

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

\* \* \* \* \*

Pennsylvania Game Commission Annual Report

\* \* \* \* \*

House Game and Fisheries Committee

Main Capitol Building  
Room 140  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Thursday, April 3, 2008, 9:00 a.m.

--oOo--

BEFORE:

Honorable Edward Staback, Majority Chairman  
Honorable Neal Goodman  
Honorable Gary Haluska  
Honorable Michael Hanna  
Honorable Deberah Kula  
Honorable Chris Sainato  
Honorable Dan Surra  
Honorable Bryan Cutler  
Honorable Gordon Denlinger  
Honorable Garth Everett  
Honorable Keith Gillespie  
Honorable Rob Kauffman  
Honorable Mark Keller  
Honorable David Millard  
Honorable Dan Moul  
Honorable Michael Peifer  
Honorable Scott Perry  
Honorable Todd Rock

DEIRDRE J. WEYER, RPR  
weyerreporting@comcast.net  
2180 Craley Road, Windsor, Pennsylvania 17366  
(717) 246.8061

ALSO PRESENT:

Steven McMillen  
Majority Executive Director

Julie Foley  
Majority Legislative Assistant

Charles Miller  
Majority Research Analyst

David Comes  
Minority Executive Director

Greg Raffensperger  
Minority Research Analyst

C O N T E N T S

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

WITNESSES

PAGE

Carl Roe, Executive Director

6

Pennsylvania Game Commission

1                   CHAIRPERSON STABACK: The hour of 9  
2 a.m. having arrived, I'm going to call this  
3 hearing of the House Game and Fisheries Committee  
4 to order. Today we're here to take testimony in  
5 the form of the annual report from the  
6 Pennsylvania Game Commission.

7                   Before the testimony starts, as usual,  
8 I would like the members of the committee starting  
9 on my far left to identify themselves and the  
10 districts that they represent.

11                   REPRESENTATIVE KULA: Deborah Kula,  
12 Fayette and Westmoreland Counties, 52nd District.

13                   REPRESENTATIVE SAINATO: Chris Sainato.  
14 I represent the 9th Legislative District, which is  
15 parts of Lawrence and parts of Beaver County.

16                   REPRESENTATIVE MILLARD: David Millard,  
17 109th District, Columbia County.

18                   REPRESENTATIVE ROCK: Todd Rock, 90th  
19 District, Franklin County.

20                   REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: Dan Surra, 75th  
21 District, Clearfield and Elk Counties.

22                   REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: Gary Haluska,  
23 73rd District in Cambria County.

24                   REPRESENTATIVE PERRY: Scott Perry,  
25 92nd District, York and Cumberland Counties.

1                   REPRESENTATIVE CUTLER: Brian Cutler,  
2 Southern Lancaster County, 100th District.

3                   REPRESENTATIVE PEIFER: Mike Peifer,  
4 139th District, which is Wayne, Pike, and Monroe  
5 Counties.

6                   REPRESENTATIVE KELLER: Mark Keller,  
7 86th District, which is Franklin and Perry  
8 Counties.

9                   REPRESENTATIVE MOUL: Good morning, Dan  
10 Moul, 91st District, Adams and Franklin.

11                  REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Gordon  
12 Denlinger, Minority Vice-Chairman of the Committee  
13 representing the 99th District, Eastern Lancaster  
14 County.

15                  CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Ed Staback, the  
16 115th, Northern Lackawanna and Southern Wayne.

17                  REPRESENTATIVE KAUFFMAN: Rob Kauffman,  
18 the 89th District, Franklin and Cumberland  
19 Counties.

20                  CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Joining us right  
21 at this point is Representative Michael Hanna.

22                  REPRESENTATIVE HANNA: Mike Hanna, the  
23 76th District, Clinton and Centre Counties.

24                  REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: Garth Everett,  
25 Mike's neighbor, the 84th District, Lycoming

1 County.

2 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Is that everyone?

3 (No audible response.)

4 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Now we'll accept  
5 today's testimony from the Executive Director of  
6 Pennsylvania Game Commission, Mr. Carl Roe.

7 Carl, please begin whenever you're  
8 ready.

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Thank you,  
10 Mr.Chairman. Chairman Staback, Vice-chairman  
11 Denlinger, as always, it's a great pleasure to be  
12 here before the House Game and Fisheries Committee  
13 to offer our annual report.

14 Before I get started, I will like to  
15 say I do have various staff here; but also we have  
16 Commissioner Palone, Commissioner Delaney,  
17 Commissioner Schreffler, and Commissioner Tom Boop  
18 with us today.

19 It's been a very productive and  
20 challenging year for the Pennsylvania Game  
21 Commission as we strive to fulfill our mission of  
22 managing all wild birds and mammals and their  
23 habitats for current and future generations.

24 As required by state law, we delivered  
25 our annual report and update of our Growing

1 Greener II Program on January 21st. We will offer  
2 some comments on the report and an additional  
3 information on various issues.

4 As we continue to improve in areas,  
5 you'll notice in the report that for the second  
6 year we organized a Program Accountability section  
7 in line with the strategic plan.

8 This year we have combined some  
9 measurement data with the analysis of where we are  
10 on achieving the objectives in the plan. We moved  
11 forward in some areas but are hampered by the lack  
12 of resources to achieve some important objectives.

13 Habitat is a key life requisite for all  
14 wildlife, and we continue to be concerned about  
15 encroachment on wildlife habitat. As you are well  
16 aware, we are responsible for approximately 46  
17 species, being 429 birds and 66 mammals with 22  
18 threatened or endangered.

19 Slowing the loss of wildlife habitat is  
20 critical to ensuring their future for many of our  
21 native species. In the past 30 years, the  
22 American Woodcock populations have declined by 40  
23 percent in the Northeast region of the United  
24 States.

25 Bobwhite quail have declined by 95

1 percent, the Eastern Meadowlark declined 80  
2 percent, and the upland sandpiper have declined by  
3 90 percent.

4 Species at most risk are typically  
5 associated with wetlands, repairing areas, old  
6 field shrub grasslands, continuous blocks of old  
7 growth forest, and specialists habitat such as  
8 caves and vernal pools.

9 Developing and maintaining these areas  
10 is extremely important for a variety of game and  
11 nongame species. We work hard to develop these  
12 areas through several programs. The first is a  
13 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program better  
14 known as CREP where we are putting 265,000 acres  
15 of habitat back on the ground.

16 We are almost finished with the Upper  
17 Susquehanna Basin CREP and will soon have over  
18 200,000 acres of farmland planted -- planned and  
19 planted that covers both the Lower and Upper  
20 Susquehanna Basin.

21 The other 65,000 acres are in the Ohio  
22 River Basin where we have approximately 19,000  
23 acres planned and planted. We should complete the  
24 CREP Program over the next two to three years.

25 Additionally, through the use of



1 Federal State Wildlife Grant program, we have  
2 hired a wildlife biologist for each of the regions  
3 to better focus on existing private landowners in  
4 restoring and enhancing more wildlife habitat on  
5 their properties.

6 We believe that with additional funding  
7 this program can have a tremendous impact on  
8 treating habitats on a much greater scale than  
9 just on our State Gamelands.

10 I mentioned last year about ringneck  
11 pheasants and the reintroduction efforts in the  
12 southwestern part of the state. And this year  
13 I am pleased to tell you that we have worked with  
14 Pheasants Forever in a trap and transfer effort in  
15 the Montour County, and the reintroduction has  
16 been going well and we are monitoring survival and  
17 population response.

18 Just as a follow up to last year, our  
19 Integrated State Gameland Plan Model was  
20 implemented as we completed a pilot State Gameland  
21 plan in each of the six regions.

22 This program integrates the region's  
23 land manager, the region forester, and the region  
24 wildlife management supervisor in a planning  
25 process to develop a plan that is viable,

1 practical, and adaptable to changing  
2 circumstances.

3 Each plan is unique to the gameland  
4 that allows for an adaptive management style as to  
5 the best interest and advantage of the wildlife  
6 resources in sportsmen and women.

7 Shifting focus for a moment to our  
8 fiscal situation. By the end of June 2008, we  
9 anticipate a Game Fund balance of around \$32  
10 million on a cost accounting basis.

11 To get to that level, in addition to  
12 the revenue increases, we took a very conservative  
13 approach to spending, particularly on the  
14 personnel side where we maintained approximately  
15 110 vacancies throughout the year. That included  
16 32 vacant wildlife conservation officer districts  
17 and about 30 food and cover crew vacancies.

18 Our 27th Wildlife Conservation Officer  
19 class graduated on March the 8th, and they filled  
20 21 of the 32 vacant WCO districts. We still have  
21 11 vacant districts with another six districts  
22 probably vacant by the end of this fiscal year.

23 By June 2010, we anticipate a return to  
24 over 30 WCO vacancies statewide. We are planning  
25 on having another WCO class in March of 2009, but

1 that decision will ultimately be driven by the  
2 availability of funds.

3 Although we believe we manage our  
4 fiscal resources very responsibly, the expenses we  
5 cannot control continue to present to challenge.

6 For example, we annually pay various  
7 state agencies such as the Department of General  
8 Services, Office of Administration Information  
9 Technology, and the Comptroller Office almost \$1.7  
10 million a year for support they provide.

11 The new State Labor Contract that went  
12 into effect on July 1st, 2007, will increase our  
13 personnel cost by an additional \$2 million the  
14 first year, meaning this year. And at year four,  
15 2010, the annual increase in costs will be around  
16 \$9.5 million.

17 The total increase in personnel cost  
18 over the life of the four-year contract is over  
19 \$23 million. Although a balance of \$32 million  
20 sounds like a lot, it does not cover the  
21 anticipated expenses for the next three years.

22 As you well know, since we receive no  
23 appropriation from the General Fund, our revenues,  
24 as in the private sector, are based on earnings.

25 We need approximately \$22 million on

1 hand in the Game Fund to open the doors on July  
2 1st, the first day of the fiscal year. So if you  
3 take the \$22 million from our anticipated fund  
4 balance of 32 million, then we have only \$10  
5 million to cover any additional expenses for the  
6 next three years.

7 As you can see, the balance does not  
8 even cover the increased personnel costs, let  
9 alone the inflationary effect on day-to-day  
10 operations.

11 As an example, when you approved our  
12 last license increase in 1998, gas was around a  
13 dollar a gallon. Today, it averages above \$3 a  
14 gallon with most reports having it reach \$4 a  
15 gallon by the summer.

16 I do not want to dwell on the license  
17 cost issue, but the most common observer can see  
18 something is wrong when hunters from our  
19 neighboring state of New Jersey and Ohio can hunt  
20 as a nonresident in Pennsylvania cheaper than they  
21 can hunt as a resident in their own state.

22 In a recent report by -- Associates for  
23 the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies,  
24 Pennsylvania continues to have th second most  
25 hunters in the nation, just behind Texas.

1            Pennsylvania hunters led the nation by  
2            spending a total of 16.86 million days afield,  
3            exceeded second place Texas by 2.6 million more  
4            days.

5            Now, what does this mean to the economy  
6            of Pennsylvania? Using the multiplier effect,  
7            hunting alone is more than a \$3 billion industry  
8            and generates over \$214 million in state and local  
9            taxes.

10            Currently, none of the 214 million is  
11            reinvested back into helping protect and ensure a  
12            secure future for the very wildlife and  
13            wildlife-created programs that generate these  
14            revenues. This needs to be fixed.

15            Last year, our 2006/2007 hunting  
16            season, was very productive. We continue to enjoy  
17            large bear harvests, and turkey seasons were very  
18            successful for our hunters.

19            It appears grouse hunters are enjoying  
20            the upcycle of grouse populations where early  
21            successional habitat is available. Small game,  
22            including rabbits, appear to be more plentiful  
23            than in the recent past. And, again, where good  
24            habitat can support population growth.

25            Furtaker opportunities are plentiful

1 for a variety of species. And we would really  
2 like more hunters to take part in furtaking,  
3 particularly on coyotes and foxes.

4 But even more importantly, we had the  
5 safest hunting season in our history with only 33  
6 hunting-related shooting incidents reported. And  
7 this was down from a record low of 49  
8 hunting-related shooting incidents the previous  
9 year.

10 This can be attributed to the great  
11 hunters we have in Pennsylvania who clearly know  
12 how to identify their target and know what's  
13 behind it.

14 Just follow up on that target, we've  
15 included in your packet a copy of our updated  
16 Hunter/Trapper Education Manual. That's this one  
17 here. We believe the updated manual and companion  
18 instructor notes are a major step forward in  
19 providing a better product to the public.

20 Our program is in its second year of  
21 development, and we will finish deploying the  
22 updated program across the entire state next year.

23 During a recent evaluation by the  
24 International Hunter Education Association, they  
25 stated that our updated materials were, if not the

1 best, one of the best in the nation and many of  
2 the other states are using our materials.

3           Additionally, we are offering a  
4 Distance Education Module in the program. An  
5 individual can study at home by the book or on the  
6 computer and then come to a location for about a  
7 two-hour class to take the test.

8           We believe this will give those who do  
9 not want to be in a classroom setting an  
10 opportunity to complete hunter/trapper education,  
11 and we are very excited about the Distance  
12 Education Module and believe it would expand in  
13 the future.

14           I would be remiss if I did not discuss  
15 deer for just a moment. I attended a public  
16 officials luncheon at the Farm Show where  
17 Secretary Wolf mentioned that when the Farm Show  
18 started and opened in 1917, the two major topics  
19 were the advent of the gasoline tractor and the  
20 deer damage -- the damage the deer were causing to  
21 orchards.

22           Ninety years later, deer remain the hot  
23 topic in many circles. The 2007/2008 estimated  
24 deer harvest was approximately 323,070, including  
25 109,200 buck and 213,870 antlerless deer. Deer

1 hunting continues to be a challenge in some areas,  
2 but reports are that deer are larger and antler  
3 restrictions are working.

4 In an effort to help hunters understand  
5 the reasons behind the current deer management  
6 policy, we have increased the emphasis on  
7 communicating our Deer Management Program through  
8 a variety of means.

9 We have included a copy of our Deer  
10 Management booklet -- this one right here -- in  
11 your packet. I hope you take the time to read it  
12 as we have provided thousands of copies to the  
13 public and will continue to do so.

14 We conducted seven open houses last  
15 fall on deer management and are offering seven  
16 more this spring. We are increasing the  
17 communications on our deer program.

18 As we revise the Deer Management Plan  
19 this year, we are considering two new management  
20 goals. The first is to manage the deer herd to  
21 provide recreational opportunities, and the second  
22 is to improve the public's knowledge and  
23 understanding about deer and the Deer Management  
24 Program.

25 An additional major program that we



1 addressed last year was wind energy. The Game  
2 Commission participated in the collaborative  
3 process that resulted in the development of a  
4 voluntary wind energy cooperative agreement.

5 Being responsible for wildlife impacts  
6 from wind energy, the Game Commission took the  
7 lead in establishing various protocols that would  
8 help wind energy companies to evaluate risk and  
9 avoid potential wildlife impacts.

10 This program has already proven to be  
11 mutually beneficial to both the wind energy  
12 industry and our bird and mammal resources.

13 However, to assist the execution of  
14 this program, we hired four biologists to provide  
15 monitoring of the program and assist the wind  
16 energy companies in site identification. This is  
17 an additional cost of almost \$300,000, a cost we  
18 had not anticipated, but is necessary to support  
19 the program for clean energy.

20 One of the most enjoyable programs  
21 we've recently offered and as a result of  
22 legislation that you passed several years ago is  
23 the Mentored Youth Hunt Program.

24 We've received numerous letters and  
25 emails from grandparents, parents, and the young

1 hunter themselves. They are all very appreciative  
2 of the opportunity to have this experience.

3 And I would suggest that you visit our  
4 Website and see in some of the pictures that were  
5 sent to us. I will guarantee you, you will have a  
6 smile on your face after viewing those faces. We  
7 should all keep that youthful enthusiasm in mind  
8 as we enjoy the outdoors. It is more than just  
9 about a successful harvest.

10 And I would like to relay a personal  
11 experience from waterfowl hunting this year. We  
12 had some geese come over the blind. It was kind  
13 of a long shot. We took it. Goose fell down in  
14 the water just on the other side of the decoys.

15 We were getting ready to release the  
16 dog, a bald eagle came sweeping out of the sky and  
17 grabbed that goose off the water. Started to get  
18 up, goose fall back a little bit, bald eagle  
19 dropped it. Bald eagle -- up again, as you know,  
20 bend over, came right down crashing back down on  
21 it, grabbed it again. Got about 8 feet off the  
22 water this time; the goose got away again; the dog  
23 got there and brought it back.

24 We killed a few ducks and geese over  
25 those two days, but the story we talk about the

1 most was that bald eagle trying to get away with  
2 my dinner from my goose that day. It was a great,  
3 great experience.

4 There are many ways to enjoy the  
5 outdoors, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission is  
6 here to help you connect with wildlife. I'm sure  
7 that many of you have your own special wildlife  
8 moments, and those in Pennsylvania are a large  
9 part due to the efforts of the men and women of  
10 the Game Commission.

11 Our ability to provide those moments  
12 for the citizens of the Commonwealth is directly  
13 related to the resources available to execute the  
14 necessary programs.

15 I'll be glad to answer any of your  
16 questions and thank you for your attention.

17 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Thank you very  
18 much for the details. Many of the areas of  
19 interest, not only to Members of the Committee,  
20 but to the sporting population as a whole across  
21 the Commonwealth.

22 Carl, in your testimony, you indicated  
23 the Commission had recently hired six biologists  
24 to assist private landowners with the ways and  
25 means of enhancing habitat on their properties.

1           Several years ago, at least two years  
2 ago, we had conversations with the Game Commission  
3 regarding the coyote population in the  
4 Commonwealth.

5           And back then, we were told that the  
6 Commission was intending to hire six biologists,  
7 one for each of the regions in the Commonwealth,  
8 and that biologist would be charged with coming up  
9 with ways and means of trying to better control  
10 the coyote populations across the state.

11           So the question is, In addition to the  
12 biologist's responsibilities to the private  
13 landowner and helping him enhancing habitat on his  
14 property, will they be charged with the  
15 responsibility of finding the ways and means of  
16 controlling the coyote populations across the  
17 state which today are truly, truly exploding?

18           EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: The purpose of  
19 these specific biologists, because they're paid by  
20 the Federal Grant State Wildlife Grant Program,  
21 will be oriented towards those habitat issue.

22           Obviously, we have concerns, as I  
23 mentioned in my testimony, of coyotes, and we  
24 would like more people to participate. It is the  
25 most liberal season we have. It's 24/7, 365 days

1 a year. And due to the foresight and the laws  
2 passed, I believe it was about a year and a half  
3 ago, you can bait and decoy coyotes in.

4 It's a matter for us to have a better  
5 campaign, let's say, to in fact get more people  
6 involved in that coyote hunt, which is a very,  
7 very tough hunt. No doubt about it.

8 But it's from a biological point of  
9 view, we think we have a handle on the fact that  
10 there are a lot more coyotes. The question is,  
11 How do we eliminate that?

12 We have received cards and letters  
13 suggesting bounties. I'm not sure we want to go  
14 in that direction. I think we just need to create  
15 the interest for the hunters that this is a real  
16 tough and good hunt and you have the opportunity  
17 to do it any time of the year.

18 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: But once again,  
19 will any of these biologists be charged with the  
20 responsibility?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: No, none of  
22 those biologists that we've hired under the State  
23 Wildlife Grant Program will be under coyotes  
24 because of the specific restrictions of State  
25 Wildlife Grants being oriented toward more species

1 of special concern as opposed to a game animal.

2 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: So it's the Game  
3 Commission's intention that you will never hire  
4 anyone specifically to deal with that problem?

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Given the  
6 additional resources, we can hire a lot of the  
7 people to do a lot of things that we can't do now.  
8 And one of those could be coyote.

9 Our Wildlife Management Supervisor,  
10 which we have a new biologist over the last three  
11 or four years in each of the regions, is charged  
12 with looking at that from a habitat point of view.

13 But the coyotes themselves, we don't  
14 have the biologists -- furbearer biologist who  
15 keeps track of the take, which has steadily  
16 increased.

17 And I'll have to go back and take a  
18 quick look, but it seems to me last year I believe  
19 over 20,000 coyotes were taken. I can get you the  
20 exact number later on if you like from our  
21 furtaker survey.

22 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Tell me, if  
23 additional resources were available, would the  
24 Game Commission hire additional people to deal  
25 with that problem; specifically, with the coyote

1 problem?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I'm not sure  
3 what you mean by deal with it. We can expand --  
4 the opportunity is totally expanded. It's totally  
5 open to take coyote. Can we do more research?  
6 Absolutely.

7 We have one furbearer biologist right  
8 now and, with additional resources, we'd love to  
9 hire another furbearer biologist, particularly an  
10 aquatic mammal biologist for beaver and otter and  
11 those things.

12 That terrestrial furbearer biologist  
13 will continue with our Fisher Program and all the  
14 other things that we need to do with those other  
15 species.

16 But absolutely we could hire a  
17 biologist specifically oriented towards coyote,  
18 but that would be studying the biology of them as  
19 opposed to the end result that you want. And that  
20 is more take, I'm assuming.

21 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Okay. All right.  
22 Let's talk about the changes in the Deer  
23 Management Program.

24 One of the items of particular interest  
25 to me are these pending changes that the

1 Commission is suggesting regarding the four  
2 Wildlife Management Units. Now, those changes are  
3 awaiting final approval by the Commission, which  
4 will apparently take place later in the month,  
5 later in April.

6 Carl, you and I have spoken in the past  
7 about what I saw was a total lack of  
8 responsiveness by the Board of Commissioners. I  
9 find that I'm in a position of I guess a lot of  
10 hunters I know who still feel strongly in their  
11 opinions but are tired of seeing them totally  
12 ignored. And I think that everybody gets tired of  
13 that kind of treatment, you know, in time.

14 But one point remains and it was  
15 central to what I've been saying to the Board and  
16 to the Commission for the past several years, and  
17 that is simply that there is more than one way for  
18 the Game Commission to study the deer management  
19 problem that they had.

20 And I think what is -- and I think that  
21 is reflective, I should say, in the changes that  
22 are being recommended right now with the manner in  
23 which we're going to hunt doe deer in at least  
24 four of those Management areas.

25 I know I have heard from a number of



1 others throughout the northeast and my legislative  
2 district who think that this is a step in the  
3 right direction; sort of viewing it as a new  
4 beginning, if you will. I would only offer that I  
5 would like the program even more if it covered a  
6 wider range of the Commonwealth.

7 With that being said, could you talk a  
8 little bit about the proposed changes and, in  
9 particular, what you expect to find as a result of  
10 those changes?

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Absolutely.  
12 Thank you for the question, because it is really  
13 an important one to all of us.

14 The concept of the study is basically  
15 to see if there's a difference in the harvest  
16 success rate on antlerless deer with a shorter  
17 season.

18 In other words, we know what the  
19 success rate is over a two-week concurrent season.  
20 And we're going to see if there's a difference in  
21 the success rate of harvest from a five-day buck  
22 season and then a seven-day concurrent season  
23 afterwards.

24 And what kind of drove this in my  
25 thought process was, as a result, it drives

1 towards opportunity for hunters. And when I  
2 looked at 2G, four years ago we had an allocation  
3 of around 52,000 antlerless deer tags. Two or  
4 three years ago, it was down to 19,000.

5 We know that on the second round of  
6 antlerless sales there was only 2 or 3,000 tags  
7 left to sell on that management unit. So we think  
8 we had about 48, 49,000 hunters when we had the  
9 52,000 allocation.

10 When we cut to 19,000, we cut,  
11 basically, 30,000 hunters' opportunity to hunt  
12 antlerless in the Northcentral region of the state  
13 in 2G. We moved it up to 26,000 last year because  
14 of some population model issues.

15 But still, that's only half the people  
16 who were hunting antlerless deer with a antlerless  
17 tag in 2G than did three years previously.

18 For the last three years, no  
19 nonresident has received an antlerless tag in  
20 2G -- and we all knew people who have camps there,  
21 who grew up in Pennsylvania and now may work in  
22 Virginia or New York or some place else -- because  
23 we sell out 2G in the first two, two and a half  
24 days on antlerless deer.

25 The other part of this model is if, in

1 fact, we changed that harvest rate, in the future  
2 when we want to raise the deer herd in the  
3 Wildlife Management Unit, do we have another tool  
4 than just lowering the allocation, which in my  
5 mind takes more opportunity away from hunters.

6 So we'll see if -- that antlerless  
7 success rate will tell us whether there's a change  
8 or not.

9 So let's say in 2G when the habitat and  
10 herd health is good, we want to increase the herd  
11 there. Rather than taking opportunity away from  
12 hunters in the sense of license, we'll be able to  
13 do it with a shorter season and still have as many  
14 hunters being able to do it. So that's kind of  
15 the intent of the study.

16 Now, will there be some tangential  
17 benefits to this? We don't know. We're doing a  
18 survey in those four Wildlife Management Units  
19 right now to get a baseline on some social data,  
20 for lack of a better term.

21 We think that having that Saturday  
22 being the first day of a concurrent season may  
23 have a secondary economic effect with people  
24 coming back on that Saturday a little heavier than  
25 they normally had, which had the second day maybe

1 have a little bit of a economic impact.

2 From a social point of view, having  
3 that many people in the woods that first day on  
4 the Saturday and not having killed those  
5 antlerless deer off during the week, maybe people  
6 will see more deer because there will be more  
7 people in the woods pushing those deer at that  
8 point in time.

9 Generally, we harvest about 65 percent  
10 of our antlerless deer in the first two days of  
11 the season. So by the rest of the season, you've  
12 taken -- you only have 35 percent of that  
13 antlerless take to be had, you've taken quite a  
14 few deer out of the harvest between buck and doe  
15 that first day.

16 We're hoping by having the second  
17 concurrent -- start of the concurrent season on  
18 that following Saturday, may have that effect of  
19 pushing a few more deer and people see a few more  
20 deer in the woods.

21 We don't know that. That's just pure  
22 speculation. And after three years we'll see some  
23 of those things that might have happened.

24 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Carl, you may  
25 have mentioned this and I may have missed it, but

1       how long do you anticipate this program to be in  
2       effect before you have accumulated enough  
3       information to make a reasonable judgment?

4                   EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE:  Minimum time  
5       is three years.  That way you don't have a point  
6       in time data.  You have a data set over three  
7       years, you can look at the trends, and you can get  
8       a reasonable average over three years' worth of  
9       data.

10                   In case there's an anomaly in there,  
11       maybe part of this season we had very bad first  
12       day, we can look at that data over the three year  
13       set as opposed to just one year.

14                   After three years, we'll have that data  
15       set and then we'll be able to see if there was a  
16       difference in that antlerless harvest success  
17       rate.  And that will be another tool in the  
18       toolbox for the future when we're ready to  
19       increase the deer herd in those WMUs where the  
20       conditions are right.

21                   CHAIRPERSON STABACK:  Tell me, would it  
22       be a reasonable assumption on our part, the  
23       sporting community's part, would it be a  
24       reasonable assumption to assume that at the end of  
25       three years, if the data that you have collected

1 demonstrates itself to be positive regarding the  
2 program itself, that additional Wildlife  
3 Management Units will realize the same benefit  
4 after three years and that there will be  
5 additional management units that will be open only  
6 to doe shooting the second week of the season?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: That would  
8 really be driven by the data on the forest health  
9 and the herd health. But, again, that would  
10 provide the additional opportunity in a different  
11 model as opposed to the current one we have that's  
12 fairly universal but would certainly be one of the  
13 things we would look at.

14 And as our data's getting finalized  
15 this year, I think you'll see in another three or  
16 four weeks that we're looking at a couple more  
17 WMUs possibly increasing the herd and a couple  
18 WMUs where the habitat's improved and the herd  
19 health is where we want it to be.

20 And we're slowly getting there in that  
21 direction. So when those conditions are right,  
22 those two WMUs in the future could have a -- had a  
23 five-day buck and a seven-day concurrent season  
24 utilized to help bring that herd up rather than  
25 reducing the allocation, which it appears that

1 we're gonna do this year to bring the herd up in a  
2 couple of WMUs.

3 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Carl, thank you.  
4 Representative Denlinger.

5 REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Thank you,  
6 Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Carl, for your  
7 testimony.

8 I want to move on to the discussion of  
9 the point of sale system. I understand we're  
10 operating under a delay again at this point. Can  
11 you please bring me up to date where you are?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Absolutely. I  
13 know some of you are frustrated, but none of you  
14 are more frustrated than I am.

15 As you know, the Game Commission paid  
16 for the updated review in 2004/2005. And Fish was  
17 having some financial problems at that time, so we  
18 funded that entire program. The project manager  
19 of the entire program is, in fact, in the Game  
20 Commission.

21 The company was default on their first  
22 contract last June. June 15th they were supposed  
23 to have a fully operational system. They were in  
24 default. We rewrote another contract. We were  
25 hoping to get a pilot last fall, doing some

1 testing; and having a 1 March date was our date  
2 this year. They didn't meet that date either.

3 Basically, the system is divided into  
4 pieces. There's three major pieces to the system.  
5 One is the sales component, meaning walking up and  
6 getting a license printed out.

7 The second major component is the  
8 financial backbone of it. And that means, how do  
9 you do the electric funds transfer, move the money  
10 into accounts, making sure the dollars are going  
11 where they're supposed to be going.

12 And the final end is an administrative  
13 portion which allows us to, in fact, control the  
14 vendors: See what the vendors are doing, send  
15 messages to the vendors, change licenses, change  
16 our season dates and all those kinds of things  
17 that we need to do to be able to manage a  
18 functioning system.

19 Right now, the front end sales portion  
20 for us is about 90 percent there. Still some  
21 issue, but about 90 percent there. Their  
22 financial back end is not complete for either us  
23 or Fish.

24 The company subcontracted to EDS to, in  
25 fact, do a interim financial background to get



1 Fish moving along. The administrative background  
2 has not been accepted for any testing at all yet.  
3 It's getting closer, but I won't say -- it's no  
4 way near where we are gonna put a test on it yet.

5 I met with the owners of the company  
6 last week for a day and a half. Their product  
7 management skills are abysmal. We sat down and we  
8 went through the contract and rebuilt a  
9 requirements documents for them.

10 A master went to macro level and then  
11 it's the two iterations of microlevel issues that  
12 we have currently ongoing in an effort to keep  
13 this going, even after March the 1st  
14 when -- begins for the second time in default of  
15 the contract.

16 And people asked why don't you just get  
17 rid of this company and why didn't you get rid of  
18 them on March the 1st? The challenge there was,  
19 very frankly, out of courtesy to the Fish.

20 They're coming into their peak license  
21 sales, and for us to pull the plug at that point  
22 in time would have had a major effect on their  
23 ability to sell licenses during the most critical  
24 time of the year for them.

25 Their bond expires on May 31st. It's a

1       \$5 million bond. The company that has it now is  
2       not renewing it. They are looking for somebody  
3       else to renew that bond. They've got till April  
4       15th to have literal intent on that bond renewal  
5       or we're going to look awfully about what we got  
6       to do there.

7                   It's unfortunate, but they have just  
8       not produced. An example I use all the time: You  
9       order a Crown Victoria with an 8-cylinder in black  
10      and they show up the next day with a Pinto, green,  
11      4-cylinder and the hood's missing. And we'd  
12      negotiate from there trying to get back -- and  
13      they expect the same payment.

14                   Luckily for us, we have not sunk one  
15      dollar into ALS because we won't pay until the  
16      first license is published -- or printed out in  
17      the sales environment.

18                   REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Do we have  
19      recourse written into the contract for  
20      noncompliance?

21                   EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Absolutely.  
22      Last week, as a matter of fact, we started the  
23      meeting in discussions -- the monies that we have  
24      invested in this from either directly or  
25      indirectly, time of my people, the opportunity it

1 costs to do other things that we should have been  
2 doing, that's what the bond's there for.

3 And we have a plan to go -- to  
4 take -- if, in fact, we do discontinue the  
5 relationship with them, part of that bond money  
6 will reimburse our expenses.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Based on the  
8 picture you're painting here, that would seem to  
9 be in order. Absolutely.

10 Moving -- you're going into specifics  
11 with Chairman Staback, which I appreciated, on 2G.  
12 The backing out, you know, a few thousand feet,  
13 we're now roughly at the end of the five-year deer  
14 management plan.

15 I'm wondering internally within the  
16 Commission what kind of analysis you've done to  
17 see the impacts, you know, how it's all working?  
18 What have you done internally on that?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: It's a  
20 constant yearly analysis to evaluate the program.  
21 One of the things that we did two years ago, as  
22 you know, was really just developed the first  
23 measurements.

24 Because one of the things I had a  
25 concern with when I came in as the Executive

1 Director is how do we know when we're there? And  
2 we spent that first year developing the  
3 measurements and collecting the data and  
4 reconstructing the data for the previous years.

5 And we were in herd reductions for  
6 about four or five years. The last two years  
7 we've been herd stabilization, for the most part,  
8 throughout the state.

9 We do those analysis. And as part of  
10 the review of the five-year plan, we are looking  
11 at hard those measurements and we're  
12 reconstructing some of those because we found some  
13 other studies that may be more suitable to what  
14 we're doing.

15 And you'll hear those after the  
16 Commissioners get briefed on those at the end of  
17 April here. So we think we're continuing to  
18 refine the models. We're continuing to work  
19 forward.

20 Again, everybody still thinks we're in  
21 herd reduction. We haven't done a very good job  
22 of advertising what we're really doing, to be very  
23 frank with you. That's why we established a deer  
24 communications working group last year to get the  
25 word out better, as I described in my comments.

1                   But last year, we had three Wildlife  
2 Management Units that we were continuing to  
3 decrease the herd. That's 5C and 5D in the  
4 southeast part of the region, and 2B, which is  
5 Allegheny County expanded, basically.

6                   And we were increasing the herd in 4B.  
7 And the rest of the wildlife management is for the  
8 second or third year in a row we were trying to  
9 stabilize.

10                  As we brief the Commissioners in April,  
11 you'll see some of those things change.

12 Obviously, we'll still have the three that are  
13 decreasing; but I think you'll see a couple more  
14 Wildlife Management Units where the habitat and  
15 herd have gotten to the point where they meet the  
16 target goals as far as increase in a couple WMUs.

17                  REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Even if we  
18 are at the end of the five-year plan, is the plan  
19 of the Commission to come forward with a second  
20 five-year plan or some other term with  
21 adjustments?

22                  EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: You'll see the  
23 measurement adjustments and you'll see basically a  
24 ten-year plan this time. And, again, we continue  
25 to evaluate annually, as you know, because we have

1 to set up the antlerless allocation based upon the  
2 estimated harvest from the previous year.

3 So it's kind of rolling forward and  
4 it's a evolving program as we learn more and more  
5 about deer and other studies that are being done  
6 throughout the United States.

7 REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: And then a  
8 couple questions more specifically on your written  
9 testimony, if I could.

10 You went into some explanation of the  
11 number of vacancies you have with WCOs and so  
12 forth. And I did attend one of the graduations a  
13 couple years ago, and that's quite a step for  
14 individuals. It's a wonderful thing.

15 I'm wondering, you're basing the number  
16 of folks who can come into the front of the  
17 educational program on budget. Do you turn away a  
18 serious number of potential students each cycle?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: We -- this  
20 past year, we had a Civil Service process; so we  
21 kind of get it after it gets through the Civil  
22 Service side. 900 applicants, and we offer the  
23 school to 33 because that's the size that we can  
24 handle inside the school. So we have a whittling  
25 down process.

1            Obviously, we do a thorough background  
2            investigation. This year -- this past class, we  
3            entered a couple other tests, some psychological  
4            testing and other things that are used in other  
5            law enforcement arena. And we want to make that  
6            filter even cleaner for the future.

7            We offered it to 33. Unfortunately,  
8            seven turned down right away; a couple other had  
9            some problems; and we had one that we removed  
10           because he needed to be removed.

11           REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Sometimes  
12           that happens. And I'm wondering, what is the cost  
13           per student to the Commission?

14           EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: We -- to run a  
15           class, around \$2 million. We'll figure the salary  
16           for the officers is around 29,000, maybe \$30,000  
17           next time around per individual. That's one of  
18           our challenges. People leave 50-, 60,000-a-year  
19           job to come be a conservation officer. For that  
20           year, they gotta figure out how to make ends meet.

21           So for salaries, it's around 30,000 for  
22           33 officers, which is around a million and another  
23           million dollars in operational costs. So that's  
24           what we figure \$2 million to run a full class.

25           REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: And then

1 finally, I'm wondering -- and I'm hearing this  
2 from hunters out there that our out-of-state  
3 licensing is a real steal, if you will.

4 I'm wondering, you mentioned the  
5 comparative with New Jersey and Ohio. What are  
6 their out-of-state license fees?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I don't have  
8 them right offhand, but we'll get them for you.

9 The analysis we did, we said, What do  
10 you get on a Pennsylvania general hunting license?  
11 I almost said the back tag. I want to get those  
12 off the back in the wallet someday, move away from  
13 the back tag thing.

14 For a general hunting license, you get  
15 an antlered deer, all the small game, and two  
16 turkey, basically. When you go to Ohio, it's  
17 something like \$30 a turkey tag; migratory bird,  
18 meaning pheasant -- not migratory, but small game,  
19 meaning pheasant and quail, in New jersey it's \$40  
20 just for their pheasant tag. That's twice as much  
21 as our general hunting license.

22 Those are the examples of the  
23 difference between Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New  
24 Jersey. We'll run the data down for you and give  
25 those comparisons for you.



1                   REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: There is  
2 some tension. I do sense the resident hunter  
3 community feels that folks are coming in from out  
4 of state for a fee that's too low. So that's  
5 something --

6                   EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: We'd welcome  
7 any increase in any fees along those lines.

8                   REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: I'm sure you  
9 would. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10                  CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Representative  
11 Hanna.

12                  REPRESENTATIVE HANNA: Thank you,  
13 Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Carl, for your  
14 testimony.

15                  Let me start by saying that the folks  
16 in my region of the state, the Northcentral part  
17 of Pennsylvania, are excited about the proposed  
18 changes in your Deer Management Program.

19                  We welcome the research project that  
20 you're going to do. We would welcome it even more  
21 if it was the whole first week and not a Saturday  
22 antlerless hunting; but we understand that it's a  
23 step, as my folks see it, in the right direction.

24                  We certainly want to thank you and the  
25 Commission members and the Commissioners for your

1 action on that. We think it's a good first step.

2 And I was also pleased to see in your  
3 testimony the mention of the recreational  
4 opportunities as being part of your deer  
5 management, and that certainly is something that  
6 we welcome as well because we certainly feel that  
7 that's a huge part of deer management throughout  
8 Northcentral Pennsylvania.

9 My question deals more with the  
10 beginning of your testimony where you spent some  
11 time talking about habitats. And I recognize that  
12 you focused mostly on private land habitat and  
13 issues with that.

14 I'd like you to spend a little time  
15 talking about public land habitat. One of the  
16 things that I hear most frequently in the  
17 Northcentral part of the state is we recognize  
18 that the deer herd is substantially reduced right  
19 now and that this is an opportune time for  
20 regeneration.

21 And is there anything that we can do or  
22 anything that the Commission is doing to work not  
23 just on the gamelands, but also on the other  
24 public lands?

25 Because, as you know, in Northcentral

1 Pennsylvania we have huge amounts of state forest  
2 land and we would like to see aggressive  
3 timbering. The wild deer herd is down, so the  
4 regeneration that we so desperately need could  
5 take hold while there aren't deer there to really  
6 impact it as they have in the past.

7 Is the Commission working in that way,  
8 not just as I say on the SGLs, but also in the  
9 Bureau of Forestry lands?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Our approach  
11 is a little bit different than the Bureau of  
12 Forestry, as you know. We approach our lands from  
13 a habitat point of view as to opposed to a  
14 commercial environment coupled with a balanced  
15 ecology on forestlands.

16 We have several sales right now that as  
17 we learn more and more about our forests on  
18 gamelands, through our forest inventory teams that  
19 we just started two years ago.

20 One of the challenges we have on  
21 gamelands -- and I'll start with that and kind of  
22 drift towards the Bureau of Forestry later.

23 Our forests, our gamelands are really  
24 out of balance. We have about 10 percent of our  
25 land in early successional growth. I'm rounding

1       these numbers off a little bit.

2                   We have about, I guess it's 28 to 30  
3 percent in Stage 3, or pole timber. We have about  
4 53 percent in small saw, which is stage 2, which  
5 is basically 12 inches to 16 inches, not really  
6 great commercial value, but next to it. And only  
7 10 percent considered old growth or Size 1 timber,  
8 16, 18 deviation and above.

9                   So as you can see, the highest  
10 commercial value is only in the area where we have  
11 about 10 percent of that land. From a habitat  
12 point of view, we can't take that out.

13                   We need to, in fact, push more into the  
14 old growth for various species. And where we can  
15 do that is, in fact, in that 52, 53 percent of  
16 that Stage 2 timber, which is small saw, what we  
17 call small saw timber.

18                   That's a great challenge for us because  
19 the commercial value of that timber is very  
20 little. Number of board feet, not the best time  
21 to cut it.

22                   Again, we approach it from a habitat  
23 point of view. And we're having some contracts  
24 come in right now on some land where we're going  
25 to give out tens of thousands of board feet but

1 get very little money for it because we need to  
2 drive that back into early successional forests  
3 for that regeneration effort to get the type of  
4 forests that we want.

5 As an example, as we find out more and  
6 more about our forests -- and I'm trying to  
7 remember where it was. I believe it was in the  
8 Northcentral region.

9 Wild Forest Inventory Team cored a  
10 tree -- I believe it was a chestnut oak -- that  
11 was about 16 DBH, which is a hundred-year-old  
12 tree -- it was over 200 years old.

13 So if you look at the cycle of the  
14 forest, it takes us 200 years to get a tree that's  
15 around 16, 18 DBH. That means the silviculture  
16 there is really pretty poor.

17 So rather than cutting on a rotation of  
18 1 percent, if that's the type of forest it is,  
19 maybe a half a percent is all we can do on a  
20 rotational basis to keep those stages the way we  
21 want them. So that's one of the things we're  
22 finding out.

23 Bureau of Forestry, like I say, their  
24 approach is little bit different. And I can't  
25 really speak for them, but we work with them on

1 some of their lands up in Elk County on putting  
2 habitat in for elk and deer and other areas.

3 But generally, the Bureau of Forestry  
4 products industry is a prime orientation for the  
5 management of the forests. That's their mission,  
6 so to speak.

7 REPRESENTATIVE HANNA: You mentioned  
8 about the silviculture not being highest quality.  
9 Have you adjusted your management practices to  
10 address that? I mean, it would seem to me that we  
11 need to address the concerns with the quality of  
12 the soil, particularly with the reports about acid  
13 rain and the acid content.

14 Is there anything that's been done with  
15 the gameland managements to address that?

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: The only thing  
17 we've done is the fencing aspect. Liming and rest  
18 of it is cost prohibitive at the current time. We  
19 just fence and hold the fence up higher or longer  
20 till those preferred species get beyond the browse  
21 -- so the deer don't have a browse effect on them.  
22 That's about what we do right now.

23 And there's been some pressure, to be  
24 very frank with you, to do "D" map on gamelands.  
25 But our philosophy is that the gamelands are there

1 to optimize hunting opportunities, not to -- not  
2 to -- we'll absorb the cost and assure  
3 regeneration there to keep the hunting  
4 opportunities there.

5 REPRESENTATIVE HANNA: Final question,  
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 First let me say I would discourage you  
8 to do D mapping on the gamelands.

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Absolutely  
10 not.

11 REPRESENTATIVE HANNA: But let me just  
12 ask, because of the, I guess the low price for  
13 your timber, is it not practical to try and  
14 require that the cutters do the liming of the  
15 forest floor to see if that might be part of the  
16 actual timbering operation?

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Well, we do  
18 that quite often, for liming. But in many cases  
19 they'll put in another half a mile road that  
20 increases access for hunters; they'll put a bridge  
21 across a stream. But that comes off the top.

22 I mean, there's no freebies out there.  
23 So we've had cuts where we've gotten zero dollars  
24 in the bank as a result of a cut but we've had  
25 improvements on roads, greater access, they put in

1 herbaceous openings afterwards on landings, which  
2 they're required to do anyhow.

3           So part of the challenge is,  
4 particularly in the current era where as an  
5 example cherries dropped 20 percent on the market.  
6 So we've got contracts out there right now where  
7 we've got some -- some of the foresters, they're  
8 just kind of waiting there.

9           And we had one -- I believe it was last  
10 year -- walked away and forfeited their bond. The  
11 market's dropped in some areas where they're not  
12 going to be able to make that profit line; they  
13 walk away from it.

14           So the more of the fact that the cost  
15 of the -- the bid prices are going way down, to  
16 roll that back in just decreases our revenue off  
17 those activities more. And that's at a time we  
18 can't afford to have those revenues decreased.

19           To be very frank with you, the license  
20 increase, one of the things we're going to look at  
21 is how much revenue do we need to generate in our  
22 habitat improvement cuts?

23           And with a license increase, obviously,  
24 that'll go down and do some of the things in  
25 getting our forests back in balance that we need



1 to do and create much more early successional  
2 growth, as we all know is great for a variety of  
3 game and nongame species.

4 REPRESENTATIVE HANNA: Thank you, Carl.  
5 Let me just finish by saying I think the hunters  
6 in the Northcentral part of the state would be  
7 willing to pay more for their license if you were  
8 getting better habitat on gamelands and throughout  
9 the public forest in the Northcentral part of the  
10 state.

11 So I would encourage you to continue  
12 with the aggressive timbering, even if it isn't a  
13 revenue generator for you. I think you'll build a  
14 lot of support amongst the hunters in our area.  
15 Thank you.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Thank you.

17 REPRESENTATIVE HANNA: Thank you,  
18 Mr. Chairman.

19 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: The Committee has  
20 been joined by two additional members,  
21 Representative Gillespie and Representative  
22 Goodman.

23 Representative Everett.

24 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: Thank you,  
25 Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Roe.

1           I have some -- and would just echo, as  
2 Representative Hanna and I do share a border and  
3 we have hunting camps that go across the borders  
4 and I think Mike even hunts in a hunting camp  
5 that's over in the district I represent. So we  
6 have very common interests, so I echo everything  
7 Representative Hanna said.

8           I have some questions that have come up  
9 from some of the folks up in Lycoming County about  
10 gas leases. They have some information and  
11 belief -- and I don't have any information on  
12 this -- that there has been maybe -- and they  
13 specifically mentioned State Gamelands 75, that  
14 there's been gas leases that have been negotiated  
15 on that.

16           And I was just wondering if you could  
17 shed some light on that, what the terms of that  
18 lease may or may not be, how it was negotiated,  
19 and what you feel the impact of this gas  
20 activity -- it's going to be all through Lycoming  
21 County, both on private land and public lands, and  
22 what you think that's going to do to our State  
23 Gamelands and hunting lands?

24           EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: That's a great  
25 question. We've always had a very good oil, gas,

1 and mineral program. What we find in -- two  
2 different situations can occur on gamelands.

3 One is that we don't own the mineral  
4 rights on it, which may include gas. Which means  
5 the owner of those gas rights can come in whenever  
6 they want to and, in fact, drill and pull gas off  
7 the gamelands. That could be parceled and maybe a  
8 part of the gameland a person may have the mineral  
9 rights and we may have the others.

10 On this specific gameland, I don't  
11 recall the exact set of circumstances; but I could  
12 tell you some of the things that we have run  
13 across over the last year, year and a half has  
14 become more lucrative for people to go after that  
15 gas in the -- areas.

16 Because you mentioned private land is  
17 also being developed, we have several places where  
18 in fact on the private land around gamelands gas  
19 wells are very close to the border of the  
20 gameland; so therefore, the gas deposition may, in  
21 fact, cross under that boundary line and as  
22 they're drilling here, gas is coming off the  
23 gamelands.

24 We monitor that very closely. And what  
25 we do -- that's when we do offer leases,

1 obviously, to come on the gamelands, drill. And  
2 in fact, so we benefit from those revenues.  
3 That's if somebody else owns the rights.

4 In several places of gamelands we, in  
5 fact, do offer the opportunity to put in gas wells  
6 because the market is just quite good for it right  
7 now.

8 What does that do for us from a habitat  
9 point of view? Depending upon the area, it could  
10 be a habitat enhancement because now you've made  
11 it a half an acre herbaceous opening -- and we  
12 require seeding and putting it back into a  
13 grassland environment -- in this midst of this  
14 forest.

15 So there is a quasi, small benefit  
16 habitatwise. Many cases what we've also done,  
17 particularly on our coal leases, is that we  
18 require acreage along with the coal rights.

19 In other words, if you're going to take  
20 this many acres out of use for hunters, we're  
21 going to get 40, 50, 60 acres sometimes to be  
22 purchased next to the gamelands so we as hunters  
23 will, in fact, have more area to hunt as part of  
24 that coal lease agreement.

25 As far as how we do it, we have to

1 follow the state rules and we bid 'em out on  
2 contracts and people have an opportunity to bid on  
3 that contract. It's an open process. We open a  
4 contract and we take the best rate.

5 And correct me if I'm wrong, somebody  
6 back here remind me, the last contract we  
7 negotiated I think we got 28 percent of the  
8 royalty on that gas. That's pretty doggone good.  
9 So we turned that around and we've done really,  
10 really well lately on gas.

11 As you'll see, as you know, the  
12 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee is  
13 looking at our habitat improvement operation,  
14 meaning timber operations as well as oil, gas,  
15 mineral. And so far they've been pretty impressed  
16 with how we do business on that side.

17 And we're pretty tough negotiators. To  
18 get on gamelands and do something, we get prime  
19 funds for that.

20 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: If I could  
21 just be put in touch with someone who could get  
22 that information.

23 What I want to do is convince -- the  
24 bidding in Lycoming County has just gone crazy  
25 right now on land rents and then the royalties.

1                   And my understanding is that the Game  
2 Commission drove a pretty good bargain. I just  
3 need the figure so I can convince all the rest of  
4 the folks that you did get a good bargain and then  
5 they'll -- and I believe you will, from what I  
6 understand, that I think that you will see some  
7 habitat improvements when they do cut in for their  
8 wells and their roads and your collector lines,  
9 they'd be great places for food plots and habitat  
10 management.

11                   EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Exactly.  
12 We'll get that information to you specifically on  
13 the State Gamelands. And even when people have  
14 rights, we -- even though we can't really force  
15 them into certain areas, we work within the,  
16 where's the best place to put the well?

17                   We also look at the habitat impact.  
18 We'll get -- that'll be a whole separate briefing  
19 for you on how we, in fact, go for what the  
20 stumpage value is. Not only the stumpage value,  
21 but what's the habitat value.

22                   If you've taken down three or four  
23 prime oak trees that are producing hard mass,  
24 there's a habitat value to that also. So the last  
25 couple years we've not only gone for stump value,

1 but habitat values are impacted by any operation  
2 along those lines and those companies are charged  
3 that value also.

4 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: If we could  
5 maybe at some point have a public meeting up in  
6 the area where this is all taking place, because  
7 the -- shell deposit goes right down through, as  
8 you're aware, I know.

9 But there's a lot of people that aren't  
10 aware of what's going on. Because all the sudden  
11 everybody in Lycoming County that's a landowner is  
12 a gas expert also. And I would just like to have  
13 them understand that you are gas experts also and  
14 let 'em know what's going on, what your plans are.  
15 Because it'll make my life a lot easier.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I understand.  
17 We'll get with you and we'll be glad to have an  
18 open house up there on our OGM program in the  
19 area. Glad to do that.

20 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: I have one  
21 other issue that's kind of a follow up from an  
22 issue that I raised last year about the  
23 supplemental feeding issue during the season.  
24 And, you know, it was the result of some  
25 prosecutions at two of the hunting camps up in

1 Lycoming County.

2           What happened this season is just about  
3 everybody, because they didn't want their camps  
4 shut down, have ceased doing any supplemental  
5 feeding, which I think probably was the Game  
6 Commission's goal.

7           But I had one large camp that attempted  
8 to negotiate with the WCOs and the Game  
9 Commission. They have 6,000 acres and, I mean,  
10 they're a very large camp and they have a diverse  
11 topography in their camp.

12           Some of it, they've done a  
13 lot -- invested a lot of money in their food plots  
14 and their habitat management; but there's other  
15 areas where it's very difficult, very steep and,  
16 like I say, there's no soil in some places to do  
17 food plots or anything.

18           And what they attempted to do was  
19 worked to say we'll pull our feeders from the  
20 areas where we really don't need 'em because we've  
21 really developed things, but we'd like to keep  
22 feeders into these areas.

23           And the discussion was, if you have a  
24 feeder anywhere on your 6,000 acres -- and they  
25 even said we won't even hunt in the area where we



1 have the feeders. And they were told, Any feeder  
2 anywhere on any of your 6,000 acres we're going to  
3 shut you down.

4 Is that -- you know, is that the  
5 philosophy that any supplemental feeding anywhere  
6 is baiting and is illegal?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: The law  
8 clearly states that all feeding and any bait must  
9 be removed 30 days prior to the season. And  
10 that's what the law says.

11 The reality is, is feeding does become  
12 baiting when it influences the activity of the  
13 animal. So even though you may not be hunting  
14 directly over it, you are still creating travel  
15 lanes or other issues where hunting can take place  
16 as a result of that place where you're  
17 supplementing feeding.

18 And I would offer that one of the  
19 things we've seen over the years is that  
20 supplemental feeding, particularly even after the  
21 season -- I mean, if you asked our veterinarian,  
22 he would say get rid of all supplemental feeding  
23 because it creates a false carrying capacity in  
24 some areas of the state.

25 But in reality, people enjoy feeding

1 wildlife; but during the season, it is considered  
2 baiting once that season starts, if you're  
3 utilizing it in a sense of manipulating the habits  
4 of the game.

5 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: So a  
6 year-around supplemental feeding program where  
7 they're feeding high protein -- and they are,  
8 there's no doubt about it, they are trying to  
9 raise the carrying capacity of their property; and  
10 it's their property.

11 And I just don't -- I still fail to  
12 understand how they, by raising the carrying  
13 capacity of their property, they're hurting anyone  
14 anywhere else.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Well, I would  
16 offer if they're carrying deer, it's a false  
17 carrying capacity on that property. If the deer  
18 stayed on that property, it'd be one thing.

19 But if it's next to a State Gamelands  
20 and it moves over there and decides to overbrowse  
21 the State Gamelands because it's in proximity or  
22 other private property or a farm next door and  
23 uses that for supplemental feeding in the summer  
24 and fall, it does have an impact on their  
25 neighboring properties.

1                   So that's one of the issues also with  
2                   having a false carrying capacity, so to speak.

3                   REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT:   But that was  
4                   the offer was to come on the property and to show,  
5                   okay, we're not gonna have it because that's too  
6                   close to State.  You can't have it here because we  
7                   get complaints from this farmer.

8                   But this was a blanket:  You put a  
9                   feeder anywhere on your 6,000 acres and we're  
10                  shutting your camp down.  That just doesn't seem  
11                  to be anything near what you're saying now.

12                  EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE:  If you're  
13                  going to use that feed during hunting season and  
14                  hunt deer or over it, it becomes baiting, which it  
15                  is, in fact, a violation of the code.

16                  So if you're manipulating the traveling  
17                  or enticing other wildlife into the area by using  
18                  that feed during the hunting season, it's  
19                  considered baiting.  So the best advice we can  
20                  give people is to stop feeding 30 days prior to  
21                  the hunting season and you'll be just fine during  
22                  hunting season.

23                  REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT:  But food plots  
24                  do the --

25                  EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE:  Food plots are

1 an unnatural environment --

2 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: Standing on  
3 harvested corn?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: That's what  
5 the statute says, yes.

6 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: Thank you.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: You haven't  
8 manipulated it.

9 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: Standing on  
10 harvested corn is not manipulating it?

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: No, the corn  
12 has not been manipulated. It's in a natural  
13 state. And I think -- I'm assuming that was the  
14 intent of the statute that, in fact, as it occurs  
15 in a natural state, it's not considered baiting.

16 If you manipulate that -- you can hunt  
17 next to an apple tree, right? I mean, all of us  
18 find cherry trees and apple trees. But if you  
19 take a bushel of apples and dump 'em on the  
20 ground, that's different than hunting in the  
21 natural state or a natural occurrence of areas.

22 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: Thank you.

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I know it's a  
24 tough one for you.

25 REPRESENTATIVE EVERETT: No, I

1 mean -- and I understand what you're saying and I  
2 know you understand what I'm saying. They're  
3 allowed to plant an apple orchard and not harvest  
4 it, and that's good and that's fine; but in areas  
5 where you can't have an apple orchard, you can't  
6 have a food plot, you just can't have deer I  
7 guess.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: That's the  
9 challenge -- if you look at the topography over a  
10 lot of gamelands, it's land that nobody wanted 30,  
11 40, 50 years ago.

12 And that's some of the challenges we  
13 have on gamelands in putting in habitat, to be  
14 very frank with you. There's just not a lot of  
15 places where there's good soil to be able to do  
16 those kind of things.

17 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Representative  
18 Gillespie.

19 REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: Thank you,  
20 Mr. Chairman. Carl, good to see. Thanks for your  
21 testimony. I enjoyed it.

22 Just a couple comments to switch gears  
23 here. You mentioned about the trap and transfer  
24 program for the pheasants in Montour County.  
25 Where are those pheasants coming from? Is this an

1 exchange program with turkeys

2 or --

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Some of it is  
4 exchange with turkeys. We mostly get 'em from  
5 Montana and North and South Dakota, depending upon  
6 the specific program we have. We've got a couple  
7 programs going on. But we, in fact, work with  
8 Pheasants Forever to go out, pick them up, and  
9 bring 'em back and release 'em.

10 REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: How large a  
11 quantity is this project?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I think it's  
13 300 birds a year. Our goal was 300 birds a year  
14 from out west to bring in.

15 REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: Well, next  
16 to one of my fondest memories is getting home from  
17 school and doing my chores and grabbing my English  
18 Setter and going out and hunting pheasants was  
19 trapping.

20 And I notice here in your testimony  
21 about plentiful variety of species. I've been  
22 hearing that there's been a bit of a blight with  
23 the muskrat population. Do you have any comment  
24 about that?

25 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: No, I really

1 don't. But we can get back to you with that one.  
2 But it has been a concern of ours because the  
3 populations have really plummeted in the recent  
4 years. I'm not sure what the cause and effect is  
5 there, but we're looking at that one.

6 I'll get a separate briefing for you in  
7 your office with that one if you'd like. I don't  
8 have that on the tip of my tongue.

9 REPRESENTATIVE GILLESPIE: I appreciate  
10 that, Carl. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Representative  
12 Surra.

13 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: Thank you,  
14 Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Director Roe. Just  
15 a few comments and then a brief question.

16 I'm very disappointed again, and you  
17 are too. We're still stuck with carbon paper and  
18 point of sale stuff hasn't gone forward. It just  
19 really is unbelievable. I don't know how other  
20 states have been able to do it for the last 15 or  
21 20 years.

22 I want to share with you another  
23 scientific survey I did in one of my recent  
24 newsletters with some interesting results. In one  
25 of the recent -- very critical in the past of the

1 report card system, you know, of reporting your  
2 deer kill.

3 And I was surprised to find out that 64  
4 percent of the people that responded always  
5 reported their deer kills, which was much higher  
6 than '95 was and probably much higher than you  
7 think it was. So maybe it's not that scientific.

8 But one of the things that was  
9 concerning was that of the entire universe of  
10 people that responded, 13 percent of them no  
11 longer hunt. And of that universe, 64 percent of  
12 them have quit hunting in the last five years.

13 And I'm suspicious that that's a  
14 combination of the fact that our hunters are older  
15 and many of 'em are disenchanting with the way  
16 things are going.

17 When I asked the question about how  
18 long you've been hunting, it's very clear 86  
19 percent of our hunters have been hunting in excess  
20 of 20 years.

21 So we have -- if you look -- normally a  
22 bell curve, our curve is tapered and very  
23 ballooned at the end of the age of our hunting  
24 population. And that could be problematic down  
25 the road and something that we are trying to work



1 on with the mentoring program in a lot of our  
2 youth hunts.

3 I was glad to see you mention, as  
4 Representative Hanna said, about the recreational  
5 opportunities of deer. And you also talked about  
6 how important the economy is for hunting. And I  
7 look forward to having that discussion with you at  
8 a future time how hunting has impacted -- the  
9 negative impact that we've had in the Northcentral  
10 part of the state for hunting.

11 But finally, last year I talked about  
12 how many licenses we sold last year compared to  
13 the year before. And we didn't agree on what that  
14 percentage of decrease was. I think it was mostly  
15 because the numbers, you know, at that point in  
16 time that you could calculate.

17 At this point in April of 2008, do you  
18 have a handle on how many licenses were sold in  
19 the previous hunting year?

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Oh, yes. You  
21 mean from the previous year, last year?

22 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: Yes.

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Yes, we were  
24 down 2 percent last year overall and this year so  
25 far we're just a little bit over 2 percent as of

1 the middle of March. We almost have a month lag  
2 from the reporting from our agents. So right now  
3 we're just a little over 2 percent down from last  
4 year.

5 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: So we still  
6 don't have a total of how many licenses were sold  
7 last hunting season?

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Hunting  
9 season, meaning this past fall?

10 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: I mean last  
11 year, for the 2007 hunting licenses.

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Okay. The  
13 2007/2008 hunting licenses, we'll have the final  
14 figures at the end of May. And the reason for  
15 that is obviously we have a late turkey season, we  
16 have people buy a general hunting license.

17 So we get our final agent  
18 reconciliation at the end of May. We do have the  
19 final figures for the 2006/2007 season.

20 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: How is the  
21 out-of-state license sales trend in, say, the last  
22 five years?

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I can't  
24 remember all that. I think I do have a chart in  
25 there. It's down, no doubt about it. I think

1 part of that is a couple reasons. I'll give you  
2 an example: An adult nonresident -- let me give  
3 you from about the last four or five years.

4 You want to start '04/'05, about that  
5 time frame or --

6 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: Yeah.

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Okay.

8 '04/'05, they went down -- difference between '03  
9 and '04 was no change; 8 percent down, '04 and  
10 '05; and 5 percent down overall from '99 to '06.

11 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: Those are pretty  
12 substantial decreases, I would guess.

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Yes.

14 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: And I'm not  
15 surprised by those numbers, and I'm not asking you  
16 a question that I know the answer. I did not  
17 research any of this or I wouldn't ask you; I'd  
18 just be telling you.

19 But that's very interesting when you  
20 consider what a bargain it is, because it is a  
21 bargain.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Sure.

23 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: So then why  
24 would you think that we're losing so many  
25 out-of-state hunters when it's such a bargain?

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I think  
2 there's a couple of reasons for it. One is when I  
3 filled a vehicle up this past weekend, in my Jeep  
4 I think it was \$52 to fill it up. I think that  
5 affects it.

6 I think another big effect is what I  
7 mentioned earlier to Representative Hanna, the  
8 fact that no nonresident had been able to get a  
9 license for 2G, our largest Wildlife Management  
10 Unit, where most of 'em have camps; so therefore,  
11 I know that I can't get an antlerless license.

12 I'm going up there for a two-week deer  
13 season or some time during that time frame and can  
14 only hunt buck with a herd that has been  
15 reduced -- and we recognize it's been  
16 reduced -- that has an impact on it also.

17 So I think those two factors  
18 are -- contribute to a declining population of our  
19 nonresident hunters.

20 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: And we've lost  
21 them not only because of the antlerless situation,  
22 but we've lost them as antler hunters also?

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I think  
24 there's an impact, absolutely. The herd  
25 reduction -- I don't think there's anybody in this

1 room who wouldn't like to see more deer, including  
2 me.

3 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: It goes for me,  
4 it goes to the economic impact on the Northcentral  
5 part of the state. Those camps are -- and I've  
6 said this and I'm going to end my comments now,  
7 because I'm done beating up the Game Commission.  
8 Eventually, this is going to work itself out.

9 Deer season up in that part of the  
10 state used to be an event. It was a circus.  
11 These little towns became cities and now it's  
12 almost like any other day. And that's really too  
13 bad. And I hope we can work to change that.  
14 That's all I have.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I think there  
16 are a couple of contributing factors. I think not  
17 only the fact that there are definitely fewer deer  
18 there; but I think the hunting pattern has also  
19 changed in the last, certainly in the last 15 or  
20 20 years.

21 I ride with WCOs the whole first week  
22 of deer season because we need the maximum number  
23 of people in the field. By Tuesday afternoon and  
24 certainly by Wednesday morning, it gets tougher  
25 and tougher to find a hunter.

1                   I rode for three and a half hours in  
2 Elk Forest on Thursday and could not find a  
3 hunter. So the patterns of hunting have changed  
4 considerably in the sense of they go for the day,  
5 day and a half, maybe two days. And you're saying  
6 they leave because they're not seeing any deer.  
7 That could very well be the case.

8                   Trying to roll back that to the  
9 economics, we talk about this because we are  
10 concerned about this. Couple other impacts, if I  
11 only end up bringing two days' worth of groceries  
12 with me because I'm only hunting two days, I'll  
13 probably throw that in the car and bring it up.

14                   If I'm spending a week up there, I'll  
15 probably buy those groceries because I won't have  
16 enough room in the vehicle till I get there.

17                   Another impact that we've seen in  
18 several areas is that when -- St. Mary's. When a  
19 Wal-Mart rolls in, a lot of mom-and-pop operations  
20 seem to go away.

21                   Other thing we're taking a look at is  
22 we have Bass Pro, we have Gander Mountain, we have  
23 Cabelas. I mean, they are destinations in  
24 themselves many times for people. And people come  
25 down and they'll load up on things they used to

1 buy at Rows (phonetic) Bait and Tackle in  
2 Villanova. And they don't do that anymore.

3 REPRESENTATIVE SURRA: Well, I agree  
4 with that; but what I'm telling you is they're not  
5 there. It's not that they're going to Wal-Mart.  
6 If they're going to my Wal-Mart at home, they're  
7 driving back home somewhere else to hunt.

8 But you brought it up about not anybody  
9 being in the woods late in the season. And I'll  
10 give you my own personal experience. I think the  
11 last Saturday of the rifle season this year was  
12 probably the finest day to be in the woods in the  
13 Northcentral part of the state in the last 30  
14 years.

15 It was -- we had 6 inches of fresh snow  
16 and it was in the 30 degrees, the sun was shining.  
17 And I got up at 4:30 in the morning and made a pot  
18 of coffee and got some lunchmeat out and got some  
19 bread out and I started to take it apart. And I'm  
20 like, I'm going to stay home and do my Christmas  
21 cards.

22 And I'll tell you why. It's because I  
23 had hunted the entire season and not seen a deer.  
24 And that's really sad. I need to change where I  
25 hunt. But I live and hunt in the some of the best

1 deer habitat in the State of Pennsylvania, and  
2 it's difficult. And I'm not alone.

3 And we've been down this road, but I  
4 thank you for your efforts and your testimony.

5 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Representative  
6 Millard.

7 REPRESENTATIVE MILLARD: Thank you,  
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 Director Roe, I guess that all of us  
10 have defining moments, you know, in our careers;  
11 and my questions and my comments today are going  
12 to be from back home, from the folks who have  
13 contacted me about the Game Commission.

14 And I guess the defining moment for me  
15 was being appointed to the Fish and Game  
16 Committee. And I'm convinced, here we are, you  
17 know, 14, 15 months later that I'm on this  
18 Committee, first time serving, that with all the  
19 emails, all the correspondence, all the phone  
20 calls, that everybody's an expert and nobody can  
21 agree.

22 And I think that that's probably a nice  
23 way for me to sum up all the groups that have  
24 contacted me, because you got a heck of a job.  
25 Nobody's ever gonna agree on whatever the programs



1 are.

2 But to get into my questioning to you,  
3 you talked about as other groups have come before  
4 us -- and I serve on Appropriations as  
5 well -- about the need for a license increase.

6 Now, I guess the obvious  
7 question -- and, again, I don't have a position on  
8 this, but I feel that I have to relate to you  
9 what's being given to me back in my district. The  
10 obvious approach to it that some people think is a  
11 merger with the Fish Commission.

12 What's your take on that? What are you  
13 doing different that couldn't be done under one  
14 roof?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Well, I would  
16 relate the fact that a study was done several  
17 years ago and, in reality, there were not  
18 significant savings realized by merging the two  
19 organizations.

20 When I go to the Association of Fish  
21 and Wildlife Agencies in other areas meeting with  
22 my peers, they envy the situation we have in  
23 Pennsylvania.

24 Those other agencies that have recently  
25 been merged, they find what happens is wildlife

1 falls out the bottom. If they get merged into an  
2 environment where you're under -- and, obviously,  
3 the logical step after the merger between Fish and  
4 Game would be, be under DCNR. I mean, that's  
5 the -- the logic just flows in that direction.

6 And obviously our concern is -- and,  
7 again, I talked to my contemporaries that wildlife  
8 and hunters fall out the bottom in those  
9 environments.

10 REPRESENTATIVE MILLARD: Now, with your  
11 management, your training of your conservation  
12 officers, obviously there's a difference in that  
13 training than with training officers in the Fish  
14 Commission, the Fish and Boat Commission.

15 But is there any way to combine maybe  
16 some of the educational classes that, you  
17 know -- what I'm leading the path down to here is,  
18 is there a way to cooperate a little more closely,  
19 maybe not a merger, but is there a way to combine  
20 resources as far as education or any other method  
21 that you see to cooperate with other agencies to  
22 save money for both agencies?

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: We -- well, a  
24 good example could have been or may still be the  
25 point of sale systems, because it's a cooperative

1 effort between Fish and us. And I would say on  
2 the ground we work very cooperatively with Fish.

3 We help stock. We ride with Water  
4 Waste Conservation Officers in boats to help  
5 enforce during their high times. Their Waterways  
6 Conservation Officers ride with our WCOs during  
7 various seasons to help enforce the law. We have  
8 the authority to enforce each other's laws.

9 So we do that from a manpower point of  
10 view. Not constantly, but during our peak years  
11 we certainly help each other out at that ground  
12 level.

13 REPRESENTATIVE MILLARD: My final  
14 question is observations again from my  
15 constituents. Has there been a large turnover in  
16 the Game Commission in the past couple years and,  
17 if there has been, why?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I don't know  
19 if it's a large turnover per se. With our WCOs,  
20 it's the matter of the fact that when they  
21 graduated from the school. Historically, they  
22 look back around 30, 40 years ago, classes were  
23 pretty frequently, every two or three years.

24 This last class I think there was a gap  
25 of almost five, almost six years between classes.

1 So it's kinda cyclical in how many people are  
2 still active in the Game Commission.

3 Another thing that we find is when our  
4 employees come to us, they have a tendency to stay  
5 with us. We have employees that have been over 40  
6 years with the Game Commission.

7 They like the work, they have  
8 admissions (phonetic) rate, and they're  
9 contributing to the greater good of the  
10 Commonwealth. So when they do leave, they do kind  
11 of have a tendency to leave in clumps.

12 But again, as far as the WCOs were  
13 concerned, that's as a result of not having the  
14 funds to be able to run that class about the two  
15 or three year mark. So we have this five-year gap  
16 where several class may, in fact, have left the  
17 role, so to speak, as wildlife conservation  
18 officers.

19 REPRESENTATIVE MILLARD: Thank you.  
20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Representative  
22 Haluska.

23 REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: Thank you,  
24 Mr. Chairman.

25 Carl, thanks for your presentation.

1 I've been here going on my 14th year and served on  
2 this Committee -- Council and the Forestry Task  
3 Force for those years too and worked with Jim  
4 Grason (phonetic) as our state forester when he  
5 was.

6 Obviously, we're -- and we've always  
7 asked Jim, How do we manage a hardwood deciduous  
8 forest that's 80 to a hundred years old? He says,  
9 I don't know. We've never had one before.

10 So, basically, in those two committees  
11 we find out what the health of the forest.  
12 Obviously, acid rain has blights, everything else  
13 that happens.

14 We really don't know, if we do a cut,  
15 what's going to come back. Because when it was a  
16 conifer forest, basically, it came back as a  
17 deciduous hardwood forest. So we got a surprise  
18 in a hundred years.

19 So that being said, you know, that's a  
20 topic that has so many twists and turns that, you  
21 know, you really can't predict, even if you deer  
22 fence or whatever you do, that it's going to come  
23 back the way you want it.

24 In your testimony you said you manage  
25 about 75 mammals in the state?

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I believe it's  
2 66.

3 REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: 66. But to me  
4 it seems like there's the Big Five. There's deer,  
5 bear, turkey, grouse, pheasant. Those to me are  
6 the Big Five. And really, out of those five, the  
7 white-tailed deer is probably what the majority of  
8 hunters actually buy a hunting license to hunt.

9 And I just feel that the Game  
10 Commission -- I know they have a big job, they  
11 have a lot of things to do; but I think they've  
12 lost their focus.

13 Their focus basically is the  
14 white-tailed deer. Why are out-of-state licenses  
15 dropping? Because there's no deer to hunt.

16 I've had constituents come to me this  
17 last year -- now we're in the fifth year I guess  
18 of this program -- complaining to me. And these  
19 people never complained before and they really go  
20 out and they hunt hard.

21 They said, Gary, if you allow the Game  
22 Commission to continue to reduce this doe herd, I  
23 will never buy a license in this state again. I  
24 will hunt in West Virginia and Ohio, New York,  
25 where I also hunt now.

1                   They said, It's ridiculous that they've  
2                   dropped the numbers this far, that they're  
3                   continuing on this crash course; they're not  
4                   stabilizing.

5                   I understand it was a hard push to get  
6                   the Commission to at least look at four Management  
7                   Units. Four Management Units to me isn't enough.  
8                   I mean, that was just a little token of, okay, we  
9                   hear you complaining; we hear our hunters  
10                  complaining; we're going to give you this little  
11                  token. We're going to cut five days of doe season  
12                  out.

13                  Well, that doesn't cut it with my  
14                  hunters and it certainly doesn't cut it with me.  
15                  That -- I'm really disappointed, obviously, the  
16                  point of sale. I think it's been eight years that  
17                  we've been on this course of point of sale.

18                  And really to capture information to  
19                  contact and communicate with your hunters, until  
20                  you get to the point of sale, it's like you said,  
21                  you don't even have the figures yet on how many  
22                  hunting licenses you sold last year. It's like  
23                  you're playing catch-up constantly, and I feel bad  
24                  for that.

25                  And it seems like the Game Commission,

1 unlike the Fish Commission which did does work  
2 hand-in-hand with fishing clubs and different  
3 things and they build habitat, they put it in the  
4 lakes, they have a working partnership. There are  
5 some small grants that they're thinking about.

6 Like our problem with the hunting  
7 clubs, has the Game Commission ever approached  
8 them to say, Look, guys, we will help you with a  
9 mini grant. We will clear some area and plant  
10 some crops so the coverage and forestry for those  
11 deer?

12 No. The Game Commission goes to the  
13 citizen, You have any kind of deer, we're closing  
14 you down. It's that attitude that really sticks  
15 in people's craws because of the Game Commission.

16 Heavy-handed doesn't work with people,  
17 and, you know, that really is what I hear a lot.  
18 I know the Game Commission does a lot. I know on  
19 their land they have cooperative farm programs.  
20 But they really have to make a real, real good  
21 attempt.

22 I know I have a bill in that's sitting  
23 in, waiting to sit in the Committee just to take  
24 corn out of baiting. Get rid of this whole issue  
25 of corn being bait. And maybe that would help a



1 lot of these clubs. I don't know.

2 But, you know, I really, really think  
3 that the Game Commission has to do a better job to  
4 focus on what people really want to hunt. There  
5 are 66 mammals; but really when you talk to  
6 hunters that buy a hunting license, there's one  
7 mammal that they really prize: The white-tail  
8 deer.

9 Some people, obviously, hunt bear and a  
10 lot of people hunt turkey and pheasants and grouse  
11 and quail and all those other things. But I think  
12 the real core of the hunters, you know, the  
13 white-tailed deer is the core. And I just think  
14 the Game Commission's lost focus, you know, of  
15 what they're doing, basically.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: You brought  
17 several issues up. I'll try to address each of  
18 them. I'll save deer till the end, if I can.

19 Help on private lands, that was the  
20 whole concept of our private lands biologist, the  
21 state wildlife grants to work on habitat on  
22 private lands, as I mentioned in my comments.

23 One of the issues we have with that is,  
24 obviously, we can provide the information and the  
25 know-how; obviously, we don't have the resources

1 to expend the funds to assist in that arena.

2 As I mentioned, our fruit and cover  
3 crews are short over 30 people out there now,  
4 which retards our capacity to be able to, in fact,  
5 do that work on gamelands.

6 Partnerships, we have a wonderful  
7 partnership with a variety of groups. National  
8 Wild Turkey Federation, we do habitat work on  
9 public and private lands with National Wild Turkey  
10 Federation. Pheasants Forever, the reintroduction  
11 program. Lots of sportsmens groups come in and  
12 cut for hours on our gameland for us.

13 I mean, we have lots of partnerships  
14 with the local arena and they're manifested at the  
15 local area except for the state groups like  
16 Pheasants Forever and National Wild Turkey  
17 Federation.

18 As far as Pennsylvania's concerned, I  
19 believe we've received -- I should ask Don  
20 Hickman; I know he's here -- several million  
21 dollars in habitat work that we've done on  
22 gamelands and private lands from their funds.

23 So we do have wide partnerships in  
24 developing habitat for a variety of species. Look  
25 how well turkeys come back in Pennsylvania. This

1 is a great partnership between the Game Commission  
2 and National Wild Turkey Federation.

3 We're trying to do that with Pheasants  
4 Forever in those areas where we think pheasants  
5 can reproduce in a natural environment as long as  
6 that habitat's there. Local sportsmens clubs, I  
7 believe we work closely with a lot of them. So  
8 that's kind of our partnerships.

9 And the private lands issue is, one of  
10 the things we have to be careful about is being  
11 able to provide that service equitably across the  
12 state in the sense of, if I'm going to do it on  
13 one person's land, am I going to be able to do it  
14 from another person's land from an equity point of  
15 view and expending public funds? At least in my  
16 point of view.

17 So we have to look at that also.

18 REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: And I  
19 understand that; but from past hearings that we  
20 had, these clubs have spent upwards of \$40,000  
21 defending themselves.

22 I can't understand why the Game  
23 Commission's not flexible enough to work with them  
24 instead of them wasting \$40,000 in court costs and  
25 you getting your attorneys into court, that they

1 can't be flexible enough to work instead of  
2 finding these people and saying, look, can't we  
3 work together and do this and can we put some food  
4 plots in.

5                   The Game Commission doesn't do that.  
6 And believe me, I've been in enough cases over the  
7 14 years with the Game Commission being  
8 heavy-handed with hunting camps and different  
9 people. Your organization is not very flexible  
10 when it comes to the legal end of it, the law  
11 enforcement. They're not very flexible at all.

12                   EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I can't  
13 disagree with that in the past. We're doing some  
14 issues, as you well know, in trying to change some  
15 of that culture.

16                   And I would offer that those large  
17 hunting clubs where we had some difficulties in  
18 the past, we have been on their land, we have  
19 offered them advice on where to put food plots and  
20 the rest of that.

21                   But rolling back to deer and the  
22 situation with the deer, the challenge was  
23 managing deer as a specific species. It is a  
24 keystone species; in other words, whatever it does  
25 on the landscape affects a lot of other species.

1                   As an example, if you have a beaver  
2                   that comes in, you have a beaver problem. And you  
3                   have a habitat that may be early successional but  
4                   next to a stream. A beaver comes in; puts a dam  
5                   in. Now you have a wetlands environment.

6                   The beaver has created habitat in that  
7                   sense, although it may be a nuisance because you  
8                   live next to it and created some flooding; but  
9                   there's a change in habitat and it helps a lot of  
10                  variety of species.

11                  When deer overbrowse a forest, it  
12                  affects everything in the forest: Snowshoe hare,  
13                  moles, voles, ruffed grouse, everything.

14                  So in balancing that deer to the  
15                  habitat, the challenge there is to, in fact, look  
16                  at those other species. Because from a mandate  
17                  point of view and being responsible for the 465  
18                  species -- although, economically, deer is an  
19                  important one to us -- the other species have to  
20                  be managed also.

21                  REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: But I don't  
22                  understand then, why when the -- Sportsmen's Club  
23                  has corn for people to supplemental feed deer,  
24                  when these clubs supplemental feed deer -- which  
25                  is your cash crop, white-tailed deer is the Game

1 Commission's cash crop -- you chastise them for  
2 it. I can't put these two pieces together.

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: We don't  
4 chastise them --

5 REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: Yes, you do.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: -- we chastise  
7 people for baiting.

8 REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: You do not  
9 support supplemental feeding. The Game Commission  
10 does not support supplemental feeding.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: But it's not  
12 against the law to supplemental feed --

13 REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: I know. If it  
14 were, you would enforce it. You would close down  
15 the -- Sportsmen Club for issuing corn. That's  
16 what I can't understand.

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Well, as I  
18 described earlier, because when you supplemental  
19 feed, you have a tendency to carry the population  
20 higher than the natural carrying capacity, which  
21 could affect other people's properties that are  
22 neighbors to you.

23 REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: And I  
24 understand that. But you're saying -- the  
25 sportsmen would like to see more deer, obviously.

1 And they want one on every tree if at all  
2 possible.

3 But when people supplemental feed so  
4 that they don't impact the habitat this hard, but  
5 yet they're chastised for that. So there's got to  
6 be some give here somewhere.

7 If a sportsman club has 6,000 acres and  
8 can supplemental feed and put food plots in to  
9 raise the carrying capacity on that land, then I  
10 can't see why the Game Commission wouldn't bend  
11 over backwards to make that happen.

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: We don't have  
13 a problem with putting in food plots and  
14 supplemental feeding as long as that feed is  
15 cleared, cleaned up 30 days prior to the season,  
16 which could become bait.

17 REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: Which is  
18 ironic, I mean, because of the other states that  
19 you hunt in that you can hunt over bait. That's a  
20 whole other issue.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I was going to  
22 say, the purpose of hunting over bait is increased  
23 efficiency of take, which is counterproductive if  
24 you're trying, in fact, to increase the deer herd  
25 in many areas. We allow baiting, as you know, in

1 the Southeast region because in that area we're  
2 still trying to reduce the herd.

3 REPRESENTATIVE HALUSKA: But if that  
4 person from New Jersey would be able to come to  
5 Central Pennsylvania and there were some bait  
6 there and there were a better population of deer  
7 and he had a better day, he'd probably buy a  
8 license and come back.

9 Thanks, Carl.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Sure.

11 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Representative  
12 Rock.

13 REPRESENTATIVE ROCK: Thank you,  
14 Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Roe, for your  
15 testimony. I'll be brief.

16 I just wanted to focus on antler  
17 restrictions. I heard you say earlier that it's a  
18 success and it's working and I've heard different  
19 people on the Committee say that.

20 But I can't see that. I look back at  
21 all the reasons why we might have started antler  
22 restrictions in the beginning and what the  
23 objective was in the beginning and then I look at  
24 what's happened since, and I can't see where it's  
25 a success.



1           I'm assuming you did it to, you know,  
2           to sell more licenses; obviously, to grow bigger  
3           deer; to get out-of-state hunters to come to our  
4           state. All those things.

5           And I guess we have bigger deer. I'm  
6           not so sure about that. I think we have bigger  
7           body deer, but I'm not sure if the antlers are  
8           that great. I think we're taking the best of the  
9           genetics out of the herd every year, and I'm not  
10          sure you can continue to do that.

11          I'm just wondering how you consider  
12          it -- or why you consider it a success?

13                 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: It's really  
14          more anecdotal than scientific. Look at meat  
15          processors, bucks coming in heavier; the deer that  
16          go to taxidermists, larger racks.

17                 Again, the idea was not necessarily to  
18          get that, but to, in fact, move our deer to an  
19          older age before we attempt that. And I believe  
20          prior to -- we took about 85 percent of the  
21          yearlings out of the herd by not having the antler  
22          restrictions.

23                 We're taking about 50 percent out now.  
24          So we're pushing our deer to an older age, which  
25          is a better social environment in the deer herd

1       also.  So again, it's anecdotal more than anything  
2       else.

3                       But generally people are seeing bigger  
4       bucks, not as many, but bigger bucks, bigger  
5       bodied bucks.  And that was the initial intent.

6                       REPRESENTATIVE ROCK:  But now it's five  
7       years later or six years later and license sales  
8       continue to go down and out-of-state licenses  
9       continue to go down.  I don't see the advantage of  
10      it.

11                      I think that a lot of the things that  
12      the Game Commission do, I think from a PR  
13      standpoint, this situation, I think this should  
14      be -- you should survey the hunters and say this  
15      has nothing to do with managing the deer herd as  
16      far as numbers or anything or browsing off the  
17      hardwoods or anything.  This is just something we  
18      decided to do.  Do you guys still want to do this?

19                      I think it's hurting license sales.  I  
20      hunt in Maryland and I hunt in West Virginia, and  
21      I'll gladly go there and pay \$165 and buy two buck  
22      stamps.  I can shoot whatever's out there that's  
23      got a 3-inch spike.

24                      I've killed as many deer as probably  
25      anybody in this room.  It doesn't matter to me if

1       it's a 4-point or an 8-point. It really doesn't  
2       matter to me. I just go out and I enjoy hunting.

3                So I'm not sure how we're -- why we  
4       continue with this, unless there is a real outcry  
5       from the hunters to keep this going; but I'm not  
6       so sure there is.

7                EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: We've done  
8       some surveys on that. And, basically, the recent  
9       surveys, 63 percent of the hunters support antler  
10      restrictions.

11              REPRESENTATIVE ROCK: So if that's the  
12      case, then I guess we're going to get to another  
13      ten years and we'll lose another 30 percent of our  
14      hunters, we're going to get down to a small group  
15      of trophy hunters that really enjoy taking 8- and  
16      10-points but, you know, we're not going to have  
17      enough money to pay the bills. That's the way I  
18      see it.

19              EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: It's an  
20      interesting balance. There's no doubt about it.  
21      The initial idea of antler restrictions is to move  
22      our buck population to an older age, which, again,  
23      affects the social dynamics within the herd;  
24      possibly better breeding ecology.

25              And as far as passing the genes on,

1 most of our deer are taken after the rut. So that  
2 8- and 10-point would more than likely pass his  
3 genes on more than that spike would having an  
4 opportunity in the breeding environment of those  
5 deer.

6 So as far as the genetics are  
7 concerned, they're usually passed on well before  
8 they're, in fact, taken during the deer season.

9 REPRESENTATIVE ROCK: I'd agree with  
10 that. It's just that we do kill a lot more deer  
11 now and I think the button bucks do get killed off  
12 at a greater rate than they did before, so a lot  
13 of the genetics don't make it. But that's another  
14 argument.

15 But I just had one more point. With  
16 pheasant hunting, I think that's really the key to  
17 getting more hunters into the sport. I mean,  
18 that's what I started with and, you know, I wish I  
19 could go back to that; but up in Franklin County  
20 there are no pheasants.

21 Do you really think that -- I know  
22 we're trying to bring pheasants in and do all  
23 that. But do you really think that's a good use  
24 of money when there's so many coyotes, foxes, and  
25 hawks that are -- well, there's just more hawks

1       now than there are pheasants.

2                   I don't know how you can ever be  
3       successful with that.

4                   EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE:   That's a great  
5       question.   That's why we're working with Pheasants  
6       Forever.   And we've established a pretty -- I  
7       won't say it's a protocol, but a good protocol to  
8       where we're going to invest time and money in  
9       possible reintroduction efforts, because we are  
10      expending public money and we have to be able to  
11      account for it in the sense of success or failure.

12                   But again, one of the things we found  
13      in the Southwest part of the state, Pike Run, when  
14      we started reintroducing pheasants, there's a  
15      tangential effect.

16                   We have people out there now who are  
17      reengaging the wildlife and have been involved in  
18      wildlife for 15 or 20 years on the areas where  
19      we -- on these farms where we've introduced  
20      pheasants.

21                   I know one farm I was on last spring,  
22      the lady used to grow canis in her greenhouse.  
23      Now she grows part canis and other wildlife  
24      species.   She has a back box in her back yard out  
25      there.

1                   This lady has reengaged wildlife.  
2           Across many of those farms, those people are  
3           reengaging wildlife as a result of the pheasant  
4           reintroduction effort.

5                   Will they allow -- the challenge  
6           becomes, will they allow hunting on their property  
7           now because now they've got pheasants and they're  
8           their pheasants. And that's part of the challenge  
9           of a reintroduction program, particularly on  
10          private lands.

11                   But we're going to continue to do that,  
12          because we think long term it will be a benefit.  
13          I agree with you on the pheasants. I mean, I  
14          spend -- the second day of archery season is the  
15          first day of our youth pheasant hunt.

16                   And I hunt State Gamelands 230 right  
17          above Carlisle. I always -- my archery hunt  
18          around 9:00 in the morning so I can walk around  
19          and visit with the parents and their kids doing  
20          the youth pheasant hunt.

21                   You talk about smiles on their faces,  
22          flushes in their cheek the first time a bird pops  
23          up in front of them. Now, not many birds are  
24          coming down. There's a lot of shots going on; but  
25          it is excitement, they're engaged in it, and it's

1 a great time for 'em.

2 So we think -- in some places we'll be  
3 able to reintroduce those birds and get the  
4 habitat environments right, we'll have success and  
5 we'll be able to measure it. But small game is  
6 absolutely critical to bringing and recruiting  
7 young people into the hunting.

8 REPRESENTATIVE ROCK: Just one more  
9 point. I want to go back to antler restrictions  
10 just for a second. I think one point that's often  
11 overlooked -- I hunt in Greene County. I looked  
12 all over the state.

13 For where I looked, the best hunting  
14 was twenty years ago. And I think Greene County  
15 was the best kept secret out there and I still  
16 think it is.

17 But there's four on a side out there.  
18 So I have a couple hundred acres that my family  
19 owns out there. And because of four on a  
20 side -- at one point, my land was worth a lot of  
21 money. It's only good for hunting and recreation.  
22 And that's all it's good for. There's no more  
23 timber -- timbered it over the years.

24 But because four on a side, the value  
25 of my property I think is probably cut in half.

1       Because if you try -- we've just thrown it around  
2       a little bit to see if there was any interest in  
3       buying it. As soon as guys found out that there's  
4       four on a side, they're not interested.

5                 Now, I don't go there as much as I used  
6       to. I moved to Somerset County to another piece  
7       of property, so it's only three on a side. But if  
8       you really -- if you try and go out -- if you go  
9       out and hunt and you have to see four on a side,  
10      that is a difficult thing to do.

11                I'm an experienced hunter and I've been  
12      out there a lot, and I think I've killed one buck  
13      there now since the antler restrictions came into  
14      being. And I used to kill deer there every year.  
15      So I think that's an important thing.

16                Property value, I can tell you, where  
17      four on a side is -- selling to hunters, there's  
18      just not a market out there. So I think that's an  
19      important point to keep in mind.

20                EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I'm afraid you  
21      let the secret out of the bag on Greene County  
22      here. We are looking at that.

23                And one of the questions I had to the  
24      deer team and when we were starting to take a look  
25      at that is the reason we went to 4-point was to,



1 in fact, move that older class of buck in, because  
2 you can have yearling bucks in that area with 3  
3 points on a side. So again, pushing that yearling  
4 buck into a second year.

5 And we're trying to take a look at the  
6 data that we have that, in fact, does that 4-point  
7 make that happen? In other words, are we getting  
8 that -- advancing that yearling into a stage, is  
9 that 4-point the way to get there? Or are we  
10 seeing deer with 3 points on a side that are two,  
11 three years old?

12 So we're taking a look at that. Again,  
13 that's driven by -- we'd like to do some more  
14 studies. I would like to do some more studies on  
15 that because I've got a feeling that we can do  
16 that a little bit better. Again, it's driven by  
17 the number of people available to do those things.

18 REPRESENTATIVE ROCK: One more thing.  
19 This is it. A disease came through out there. I  
20 think it was blue tongue, or black tongue?

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: It was  
22 Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease, EHD, down in the  
23 southwest part of the state, yes.

24 REPRESENTATIVE ROCK: And has that been  
25 controlled or do you know where that stands?

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Yes, we do.  
2 I've spent a couple days out there when it hit  
3 pretty hard. It's borne by a mite and it's  
4 transmitted from deer to deer by this mite. And  
5 when they get their first hard frost, it kills the  
6 mite and disease basically goes away.

7 But it can be pretty detrimental during  
8 those time frames when that mite is active. I  
9 believe its life cycle is about six week also. So  
10 if the weather stays right and the conditions of  
11 moisture in the ground are right, you can have two  
12 or three generations of mites transmitting that  
13 disease.

14 It's pretty common in the southern part  
15 of the United States. It's usually airborne. It  
16 comes in and it gets established. We have pockets  
17 down there in Greene County and Washington County  
18 and a little bit more to the east where there's  
19 pockets where a lot of deer died, no doubt about  
20 it.

21 We had just done survey on that  
22 specific area of Wildlife Management 2A on hunter  
23 activity during the time frame. We found  
24 that -- it's another whole briefing, about 15 or  
25 20 minutes.

1                   But we found hunters were less likely  
2 to shoot deer this year there. And, in fact, the  
3 deer harvest from an antlerless point of view was  
4 down as well as antlered deer, because there was  
5 some concern.

6                   Although we had two open houses and we  
7 had lots of information out there about what the  
8 disease does to deer. But, again, it was very  
9 sporadic. You could smell a dead deer in one area  
10 and a mile and a half away you would see deer in  
11 the field at 3:00 in the afternoon.

12                   So it was pocketed and did have an  
13 impact, but not a devastating impact on the  
14 population. So Greene County's still a pretty  
15 good shape place to go hunt deer.

16                   REPRESENTATIVE ROCK: I just think with  
17 antler restrictions, I just think going forward  
18 it's something that the Game Commission should  
19 take a look at. I don't know if this study -- my  
20 study back home wouldn't be 64 percent; I can tell  
21 you that.

22                   I still believe that hunters should  
23 decide what the trophy is and it doesn't have to  
24 have eight points. And I think we should be  
25 looking for every hunter -- to try to keep the

1 hunters we currently have and try to look for new  
2 hunters.

3 And I can't believe that we're going to  
4 find a whole lot of new hunters or keep the ones  
5 we have by antler restrictions. I just don't  
6 think that's the way to go.

7 I think it's nice. I think it would be  
8 great to get our deer woods to the point where  
9 everyone's killing an 8-point; but I don't think  
10 that's going to happen. Obviously, it's not  
11 happening. So I think that's just something to  
12 take a look at. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Representative  
14 Goodman.

15 REPRESENTATIVE GOODMAN: Thank you,  
16 Mr. Chairman.

17 Most of the questions have been asked  
18 and answered, so I'm not going to belabor the  
19 hearing any longer. It's just, I share many of my  
20 colleagues' frustrations with regards, especially  
21 Representative Millard as a new member.

22 I remember when I was first elected  
23 five and a half years ago and I remember I  
24 wrote -- because I looked at it this morning, I  
25 wrote all the questions down. I came in here and

1 I was all excited, these were all the questions I  
2 was going to ask.

3 And they had to do with doe allocations  
4 and point of sales and they had to do with access  
5 to land and license increase and hunter input into  
6 decision making and timbering and baiting. And  
7 five and a half years later, we're talking about  
8 the same stuff. It's almost like ground hog day.

9 It's like we come here every year -- I  
10 mean, I know you're an independent agency and  
11 there are people in the state that feel that the  
12 General Assembly should have more say into what  
13 exactly goes on at the Game Commission.

14 And I receive hundreds, if not  
15 thousands, of emails over the last few years  
16 asking, you know, that we take a more active role.  
17 And I tried to explain to them that it's almost  
18 impossible to do with an independent agency.

19 But like I said, most of the questions  
20 have been asked and answered; so I'd like to give  
21 you a little homework for next year's meeting so  
22 it doesn't seem like, you know, you come in here,  
23 you give your opening remarks, we ask our  
24 questions and the Game Commission leaves. Nothing  
25 happens.

1                   We've heard about timbering; we've  
2 heard about food plots; we've heard about  
3 improving habitat. You even in your opening  
4 remarks say habitat is a key life requisite for  
5 all wildlife and we continue to be concerned about  
6 encroachment. We have problems with baiting with  
7 sportsmen's club.

8                   I've watched what's known as the  
9 Outdoor Channel. I'm assuming it's statewide.  
10 And it has a lot to with hunting and fishing  
11 activities throughout the United States.

12                   And there's not a show that goes by  
13 there that isn't some hunter out there somewhere  
14 in another state hunting over a food plot. And  
15 I'm not talking about bait and I'm not talking  
16 about corn. I'm talking about planted food plots.

17                   And when I asked members of the Game  
18 Commission why the Game Commission has not taken  
19 an aggressive role in pursuing food plots for  
20 white-tailed deer like they have for elk, the  
21 answer I receive is, first of all, DCNR wouldn't  
22 let us do that.

23                   And the second one is, We don't do that  
24 on our own. We want to co-op with sportsmen's  
25 clubs. And I don't think the Game Commission

1 should have to rely on sportsmen's clubs.

2           So here's the homework: I would like  
3 you to contact commercial companies. There's some  
4 groups out there like Biologic and Buck Forage  
5 Oats and there's White-tailed Clover.

6           And now I am certain that some of these  
7 companies would like to get into a co-op with the  
8 Pennsylvania Game Commission and hopefully even  
9 with DCNR, and as you try to improve your habitat,  
10 that they would do things like donate seed or  
11 maybe even equipment to make it easier for the  
12 Game Commission to sustain wildlife on their  
13 gamelands with food plots.

14           Because it just doesn't seem to me like  
15 it's working. We're shooting so many deer to  
16 improve our habitat, but yet the Game Commission  
17 isn't doing anything to improve the habitat as far  
18 as -- CREP is a wonderful program and it does a  
19 lot of things for small game and everything, but  
20 I'm talking about white-tailed deer.

21           So in a round-about way what I'd like  
22 to see you do is contact these commercial entities  
23 and see if there is some way that you can develop  
24 a cooperation with them to use their resources to  
25 improve habitat on our gamelands.

1                   And then next year when you come in  
2 here, I'd like you to be able to tell me that  
3 we've done X, Y, and Z on Gamelands No. 1, 2 and  
4 3.

5                   That's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

6                   EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Well, first of  
7 all, I would say that we -- as those of you that  
8 have visited our gamelands and traveled our  
9 gamelands, we do a considerable amount of habitat  
10 work on gamelands, including food plots. Is it  
11 all going to be food plots? Obviously, not yet.

12                   They have a variety of habitat there  
13 for a variety of species. The greatest portion of  
14 our budget -- I think it's almost 42 percent or 44  
15 percent -- goes to our wildlife habitat management  
16 primarily on gamelands, but also on private lands  
17 to a certain degree where there are cooperators.

18                   So we do have an active program.  
19 Again, it's limited by the resources available.  
20 It's a greater portion of our budget.

21                   I mean, I guess I don't see the fact  
22 that we don't actively manage as best we can on  
23 gamelands to have an -- not a maximum yield of  
24 game on gamelands, but an optimum yield in balance  
25 with the habitat that's there.



1           We will certainly look at partners and  
2           that may be a great suggestion. If we can get a  
3           company like Biologic or -- to be a partner with  
4           us, that would be great. Certainly would reduce  
5           some of our costs.

6           But I would invite again, as I did last  
7           year, any and all of you for habitat tours and to  
8           show you what we're doing on the gamelands in your  
9           areas. Many of you have taken advantage of that  
10          and you see what we do.

11          Again, as I mentioned earlier, we got  
12          almost -- I think it was as much as 200 and some  
13          food cover crew people were out there working  
14          every day. Again, we're short 30, 32 now because  
15          of budget issues. And we have an active program.

16          But gamelands are only 5 percent of the  
17          land in Pennsylvania. So if you're expecting to  
18          really influence the habitat across the Board for  
19          a variety of species, 80 percent of the land's in  
20          private hands.

21          That's where it's going to have to  
22          happen over time to increase the yield for a  
23          variety of species of game. It's going to be  
24          habitat on private lands. We can present the  
25          models, we can do a system, but we have 660-some

1 plots throughout the Commonwealth. We actively  
2 manage gamelands.

3 I've just -- and we're looking for  
4 other partners, as we always do, to reduce the  
5 costs. But again, I'd invite all of you again for  
6 a gamelands tour to see what we're doing out  
7 there.

8 REPRESENTATIVE GOODMAN: I'm not really  
9 going to engage in this. I've been to gamelands.  
10 I've done the tours. I'm talking about a  
11 cooperative effort to what in my opinion would be  
12 work closely with sportsmen's groups.

13 Like, if you have a -- Gary had a  
14 really good point when he said it makes absolutely  
15 no sense for a sportsmen's group to have to spend  
16 \$45,000 in court defending themselves against the  
17 Game Commission.

18 I think -- I don't know all of the  
19 ancillary details of this particular case; but I'm  
20 certain that a cooperative effort could have been  
21 made where you could have come in at some point  
22 and said, Listen, we don't want you baiting 30  
23 days out from the season; but we do have an  
24 agreement worked out with, like, a company like  
25 Biologic. And they can come in and they can test

1 your soil form, you know, carrying capacity or for  
2 the acidity and they can come up with a plan for  
3 you that you can grow some type of an alternative  
4 food source for the deer so that you're not  
5 baiting.

6 And it just seems to me that we're not  
7 as cooperative with either sportsmen's clubs,  
8 private groups, and in private sector as we could  
9 be. I just think we could be doing it better and  
10 cheaper and more hunter friendly.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Well, we would  
12 certainly like to move in that direction. And we  
13 do have a Cooperator Program, as you know. We  
14 offer those services of our cooperators.

15 And now with the private land habitat,  
16 like, a biologist in each region, that could give  
17 us the capacity to do -- increased capacity to do  
18 some of those things. Hopefully, we'll move  
19 further in that direction.

20 REPRESENTATIVE GOODMAN: Thank you,  
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Representative  
23 Moul.

24 REPRESENTATIVE MOUL: Thank you,  
25 Chairman Staback.

1 Carl, good to see you again. I don't  
2 envy your position here. I must be getting a  
3 reputation. I said to my colleague, Do you think  
4 I ought to throw my two cents in? He said he'd be  
5 surprised if I didn't.

6 I just wanted to make a short  
7 statement, get your input a little bit. Something  
8 that's going on down in my neck of the woods,  
9 Southcentral Pennsylvania.

10 We're losing farmland to leases.  
11 Groups of hunters have been frustrated and said,  
12 We're just going to take the Game Commission right  
13 on out of this equation. I guess other than the  
14 WCOs. They're going to manage their own deer  
15 herd.

16 They're going in, putting up -- a few  
17 hundred dollars, whatever, into a hat, and they're  
18 leasing conjoining farms and then they're posting  
19 it, they're doing their own flood plots, and in a  
20 sense they're making their own hunting preserves.

21 What that does is it takes guys like me  
22 that used to hunt those farms that are not in  
23 those memberships and it's forcing us to the State  
24 Gamelands along with many others. And there's not  
25 that many State Gamelands down there.

1                   And the point I'm making is most of  
2 those State Gamelands are pretty well shot out,  
3 partly because of what's going on.

4                   Have you noticed this trend going on  
5 and do you expect this trend to go around the  
6 state? And if you do, aren't you the defeating  
7 your own purpose here by forcing all these private  
8 preserves?

9                   EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: I don't know  
10 so much about leases. Obviously, from your  
11 experience, there's been an increase in leases in  
12 your area.

13                   We have seen more property being  
14 posted, for a variety of reasons. One is, in  
15 fact, to manage that deer for the their youth.  
16 And I offer to hunters, just because a property is  
17 posted doesn't mean you can't hunt it.

18                   As many of us know, we can go to posted  
19 property and you go up and offer yourself in a  
20 presentable manner and you can get access to a lot  
21 of posted property throughout the Commonwealth, as  
22 long as you conduct yourself in an ethical way on  
23 that property.

24                   So again, I would offer a lot of  
25 hunters, just because it's posted doesn't mean you

1 won't have the opportunity to hunt on it.

2 Leasing issues, I haven't seen as much  
3 on that; but, obviously, it's an occurrence in  
4 your area. We'll take a look at that and see if  
5 more property's being leased in that --

6 REPRESENTATIVE MOUL: My brother-in-law  
7 and I met with, I'm sorry, guys. I've leased out  
8 my hunting rights.

9 So it's something that if the "no deer  
10 in the State Gamelands" trend continues, I think  
11 you're going to see an awful lot more of this in  
12 the future. But I just wanted to throw my two  
13 cents in there. Thank you.

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: You do, you  
15 raise a great point on gamelands. Again, it's 5  
16 percent of the land in the Commonwealth. And for  
17 people who don't have access to private land, the  
18 State Gamelands, the state forestlands, which  
19 combined is only about 15 percent of the land.

20 So if you continue to have all that  
21 pressure -- and I look at -- I use my own local  
22 gamelands that I hunt on there. The first  
23 three -- lots of deer signs, see deer the first  
24 two or three Saturdays of archery season.

25 Small game opens up on that

1 thousand-acre gamelands, and all the deer are gone  
2 by the time rifle season rolls around because of  
3 the pressure of small game.

4           There might be a half a dozen cars that  
5 first Saturday and maybe seven the next Saturday.  
6 The first day of small game, there's 40 vehicles  
7 out there with dogs hitting that gamelands and  
8 you'll disperse the deer off the gamelands.

9           I can go out for the late season after  
10 Christmas, I'll see deer sign again start coming  
11 back as that deer start to migrate back onto the  
12 gamelands. It is part of the challenge that we  
13 have in that deer do disperse, as you know, when  
14 they put a lot of pressure on them.

15           REPRESENTATIVE MOUL: Okay. Thank you.

16           CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Carl, I wanted to  
17 talk just a little bit about the deer audit that's  
18 going to be in the very near future.

19           I think everybody is interested in the  
20 outcome of that audit. I certainly know I want to  
21 see it done. I know why the sporting community up  
22 in the Northeast wants to see it done.

23           But what I'm interested in is why the  
24 Game Commission would want to see such an audit?  
25 Doesn't the need for an outside audit indicate in

1 some way that the Commission has done a poor job  
2 in gaining the confidence of the sporting  
3 community?

4 What does it mean to you and the job  
5 the Commission has done communicating with hunters  
6 that the need for the findings of an outside  
7 agency is now necessary to establish the  
8 credibility, the confidence, and the  
9 trustworthiness of the Commission again?

10 Tell me, Carl, what do you think the  
11 Commission could have done that could have negated  
12 the necessity of such an audit?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: That's a real  
14 tough question in the sense of you're looking at  
15 hunter satisfaction and how do you define that.  
16 I've talked to hunters who are friends of mine,  
17 killed a buck and a doe, and didn't see enough  
18 deer.

19 So how do you measure hunter  
20 satisfaction? It is relative to that audit  
21 process, in a sense. We welcome the audit. If  
22 the audit's done from somebody else outside of the  
23 Commonwealth and can bring the scientific skills  
24 to do the audit, we welcome it.

25 I guess my question would be in the



1 reverse order of this question: If the audit's  
2 done and says the Game Commission is very  
3 innovative, follows scientific procedures, has one  
4 of the best deer management programs in the United  
5 States, will that change the attitude of the  
6 people who are dissatisfied with deer hunting in  
7 Pennsylvania?

8 And I would offer it probably won't  
9 change their attitude, that they're still  
10 dissatisfied with deer hunting in Pennsylvania.

11 Michigan did a study several years ago  
12 on their population models. I believe it was  
13 Michigan -- Michigan or Wisconsin, I'm not sure  
14 which.

15 They had an outside team, independent  
16 team come in that the Legislature mandated to  
17 happen. The team came in, said the population  
18 models were really pretty good. You can improve  
19 them a little here and there with additional  
20 resources. The hunters still didn't believe the  
21 population models.

22 So the challenge we have, and you're  
23 absolutely right, is not convincing hunters that  
24 their experience was incorrect; we need to better  
25 communicate our program.

1           And as I said earlier, as we started  
2           our Deer Management Working Communications Group  
3           last year, we have our deer management booklet.  
4           Please read it. It explains an awful lot in a few  
5           pages.

6           We're finishing a DVD right now. We  
7           had an initial one that -- as a matter of fact, we  
8           introduced it with Representative Gillespie down  
9           in York County. It was about 55 minutes long.  
10          Now we've compressed that down to about 30  
11          minutes, which is much more manageable timewise.  
12          We're getting ready to distribute that.

13          We continue to inform and we continue  
14          to inform. That's all we can do. And again, we  
15          welcome the audit, as long as it's done  
16          independently, as long as it's done from a  
17          scientific approach, more than welcome the audit.  
18          Hopefully, we'll learn something out of that.

19          CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Well, it's  
20          certainly going to be done scientifically and it's  
21          certainly going to be done by an organization  
22          that's located outside the state.

23          My understanding is that probably the  
24          only time a subcontractor might be utilized is if  
25          the outside contractor specifically has a

1 particular job that he wants to see done by  
2 someone living within Pennsylvania. And then, of  
3 course, that would be subject to the approval of  
4 the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee as  
5 well.

6 So it's not going to be a  
7 helter-skelter thing. And hopefully at the end of  
8 the audit we'll just bring this whole deer  
9 management concept, you know, to an end once and  
10 for all. Good, bad, or indifferent.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: Absolutely.  
12 We welcome it.

13 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Well, good, bad,  
14 or indifferent. Hopefully it'll be accepted by  
15 everyone, I hope.

16 Representative Denlinger.

17 REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: Thank you,  
18 Mr. Chairman.

19 I neglected to ask for something when I  
20 had gone through my initial questions, and so I  
21 did want to ask you: You had responded favorably  
22 when I asked if -- as you're coming to the end of  
23 the five-year plan if you're going to do internal  
24 analysis and sort of a review of that plan, would  
25 you submit the results on your findings, please,

1 to this Committee through the Chairman?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROE: And you'll see  
3 -- as we finalize the reiteration of a plan, we  
4 put it on our Website for public comment. All of  
5 our data from -- over the last two years have been  
6 put on our Website, making us transparent as we  
7 possibly can as far as deer management's  
8 concerned.

9 So we can give you a synopsis of what  
10 we think we've achieved over those five years.

11 REPRESENTATIVE DENLINGER: I'd  
12 appreciate that. If it could be in written form,  
13 I think that would be appreciated by this  
14 Committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 CHAIRPERSON STABACK: Seeing that  
16 there's no more questions, I think that will  
17 conclude today's hearing. Carl, I want to thank  
18 you once again for being here, for your efforts  
19 and your testimony.

20 And as always, you took the questions  
21 straight on. You didn't hinge. Some of them were  
22 very tough at times. Both I and the Committee  
23 appreciate your effort in that regard. Once  
24 again, thank you for being here. Thank you all  
25 for being here.

1                   On that note, this hearing is  
2           concluded.

3                   (The proceedings concluded at 11:00  
4           a.m.)

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Deirdre J. Weyer, Registered Professional Reporter, Notary Public, duly commissioned and qualified in and for the County of York, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of my stenotype notes taken by me and subsequently reduced to computer printout under my supervision, and that this copy is a correct record of the same.

This certification does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means unless under my direct control and/or supervision.

Dated this 3rd day of April, 2008.

-----  
Deirdre J. Weyer, RPR  
Notary Public