quite a bit of it to do any good. We have more humus in the east so we are hoping that the Missouri study can tease out some of that. The disease has been there longer and simple mathematics if something is in an area longer you have more of it over time, than an area that just gets a spark of CWD. It has more time to spread naturally, yearlings leaving with the disease, Colorado and Nebraska deer coming in. Continuation of baiting and feeding after disease arrived. When you don't have a disease like CWD on the landscape it is neutral. But when you get a disease like CWD you have to stop baiting and feeding because every deer is coming there and will pick up prions at those sites and there are a lot of other reasons not to bait and feed. Baiting spreads this disease. What could slow prevalence in eastern Kansas to save what is left? Natural helpers, more humus and less clay soil profile in the east should help us a little bit and cyclic hemorrhagic disease outbreaks will take out a lot of deer. We are due for one, started to have one last year. It will reduce the population and reduce those contact rates naturally when that happens. Do we rely on those two things to stop it completely, no but we are slowing the prevalence when we can but there is no eradication. The human helper aspect of it is to stop baiting and feeding where we can. If we have to do it by regulation that is what we will do. It is a tragedy of the commons when somebody is doing something next to you on some other property and you are voluntarily trying to help the deer, but you want to do it too because they are. That is the primary reason it is out of control. You can go to places like Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, and it is all around the perimeter and the hot spot in Stafford County is near Quivira Wildlife Refuge. And stop bringing carcasses east, moving carcasses around anywhere is a bad idea, most the prions are in the brain and spinal cord. A lot of this is common sense. To get everyone on board is the trouble. Still no evidence any human has acquired a TSE from eating a positive cervid, deer or elk. Thousands are eaten every year that are untested and positive, and no humans have it yet. Maybe not enough positives have been eaten yet. BSE, mad-cow disease in the 1990s, millions of people ate that beef, 200 plus people got it. We might be protected by that and not see that first case for a long time because millions of people are not going to eat these positives. We are losing the hunter base and it may be 20-30 years before we get up to a number like that. The awareness not to eat those is out there. That might help. Maybe an incubation time, the machacas in Canada was 9-10 years before they came down with it and it wasn't replicated in at the Colorado Institute. What if humans is 20-30 years. That is why we don't recommend easting positives. We have no clue if there is an incubation time, and we don't want to see that trojan horse. Maybe humans will never get CWD variant, we might have a barrier in our gut that prevents that from ever happening. Experiments using non-human primates and humanized mice, where they

change the DNA, so those mice express human genes, that continues to suggest the risk is not zero. We need to pay attention to that. There is evidence CWD is adversely affecting some cervid populations, four for sure. Long term model Colorado came out with still suggests the loss of older trophy animals over time, not just see it overnight. Antidotal evidence in Decatur County, I have a friend there who has lived there for 40 years and is a deer hunter, he says there are fewer older deer, he doesn't see them on trail cameras and that is an area that has had it the longest. We have robust deer population in the state, this can mislead people into thinking all our deer are sick and some states don't want any deer coming from Kansas because we are a CWD state. We have a lot of healthy animals out there, a robust buck population. We still get a lot of brain abscesses that attest to that. We are a destination state and number five in the nation for big animals. Anything we can do to continue that and do what we can about CWD and maintain those trophies and desire of people to come here, we need to do it. New plan for next year. Missouri is done sampling and some people have gotten used to statewide surveillance and having their deer tested for free. We have a tentative plan, may be changes to it, move towards contract with lab at Manhattan and then we can test more samples. For any interested hunters. A lot of the 2,000 samples are coming deer where the hunter doesn't even know their deer is tested, comes from taxidermists. We are going to try to take care of hunter who is interested in CWD and others and test as many as we can until funding is exhausted. This will shorten wait times. The problem is when samples are sent to a lab the hunter has to wait a month or two, and that is not good enough when you want to process your deer. So, we are going to shorten that up and ship samples from district and regional offices every week and get results to 2-3 weeks, maybe shorter than that. We will still sample the southwest zone, this will be the only area where we use paid collectors, that is the next rotation zone. Hunters can bring samples or heads to district or regional offices, may need to adjust on some things and maybe will meet people in some places and biologists will ship to lab each week. Hunters will also be allowed to ship to Manhattan themselves, we will pay for it if we get a data card. Right now, we are thinking we will put the data card in the hunting regulations, and they can clip it out and fill it out and give it to the lab when they take, or ship, their sample there. Hunters can also bypass our program and submit privately and pay the \$28, and some people will. The lab prioritizes those samples, and we are second. Private submissions have been hovering about 200 a year for past four years, expect max of 1,000 samples, so testing fee will be \$28,000. We will have some wiggle room and will be able to take care of our constituents if we have to.

Levi Jaster – big game biologist, presented this update to the commission (Exhibit S). Thank Shane for laying the groundwork. I will talk about low hanging fruit regarding CWD in Kansas and our regulations. Shane alluded to the carcass movement and where we are going with this. The map from USGS for CWD shows what they know for endemic areas around the country and gives you general idea of where CWD is found across North America. Gray indicates where found in free ranging populations, color dots show whether found in captive populations that were depopulated in yellow or red if current captive cervid population. In looking at regulations reviewed all the states that border Kansas and tried to focus on states with similar situation as us and a couple of others. A lot of digging through state websites and regulation documents to look at what they have been doing. While doing that, not just looking at carcass import restrictions but internal restrictions in each state and baiting and feeding regulations regarding CWD and other situations. There are some other reasons to look at baiting besides just CWD and disease. Habitat impacts around feeders; predation plays a role in that, general health for deer, and aflatoxins and reviewing whether necessary to hunt over bait. There are some studies that show there is no difference in harvest. That will be coming out somewhere down the line. Focus on import of carcasses into the state from another state. Looking at other states, most have a carcass ban in

place, with three notable exceptions, Colorado, Nebraska and South Dakota. Colorado did have import restriction in place but have struck that and doing large education efforts; Nebraska has never had any regulations; and South Dakota is taking approach of implementing disposal regulations rather than carcass movement regulations but also have greater jurisdiction as far as what they oversee over taxidermists, processors and such. Otherwise, nearly every state has a carcass ban, about half set to only infected areas only, most states include provisions for deboned meat, or cut and wrapped meat which may contain bones, most include quarters with no head or spine. Almost everybody has something regarding hides, if no excess tissue attached, clean skulls for most states, clean teeth from canine teeth, sometimes called whistlers or buglers, antlers, some states mention shed antlers or antlers not attached to the skull, and antlers on a clean skull are allowed by most states. Finished taxidermy or canned products are allowed with a few exceptions, assuming they probably would fall under antlers on a clean skull plate for finished taxidermy project. A few states allow importing carcasses, or parts that don't fit other definitions, directly to taxidermist or processor. A few differences I saw, Arizona, which doesn't have CWD yet, don't allow velvet on antlers either. Illinois has landfill indemnity law in place to try and convince landfill operators to participate in disposal efforts and nobody can come back on them later for having prions. They also require, for implementing directly to a processor or taxidermist that all tissue has to be frozen. Minnesota has nonresident direct travel exemption; so, if bringing a whole carcass into the state, not staying but traveling through as part of your direct route from where you came from to where you are going. Missouri has 48 hours to taxidermist and have greater jurisdiction on taxidermists and processors who take wild game. New Mexico requires anything has to be discarded in field or sent to incinerator. Texas has uncleaned head waiver requirement for bringing anything from infected area to processor or taxidermist, you have to print it and give to who you take animal to. Wisconsin also includes that 72-hour taxidermist/processor exception to import rule. Wyoming has import restriction, internal movement restriction as well as export restriction of whole carcasses. They have the most widespread CWD of any state. Best management practices are listed in AFWA for reducing risk of CWD management regarding carcasses. They recommend as best thing to do is prohibit importation of intact cervid carcasses, which includes spinal column and brain tissue from all states and provinces. They do say you should allow cut wrapped meat, deboned meat, cleaned skulls or skull cap with no brain tissue, shed antlers, hides, canine teeth or finished taxidermy products. They also provide some alternatives. One is to allow quartered carcasses with no spinal column of brain tissue in addition. Another one is to prohibit all movement from known infected areas and import only parts from states with known infection; similar but if hunting in an area with no detected CWD you still couldn't bring it if state has an infection. Consider passage of all the appropriate parts of it even if from a state with CWD positive status. Consider allowing import of whole carcass provided the carcass is accompanied by a not-detected CWD test. It might be difficult to implement due to the turnaround time required for CWD testing. Implementation of that would likely be on the hunter. Store carcass where they got it until they are able to bring it. Our first look at potentially proposed regulation for Kansas. Wrote it to keep it simple and understandable but there may be language that needs to be adjusted. Importation of wild cervid carcasses, specifically say wild since we don't have jurisdiction over captive cervids in Kansas and have to work with the Department of Ag to address captive carcasses. The prohibition of wild carcasses into Kansas is prohibited, except for whole carcasses after not-detected CWD status is received from CWD test performed by an accredited laboratory. There may be, down the road, a home or field test, still being developed, but a ways from that. Quarters

with head materials removed, deboned meat, cut and wrapped, hides with excess flesh removed, clean skulls, clean teeth; skull plate cap with antlers attached and cleaned of soft tissues, antlers without skull plate attached which would allow shed antlers, finished taxidermy and tanned hides, heads and capes with not more than six inches of neck attached or antlers attached to an uncleaned skull plate cap if submitted to a taxidermist within 72 hours after entry and the taxidermist disposed of waste tissues in a licensed landfill (like Colorado), tissues for use at a diagnostic or research lab (would allow them to bring lymph nodes to lab in Manhattan), and tissues for research not being used at a lab with prior approval by KDWP (a couple different states have some specific language for this and this seemed like simplest one. Hunters will still have to maintain proof of sex as required by regulations it doesn't excuse that. Opened regulations to give them some options to do that. That would be the language we are proposing for not bringing CWD into Kansas from another source. We are also talking about what we can do within the state. I don't have specific language today. CWD is detected in many parts of the state and have some areas with pretty high prevalence rates but still have areas we have not detected CWD. As Shane mentioned, not bringing carcasses east would be a big benefit. We are considering something that falls in lines of you can transport the carcasses within the management unit of harvest and up to 30 miles from boundary to let people hunting locally to get to their home or take to taxidermist. If they want to go farther, we will be looking at them quartering it, or leaving the head and spine in that area. We are still discussing how we can approach that and what seems like it would work well for us.

C. Workshop Session

Chairman Lauber – Time is getting away from us and we have a lot of workshop items. Some will go fast. I will not call for another break, please get up as needed.

1. KAR 115-4-11 Big Game permit applications – Levi Jaster, big game coordinator, presented these regulations to the Commission (Exhibit T). Regarding recent changes to applications and preference points for pronghorn antelope. There were some technical edits for some reason didn't happen and some old language was left in. You got most of those with current text and technical edits on next couple of pages. Staff identified some other things that need to be addressed while doing this. Plan to workshop this one more time.

2. Deer 25 Series Regulations (KAR 115-25-9 Deer; open season, bag limit and permits) – Levi Jaster, big game coordinator, presented these regulations to the Commission (Exhibit U). The 25-series sets our season dates for deer statewide. In the past we have given dates for the upcoming season with this regulation and review it every year. As you are aware of the issues in getting regulations through the process that are outside our control. We have looked at rewriting a lot of these, so we don't have to vote on them every year. We will bring them to you when time for a change that needs to be addressed. I have new language of the actual regulation in there. Such as the archery season begins on the second Monday following the first Saturday. There is some oddness to that because trying to deal with when our youth season falls or when it would potentially change down the road. We didn't want to say use language that said the archery season starts after the youth season because we could run into issues with that. As the changes fall, it basically gives us the same days we've been running with the last couple years and would maintain that into the foreseeable future. Unless we have to address some other change. The biggest change in this is that we propose the extended pre-rut in DMU 12 to help address deer overpopulation in there. There is quite an increase in landowner, and especially ag producer complaints, and deer damage permits. We are seeing that in other cases too, as far as our

deer/vehicle accidents and such. So that adds specifically that in Unit 12 the extended pre-rut whitetail deer antlerless-only season begins the Tuesday immediately following Columbus Day, because Columbus Day is the last day of the regular pre-rut and continues to six more days/ Which would give them two full weekends in that Unit, for nine days for some additional firearms opportunities. Especially for a season that's 90 some, almost 98 percent, of the activity during that is residents. Also, to be earlier to hopefully help address some crop damage while it's still occurring. If this is passed with durable language, we would put dates in Secretary's Orders to be sure people know what dates actually are. Another added benefit of the durable language is that hunters will be able to look at that and see when it will be 2-3 years in advance. In some years we have moved the youth season back a weekend, so it didn't fall on September 1, so people didn't have to choose between dove hunting, a great youth opportunity. With this we might have overlap but they can at least plan for it.

3. KAR 115-25-9a Deer; open season, bag limit, and permits; additional considerations; Ft. Riley (military deer seasons) – Levi Jaster, big game biologist, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit V). This one still has specific dates. We are working with military subunits to find a way to address this regulation in more durable language too. With many of the differences we haven't been able to work that out yet to figure out what we can and can't allow on these season dates. Maybe it will be something like posted notice or something like that, but we have to work this out and make sure we include them on how we do this. For 2023: Smoky Hill is following statewide seasons established in KAR 115-25-9. White-tailed deer antlerless-only permits allowed is five. Fort Riley has requested the same seasons as statewide 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; and a deer hunter may use one white-tailed deer antlerless-only permit on 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 but spread over several weekends. That is one of the reasons it has been difficult to get this into durable language with those changes and shifts. 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.

4. Furbearer Regulations – Matt Peek, furbearer research biologist, presented these regulations to the Commission (Exhibit W). Night season ends March 31, so our plan is to conduct a survey at the end of that season and be back in April with some preliminary information. We will also be reviewing furbearer regulations during that process with the furbearer committee considering ways we might increase certain species of furbearer harvest. At the last commissioner meeting I had a couple of questions about night vision season. Commissioner Sporer asked about the current permit sales were. As of this week, it looks we have about 40% increase in night vision permit sales from previous season. We would anticipate that we are going to sell over 6,000. Commissioner Sill asked about distribution of night vision permit holders. A quick assessment of that indicates they are widespread statewide with only three counties with fewer than ten-night vision permits and those are three of our less populated

counties. Fewer people, fewer permit sales. Another interesting thing I noted is that 19% of night vision permit holders are people who live out of state. I heard of competition hunts drawing a lot of people in.

5. KAR 115-25-7 Antelope; open season, bag limit and permits – Matt Peek, furbearer research biologist, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit X). Nothing to add from last meeting. We are making changes to terminology, so we take specific dates out to make the regulation longer lasting. We are also proposing to do away with the second half of the archery seasons, or late archery season. Permit allocations are similar to recent years.

6. KAR 115-25-8 Elk; open season, bag limit and permit – Matt Peek, furbearer research biologist, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit Y). Like pronghorn, we have some changes in language, so not listing specific calendar years. Otherwise, things are good with elk. We are proposing 12 any-elk and 18 antlerless elk permits on Fort Riley, the same number we have allocated in recent years.

7. Public Land Regulations – Ryan Stucky, public lands assistant director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit Z). As mentioned back in January, the last Commission meeting, this is the time of year where public lands comes forward with any proposed changes or any new regulations and we don't have any at this time. We didn't mention last time that we are discussing the hunting pressure issues and that's mostly focused around waterfowl. Tom Bidrowski is here to give a presentation on what some of that looks like.

Tom Bidrowski, migratory game bird program manager – (PowerPoint – Exhibit AA) I will give a brief update on status of waterfowling and KDWP's efforts to manage waterfowl hunting pressure. North America waterfall landscape is quickly changing not only the physical landscape but also the social dynamics. This is leading to changes in how we hunt, where we hunt, and when we hunt. When activities steeped in tradition, like waterfowling, undergoes new pressures there can be clashes of what a waterfowling experience should be or what is the new norm. Modern waterfowlers have the benefits of longer seasons and greater arrangement of season dates. Since 1997, we've had a 74-day season in our Low Plains unit. For our previous longer season you have to go back to 1958. We have had one or two zones through history but since 2012, we've had four zones that have splits that is based off the season. Since 2004, we are hunting later than ever since and have been able to hunt the last two weeks of January. You would have to go back to the 1930s to include those hunting days. Waterfowlers have the greater advantages to travel, and they do travel more to hunt. As we've seen in the last few years people are more mobile and have greater abilities travel due to remote working abilities. We have after work cell phones and have access to better and more current information. We can look at satellite maps and get scouting reports just at our fingertips. We also have the benefit of modern equipment with nearly any waterfowling gadget has improved over the decades. Think of Gore-Tex, neoprene, and mud motor has replaced cotton jackets, rubber waders, and a pole boat. Due to its ample and quality waterfall hunting opportunities Kansas is a waterfowl hunting destination. This increased hunting pressure can affect waterfowl distribution and behavior. Greater pressure can reduce hunting access and decrease waterfowling quality overall. This can lead to decreased hunter satisfaction, especially among resident hunters. Maintaining resident Kansas waterfowl hunters is a high priority. Kansas residents are critical for the support of local conservation issues such as water rights, legislative actions and land acquisitions. Kansas cannot maintain its waterfowl hunting heritage without strong resident waterfowlers. There are many challenges to the future of Kansas waterfowl. It will take a variety of approaches and timelines to

ensure Kansas retains its waterfowl hunting heritage. Hunters are utmost important but also to find amiable solutions we'll take other stakeholder's involvement, such as guides and outfitters, rural communities and businesses and Kansas elected officials. To examine the impacts of these pressures and develop actions to offset them Kansas Wildlife and Parks has created an ad hoc committee. Our goal is to maintain Kansas waterfowl hunting heritage by providing quality waterfowl habitat and valued hunting experiences. Specifically, to assess impacts of waterfowl hunting pressure due to increasing non-resident hunters, guiding and outfitting activities and crowding of public lands. Then to develop appropriate strategies to address these identified issues. To ensure we meet our goal the committee has developed five objectives. We first want to improve and create additional waterfowl habitat and waterfowl hunting opportunities. We want to manage waterfowl hunting pressure and disturbance to benefit the waterfowl resources to improve waterfowl hunting. We want to ensure Kansas residents have waterfowl hunting opportunities and improved waterfowl hunter satisfaction. We want to evaluate Kansas waterfowl hunting license permits, pricing and allocation. We also want to make sure we engage Kansas waterfowl community, guiding and fitting industries, and Kansas elective officials to improve Kansas waterfowl habitats, waterfowl hunting, and also to encourage waterfowl hunting ethics. As the issue surrounding the status of waterfowl are complex and interwoven, it will take a variety approaches and implementations and timelines to improve Kansas waterfowl hunting. So, we have divided these tasks into five different approaches with various iterations among them. They are licensing-based alternatives; season structure alternatives; Kansas Wildlife and Parks managed land property alternatives; guiding and outfitting alternatives; and communication and outreach approaches. KDWP has already implemented some actions with most of these directed at specific wildlife area issues. Some actions can be implemented more quickly than others and this is due to some actions will take efforts outside KDWP's authority. Such as ones that include the need for legislative approval, which would include any action relating to licensing structures, land purchases, or guiding. We recognize this as a learning process and approaches need to be thoroughly vetted, reviewed after implementation and in some cases maybe need to be modified. Stakeholder involvement is the key to have meaningful results. Stakeholder preferences will vary and due to these varying preferences finding solutions may be contentious. In the next few months KDWP's ad hoc committee will be developing and evaluating possible actions. As viable alternatives become apparent, we will engage the commission and stakeholders. We look forward to working with the commission and all stakeholders to improve Kansas waterfowl hunting. With that be glad to answer any questions.

Commissioner Sporer - What's the timeline for this committee and what would you think would be reasonable to come up with some solutions? Bidrowski – So, within the next month or two the committee will be working at developing a list of all possible alternatives. All those ideas that everyone's been spitting out over the last few years and looking around some of the other states. So, we will be compiling that list and be bringing those options forward. And providing different timelines based on different options. Some for wildlife areas, which would just be through our commission process, through the open regulation document on public lands. Some will take working with the legislature and could take up one, two or three or more years for some

Commissioner Sporer - In my opinion, I guess we finally realized that we've got a problem, so I guess that's the first direction in solving our problem. The next thing is how many more resident waterfowl hunters are we going to lose in the meantime. And to get to any type of solution and whether the solutions will be enough to satisfy the resident hunters. It will have to be seen. Are we going to come up with some ideas today or are we just going to do the committee deal? What

is the thinking on this? Secretary Loveless – Tom is helping lead this and some of us he is dragging along. We are trying to push faster and be more aggressive. We met within the last month, and we got additional meetings scheduled. But, in parallel, one of the problems with this process is if we do all our internal conversations and then reach out it slows everything down. What we are trying to do is things in parallel, while having internal conversations. Tuesday we will be with guides and outfitters, and we will need to reach out to the public. We will try to do this as much as we can. Once we come up with some concrete ideas, we will share those to try and speed up the process. We agree and feel some urgency to this and realize it is a situation we need to address as quickly as we can. Bidrowski – It is a high priority for the agency and something we have been thinking about for years. We have been implementing solutions, but some take more time than others because they are outside of our scope. This is something we wish we could fix immediately but if we don't address the issue properly, we will end up chasing bad regulation fixes. Not just a simple solution for this. Commissioner Sporer – Who is all on the committee? Bidrowski – We have six public land wildlife area managers, most in conjunction with waterfowl management areas, we have three public land biologists out of our wildlife division, two migratory game bird biologists, myself and Rich Schultheis, chiefs of wildlife division as well as public lands division and Stuart Schrag is chairing the committee. Commissioner Sill – I am totally on board with fact that this is largely a waterfowl issue at the moment. But this is a public lands issue. You've lost 10 000 deer hunters related to access and things over the past 10 years. So, I'm a little disappointed that this is waterfowl issues not public lands issues. Because it's the same. If we ignore this long enough the waterfowl hunters will quit. Non-residents will come and it'll all quiet down because the ones who are frustrated will quit chirping. That's kind of my take on what's happened with the deer hunting over the past 10 years. They just quit. There's more to it, I understand. There's philosophy towards public lands that carries a cross all the species. Policies vary. The waterfowl policy on public lands has to be different than deer policy, they're different. But the philosophy needs to be there and I'm going to be terribly disappointed if we go through this process and address hunting pressure and resources and quality experiences for waterfowl hunting on public lands but don't address that for other species too. So, I hope that in this, Tom's leading waterfowl, but this is a public lands issue not just a single species issue. Bidrowski - As you know some of the issues, particularly when it comes to private land leasing, you know for other species but predominantly deer, does affect waterfowl hunting. This would be providing a road map on how we address some of those issues. Secretary Loveless - Commissioner Sill has a point well taken. Tom just mentioned about releasing private land too. That that does affect waterfowl as well as deer. In our conversation we're having with the guides and outfitters, those are the folks who are leasing a lot of that land. Next week we'll be talking about ways to open that up because the comments we get from our deer hunters are, I don't have access to the land I used to have and they're not talking about public land they are talking about private land. So, we're going to try to have a conversation with those people that are controlling those leases about if there is a window of opportunity that we could open for the public on lands that have not been accessible to them because of those leases. So, we're trying to be creative and figure out ways to get them out there and also address this this perception by the public that people are with deep pockets are coming in and leasing this land out from underneath us. And our ability to use it like we could historically. So, while we absolutely support a landowner's right to earn income off that for deer or whatever, we're trying to figure out if there's a good middle ground where it could be shared at some points in the season and that would largely benefit our resident hunters. Commissioner Sporer - I had conversations with Secretary Loveless in the last couple weeks and talked a lot about this and I've thrown out lots of different things that probably aren't very achievable through the regs and rules policy, but I guess I've got kind of a new thought on waterfowling. I've studied all the other

states, in North Dakota you can only hunt 14 days as a non-resident waterfowl hunter, South Dakota has zones that non-residents can't hunt, and I've thought a lot about limiting the week between Christmas and New Year's and limiting the last week of the season to resident hunters only. I think that's an achievable goal for the committee. It's something that I think can be passed and I think it is something that would go a long way to start making our resident waterfowl hunters happier. Also, a thought is Nebraska and South Dakota have started an optional duck harvest season where you can either choose to shoot six ducks that are limited to five mallards so many hens and then one other duck or a variety of six ducks, but it's based on sex and species. Option two in Nebraska and South Dakota is you can just shoot three ducks of any kind. That's an option, I suppose, when you buy your license. It was just interesting to me that option was out there. I guess an option that comes to my mind when we're talking about non-resident pressure on public lands and commercial hunting, what if the state of Kansas allowed all nonresidents to hunt whenever they wanted to, wherever they wanted, but they were limited to three geese and three ducks. How simple is that? Thank you. Bidrowski – So, the two-tier experiment is they just finished up the second year of a five-year experiment that South Dakota and Nebraska are doing. Something that the Central Flyway Council had been asking to have for about a decade. We've tried different alterations like the Hunter's Choice back in the mid-2000s. So, the two-tier system allows its way to bring in new novices, ones that think that duck ID or waterfowl hunting regulations are complicated, it's kind of an R3 effort to either to reactivate older hunters to get them back in or bring in new hunters. That is not a direct option right now until that's evaluated at the Fish and Wildlife Service after that five-year period. So, there will be three more seasons of them looking at the effects of harvest and what species are taken. Right now, Kansas does have the ability to reduce bag limits as long as we're more restrictive than the states. But you're really going to have to look at maybe one or two birds really before you start seeing people's changes in that. You know we just went from a three Canada goose limit back in 2012 to our current six. So, things like that may not have the effect we want, it's usually around two birds where we start seeing people drop. We are not saying or particularly like that for public lands, but it may have some benefits. All those options you described there were kind of fun to fill in our season structure alternatives where we thought about different opening dates and bag limits and those type of things. Those or some iteration of that. Chairman Lauber - The two suggestions that Troy made will the waterfowl committee explore those? Bidrowski - For this year, no, we have our staff recommendations that I present later this evening. Something that we rather vet through the waterfowl on this ad hoc hunting pressure committee to look at those type of options of packaging what can be done and what kind of impacts they may have. Assistant Secretary Schrag - Chairman Lauber, what Commissioner Sporer suggested with designating resident days is on the list of proposed recommendations under this ad hoc committee. Commissioner Sporer - I just don't know how we can go one more year with the door wide open. I don't know if it's already too late. In my opinion I see a lot of it that's already too late, we've already lost too many resident waterfowl hunters to the pressure. I don't know that we can stand another year of it. I am very frustrated over the whole process and trying to figure it out. Bidrowski – Our resident waterfowl numbers have remained stable particularly over the last five years. We have been seeing that increase in nonresidents, however this year our nonresident numbers are back down to like about the 2017-2018 levels. Commissioner Sporer - I must have missed that survey. Bidrowski - It's provided in the briefing item where we have the season dates and staff recommendations. You can look at those trends. Commissioner Sporer - I didn't get to take the

survey. Bidrowski – It is waterfowl stamp sales. Commissioner Sporer - Just because you bought a stamp doesn't mean you went hunting. Bidrowski – It is also expressed through HIP where we survey active waterfowl hunters. Commissioner Sporer - I must have missed that survey.

8. KAR 115-8-1 Department lands and waters: hunting, furharvesting and discharge of firearms (reference document) – Ryan Stucky, public lands assistant director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit BB). We had two changes that we proposed for the reference document. We have worked this through workshop approximately eight times, for the better part of a year. The first change was we were proposing two properties down in southeast Kansas just north of Chetopa in the Cherokee lowlands area. In previous commission meetings we've had some maps given out and on the internet that Jason provided for us. The second one was the department was recommending adding all public land properties, which are State Fishing Lakes and Wildlife Areas into the electronic check-in and checkout system. This was for hunting only. Due to our licensing vendor change and transition, there's been some challenges and we'd like to not go forward with that part of the recommendation. I think I mentioned that last January as well. What we'd like to do is for the next Commission meeting is take this part out of our recommendations to just leave the refuge proposal in and then move that to pending regulations.

9. Webless Migratory Bird Regulations – Richard Schultheis, assistant director of wildlife division, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit CC). Here today to talk about webless migratory game bird regulations. A part of that discussion occurred a little bit earlier today talking about wanting waste in crows. Primarily I just wanted to summarize as far as season's, bag limits, and those types of things for webless migratory birds. There have been no changes to federal frameworks for the upcoming season. Staff are recommending no changes to current regulation. For our webless species all those regulations are in our permit regulation already and they are of a structure that we don't need to approve them on an annual basis to make any changes. So, hopefully it's the model we'll go forward with for some other species as well, to help with the promulgation process to make it a little more straightforward. I did want to note, based on the wanton waste discussion we had at the previous meeting again today, that I think there'll be some further consideration there about what the best path forward is as far as crows and how to handle that. There are some complex issues there especially when we talk about control, depredation and utilization of crow effigies to try and keep crows from coming in and damage situations. It can be a complex issue for crows. Private land versus public land and how that regulation might look going forward is going to take some further thought. We'll be coming back at another time to try and discuss that a little bit further. I just wanted to touch on that.

10. Waterfowl Regulations – Tom Bidrowski, migratory game bird program manager, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit DD, PowerPoint – Exhibit EE). Today providing information on the development of Kansas waterfowl hunting season, including staff recommendations for the 2023-2024 waterfowl hunting season. Chairman Lauber - When will we vote on these? Bidrowski - This will be voted on at the April meeting. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) develop frameworks that establish maximum bag and possession limits, season lengths, earliest and latest closing dates. The briefing item contains how the federal frameworks are developed and the federal framework's limitations. States must operate these within these frameworks when establishing state-specific migratory game bird seasons. At the state process the selection of waterfowl season dates are different than a resident game and as well as our webless migratory species and that they are not adopted via set regulation but rather adopted by commission census. This is due to the season variability and the later time frame for which the seasons are addressed. Kansas officially adopts its seasons through the annual season

selection letter sent to the USFWS on May 1. Again, the briefing item has a summary of the federal frameworks. There are no changes from the previous year. In 2021, Kansas Wildlife and Parks incorporated a decision tool to assist in the season setting process. By identifying important season date parameters for each of the Kansas waterfowl hunting zones. This process is to develop season selection stability, reduce bias and add transparency in the season date selection process. The briefing item does include staff recommendations for the 2023-2024 waterfowl seasons. We'll start with September teal. Similar to previous seasons, staff is recommending a nine-day season in the high plains beginning the third Saturday of September, and a 16-day season for the low plains beginning the second Saturday of September. The difference in days between the high plains and Low Plains is due to the additional 23 days afforded during the general duck seasons of the High Plains unit and the 107-day season restriction limit of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Staff are again recommending holding two consecutive days for youth, veterans and active military. Staff recommends they are held one week prior to the opening day of the general duck season in each of the respective Kansas duck zones. As mentioned previously staff is incorporating tools of structured decision making to assist in removing bias and stabilize season date selection. In review of migration patterns, harvest, hunter activity, habitat conditions, weather patterns, holidays, hunter surveys, hunter communications and other variables, staff believe this structure provides the best long-term opportunity for most of the Kansas waterfowl hunters. On the slide and the briefing items are the staff recommendations for season dates for each of the waterfowl hunting zones. Staff recommends a goose season, similar to past years, and staff continues recommendation of a six Canada goose bag limit, which is two less than what the federal frameworks allow. Consistent with past seasons staff recommends a 15-day falconry season in Kansas Low Plains zones. Due to the migratory bird restrictions of 107-days, additional hawking days are only available for the Low Plains unit. Please note that 2024 is a leap year, so this would start the season, backdated from March 10, so the latest it can be held this year will be February 25, not February 24 as noted in the briefing item. Staff recommendations are due to the USFWS by May 1 and at our April commission meeting will require commission action. Chairman Lauber - I think you've answered the question we have to have this to the USFWS by May 1? Bidrowski – Correct.

11. KAR 115-2-1 Amount of Fees – Jake George, wildlife division director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit FF). This is the second time I've been before you, we did a general discussion and laid out some of the need for increases to fees with the revenue shortfall that we're experiencing. I'm not going to go into detail on that again. This presentation will be fairly brief. In the following workshop we'll get into more details. For 115 2-1, what's in your briefing book is a modified version of that regulation that simply has an added column to the right. As promised at the general discussion last time, this was a completion of the review of the statutes and our fee caps within the legislative statutes that we cannot exceed within our regulation. I mentioned previously the interesting part in that process was identifying that there are a lot of our current fees that we are not at the caps. So, within that document we're kind of ease of going through them the fees and bold are the ones that were already at our statutory caps. You can see that they're not very numerous throughout the document. The primary ones where we are at the caps are with resident hunting, fishing and furharvesting licenses. Aside from that, for any of the permits and other licenses there is quite a bit of room. I highlighted the low-hanging fruit. Some of the ones that we've identified initially through the revenue committee process, based on knowing what demand is, and that we have room to increase there they are the

likely ones that we will be proposing increases to. You can see how much room that we have there on those. The nonresident hunting license is one of them that is currently \$95 that has a cap of \$125. I'm going to skip over the turkey and come back to that in just a second. The nonresident combination two deer permit is an antler deer and antlerless white-tailed deer permit, that one is currently \$415, at a rate which is less than it would cost to get the antlered permit and an antlerless-only permit as a nonresident separately, so that is certainly one that we're going to look at an increase to. You'll notice the cap on that one is rather high at \$800 that obviously would be higher than we would go with it. The main reason it could potentially go that high is because within the statute it does not specify any difference between sex, antlered, antlerless or anything like that it just sets a cap for deer permits. The non-resident fishing license is another one that's been identified, it's currently \$50 and has a cap of \$75. The nonresident calendar day fishing license doesn't have much room to increase, but is one that's at \$7.50, has a cap of \$10. We've already talked about the two separate hunting and fishing nonresident permits. The nonresident combination hunting and fishing license is currently at \$135 and has the potential to increase to \$200. The last two down there are ones that in talking to staff in Pratt, who are processing permits for both game breeder permits and controlled shooting area operator licenses, we have some room to increase in both of those and based on the workload for processing those on an annual basis they were recommending that we consider some increases there. Back to the non-resident turkey. That is one that we're going to have to look at the numbers. I have a to be determined in there for the turkey permit application fee, which is the only addition to the regulation. As a part of the regulations that are before you, changing the nonresident turkey to a limited quota draw, there would be a reduction in the total number of nonresident turkey permits. So, we're going to not be able to make that change as well as the change in the fall season, something that's going to be budget neutral. We're going to see a decrease in revenue there, which we knew going into it. Overall fiscal impact of it is estimated about \$700 000 for those changes. We could try to offset that some. All that said, if we were to, just ballparking here, hit the caps on every single one of these that's identified, with the exception of the spring turkey permit for nonresidents, based on 2021 license sale numbers it would put us at about \$3.7 million in additional revenue. If you remember when we talked in the general discussion, we were really shooting for a goal of somewhere in that \$4 million to \$6 million dollars in additional revenue to meet our needs and shooting for our needs over at least the next three years. Before we go through the process of reviewing this again on a more regular basis. We're going to take a deeper dive on this, and I'll have some additional recommendations when we come back. Commissioner Escareno - I was looking at the resident lifetime fishing license. I didn't see one that was listed in there. I know my wife's not a hunter, but she does love to fish. We're of the age now where we can take advantage of that situation and was wondering why there was not one listed? George - Lifetime fishing license is it the cap and that's at the bottom of page two. Commissioner Escareno – Senior lifetime fishing. George – Senior, I would have to take a look at that.

12. KAR 115-2-3 Camping, utility, and other fees – Linda Lanterman, parks director, presented this regulation to the Commission (Exhibit GG, PowerPoint (Exhibit HH). I'm looking at our state park fees and what I presented to you last time. It's been a couple times that we've talked about our annual camp permit. We initiated that annual camp permit back in the 1980s and we did that so that we could get people into our state park systems. Today we have significantly more campsites and more amenities than what we did back in the 1980s. To be honest with you our annual camp permit has really outlived its useful life for the purpose of what we were wanting to use it for. Keep in mind in 2020 and 2021 we sold significant amount of annual camp permits. To be honest with you a lot of those were for a good reason. They were people that were coming into our state parks to camp because of the COVID issue. It dropped

down in 2022 significantly lower. Of those 2,500 permits in 2022, we require seasonal campers. The Corps of Engineers allows us to have a seasonal camp program, March through November, and they can stay in one campsite with a contract with us. In the contract, which Commissioner Sill and I just had some conversation on, there's some requirements for them to do that and it's a higher fee. I'll show that at the end of my presentation. Of those 2,500, about 300 to 350 are those seasonal campers. To do the seasonal camp program we require them to have an annual camp permit, so that might be something we need to look at. Just the annual permit itself, still last year, was a hefty number for us. I don't want to put those off because it does give us a revenue. Remember in 2022 we've sold the least amount of annual camp permits we've ever sold. The problem is, those that purchase the permit are staying much longer and that defeats our purpose of the annual camp permit. They are staying longer than what it would normally be for a daily person. In addition to that, they tie up those sites. They're leaving their unit there, not necessarily being there all the time, then nobody else can utilize that site. That's the concern with annual camp. If you look at our unrealized revenue for that permit, just in 2022 alone it's over a million dollars. That is significant for us and that's the purpose of us to looking at the annual camp permit. As the Secretary knows, we would have looked at this in 2019 but we had historic flooding, so it wasn't a good time to look at fees. Then we hit COVID so here we are with the opportunity to look at our fees just like what Jake has talked about. Also, I want to say we talked last time about our daily fee. If we look at camping as a whole, which that is our main use in our state parks and most generally it is people coming into camp. So, we looked at when we were looking at annual camp permits. There's only two of us in the nation that have them, New Mexico and Kansas. We started looking at the fees of our neighbors and we are significantly lower than our neighbors on the daily fee. In 2019, had we have been able to come to the commission to look at fees, we would have gone to probably \$12 we're at \$10 now. Keep in mind we do have a prime fee for those sites that are more desirable during prime season. That's an extra two dollars a night. Typically, somebody could be coming in and spending \$12 a night and for camping instead of just \$10. However, the neighbors of us are still significantly higher. If you look at some of those, the lowest is Iowa at \$16, Arkansas \$15 and I am going to throw Colorado out because they're at \$28 a night, Missouri \$15, Nebraska \$15, and Oklahoma \$18. So, those are all significantly higher even with our two dollars on there that would be higher than what we have. I will say to you, I believe that Kansas State Park's a good value, I don't want to price us out. It's certainly something we should be looking at to increase our fees. In addition to that when somebody comes into our state park system and they make a reservation, there's a reservation fee on that. Let me give you a little perspective on what other states are doing are charging on their reservations. I'm looking at Wyoming, at \$4, Iowa is at \$4.50, Missouri is \$6.50, and Nebraska is \$8.50 per reservation, and we are at \$2.90. So, we're significantly lower, which we're thankful for, with the Aspira doing our reservations. I would not be up here asking for a significant increase if our reservation fees were at eight bucks for a reservation that would not go over well. I just wanted you to kind of see that we do feel like our annual camp permit has outlived its usefulness. However, keep in mind we have something that we use an annual fee for, those that do the seasonal camp. I just want to show you we do have a discounted permit that we will keep, but if we go up, we will change this price, a \$2 a day discount. This is important for one reason. Those individuals that come in for a 14-night permit; I feel like this permit and the annual, frankly saved us when the legislature looks at if we provide a senior discount. We do on vehicles, you can get a discounted senior permit, but we've never done camping. We still provide a permit that's a \$2 a day discount if they want to camp. So, we've met with some of the Good

Sam's groups on some of this and I feel like this gives us an opportunity to provide a discounted permit to those that would want to buy this. Our seasonal camping program numbers, Group C is El Dorado only. It's quite a bit higher because we have an RV site close to there that is private and is about that price, we are a little bit higher. Those are the fees that annual camp would be in addition to these. A one-time purchase and these are a monthly fee if they sign the contract and stay at least 30 days. So, I wanted you to hear that. Our team is going to recommend we do away with that annual permit, and we will come back with some recommendations on those other fees. We've been able to track them, and we weren't able to track them before in our system but have for last few years. So, now we know what we're losing and what people are using them, and we know that we need to make some changes.

Chairman Lauber – The next items are several workshop items that have been presented multiple times and we are not going to have a presentation on them.

13. Pending Regulations –

- 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.
- 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).

Chairman Lauber – Any questions on any of these?

VII. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Future Meeting Locations and Dates

- *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)*
- *August 17, Pittsburg*

Commissioner Sporer – I want to voice my frustration. At the last meeting, we were told we were going to get some resolution to the pressure on public lands. All we got was the making of a committee and that is extremely frustrating to me.

Jason Dickson - We did have a question in the chat. This might be a Tom question. Will KDWP put out the dates and locations for the waterfowl workshops? Bidrowski – There currently are no planned workshops at this time for public outside of the Commission meetings. As we develop suggestions and alternatives, we'll start workshopping and work with our Public Relations on the need for workshops outside the commission meeting.

Chairman Lauber – It has been a longer afternoon than we anticipated but some items go faster, and some have a lot to go over.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 5:21 p.m.