

Wisconsin Conservation Congress

District Leadership Council

Meeting Minutes



ORDER OF BUSINESS	5/24/16	9 AM	DNR Service Center Fitchburg
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY	Chairman Larry Bonde at 9 AM
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B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES	Weiss, Olson, Brown, Larson, Riggle, Anderson, Ellingson, Kruger, Suchla, Brownell, Lobner, Maas, Splitt, Gruszynski, Bonde, Fahrney, Rogers, Risley, Meyer, Shook, Gunderson @1:44PM Zimmermann, Schmit
EXCUSED	Kevin Smaby

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

DISCUSSION	Bonde said there were no changes to agenda as published. The only issue is the speakers that are scheduled to attend, due to the number and length of possible discussion we may have to be flexible to allow resolution authors a chance to speak as they become available.
ACTION	M/ Maas 2 nd Meyer to approve as published and allow flexibility on time allocation if necessary. M/C

D. CHAIRS UPDATE

BONDE

DISCUSSION	<p>Bonde stated that the time has come to adjust some committee assignments including chairs in some cases. These new assignments will correct leadership issues that failed to follow the job description. There have been too many Chairs, Vice Chairs and Secretary's that are not doing their appropriate jobs there is going to be a little bit of a shuffle. If you are one of the people that have been flagged as far as not getting a notice out on time, contacting you department liaisons' in time or getting your materials out on time we will be making some changes to correct this. There are enough people in the pool that want to comply and we will give them an opportunity to step up in a leadership role. It will take a little time for the new leadership to get there feet under them but in a month or two we should have a good feel for how we will make positive adjustments.</p> <p>He has great enthusiasm for the Technologies' Committee helping move us forward Staush Gruszynski has volunteered for that committee and is very familiar with public outreach in his position with the League of Wisconsin Voters. Jeff Kelm who works with Dan Small's public radio show is excited and ready to get involved so this will help tackling some of the issues in this area. We had a handful of ideas pop up at the convention and it is rewarding when you see people embrace those ideas and start to run with them and he is looking forward to get some of these ideas rolling.</p> <p>Larry said he is always willing to listen to anybody If anyone has a need to contact him to do so; the best time is typically in the afternoon and he doesn't answer calls after 8 PM because his day starts at 2:30 AM. He wants to hear about issues he doesn't have many personal reasons to travel to the North and admits that he feels out of the loop sometimes. He usually uses some long standing mentors when there are problems but he would ask that if there are problems or potential problems that either the delegate or district leader contact him. If you don't get an answer leave a detailed message and if for some reason you do not get a reply with in 24 hours please try again.</p> <p>If you have his personal email address you can use that but if it is a sensitive issue he has a new Gmail account (chairmanbonde@gmail.com) for that the state phone to contact him is (608-235-5825).</p>
ACTION	Information only no action taken

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. REVIEW OF VOTES STATEWIDE DELIGATION -DNR

BONDE

DISCUSSION	The first 4 questions having to do with tree stands on public property did not pass statewide. Not sure if the department will advance these to the DNR Board but if so we will testify to our position. Ken Anderson: We need uniformity on the placement and use of tree stands on public lands. In the North there are conflicting allowed uses from county to county. Larry suggested we work with Board member Gary Zimmer who may have a better handle on some of those issues we could start the dialog at the Board meet and greet tonight.
ACTION	Information only no action taken

B. REVIEW OF VOTES STATEWIDE DELIGATION-WCC

BONDE

DISCUSSION	At the convention we had 3 questions that were rejected even though the statewide vote was in favor. They were: #14 Artificial bait on trout streams #16 Bear Tags Priority Points #39 Use of Unfilled Turkey Points in Seasons 5&6 These will not be on our recommended list for WDNR Board action.
ACTION	As Stated

C. PROPOSED COP CHANGES

BONDE

DISCUSSION	Larry asked that all Councilors turn to tab 4 in the convention book and he reviewed the proposed changes.
ACTION	The following actions were taken: M/ Meyer 2 nd Weiss to adopt changes as proposed on page 1 in section II. and III. M/C M/ Maas 2 nd Larson to adopt changes as proposed on page 6 in section (E) (VI.) (4) (c.) "quorum measures" M/C*

D. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS, OFFICERS AND MANDITORY TRAINING

DISCUSSION	There will be mandatory Leadership Training for Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee Secretaries on July 9 th time and location to be determined. This will be recorded but is mandatory. There was some confusion on the amount of delegates allowed from districts. Some were different district to district. It was decided to leave the totals as they were turned in. It will be reviewed next year rather than cause a problem since no advantage will be given to any area by leaving requests as it is.
ACTION	Information only no action taken

E. REVIEW OF COUNTY DEER ADVISORY COUNCILS

BONDE

DISCUSSION	Over all it ran fairly well we have to remember that this is a Department meeting we provide leadership as Chair and Alt/Secretary. With that said there are still (3) CDAC's that have NOT turned in their final recommendations and minutes. District leaders please contact any county that is not in compliance. There also were a few people that did NOT conduct themselves properly that action reflected poorly on the Congress. These issues cannot and will not be allowed to continue! Just to clarify the Alt/Secretary can enter into the discussion they are just not allowed to vote. It is also the Departments responsibility to solicit CDAC members, the potential candidates must fill out an application. There has been some flexibility as to what individual representatives areas of experience covered, as an example one CDAC has a delegate representing ABATE (motor cycle riders group). While this may seam unusual the Chair felt that this individual brought a very different perspective and was a very engaged participant. It should be noted that this county was having difficulty getting any type of group together other than Congress delegates.
ACTION	Information only no action taken

G. RES. AUTHORS ABILITY TO PRESENT AT JANUARY DLC MEETING

BONDIE

DISCUSSION	This has come up before and some people feel that at times not everything that was discussed at the committee level made the minutes. Shook: Another issue is not all resolutions are properly vetted as was the case with the proposed closure at the Mead Wildlife Area. Not enough people were aware of
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	all of the issues and it sailed through committee, afterwards it got quite vocal I don't think that this is a bad idea but it could add considerable time to the January meeting. Bonde; The Strategic Plan has asked that we have an additional meeting and we could act on the resolutions that have passed any committee that had met before the January meeting so the work load would be spread out more. Weiss is in favor we are all about public involvement. Rogers agrees along with this. Maas agrees but cautioned that some positions we take may be effected and have a negative impact. Fahrney supports and does not want people cut out of the discussion, we could add a requirement to declare in writing before hand. Splitt questioned why we even review at the DLC level; maybe it is enough that the committee approved it. Bonde: some of the questions are riddled with inaccuracies that need review. Weiss; having the author present would be helpful to prevent misunderstandings that happen due to misinterpretation and allow for clarification of intent.
ACTION	M/ Meyer 2 nd Weiss to advance M/C

H. STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION GROUP'S RECOMENDATIONS

DISCUSSION	1) When is the best time to hold the suggested extra (4 th) meeting? We should have availability to call in also. 2) Add a standing agenda item at DLC meetings for Strategic Plan update. 3) Create a work group to assist Historian in research.
ACTION	M/ Meyer 2 nd Fahrney to have a meeting in the fall (Sept. Oct.) time frame. Shook suggested a friendly amendment to be held at the discretion of the chair. Agreed to. M/C M/ Meyer 2 nd Splitt to have standing agenda item for Strategic Plan Committee Bonde; As of the Convention he has approved the work group through volunteers'.

I. DISCUSSION ON CWD AND CAPTIVE CERVID OPERATIONS

DISCUSSION	<p>A panel of speakers has been assembled to have discussion from both sides of issue. Prior to the meeting a letter was sent to all Council Members by George Meyer Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. Doc. [5-24-16(1)]</p> <p>Rick Vojtik President of Whitetails of Wisconsin (WOW) started the discussion. His reason for being here today is to make sure decisions are made off of science and not rumors or untruths, he owned farm with CWD in Clark County. DTCAP traced heard and didn't find where CWD came from. New studies suggested CWD may come from purchased hay and corn transfers other thoughts suggest feces from birds may cause the prion to spread. He feels that double fencing would not have prevented escapes. USDA is doing research along with Whitetails of Wisconsin and paying for some additional studies. He feels that the proposed 30 day depopulation requirement goes against the constitution as to unlawful seizure with out compensation. The required testing and paperwork takes longer and in the last case funding wasn't available with in the 30 day time frame.</p> <p>Laurie Seale WOW (Whitetails of Wisconsin) Support Governor Walker's recommendation on CWD control measures. His recommendation for additional studies of deer with in the CWD zone. She objects to the elimination of CWD herds she feels that the playing field has changed. Many states are discovering CWD in their herds. Arkansas said they have a 23% CWD rate, how can they have that and we have a 6-9% rate after 10 years? Quoted Dr. Mike Miller a research scientist from Colorado saying that people do not know how many deer are infected nor for how long he is suggesting that there are not enough tests being done to get a clear picture. The western states are seeing increases in their herds even though they have CWD on record longer than Wisconsin. Dr Kroll's questions bring many interesting points to the forefront. She said that there is record of anyone dying from CWD and CWD has been in the USA for over 50 years. More deer will be killed by cars and bullets than CWD. Doc. [5-24-16(1 and 2)]</p> <p>Joel Espe Speaking on behalf of the Wisconsin Deer and Elk farmer's group He believes that the "Best Science" from the past is not the correct science. Other forces at play; food bird droppings are believed to be a source of CWD. The cost to double fence is in the millions of dollars and the loss of 100's of jobs in Wisconsin. Lunch @12:32 PM Working lunch then back@ 12:45 PM</p> <p>Dave Clausen former DNR Board member and DVM Spoke on behalf of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation in support of resolutions Doc. (5-24-16)</p> <p>Mike Brust President of the Wisconsin Bow Hunters spoke in support of resolutions. WBH is all about</p>
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sustaining Deer Hunting in Wisconsin. This panel said that we need more testing, we need more studies. We can not wait to do what ever it takes to preserve our hunting heritage. He was a Conservation Congress member for 32 years and always held to the congress purpose to protect the resource now and for future generations. Is waiting and not reacting to some of these issues the correct way to go? He would rather see some action rather than no action.

Dr Paul McGraw Chief DVM of DATCAP

In Wisconsin agriculture is a \$88 billion dollar industry live stock is \$50 billion dollar industry we take agriculture and live stock very seriously. We spend a lot of time on cervid deer farms which is a small part of our responsibility as a regulatory agency.

Since 2002 when we were given the added responsibility of cervid farms we have conducted 39,000 tests, 199 of those tests have come back positive for CWD.

We have 400 deer farms in the state and historically 14 of those have tested positive for CWD. 11 have been depopulated the other 3 are under strict regulation, of the 3 (2) are shooting preserves and 1 is in the endemic CWD zone.

He explained the process that they go through in regulating Cervid farms in Wisconsin.

The many records and protocols that are required to keep in compliance. There are no requirements at this time for double fencing unless there are (2) CWD positive instances in the wild with in 5 miles of existing cervid farms.

His point in is that Bio Security as it pertains to CWD is just not Cervid farms but shooting preserves and deer shot in the wild that have the CWD prion. The disposal of the carcass, gut pile etc. are all pare of stopping the spread of CWD.

There is no requirement from DATCAP for a Bio Security plan, it is suggested but as of now none exists. His department does not have authority on Native Tribal Lands.

His staff is not set up as a policing force but a regulatory agency. With any business if there are bad actors and he is not saying that all Cervid farms are compliant at all times. If they are found to be noncompliant there are penalties that are imposed.

Mike Riggle: Paul has a huge responsibility for all the livestock in Wisconsin and he does it with a very limited staff (12 inspectors and 5 district DVM). He admits that a bad actor could more deer and work around the system. Mikes point is that if a farm has a CWD positive that in his opinion they should be required to double fence to try to keep the infection possibilities to a minimum to the wild heard.

Al Shook: In the case of a shooting preserve that is CWD Positive how is a harvested animal handled? They can bury on site or if they want the meat it has to be deboned with the carcass disposed of according to CWD protocols. They could also take it to a certified meat processor again according to CWD protocols. All heads and horns must go to a certified taxidermist an individual cannot haul the carcass all over the state. Doc.[5-24-16 (2)]

Tamie Ryan DNR Section Chief

Mike Riggle: "I have advocated to the department that they develop a Bio Security Plan for our state for years. As an example a person is ATVing in a CWD area in Iowa County, loads up his machine and goes to his cabin in a Northern part of the state. The prion could be transported in the accumulated mud on his ATV. The department said that they didn't want people to think that Iowa County was a toxic waste dump so noting was ever done. I do want people to think that if it will help slow or stop the spread of CWD because that is one of the things a Bio Security Plan does. We have a Water guard program set up state wide for Eurasian milfoil there should be no difference between them."

Tamie: On the department CWD web page under best practices we have information that I helpful for the public to understand just what CWD is and some of the known facts available to us.

Riggle: awhile back we had a discussion about animal based scents and CWD. I mentioned then that we needed to do more foe public awareness I don't feel that we are anywhere near what should and could be done. We should be talking about Bio Security (decontamination) of ATV's, Boots and other equipment, I feel we CWD is not a priority for the DNR where are the billboards and Public Service Announcements' informing the general public like the Water Guards are doing for other invasive species?

Anderson: What about Baiting and feeding?

Tamie: With the Governors new CWD policy I anticipate additional funds and attention will be directed To these type of initiatives. We have three types of surveillance going on in the state with the core area, new hot spots and general monitoring going on. At this time I believe all areas of the plan are up for review.

Shook: It would be a good idea to add information in the ATV pamphlets.

What about food plots?

Tamie: research doesn't show that it concentrates deer the way baiting and feeding does.

Fahrney: Some of this discussion is like apples and oranges, the discussion between Water Guards and Bio Security. If we make rules and standards they must be enforceable, how do you completely get all the dirt and mud off of an ATV for example?

Riggle: my point was more on the level of awareness.

	Tammie: one other item, prior to the 2016 season in Oneida County we will be getting more information out. As we see the spread in other areas of the state like Oneida County we will intensify the public awareness presentations. Break 2:10 PM Back 2:20 PM
ACTION	Informational only action to be taken later.

III. Assigned Resolutions:

A. BRING THE LES VOIGHT BAYFIELD HATCHERY UP TO FULL PRODUCTION CAPACITY (020116, 040616)

DISCUSSION	Al House resolution on be half of author and President of Apostle Island Sport Fisherman's Association. He gave an overview of the issues. Currently the DNR started a study but need to move to Kettle Moraine hatchery. The department doesn't have a final recommendation as to what is needed for a high capacity well based on water levels. It has been reprioritized in their schedule. Doc. [5-24-16(4)]
ACTION	M/ Anderson 2 nd Weiss to support M/C

B. FIRE TOWER PROGRAM REINSTATEMENT (070116)

DISCUSSION	Allen Peek resolution author wants the Fire tower program to be reinstated. Doc.[5-24-16(3)]
ACTION	M/ Maas 2 nd Weiss To make any and all efforts to reinstate the tower program. M/F

C. DNR'S "DO NOT RESPOND LIST" (390116)

DISCUSSION	After a department review of the problem corrective action was taken and is no longer an issue. The department has been instructed to respond to all requests.
ACTION	M/ Shook 2 nd Kruger to reject M/C

D. LEGISLATION TO GUIDE DEER REMOVAL IN CWD POSITIVE CAPTIVE/FARMED HEARDS (270216)

DISCUSSION	Christopher Underwood author in support of his resolution
ACTION	M/ Suchla 2 nd Kruger to advance M/C

E. REQUIERE DOUBLE FENCING FOR ALL CAPTIVE OPERATIONS (030116,060216, 0090416, 160216, 220216, 270116, 390216, 450116, 540216, 570116, 580116, 590116, 710116, 720316)

DISCUSSION	Refer to panel discussion (II.) (i)
ACTION	M/Weiss 2 nd / Staush to advance M/F M/ Shook That CWD positive farms that want to continue to operate must double fence 2nd/ Ron Krueger M/C this is to go to the NRB Board.

IV. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	none
ACTION	M/ Splitt 2 nd /Kruger to adjourn M/C

V. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	4:25 PM
SUBMITTED BY	Dale C. Maas
DATE	5/24/16



Economic Impact

Cervid farming in Wisconsin is an important agricultural niche industry valuable to local rural economies throughout the state.

- Wisconsin has a total of 454 commercial deer and elk farms - located in all but four Wisconsin counties.
- The cervid industry supports an estimated 1651 jobs in the state.
- Wisconsin's commercial cervid industry boasts an estimated \$28 million in annual statewide direct sales - and a total economic output estimated at \$75 million.

CWD

Deer farming is not the source of CWD and is the most highly-regulated agricultural industry in the Wisconsin.

- There is no scientific evidence that deer farms are the cause of CWD being in our state.
- Deer farms must be CWD tested for 5 years before one farm can transfer a deer to another farm.
- Deer cannot be moved across the street without a veterinary inspection and health paper.
- Every year, deer farms must have a veterinarian inspect each deer and they must also officially ID all animals and report those that are sold, purchased, born and died.
- Deer farms must test all deer over the age of 12 months for CWD that die or are harvested.

CWD is being spread by vectors often outside the control of regulations.

USDA, APHIS, and National Wildlife Research Center in Fort Collins, CO recently published a scientific article that shows it is scientifically valid that crows can transmit CWD. We know that high fences don't keep crows from possibly infecting our herd. Another proven route is through plants taking up the prions and then being moved around as animal feed. Carcass movement from CWD endemic areas is a real threat for spreading CWD around the state.

Arkansas does not allow farm-raised deer to cross state lines. The Fish and Game Commission there reported in 2014 that they had no CWD anywhere in the state. This spring they are showing a 23% prevalence rate in cervids tested in 2 counties. Science has no answers as to how this could have happened.

There are currently 7 states with CWD in their wild herds that do not allow farmed deer or elk.

Proposed "solutions" are not science-based.

There is NO proof that supports CWD is spread by nose-to-nose contact through a single fence. Recently, a double-fenced herd located in a CWD endemic area in Richland County was found to be CWD positive. There was no evidence that CWD was brought in by any of the purchased animals. Environmental contamination is the most logical cause of CWD spreading to their animals.

Deer farm escapes are rare, but, when it does happen, these animals pose a very low risk of spreading any disease due to the fact that most of these animals have been tested for TB and in the CWD program for more than 10 years.

CWD is not a devastating disease.

There is NO scientific evidence that CWD has caused a population decrease – with long incubation periods before mortality, CWD does not affect the wild deer population, and they will die from another cause long before CWD.

CWD is not a highly contagious disease, hence, the low prevalence rate.

There is no evidence of a human disease derived from eating or handling of a CWD positive animal.

All farm raised deer are tested for CWD.

CWD is spreading across the landscape and, because deer farmers are mandated to test 100% of eligible mortalities, the disease is found on the farm first.

In Wisconsin, from 1999-2015, there were 42,269 tests of farm-raised deer. Out of those tests there were 151 positives. That is an infection rate of 0.35%.

In Wisconsin from 1999-2015 there were 192,799 tests of wild deer. Out of those tests there were 3133 positives. That is an infection rate of 1.6%. ***That is an infection rate 4.5 times the farm rate!***

Deer farmers around the country are investing thousands of dollars into CWD research.

Research from a Wyoming research facility shows that the more susceptible genotype animals live for an average of 4 years after contracting CWD. The most resistant to CWD live for 13 years or more.

Whitetails of Wisconsin has financially helped support a test and cull research project to see if removing the infected animals will reduce the prevalence rate

Whitetails of Wisconsin recently approved a \$10,000 CWD research project in Wisconsin to see if deer really do die of CWD in a more natural setting (not a highly-infected research facility where we know they do eventually die at some point)

Wisconsin deer farmers are helping to develop a live blood test for detecting CWD. A recently depopulated Wisconsin herd allowed USDA to collect numerous tissue samples from their entire herd to further the advancement of live tests for CWD.

The State of Wisconsin should invest more in basic research to develop a live test for CWD and to search for CWD resistance in deer genomes.

The CWD tests are more sensitive than they were two years ago, so it could be that the new machines purchased to detect CWD are the reason the infection rates are higher than in previous years. **The State of Wisconsin should conduct a real apples to apples study by using the same testing protocols for wild deer that were used when CWD was first discovered to see if the prevalence has actually changed.**

In the State of Wisconsin the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and Consumer Protection through the United States Department of Agriculture has the sole responsibility of testing surveillance of the Agriculturally Farmed Cervid population in an ongoing basis since 1998 for the prevalence of CWD on licensed agricultural farms.

1. There are 72 counties in Wisconsin
 - A. FY1999 – 2015, 42,269 farmed deer were tested for CWD with 154 farmed deer testing positive for CWD in 12 counties. 274 to 1 ratio
 - B. The 12 counties tested 12,203 farmed deer with 154 deer being CWD positive
 - C. The average of detection was 79 farm deer tested for every positive CWD finding

2. FY2011-2015, 12 counties tested 10,492 farm deer, 5 year avg. of 2,098 deer
 - D. 0.0058% or 57 deer tested positive were from just 4 counties
 - E. 99.9942% or 10,435 farm deer tested negative for CWD were from 8 counties with previous CWD findings FY 1999 – 2010.

3. FY2015, surveillance conducted for farmed deer in 12 CWD positive counties
 - F. 765 CWD tests performed with 45 deer testing positive for CWD
 - G. 45 positives for CWD farmed deer (6%) were from 3 counties
 - H. No other CWD farmed deer were (94%) found to be CWD positive from 9 counties with previous positive CWD findings
 - I. 72 county surveillance testing for farmed deer tested 2200 deer with a total of 45 positive deer. 49 to 1 ratio

4. Contrary to the wild deer population in the State of Wisconsin, CWD testing methodologies and locations chosen by the DNR are distinctly different. This difference is the DNR has skewed the positive CWD report to the State of Wisconsin and the State Legislative body by use of the endemic area. The Farmed deer testing by DATCP for detection of CWD positives occurred in only 3 of the 72 counties (2015) of the State with a representation of testing ALL Farmed Cervids in ALL 72 counties on an equalized basis better representation of the data presented.

Summary:

Historically, Whitetail deer both in the wild and on the farm as an agricultural crop came into a yearly testing mode for CWD detection as a surveillance practice (FY1999 – 2015) for which continues today. The summaries of the data sets presented from the wild deer and farmed deer post surveillance findings show differences in where samples are collected for reporting and best representing the onset or spread of this disease.

Factual Talking Points:

CWD Surveillance in the State of Wisconsin as Conducted by the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection

In the State of Wisconsin the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has the sole responsibility of testing surveillance of the Wild Cervid population on a yearly basis since the original findings of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in 1999.

1. There are 72 counties in Wisconsin
 - A. FY1999 – 2015 (17 years) 192,799 deer tested for CWD with 3,133 deer testing positive for CWD in 20 counties. **62 to 1 ratio Historical**
 - B. The 20 counties tested 139,257 deer with the 3,133 deer CWD being positive
 - C. The average of detection was 44.5 deer tested for every positive CWD finding

2. FY2011-2015, 20 positive counties tested 24,902 deer, 5 year avg. of 4,980 deer
 - D. 60% or 14,083 deer tested were from just 4 counties*
 - E. 40% or 9,919 deer tested were from 15 counties with previous findings**
 - F. Testing showed 1,553 deer tested positive for CWD
 - G. 92% or 1,430 positive CWD deer were from 4 counties*
 - H. 8% or 123 positive CWD deer were from 9 of the 15 counties**

3. FY2015 -reduction in surveillance testing for CWD in 20 CWD positive counties
 - I. 2,612 CWD tests performed with 297 deer testing positive for CWD
 - J. 284 positives of the 297 CWD positive deer (95%) were from 4 counties***
 - K. only 13 deer (5%) found to be CWD positive from 9 counties****

4. FY 1999-2015, last 5 year average and 2015 surveillance year testing is skewed to the "HIGH" presence of CWD positive deer in the State via use of the a high testing rate to create high positive numbers used from the endemic area of the State. This is a misrepresentation of the testing surveillance that is not equalized across ALL counties of the State of Wisconsin.

* Endemic Counties - Iowa, Dane, Sauk and Richland (Table 1)

** Rock, Jefferson, Walworth, Columbia, Grant, Waukesha, Green, Washburn, Laffette, Adams, Portage, Juneau, Racine, Kenosha and Crawford

***located at the historical CWD endemic area comprising of Iowa (152), Dane (34), Sauk (61) and Richland (37)

**** (Rock (1), Walworth (1), Columbia (1), Lafayette (2), Green (3), Grant (1), Adams (2), Waukesha (1), Crawford (1).

This year, there has been a continued expression by the media to use the hype of this disease to continue to lay blame along with others that deer farmers are to blame for the spread of this disease.

In review of the historical data sets dating from 1999 through 2015 the overall wild deer testing showed a ratio of every 61 deer tested provided 1 positive wild deer with CWD. On the contrary, the same timeframe of historical data shows that the farmed deer needs to test 274 deer for every 1 farmed deer to test positive for CWD. These differences are due to the fact that wild deer historically can migrate freely while farmed deer are housed livestock behind a secured fence to prevent escapes. When a farmed deer tests positive for CWD the rest of the farmed herd is put under quarantine to review the overall health and more testing of the herd. When the wild deer are found to be positive for CWD the local area is put under strict quarantine because there is no action plan in place to review the herd status or increased surveillance testing. This unchecked practice of no disease suppression in the wild will undoubtedly allow for the spread of this disease onto the landscape of Wisconsin.

There are 72 counties in Wisconsin. Of the wild deer population that historically have tested positive for CWD are within only 20 of the 72 counties of the State.

When one reviews the numbers of surveillance testing numbers in these 20 counties the ratio for finding 1 deer positive for CWD changes to 44.5 deer tested for every 1 wild deer positive. This number is less than the historical average at 61 deer to 1 positive in the wild deer population.

In contrary to the wild deer testing, the farmed deer historically have only found positive CWD exposures in 12 of the 72 counties of the State.

When one reviews the numbers of surveillance testing numbers in these 12 counties the ratio for finding 1 deer positive for CWD changes to 79 deer tested for every 1 farmed deer positive. This number is less than the historical average at 274 deer to 1 positive on the farm but is almost 2 times as likely not to test positive for CWD.

In looking for potential trends in the data sets as to the concern of the potential spread of CWD a review was conducted.

In review of CWD surveillance by the DNR for FY 2011-2015, the testing frequency and positive ratio of testing was used again as in the historical data. In the wild population of the 20 CWD positive counties there were 24,902 tests conducted with 14,083 or 60% of the testing was from 4 counties in the endemic area of the State. The other 9,919 tests or 40% were conducted in the remaining 16 counties of prior CWD positive counties. In FY 2015, 1,553 deer tested positive for CWD for the whole State of Wisconsin. There were 1,430 positive CWD deer (92%) from just 4 counties located in the endemic area

of the State. The other 123 positive CWD positive results (8) came from 9 other counties that had positive CWD status in the past

In contrast, the agriculturally farmed deer industry shows a brighter spot. Since all farms are behind fence for regulated farming practices all suspect deer can be controlled for testing surveillance a lot easier vs. their wild counterpart in the wild.

Of the 12 counties with farms that historically had CWD positive results FY 2011-2015 tested 10,492 farmed deer with only 57 farmed deer having a positive CWD test result.

The results over the past 5 years demonstrate a 0.0058% positive rate of CWD on the farm for the whole state of Wisconsin. For positive CWD in only 4 counties. This also means that 10,435 CWD tests performed on the farmed deer in FY2011-2015 that were negative leads to a 99.9942% safety rating for farmed deer here in Wisconsin in the 8 other counties previously found with positive CWD in the past.

In the spring of 2016 there is and continues to be an onslaught of negative article printed into the news media, provided to the State Legislature and other groups of conservation interests concerning the spread of this CWD disease in the State of Wisconsin. Some imply that by double fencing requirements on all deer farms or banning all deer farms from Wisconsin is the only answer.

With the focus on these recent concerns from those who choose not to review the scientific data provided by the current CWD test results, a further review of the data sets for FY2015 was conducted.

When the FY2015 data was reviewed there seems to be a discrepancy of the overall State testing locations for the wild deer leading to the subsequent inaccurate reporting of CWD and its spread in the State of Wisconsin. In 2015, there was a public outcry by the conservationists that CWD was spreading in the state of Wisconsin because there was a higher rate of CWD detection by the DNR for FY 2015. The data does show less testing surveillance was conducted by the DNR. In the 20 counties that had previous CWD positive wild deer on the landscape there were 2,612 CWD tests performed with 297 of those test results being Positive for CWD. The accuracy concern that comes to play is that 284 of the total positives (95%) of the whole state of Wisconsin's surveillance came from just 4 counties in the endemic area of the State! Of the other counties that were CWD positive historically only 9 of the 20 counties accounted for 13 (5%) of the balance of the FY2015 State of Wisconsin Surveillance provided by the DNR. In fact there were 4 out of the 20 counties that did not show a CWD wild deer for the past 3 years!

In contrast to this skew of information by the DNR data sets it is only fair to scrutinize the deer farming industry to the same criteria. Since the news print, radio,

conservationists' and others concerned would like to know the truth of the matter a review was conducted.

FY2015, 12 counties that have historically had farmed deer test positive for CWD, there were 765 CWD tests conducted with 45 deer testing positive for CWD. The 45 CWD positive farmed deer represent 6% of the total testing population.

In closing, the data provided by the DNR is skewed for the measure of CWD detection in the State of Wisconsin by utilizing the endemic area of high CWD prevalence in the wild deer population of 4 counties. This misrepresents data collection, collations of data and all subsequent meetings referring to the information generated. This is a miss use of office and the fiduciary role the DNR is required to follow in the proper utilization of its role in following legislative laws and practices.

The peoples of Wisconsin and the State Legislative body have again been misled down the road of hype by the DNR for yet another hidden agenda in deceptive practices as demonstrated by their own data sets. The facts of the data sets and worries that CWD is spreading as a results of the deer farming industry here in Wisconsin is unfounded by the data sets historically.

The public needs to be informed about this travesty that the DNR has laid the groundwork for such the facts of misusing testing locations.

An apology is owed from the DNR, to the legislature and the citizens of Wisconsin for the final 4 points:

1. DNR misrepresenting the spread of CWD upon the landscape of Wisconsin
2. DNR misrepresenting the spread of CWD by Agricultural Farming Practices
3. DNR not to reject the notion or to help facilitate the misrepresentation practice
4. DNR not informing the public regarding these practices presented fairly through the press, radio and media outlets.

Any additional information can be provided upon request.
Information compiled by Jerome Donohoe 4/28/16

ag_o3@earthlink.net

Table 1. DNR CWD Surveillance for the Whole State of Wisconsin 2011-2015

20 Historical Positive CWD Counties 2011 - 2015			
	Total Tests	CWD Positives	
Iowa	6,284	882	
Dane	3,484	225	
Sauk	3,156	236	
Richland	2,059	87	
Rock	1,314	39	
Jefferson	593	7	
Walworth	740	13	
Columbia	627	14	
Grant	1,020	10	
Waukesha	240	4	
Green	361	11	Blue = Last Positive
Washburn	1,430	1	2011
Lafayette	289	10	
Adams	793	6	
Portage	761	4	
Juneau	308	1	2012
Racine	126	1	2012
Kenosha	1,071	1	2003
Crawford	246	1	2015 (new)
Total	24,902	1,553	Total
	60%	14,983	1,430
	40%	9,919	123
			92%
			8%



WISCONSIN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

May 17, 2016

To: Conservation Congress District Leadership Council
From: George Meyer, Executive Director, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
Subject: Background Information for Congress Double Fencing Resolution

Council Members, attached is some important background information for your deliberations on the Double Fencing of Captive Cervid Farms that you will be voting on on May 24th.

1. Please find attached the list of the authors of the resolution in fourteen, geographically distributed counties.....a very impressive list of authors.
 2. Despite having fencing regulations in this state for ten years, there are still consistently 20 to 30 escapes from captive cervid farms in Wisconsin each year.
 3. Despite DNR and DATCP regulations in place for ten years, chronic wasting disease continues to leapfrog throughout parts of the state that previously have shown no CWD in the wild deer herd. CWD infected captive cervid herds have escaped to the wild.
 4. The Wisconsin deer herd is the most important wildlife resource in the state, both in terms of our hunting heritage but also because deer hunting and watching is a billion dollar industry in the state. While the double fencing requirement imposes cost to the captive cervid farms, there is a major economic risk to the valuable Wisconsin deer herd.
 5. The Wildlife Federation has reviewed DNR Law Enforcement investigation files of captive cervid escapes. Attached is just one such file that documents the ten year plus history of escapes from just one of those farms. This farm has CWD and there have been multiple escapes. The file is a compelling and an easy read. By the way the owner of this farm is the President of one of the captive cervid organizations in the state and a principal spokesperson for the industry.
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**Names, Addresses and Phone Numbers of Introducers of Double Cervid Fencing
Resolutions at the Conservation Congress, April 2016 Spring Hearings**

Barron County----Jay Koenig, 705 Marshall St., Rice Lake, WI 54868 715-651-8082
Buffalo County----Mark Noll, S1917 Buena Vista Rd., Alma WI 54610 608-685-4580
Chippewa County----Jim Morning, 15101 St. Highway 64, Bloomer WI 715-288-6052
Douglas County----Al Horvath, Al Horvath, 6 Belknap Shores, Superior WI 54880 715-394-5694
Grant County-----Larrie Hazen, 7656 Big Green Road, Mt. Hope WI 53816 608-988-4549
Jackson County-----Allen Jackson, N8298 S. Adams Rd., Hixton, WI 54635 715-963-4354
Marquette County-----Larry Gohlke, P.O. Box 120 Neshkoro, WI, 54960 920-765-0211
Outagamie County-----Doug Seidl, N8254 Lawn Road, Seymour WI 54165 920-309-0703
Rock County-----Charlie Brown, 8131 N. Oak Ridge Dr., Milton WI 53563 608-868-2514
Sauk County-----Bradley Hashheider, E9014 Cassell Road, Sauk City, WI 53583 608-544-2901
Sawyer County-----Rick Olson, W5989 Lake Winter Rd., Winter WI 54896 715-266-6291
Shawano County--- Kevin Marquette, 916 E. Randall St., Shawano County 715-851-4175
Winnebago County---Wright Allen, 9207 Bell School Rd., Omro WI 54963 920-410-7225
Wood County----Marlin Laidlaw, 8739 St. Hwy. 80, Marshfield WI 54449, 715-676-2202



WISCONSIN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

May 24, 2016

Testimony of Wisconsin Wildlife Federation to Wisconsin Conservation Congress by David Clausen, DVM, Former Natural Resources Board Member

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation supports double fencing for cervid farms. In support of that position I would like to correct some misinformation that is being disseminated about CWD.

1. CWD is not a devastating disease. There are two published, peer reviewed, studies predicting severe population declines in elk. Malia DeVito's work, out of Wyoming, documents population impacts in mule deer due to CWD there. Dr. Mike Miller of Colorado said this at a recent live test seminar in Texas: "In the wild, we are now starting to see some evidence of population level impacts on deer herd performance in particular, and the reason I think we are not seeing it in elk, ...is that the disease is just not as prevalent in elk in the wild." Dr. Miller goes on: "We still have deer and elk, mule deer, whitetail deer, elk, moose in Colorado, they have not gone extinct, but they are not going to be nearly as abundant perhaps, in some places down the road as we would want them to be, and as our publics would want them to be. And I think that is the root of the concern."

2. Death by other reasons before CWD. This statement, while technically true, is misleading. TSEs, including CWD, are by definition, progressive FATAL neurologic diseases. Saying that a car or bullet cut short the life of an animal with a fatal disease does not change the ultimate fate of that animal. If a person with terminal pancreatic cancer gets hit by a train on the way to hospice, I guess some could correctly say the train killed that person. Other could correctly say it saved a lot of suffering. Either way the ultimate fate is the same. It is well accepted by the scientific community that the course of CWD in deer is around 2 years.

7. Nose to nose contact does not spread CWD. Deer have been shown to shed prions in body fluids such as saliva, nasal secretions and tears. As deer touch and groom each other thru a fence those fluids and accompanying prion can be ingested. Oral administration of prion is a proven way to transmit CWD.

8. CWD is a transmissible disease. And that CWD has a low prevalence rate. That statement is attributed to Dr. Beth Williams in her "Book". I had several conversations with Dr. Williams before her death. She never mentioned her "Book". People who know her well are unaware of any "Book". A Google search does not find one either. CWD has a high prevalence where the disease is established.

9. Test and ye shall find. Some claim the prevalence of CWD is lower in farmed deer than wild deer. Actually USDA data show that on farms where CWD is found, the prevalence is actually higher, up to 80%, than in deer where the disease is found in the wild. Disease prevalence is measured where the disease occurs – not where it doesn't. Hemorrhagic disease has a prevalence of about 0 for nine months of the year. Does that mean it should be of little concern the rest of the year? In Wisconsin, statewide prevalence is relatively low but that is not true in Iowa County. A deer farm not infected with CWD has a prevalence of 0. But the Hall farm prevalence was 79%. It is technically accurate, but hardly relevant, to claim that the average prevalence of the two farms was 39.5%.

10. Living with CWD. I believe that we are talking elk here not deer. Elk do admittedly live longer than deer. And for some reason there was one elk, and only one, in the Sybille facility in Wyoming that has managed to live 13 years without getting sick, the rest have all contracted the disease. The peer-reviewed literature is full of references that the course of CWD in most deer is about 2 years.

12. Escapes are low risk. As demonstrated by the fence inspection records of the Eau Claire County facility, escapes are not as rare as some would have you believe. The fact that two bucks that escaped from that facility and were at large for 6 months were infected with CWD should not be defined as "low risk".

As a veterinary practitioner I was accredited by USDA and DATCP to participate in their animal disease programs. I was also a certified cervid veterinarian. Working on cervid farms was a part of my practice. As such, I have some additional comments regarding risks to wild from game farming and some concerns on the effectiveness of the CWD Certification program.

In 1996 CWD was diagnosed on a game farm near Regina Saskatchewan. In 1998 and again in 2000 CWD was diagnosed on a game farm near Swift Current Sask. The Canadian did no trace backs until 2000. By the time the Canadian source farm was located near Lloydminster Saskatchewan, elk had been shipped to 40 farms infecting at least 21 of those farms. From there, according to the conclusions of a 2004 panel of experts appointed by the Canadian it spilled into the wild deer in proximity to three of those farms. Some may say that CWD was in the wild deer first. That is not supported by the facts. Analysis by a statistician at a university in Washington concluded that based on the number of tests conducted by the Canadian

farms are several fold greater than the odds of winning power ball. In addition, elk from Canadian farms carried CWD to Korea.

Before I comment on the CWD Certification program I want to point out that looking out for the interests of our the public deer herd is not the responsibility of Agriculture departments. The mission of USDA and other Ag departments is to protect and enhance domestic agriculture. Wild animals are not part of that mission unless and until they present a threat to domestic agriculture.

Proponents of game farming are quick to point out the USDA's CWD Certification program. That program was written with the input of the industry while the concerns of wildlife interests were pretty much ignored. As a veterinarian I am puzzled why, to my knowledge, CWD is the only certification program where the farmer or his employee gets to take the samples to be tested. That is certainly not allowed with brucellosis or pseudorabies. Those programs require sample to be taken by an accredited veterinarian or government employee to ensure the integrity of the program. The main concern I have with the CWD Certification program is that effectiveness of the entire program is based on the premise that every cervid farmer will follow the rules exactly. While I believe most cervid farmers are hard working, honest people, you have only to Google "Lacey Act convictions illegally transporting deer" to see that is not true of everyone in the industry. With a disease like CWD, it only takes a few rascals to inflict irreparable harm to our public resources.

For the past three years my wife and I have spent part of the winter in South Texas. Basically, three trips down and three back. On at least half of those trips we observed Wisconsin licensed trucks with deer farm logos on the pickup pulling trailers in Texas. I could put a generous explanation on that by assuming they were hauling Wisconsin cheese to Texas and returning with Texas citrus. The only problem with that is the conversation I had with a relative, who lives in Texas, last year. He hunts a lease in South Texas and was bragging to me about all the Wisconsin whitetail does the ranch owner was importing to improve the genetics of the deer on his ranch. That practice has been illegal for more than 10 years.

There is a lot of conversation about the development of a so-called "Live test". A live test for CWD using the currently available IHC technology is unlikely to be approved. The IHC test depends on finding prion in the lymph node that is being sampled. Unfortunately, from the time a deer is infected with CWD it take a certain amount of time, a couple months or more, for the prion to accumulate in the lymph node at levels that the IHC test can detect. So you have a situation where a deer can test negative but still be infected with CWD. I don't believe that is any way a regulatory agency will approve any test that has the possibility of certifying an animal as negative when it is actually infected.

Double fencing, while nor a cure-all, will provide additional protection to our public resources.

Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection

In the State of Wisconsin the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has the sole responsibility of testing surveillance of the Wild Cervid population on a yearly basis since the original findings of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in 1999.

1. There are 72 counties in Wisconsin
 - A. FY1999 – 2015 (17 years) 192,799 deer tested for CWD with 3,133 deer testing positive for CWD in 20 counties. **62 to 1 ratio Historical**
 - B. The 20 counties tested 139,257 deer with the 3,133 deer CWD being positive
 - C. The average of detection was 44.5 deer tested for every positive CWD finding

2. FY2011-2015, 20 positive counties tested 24,902 deer, 5 year avg. of 4,980 deer
 - D. 60% or 14,083 deer tested were from just 4 counties*
 - E. 40% or 9,919 deer tested were from 15 counties with previous findings**
 - F. Testing showed 1,553 deer tested positive for CWD
 - G. 92% or 1,430 positive CWD deer were from 4 counties*
 - H. 8% or 123 positive CWD deer were from 9 of the 15 counties**

3. FY2015 -reduction in surveillance testing for CWD in 20 CWD positive counties
 - I. 2,612 CWD tests performed with 297 deer testing positive for CWD
 - J. 284 positives of the 297 CWD positive deer (95%) were from 4 counties***
 - K. only 13 deer (5%) found to be CWD positive from 9 counties****

4. FY 1999-2015, last 5 year average and 2015 surveillance year testing is skewed to the "HIGH" presence of CWD positive deer in the State via use of the a high testing rate to create high positive numbers used from the endemic area of the State. This is a misrepresentation of the testing surveillance that is not equalized across ALL counties of the State of Wisconsin.

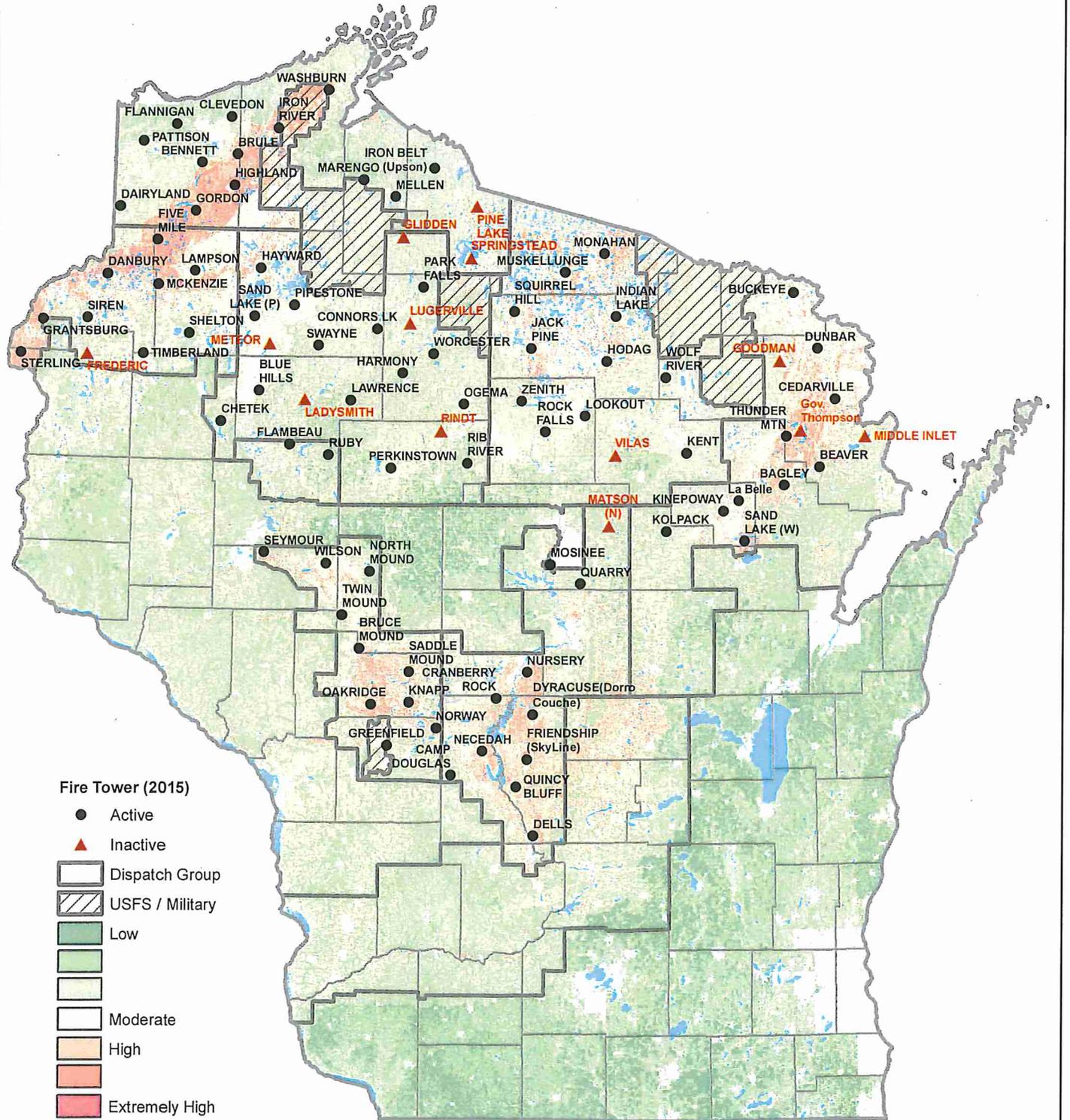
* Endemic Counties - Iowa, Dane, Sauk and Richland (Table 1)

** Rock, Jefferson, Walworth, Columbia, Grant, Waukesha, Green, Washburn, Laffeatte, Adams, Portage, Juneau, Racine, Kenosha and Crawford

***located at the historical CWD endemic area comprising of Iowa (152), Dane (34), Sauk (61) and Richland (37)

**** (Rock (1), Walworth (1), Columbia (1), Lafayette (2), Green (3), Grant (1), Adams (2), Waukesha (1), Crawford (1).

Fire Towers, 2015



The data shown on this map have been obtained from various sources, and are of varying age, reliability, and resolution. This map is not an authoritative source of information about legal land ownership or public access.



Forest Fire Tower Decommissioning Briefing

Background:

The safety of DNR staff and the public is the number one priority. The Department of Natural Resources has 72 active fire lookout towers that range in height from 60 to 100 feet. The towers were manufactured primarily by one company and were built between 1931 and 1951. A study conducted on fire detection towers manufactured by the same company, built during the same years, and that were exposed to comparable weather conditions in Pennsylvania was completed by a professional engineering firm. That assessment found that all towers were overstressed based on the design, framework, and composition of steel, resulting in them being a safety hazard for tower personnel. The study cost 11 thousand per tower for the engineering assessment.

Key Findings:

- Discussion with DNR Legal and Engineers gave us no reason to believe that a study of WI towers would not lead to different results and would cost \$850 thousand.
- In areas where fire towers are located and when staffed, only 35% of fires were detected by fire towers; the other 65% of fires were detected by aircraft or citizen reporting
- Towers were staffed an average of 17 days per year
- Annual cost for supplies/maintenance and wages to staff towers averages nearly \$160K
- Total costs to replace all 72 fire towers would near \$25 million.
- The funding that was allocated for fire towers will be shifted to provide additional aerial detection.
 - Statewide staffing days detection averaged 50 hours per day of continuous detection routes
 - Aerial detection for 2016 fire season has been more intensive than the previous tower/air detection
 - For example: Dodgeville, which had no towers, detection was increased and year to date fire numbers are down

Impact of Issue:

Based on this study and the similarities between the towers and the environmental conditions, the Bureau of Forest Protection pro-actively made the determination for safety reasons to cease staffing the towers until further investigation, discussion, and decisions regarding the use of towers could be made. The decision to remove the towers from fire detection service was made in culmination with the Field Operations Team (FOT), District Forestry Leaders, Department legal staff and engineers based on information gathered from tower inspections and reports.

Following the decision made on August 14, 2015, towers were posted restricting access and actions were taken to render the towers from being climbed (e.g. removal of first section of steps or ladder section). FOT assessed the fire tower issue examining alternatives that included conducting a similar study to the one done in Pennsylvania on DNR towers,

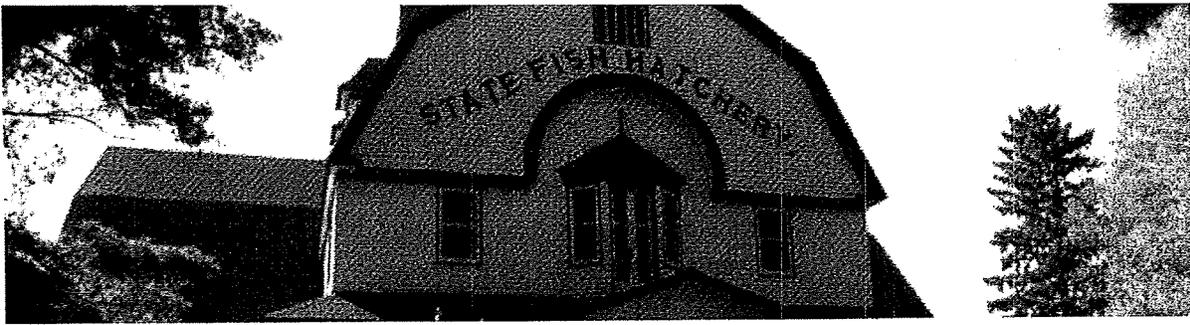
rehabilitation or replacing existing towers, or decommissioning some or all of the towers. They then made a recommendation to the Forestry Leadership Team to move forward with decommissioning all existing towers based upon the age of the current infrastructure, costs associated with replacement, improved citizen reporting and changing technology (Urban sprawl, cell phones), and the use of aerial detection via fixed-wing aircraft. The success of the aerial detection program will be further supported by increasing actual aerial detection time.

Next Steps:

1. Identify a point person for each tower to take necessary actions to facilitate decommissioning process.
2. Allocate capital funding to deal with costs associated with decommissioning and removal of the tower.
3. Work with grantor/easement holders to determine if tower is wanted for transfer of ownership or removal and site restoration for those on non-state owned lands
4. Determine any applicable future uses of towers (i.e. broad banding)
5. Allocate tower funding to aerial detection for flight hours

Contact persons:

Trent Marty - Director, Bureau of Forest Protection
Michael Warnke, Chief - Fire and Law Enforcement Section



Les Voight Fish Hatchery

Brief History: Originally founded in 1896, The Les Voight Fish hatchery was gifted to the state of Wisconsin in 1897 by R.D. Pike, an early Bayfield County entrepreneur/developer. Since then it has served as an important cornerstone of Wisconsin's Lake Superior Fishery. During its history the hatchery has helped with the establishment of Lake Superior's legendary steelhead fishery, the introduction of Brown Trout, and very importantly, was instrumental in reestablishing Lake Trout into Lake Superior after the Sea Lamprey caused near total destruction of that fishery. It also has consistently provided cold water species for stocking into Lake Michigan as well, including a contribution of Chinook Salmon this year. In the 1980's it was second only to the Wild Rose hatchery in terms of fish production of Wisconsin hatcheries.

The Issue: In recent times, the hatchery was able to maintain production by utilizing a raw water intake from Lake Superior in combination with water from the current well. With the spread of Viral Hemorrhagic Syndrome (VHS) into the Great Lakes ten years ago, the use of Lake Superior water was by necessity discontinued to prevent bio-contamination of the facility by potential pathogens. Since then, because of limitations and declining production by the current well system, the Les Voight Hatchery has been restricted to approximately 27% of capacity. The staff has experimented with some unique methods to recirculate water, but to substantially increase production, a new source of water, or investment in a Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) is needed. Currently only 6 of the 14 raceways are utilized, and 2 of those utilize recirculated water from the other 4 raceways.

Why it is needed: The Apostle Islands waters of Wisconsin are unique in having three different user groups with demand on the indigenous fishery; tribal subsistence and commercial, non-native commercial, and sport. Quite simply, even with effective regulation by the WDNR, this puts a lot of pressure on the indigenous fish stocks. Since the 1980's the WDNR has been able to help enhance and diversify the sport fishery by the planting of Brown Trout, Splake, and other species, sometimes with fair results, and sometimes with disappointing returns. To their credit the WDNR biologists and hatchery staff have worked to come up with ways to improve return on these fish. Recently they have discovered that holding fish to yearling size have drastically improved creel returns. An example: the average ten year annual creel census of Splake was a very poor 150 a year. By holding the Splake to yearling size, this was improved to 497 A MONTH! Keep in mind that many more than this were caught, but it gives an

provided by other species as well. Indeed, the brown trout fishery has become an unqualified success since this approach has been taken. With this has come an increase in the number of visiting sportsmen after a decline over the past decade, so the Wisconsin Lake Superior communities have started to economically benefit from this change.

This rebound has run into the brick wall of the limited water currently available at the Les Voight hatchery. While some help is provided by the outdoor Brule River facility, being outdoors in northern Wisconsin over the winter means the stocked fish average 15-17 a pound, as opposed to 5 a pound for Brown Trout raised year round in the Les Voight hatchery, with a corresponding reduced rate of survival when released into Lake Superior. By restoring Les Voight to full capacity would go far in encouraging increased sport fishing in Wisconsin's Lake Superior waters, and diversifying the opportunities for Lake Superior sports fishermen.

In addition, the revitalized Les Voight hatchery would serve an important biosecurity service of providing a separated cold water hatchery for Lake Michigan stocking initiatives, as well as interior cold water fish stocking initiatives. As a single disease outbreak can close a hatchery quite quickly, having another bio-secure cold water facility gives further protection from problems.

To drill a new well, estimates are in the \$400,000 range. To transition the hatchery to an RAS system would be substantially more, but with the rising cost and demand of water would be the long term solution if it can be afforded. Whichever way would be chosen, it would benefit the Wisconsin Lake Superior shore economy by increasing sport fishing visits, would help provide a diverse dynamic sport fishery in the Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior, and provide the WDNR hatchery system with an alternative bio-secure and bio-separated cold water facility to the Lake Michigan ones in case of emergency closure.

The following organizations endorse this action.

Apostle Island Sport Fishermen's Association

Western Lake Superior Trolling Association

Saxon Harbor Boat Club

Douglas County Fish and Game League

North Wisconsin Rod and Gun Club

Washburn Chamber of Commerce

Ashland Chamber of Commerce