



Wisconsin Conservation Congress

**CWD Committee**

Notes recorded by Secretary- Tony Grabski, Iowa County Delegate

From the meeting at

Mead Wildlife Area Visitor Center

Milladore, WI

**Saturday, August 7, 2010, 9:30 AM**

The CWD Committee of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress convened at 9:30 AM on Saturday August 7, 2010, at the Mead Wildlife Area Visitor Center in Milladore, Wisconsin. The CWD Committee reviewed and acted on assigned resolutions and matters concerning CWD and CWD law enforcement agenda items.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

1. Organizational Matters 9:30 AM

A. Call to Order- Meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Riggle

B. Roll Call- Committee members present were Chairman Mike Riggle, Taylor County; Secretary Tony Grabski, Iowa County; and delegates David Breunig, Lafayette County; Allan Brown, Chippewa County; Larry Gohlke, Marquette County; Edward Guptill, Marquette County; Brad Hasheider, Sauk County; Jim Kirchner, Pepin County; John Obernberger, Marathon County; Dave Poff, Waukesha County; Richard Schreiber, Columbia County; Gerald Stadler, Sauk County; Randy Voegeli, Green County; and DNR liaisons Davin Lopez and Pete Dunn.

Excused was delegate Pat Werner, Richland County.

Absent was delegate Brad Wagner, Dane County.

Delegate Ken Anderson, Vilas County; and guests Ron Kulas of The WI Bowhunter's Association, Tami Ryan, DNR Wildlife Health Section Chief; and Sherry Faust were also in attendance.

C. Review and affirmation of the CWD Committee Mission Statement- The CWD ad-hoc Study Committee mission statement below was read by Chair Mike Riggle. A motion to affirm the mission statement was made by, Al Brown, seconded by John Obernberger, and unanimously approved:

*The Mission of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress' Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Ad-hoc Study Committee is to review current CWD control policies and practices, and to facilitate the development of programs and policies that work toward management of CWD to minimize the impact of the disease on Wisconsin's free ranging deer population. To effectively accomplish this mission, the committee will take into consideration all of the biological and sociological systems critical to CWD management strategy, including the environment, deer ecology, the economy, hunters, landowners, and everyone that benefits from a healthy deer herd.*

2. Department Informational Items & Updates 9:40 AM

A. CWD-MZ 2009 Season and Testing Updates- Davin Lopez provided a summary of CWD test results and kill numbers. He also provided hand outs with 2010 helicopter deer surveillance section counts from the western and eastern CWD-MZs, graphs of CWD disease prevalence rate trends from 2002 to 2009 for the SW CWD-MZ for both male and female deer, a graph of CWD prevalence rates in Wyoming mule deer from 1997 to 2009 for area 62-65, a graph of estimated post-hunt deer population in DMUs affected by CWD from 1986 to 2009, final 2009 SAK deer population estimates for statewide DMUs, and CWD frequently asked questions. The majority of this information including the prevalence rate graphs, deer counts, and population estimates can be found on the WDNR web site at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/whealth/issues/CWD/>

The CWD test results are summarized as follows:

1. Test Results Since 2002

2. 2008 Test Results

<b>DNR Zone</b>	<b>#Sampled</b>	<b>#Analyzed</b>	<b>Positive for CWD</b>
CWD-MZ	111192	111172	1354
Remainder of WI	47719	47699	0
Unknown Zone	330	327	0
Total Sampled	159241		
Total Analyzed		159198	
Total Positive			1354

	<b>#Sampled</b>	<b>#Analyzed</b>	<b>Positive for CWD</b>
CWD-MZ	6184	6184	181
Remainder of WI	6068	6066	0
Unknown Zone	34	34	0
Total Sampled	12286		
Total Analyzed		12284	
Total Positive			181

	<b>#Sampled</b>	<b>#Analyzed</b>	<b>Positive for CWD</b>
CWD-MZ	6928	6927	179
Remainder of WI	239	239	0
Total Sampled	7167		
Total Analyzed		7166	
Total Positive			179

3. 2009 Test Results

General discussion ensued about the test results, prevalence rates, and CWD transmission. Mike Riggle asked if there were any new outbreaks outside the core area? Davin replied that several more positives were found in Richland County due to increased surveillance efforts and not necessarily due to a new outbreak. Gerald Stadler asked if there were many targeted deer that looked sick and needed to be destroyed? Davin said that he recalled about 8-12 animals and the last one was in June. Not all of these animals were CWD positive as some were sick or injured by other causes. Larry Gohlke asked how many CWD positives are actually observed as sick? Davin said most of the positives look healthy, but frequently the sick deer that are targeted are found near water. Gerald Stadler asked if car killed deer were being tested for CWD? Davin responded that these deer are sometimes tested, but sheriff's department reports and test requests are sporadic, also tissue samples taken from car kills do not last that long in hot weather and are not usable. Jim Kirchner asked about the possibility for CWD to be transmitted through water sources? Could artificial water sources for deer be considered baiting? Davin said that water would not be considered bait and not a likely source for contamination because prions are hydrophobic. Tami Ryan agreed and added that the risk of transmission through water was low because prions bind to soils preferentially. Gerald Stadler asked why we were provided with the graph of CWD prevalence rates in mule deer from Wyoming and not Colorado or other Western states? Davin responded that Wyoming data is easy to obtain compared to the

other Western states with CWD. Several questions were asked by committee members regarding human health concerns related to CWD, genetic resistance of deer and elk to CWD, if CWD could be caused by mineral deficiencies or surplus, and about the difference between food plots and baiting. Ed Guptill asked why the human health concerns have been exaggerated by the DNR and the media? Davin replied that the DNR has only reiterated what the World Health Organization has stated about precautions for CWD. He also said that banning baiting and feeding is an important tool to control disease and limit deer privatization. Regarding the effects of minerals on CWD he said that there are conflicting reports on the effects of minerals, but several controversial papers have been published on the subject. There have also been publications from the UW-Madison regarding prion binding more tightly to some minerals than others. This could affect environmental contamination by prions and their ability to be more or less absorbed after ingestion by deer from soils containing shed prions.

Tony Grabski began discussion about CWD vaccine development efforts at the University of Saskatchewan.

He would be visiting the researchers developing the vaccine on August 11<sup>th</sup> at the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization and International Vaccine Center (VIDO-InterVac) [http://www.vido.org/about\\_vido\\_intervac/index.php](http://www.vido.org/about_vido_intervac/index.php) at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. Researchers there announced in May the development of a vaccine that induces strong immune responses specific for the mis-folded form of the prion protein that causes Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer and elk. Another group headquartered at the University of Saskatchewan, the Pan-Provincial Vaccine Enterprise (PREVENT) <http://www.prevent-cecr.ca/>, is ultimately responsible for commercialization of the vaccine product. The results of the CWD vaccine research have been published and reviewed in, Hedlin, P. *et al.* (2010) Design and delivery of cryptic PrP<sup>C</sup> epitope for induction of PrP<sup>SC</sup>-specific antibody responses, *Vaccine* **28**, 981-988. The topic of how such a vaccine would be delivered was discussed. Mike Riggle and Davin Lopez said that if an orally administered vaccine were developed it could be administered through feeding. Examples of treating wild animals with vaccine have already been demonstrated for prevention of rabies. Tony asked if the DNR would ever allow feeding in the CWD zones and John Obernberger asked who would fund vaccine treatments? Davin said feeding could be allowed if it was for vaccine testing and that the DNR and legislature would likely be in favor of funding vaccine testing and development. Davin also said that a possible test facility might be the Buck Horn Flats game farm since it was already contaminated with CWD.

#### B. 2010 CWD Deer Season Preview (10:35 AM)

The season structure will be the same as that in 2009. Complete guidelines are on the WDNR web site: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/regs/index.htm>

General discussion and debate ensued about the CWD-MZ season structure, earn a buck (EAB), herd goals, deer population estimates, and if deer herd reduction would actually contain and control CWD. Ed Guptill said that deer herd goals were too low and that too many does were being shot. He said that hunters and landowners would band together and stop hunting unless herd goals were increased. Several delegates including Dave Breunig and Tony Grabski said that EAB was causing many people to stop hunting. Dave Poff said farmers do not want the early gun season. It is dangerous while they are harvesting crops to have a hunting season taking place. Gerald Stadler said that we have spent enough time and money trying to control CWD, "it is time to let nature take its course." Dave Breunig said that the DNR was not trying to control CWD, but that Tom Hauge just wanted to reduce the deer herd. Heated debate occurred with tempers flaring. Chair Mike Riggle resumed control of the meeting and cautioned that all meeting participants should speak with civility and respect or they would be asked to leave. Tony Grabski pointed out that the arguments symbolized the increasing problem of the adversarial relationship between hunters and the DNR. Davin agreed that the DNR had done a poor job of communicating the message and importance of CWD management. He said that they had hired a public relations company to assist in CWD education and outreach. Jim Kirchner asked how the DNR knows what deer population is best? He said that the DNR has sent out mixed messages and confused the public about CWD. He asked Davin if herd reduction would control CWD or not? Davin answered that in areas of high CWD prevalence herd reduction probably would not work, but in areas of new outbreaks or on the edges of the CWD-MZs herd reduction might work. Davin and Tony discussed the difference between density dependence and frequency dependence CWD transmission. Tony quoted from the Gear, et. al 2010 *J. of Applied Ecology* article that reported that CWD transmission was frequency dependent and not density dependent. Generalized herd reduction is ineffective for CWD control in density dependent transmission and herd reduction could actually accelerate localized deer extinction. Davin said this might be true in areas of high disease prevalence, but density could play a role in establishing the disease in new areas. Therefore, in new outbreaks or on the edges of the CWD-MZ herd reduction could be effective to control the spread.

Davin gave an update on activities of the public relations firm that was hired to communicate the CWD management message. He said that the DNR web site would be reorganized and simplified. Surveys of hunters and landowners were in progress to identify additional areas for improved communication between hunters and the DNR. Mike stated that he was involved in the panel that hired the communications firm. They concluded that if a clearer message about CWD and CWD management was delivered eight years ago, we would be further along with the management plan. Richard Schreiber said that they need to bridge the gaps between scientists, hunters, and the DNR. Ed Guptill said that a communications firm will not do any good. "The DNR does not listen to the general public. It should not be a one way message." He said that there should be more people involved in deer management on a county by county basis. This would allow a direct exchange of information and direct participation at a county level. Davin replied that there are more deer management units than counties and that these units were reviewed this past year. County by county management would make it difficult to account for the many differences in these DMUs.

C. & D. Captive Cervid and Law Enforcement Update (11:10 AM)- Warden Pete Dunn gave the captive cervid farm update. There were 26 reported escape incidents so far this year, this amounted to 20 actual confirmed escape incidents because 3 were previously reported, 2 were confirmed as wild deer, and 1 incident was not confirmed. Approximately 30% of these escapes were caused by gates being left open and the other 70% resulted from bad fencing or fence related issues. The 20 actual confirmed escape incidents amounted to 77 total animals. 50 of the escaped animals were recovered or killed and 27 were not recovered and remain unaccounted for. Last year the CWD Committee passed a resolution to require double gates, but this has not gone into effect yet. Questions were raised by the committee about double fencing requirements? Pete responded that double fencing has not been practical or accepted by the industry. The DNR has the authority to do fence inspections. ?If a fence fails to pass the inspection the fencing certificate can be revoked and the farmer can be issued a citation. This year three citations and one warning have been issued for escapes.

Pete reviewed the reporting requirements for escape incidents that these must be reported within 24 hours. The farmer then has 72 hours to recover the animals or else it will affect the farm's herd status and ability to move animals. Davin proposed in the 15 year CWD Plan that the DNR take total control and regulatory authority over all deer farm fencing. Larry Gohlke asked Pete about the reliability for reporting escapes? Pete said that the majority of escapes were reported by the farmer, but it is very difficult to determine when an escape actually occurred. Pete said that they are more concerned that an escape is reported and not that it is reported at the exact time that it happened.

An internal audit of 300 farm's fencing certificates was recently completed. Numerous irregularities were discovered and many fences were reinspected. The audit and inspections resulted in the revocation of 70 fencing certificates. Some of the revocations were for farms that had discontinued deer farming and were simply housekeeping clean-up of out of date records. Pete commented that the audit was a good exercise with wardens and farmers to bring records and fences up to date.

Lunch Break 12:00 Noon

### 3. Discussion and Action Items 12:30 PM

#### A. Citizen Resolutions-

##### 1. Resolution 100310- Eliminate all CWD programs

Larry Gohlke made a motion to reject. The motion was seconded by Dave Poff. Several committee members all spoke against the resolution. The vote was called and the motion to reject passed by a vote of 10 in favor and 1 opposed.

##### 2. Resolution 110510- Remove Columbia County from CWD-MZ

Jim Kirchner argued that all counties with CWD positives should remain in the CWD-MZ. He made a motion to reject the resolution. The motion was seconded by John Obernberger and discussion ensued. Richard Schreiber spoke against the resolution, but said it was a very emotional issue in Columbia County. Brad Hashheider and Ed Guptill spoke in favor of the resolution. The vote was called and the motion to reject passed by a vote of 10 in favor to 1 opposed.

3. Resolution 640310- Allow crossbows for archery hunting in the CWD-MZs

The Committee discussed and debated a resolution to allow the use of crossbows as a legal weapon for deer hunting in the CWD-MZs during archery season. A presentation and argument in favor of the resolution was presented by guest delegate Ken Anderson of Vilas County. Additional handouts containing information in opposition to the resolution were distributed from the WI Bow hunters association, WI Traditional Archers, and delegate Richard Schreiber. Several delegates spoke their views to oppose the resolution including Chair Mike Riggle, Tony Grabski, and Gerald Stadler. Dave Breunig spoke in favor of the resolution and made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by John Obernberger, and more discussion ensued. Dave Poff raised the concern for increased wounding losses because hunters overestimate the crossbow's capabilities. The vote was called and the motion failed by a vote of 4 in favor 7 opposed.

B. Committee Resolutions- None submitted

2. Department Informational Items & Updates continued

E. DNR's Revised 15-Year CWD Plan Update (1:10 PM) Note: This agenda item was rescheduled by Chairman Mike Riggle to address it after the votes on citizen resolutions in order to accommodate travel of guests in attendance specifically for their resolutions.

The revised 5-year CWD Management Plan was reviewed by an external panel of experts. The 6 panel members include Dale Garner of Iowa; Sharon Dunwoody, Communications Expert; Damien Joly, CWD Researcher; Dan O'Brian, MI Veterinarian; Marcus Peterson, of Texas A&M; and Margo Primus, Alberta. The plan was revised to accommodate concerns of that panel resulting in the proposed 15-Year CWD Management Plan. The 15-year plan can be viewed on the WDNR web site at: [http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/whealth/issues/cwd/doc/CWD\\_15plan.pdf](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/whealth/issues/cwd/doc/CWD_15plan.pdf)

Davin reviewed the main goal of the plan and proposed herd reduction actions toward achieving that goal. The next steps for the plan are completing a review of the public comments from the web site, considering the comments from other environmental groups when they are received, completing the final draft, and submitting that draft to the NRB in September for final approval.

Several committee members pointed out the negatives of sharpshooting. Tony Grabski said that sharpshooting in general was despised by the majority of landowners in the CWD-MZ. Sharpshooting has also been overwhelmingly voted down and opposed by the CWD-Stakeholder Advisory Group and overwhelmingly opposed in the 2007 statewide Conservation Congress Spring Hearings.

Additionally a resolution was passed on the floor at the 2009 Conservation Congress Convention in LaCrosse with three main points from the original 10-year plan:

[1] Sharpshooting by government agents and their private contractors should be restricted to removing sick or injured animals.

[2] The proposed extended winter shooting period should be dropped.

[3] Limit the CWD management plan to 5 years.

Dave Breunig said baiting by sharpshooters is hypocritical. Gerald Stadler agreed with the three main points approved at the convention. He added that we have spent enough time and money on aggressive herd reduction measures that do not work. Instead these methods are "killing deer hunting". He does not approve of the 15-year plan. Another concern was raised that the 15-year plan did not address the use of urine based scents. Davin said that this concern could be added to the final version of the plan.

Larry Gohlke and Jim Kirchner commented that we need to contain and control CWD within the CWD-MZ.

Larry Gohlke made a motion to approve 15-year CWD Response Goal and the motion was seconded by Jim Kirchner: *Minimize the area of Wisconsin where CWD occurs and the number of infected deer in the state.*

The vote was called and the motion failed by a vote of 4 in favor to 7 opposed.

Jim Kirchner made a motion to approve the 15-year CWD Response Plan as a whole. Richard Schreiber called for a roll call vote for the record. The results of that vote were Mike Riggle, Richard Schreiber, John Rosenberger, Larry Godlike, and Jim Kirchner were in favor; Dave Breunig, Tony Grabski, Ed Guptill, Brad Hasheider, Dave Poff, Gerald Stadler, and Randy Voegeli voted against. The motion failed 5 to 7.

4. Member Matters- 3:30 PM

A resolution for an EAB alternative from Greg Wurz of Lake Mills was introduced by Tony Grabski and briefly discussed. The resolution was a proposal to issue an either sex tag as the first tag for hunters in the CWD-MZs and additional buck tags after the first would only be issued after an antlerless deer was harvested. Mike Riggle pointed out that this resolution had not gone through the standard approval process of the spring hearing county vote prior to assignment to a committee. Therefore no further action was taken and the author will be informed to submit the resolution next spring in his county.

General summary comments on the meeting outcome and results of the votes for the resolutions and motions were made by turn for each committee member. The final comments about the meeting were made by Chairman Mike Riggle. Mike made a motion to approve the 15-year CWD Response Plan with removal of items (h) Additional days of gun-hunting opportunity; and (i) Additional focused sharpshooting. The motion was seconded by Larry Gohlke. The vote was called and the motion passed by a vote of 8 in favor and 4 opposed.

5. Adjourn 3:45 PM

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved unanimously.