CWD Response Plan Review Committee Meeting #3
- Notes from December 12, 2016

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Introduction and Meeting Plan

The third meeting of the Wisconsin CWD Response Plan Review Committee was held on December 12, 2016 at the Lussier Family Heritage Center in Madison, Wisconsin. A list of attendees is provided in Appendix I of these notes, and the agenda in Appendix II.

Bob Nack, Big Game Section Chief, with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) opened the meeting and provided an overview of the day’s agenda.

Continuing with the overall approach, the Committee members had been asked to do “pre-work” as preparation for the Committee meeting on December 12, as shown in the diagram below. They had been asked to read and provide comments on the notes from the 2nd meeting (held on November 14, 2016) and be prepared to discuss their comments for Objectives #1, 2 and 3 using Template A, on December 12.

Bob Nack from the DNR discussed the steps for the Committee between December and March 2017, as shown in the diagram below.
Following up on questions from the second meeting, staff from DNR and DATCP provided information on regulations regarding meat handling at deer processing establishments (they need to be licensed), and on the use of DNR guidelines by food pantries. An email response on the topic was read by DATCP staff; the email will be shared with the Committee.

Comments on Current Objectives & Action Items

The afternoon session focused on soliciting comments from the Committee members on Objectives #1, 2 and 3 of the current 2010-2015 CWD Response Plan.

Objective #1: Prevent new introductions of CWD

(a) Carcass movement

Action Item:

Through outreach and enforcement of carcass transportation restrictions, the DNR will seek to prevent the movement of whole wild-cervid carcasses and potentially infectious tissues from within the CWD Management Zone into the rest of the state as well as into Wisconsin from other states and provinces that have CWD in wild cervids.

Committee comments:

1. Noted that the CWD Management Zone did not exist currently. This comment is applicable to all references to CWD Management Zone in the current version of the Response Plan.
2. Current DATCP rules pertain to farmed cervids, and there are no current DATCP rules re: movement of wild deer carcass.

3. DNR has rules about carcass movement, including when the deer has been processed enough to move. However, the rules are generally not well known, and the hunters need to be better informed about them. The DNR staff informed the Committee that these rules are very hard to enforce.

4. Hunters could be informed via better outreach, e.g., using prompts during telecheck. However, out of state hunters could still move deer out of state, without knowing the rules.

5. A Committee member suggested that the rules should be clarified further. DNR staff informed the Committee that there were proposed rules re: carcass movement, and the DNR staff had put them on hold for the time being because of the work being done by the Committee.

(b) Wild cervid herds

Action Item:
The DNR will continue to recommend annual statewide deer quotas and seasons designed to keep deer populations at the established population goals for Wisconsin’s deer management units. When deer population goals are reevaluated as part of the statewide unit review process (currently every three years), disease control will be a primary consideration in those units adjacent to the CWD Management Zone.

Committee comments:
1. DNR staff recommended that in the counties that had CWD, the CDAC should be restricted to only recommending maintaining the deer population or decreasing it, and not an increase. The Committee discussed this recommendation, and noted the need to obtain backing from hunters about the “population decrease” goals, and the need to craft the message carefully so as not to hurt hunting in the state. It would be difficult to require a maintain or decrease objective if only a few CWD positive deer have been found in the wild herd. For example, 1 CWD positive deer found in Washburn County. Disease management should be a required discussion item at all CDAC meetings.

2. Expressed a desire to see CDACs engage more actively in deer herd health conversations.

3. In response to a question about how the population goals were set, DNR staff explained the CDAC process that used a variety of metrics, which resulted in recommendations going to DNR and the NRB.

4. Recommended re-evaluating the CWD county model and the definition of “affected” counties. It noted that the research was not definitively clear on whether CWD was frequency dependent or density dependent.

(c) Baiting and feeding of wild cervids

Action Item:
The DNR will continue to encourage the legislature to pursue a statewide ban on the baiting and feeding of deer to reduce the risk of disease transmission and establishment of CWD and other serious cervid diseases in new areas.
Committee comments:
1. Currently, different rules exist for different counties, causing confusion for hunters and residents, and making it difficult to enforce. The Committee recommended making a state-wide decision re: baiting and feeding, instead of the current patchwork or rules.
2. Some Committee members supported a state-wide ban on baiting and feeding, while some members opposed the ban, citing their support for private property rights. The opponents said that a state-wide ban could lead to deaths in the cold season, particularly in the northern part of the state.
3. Committee members recommended that the ban should not be driven by detection of CWD in farmed cervids.

(d) Farmed cervid regulation

Action Item:
The DNR will continue to build on our cooperative working relationship with DATCP. This will include efforts to work jointly for federal and state funding and to update a Memorandum of Understanding that clearly identifies each agency’s responsibilities and roles.

Committee comments:
1. Recommended updating the MOU based on new research information and input from the Committee.
2. Members commented that farmed cervids are not a threat to the wild herds, unless CWD is detected in the farmed cervids. Once CWD is detected in the farmed cervids, fencing should be improved.

(e) Farmed cervid escapes

Action Item:
The DNR will work to reduce the number of animals escaping from cervid farms by seeking legislative authority for the regulation of all cervid-farm fencing.

Committee comments:
1. When CWD is detected at a farm (and when the rest of the county is not CWD positive), farmers should be required to use double fencing or electric fencing (farmers’ discretion).
2. Currently, DNR has authority of fencing only white tailed deer; while DNR investigates all escapes, it can act only on white tailed deer. Data show that the most common cause of escapes is “unknown” with no damage found to the fence; the second most common cause is “gate left open.” DATCP does not have control over fencing.
3. Members noted that many farms with single fence have not tested CWD positive, though the best practice is to have a double fence.
4. The Committee recommended expanding DNR authority for all cervids. DNR bears all expenses related to investigation of escapes.
5. The Committee recommended incentives and penalties for farmers to minimize escapes. This would be a joint action item for DNR and DATCP.
6. There is no legal requirement to maintain fence after depopulation of a farm. The Committee recommended having double fencing till the depopulation farm was certified CWD-free.

7. While the best form of fencing might be open to debate, the focus should be on separating animals inside and outside the fence.

8. Farmers are willing to work to reduce escapes. Some Committee members recommended seeking more secure gating system, though there was resistance to requiring double gates all around the property.

**(f) Farmed cervid testing and depopulation of infected farms**

**Action Item:**
The DNR will continue to work with DATCP and the farmed cervid industry to: increase the compliance with monitoring, testing, record keeping and cervid movement regulations; expedite the depopulation of farms with CWD-positive animals; and minimize the future risk of those depopulated farms to wild and farmed herds by seeking legislative authority to regulate fences of depopulated farms.

**Committee comments:**

1. Only when farmed cervids test CWD positive should the above recommendations be implemented.

2. Elk pose a very low risk; only 1 elk has tested positive, and it was in Manitowoc County, WI.

**Objective #2: Monitor for and Respond to New CWD Disease Foci**

**(a) Statewide surveillance**

**Action Item:**
The DNR will develop and implement surveillance strategies to detect new foci of CWD outside of the current CWD Management Zone. These strategies will take advantage of the greater surveillance value of clinical suspect deer by encouraging people statewide to report adult deer that exhibit signs consistent with CWD. The approach will also include statewide hunter-harvest based surveillance using weighted approaches that balance efficiency and efficacy.

**Committee comments:**

1. The comment re: roadkill should apply to areas of surveillance only, and not to all areas.

2. Action item should be driven by what is needed, and not by the available budget.

**(b) Surveillance response to new foci**

**Action Item:**
After the detection of a free-ranging CWD positive deer outside of the current CWD Management Zone there will be intensive sampling and testing of deer in at least a ten-mile radius surrounding the new positive to assess the spatial extent and intensity of the outbreak.

**Committee comments:**

1. When a new detection occurs, action items should require a written response within a specific time frame (e.g., immediately, within 7 days, 30 days, etc.) with very specific tasks and
recommendations, engaging CDACs. The timeline and dates should be tightly enforced. The responsibility for this action item should lie with the DNR.

2. All free ranging Elk should be included in the surveillance, in addition to deer.

(c) Management response to new foci

Action Item:
If the new focus is in a deer management unit adjacent to the existing CWD Management Zone, then the new focus will be included in a new Management Zone boundary. If the initial assessment outlined in (b) above indicates that an aggressive course of action is warranted for disease management efforts, the DNR will employ localized herd reduction to control the new focus. When local culling is implemented, it will need to be intensive and implemented over a period of many years until the effects and efficacy can be assessed. Additional existent rules and regulations will go into effect as required by statute and code (deer rehabilitation, baiting and feeding) or as deemed necessary. Ojibwe tribes must be consulted before any action is taken in the ceded territory or on (or adjacent to) reservations that reasonably impacts the Ojibwe harvest right.

Committee comments:
1. A recommendation was made to redefine the “endemic” CWD zone and affected counties.
2. The Committee recommended further defining the terms “aggressive” and “intensive” in the management plan.
3. A recommendation was made to review the Illinois study, since generalized herd reduction or culling might not be the best solution. New research suggests looking at focused culling, instead. Colorado experience suggests that generalized culling could be wasteful.
4. The duration of a CWD designation should be defined, along with criteria that will remove the CWD designation for a county. Surveillance and management response could be used as metrics as input to the criteria discussed above.
5. A recommendation was made to continue surveillance even if no positives were found in an area.
6. Consider rehabilitators as the first line of defense. Rehabilitation of deer was banned till 2014, and the ban has been lifted now. Rehabilitation can help prevent movement of sick deer.
7. DNR should seek additional funding in general for research and monitoring.

Objective #3: Control Distribution and Intensity of CWD

(a) Hunting season structure

Action Item:
The DNR recommends that the 2008 season structure (as described in Appendix A) be the basic season structure for all units in the CWD Management Zone through 2015. The effectiveness of this structure to at least reach the interim population goals will be assessed at five-year increments and will be modified if results indicate it is insufficient to contribute to population or disease management goals.

Committee comments:
1. The hunting season structure above has not been used. The DNR team identified new tools that could be considered now.
2. Majority of deer are on private land, and not much can be done to make people shoot more deer.
3. A recommendation was made to maintain current structure, and determine changes through CDACs. Instead of forcing solutions on residents, seek local input.
4. Educate CDACs about new research regarding frequency dependent harvest.
5. More tools are needed to encourage buck harvest in CWD counties.
6. Provide incentives (monetary and other) to help hunters focus on mature deer since they have a greater likelihood of being CWD positive. However, incentives for mature bucks could discourage regular hunters since there will be less mature bucks available.
7. DNR should specific population goals to address density and frequency. Then, DNR should work with hunters, landowners and sharpshooters to attain those goals.

(b) Landowner permits

Action Item:
Issue post-season landowner hunting permits in the CWD Management Zone.

Committee comments:
1. Landowners already have permits available in the DMAP program. DNR staff provided additional information about the # of tags available to landowners in counties with high prevalence of CWD.
2. Extended seasons might cause hunting fatigue. There are specific protocols already in place related to extended hunting by private landowners.
3. Landowners are the biggest allies in managing herd health, and this potentially useful tool should remain available.

(c) Sharpshooting

Action Item:
The DNR will conduct focused sharpshooting on public lands and on private lands where permission can be obtained in areas of disease clusters in the periphery of the known CWD distribution (e.g. Devil’s Lake State Park) or in the areas of newly identified CWD foci where assessments deem such activities strategically advantageous. Sharpshooting efforts will need to be intensive and sustained over a period of many years before the impact on disease progression can be assessed and control can be documented.

Committee comments:
1. Sharpshooting was not liked by people, was divisive, expensive and not effective. It seemed like a waste of money to hire people to shoot deer.
2. Remove “sustained over a period of many years” and let the duration be decided at the local level by the local response team, based on goals determined at the local level.
3. Sharpshooting is still a useful tool and should remain available.
4. Apply scientific methods to setting targets, since randomized removal of deer will lead to removal of good deer with the bad ones. Consider targeting sick or older deer.
5. Ban on baiting does not go well with sharpshooting since sharpshooters use bait at night.
6. The DNR staff clarified that sharpshooting has not been used since 2006, and any effort should work closely with communities and include volunteers.

(d) Monitoring disease trends and patterns

**Action Item:**
The DNR will conduct sampling and CWD testing that is sufficient to monitor trends in prevalence and disease pattern within the western core monitoring area in Dane and Iowa counties, the eastern monitoring area in Rock and Walworth counties, and in the Baraboo monitoring area. In addition, the DNR will monitor spatial and prevalence patterns at selected higher prevalence areas along the periphery of the currently known CWD geographic distribution.

**Committee comments:**
1. Maintain monitoring in the core areas, and identify where else to monitor, regardless of budget.
2. Continue sampling in core areas for research to identify what is working and what is not working.
3. The Committee asked and the DNR staff clarified that current maps reflect a trend of CWD spreading along waterways.
4. Update the Plan language to reflect that monitoring should be across the state and not just in select areas. Monitoring should be expanded to all 43 counties with baiting and feeding bans.

(e) CWD Zone Deer Population Monitoring

**Action Item:**
Trends in the size of the deer population in the CWD Management Zone will be monitored using a combination of helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft surveys and population modeling. Deer population monitoring will likely be conducted annually over the duration of the plan.

**Committee comments:**
1. The DNR has stopped monitoring by helicopter, though fixed-wing aircraft are still used for monitoring in southwestern Wisconsin.
2. The Committee recommended deleting the reference to helicopters, and replacing it with generic air and field monitoring rather than specifying the types of machines that would be used.
3. The Committee also suggested referencing the deer predator study which is currently being performed.

(f) Collaborate with Illinois

**Action Item:**
The DNR will continue to work cooperatively with the Illinois DNR on CWD management, as outlined in the MOU.

**Committee comments:**
1. Broaden to include all adjacent states in the MOU, and not limit it just to Illinois.

(g) Conduct reviews after the 2015, 2020, and 2025 deer hunting seasons.
Action Item:
The DNR will conduct program reviews of our progress toward meeting the goal and objectives of this plan after the 2015, 2020, and 2025 deer seasons and, based on these reviews, make any needed modifications, some of which are outlined in actions (h), (i), and (j) below.

Committee comments:
1. Remove 2015 from the above action item since the review is being currently undertaken.
2. Remove “CWD Management Zone” from sub-item 3 of this Action Item.

(h) Additional days of gun-hunting opportunity
Action Item:
Based on the results of the review, add more days of gun-hunting opportunity.

Committee comments:
1. Use the tool to recruit new hunters or get inactive hunters more engaged. For example, increasing the age limit for youth hunting could help engage more hunters.
2. Modify the Action Item to say hunting in general, rather than “gun-hunting.”

(i) Additional focused sharpshooting
Action Item:
Consider the use of sharpshooting on public and private lands, where permission can be obtained, in areas of high disease prevalence.

Committee comments:
1. Some Committee members suggested removing this Action Item, while others suggested not removing it from the list of available tools since it could still be useful in high prevalence areas though not in the peripheral areas.

(j) Additional tools
Action Item:
Conduct and support research to develop and evaluate additional tools that have management applications and implement those that meet efficacy and acceptability criteria as needed to enhance progress towards CWD control objectives.

Committee comments:
1. No additional tools were suggested by the Committee during the meeting, though it recommended keeping the Action Item.
Feedback on the Day

The Committee members provided the following feedback on how they thought the day went:

1. Liked the discussion on the CWD model regarding endemic and affected counties.
2. When a farm tests CWD positive in a county that has not tested positive, double or electric fencing should be implemented, unless the farm is depopulated.
3. Some good revisions to the plan were discussed but there is not too much that is new. We need to learn from past mistakes and not repeat them.
4. CDACs should be engaged more; they were missing from the previous planning efforts. Engage CDACs to encourage people to sample more, and to enhance public awareness.
5. The DNR should prepare detailed response plans with specific short-term items in addition to the longer-term items, when new CWD detection occurs. Prepare a written and time-bound plan for both, wild and farmed populations. Add more specificity to the plan objectives and action items.
6. Balance the specificity of the response plan with any disincentives to report CWD.
7. Increase surveillance, but also have a thorough response plan.
8. Infected farms should be required to have double or electric fence until the farm has been certified CWD free.
9. The current plan seems to have fragmented objectives and action plans. Consider trimming the plan to 3 objectives, and avoid duplication.
10. Test more mature bucks, and require sampling for certain size of animals.
11. Antler restrictions could encourage hunters to be more engaged.
12. State agencies must work within their legislative authority; some suggestions could be outside the authority.
13. Plan requirements should follow scientific evidence and knowledge. For example, there are no current soil tests that are fully reliable.
14. Some decisions should be made statewide, e.g., carcass control, baiting, etc. Some other decisions and specific actions should be determined at the local level.
15. Cervid farmers are raising livestock, not wildlife. Double fencing requirements could damage farms financially. The DNR should consider paying for such additional requirements.
16. The discussion still seems focused on culling, which does not work. Let nature resolve the issue. CWD is still being used to ban baiting, to regulate farmers, and to control deer population. Predators are reducing the herds in significant numbers, and culling will chase hunters away.
17. Non-hunters are not represented enough in such discussions; they should have a voice.
18. Need more public support among hunters to combat CWD. We need more trust in the DNR, and the state should be willing to invest the time and money to address CWD.
19. Expand testing across the state.
20. Hunters are the most important ally for deer management, and they need to be engaged through CDACs.
21. Frequency dependence and density dependence are hard to separate. Contaminated landscape makes a difference even apart from frequency.
22. Develop incentives for landowners and hunters.
23. CDACs should be more involved in the plan, and more localized strategies are needed.
24. Create best practices and recommendations for hunters for areas that have and have not tested positive for CWD. Some information is already available on the DNR website, but consider alternative ways to promote this information and make people more aware, e.g., through pamphlets and the internet.

Citizen Input
Following the discussion above, citizens present at the meeting had an opportunity to provide input; they were asked to follow specific guidelines, which were read aloud by the facilitator (included in the notes from the 1st meeting). One citizen provided input:

- CWD is bigger than any one state, and the federal plan needs to be revamped. Wisconsin is in a perfect place to conduct research on genetic resistance to CWD.
- Incentivize hunting and focus on areas with CWD positive animals, allowing hunters to take extra bucks.
Appendix I: List of meeting attendees and participants

The December 12, 2016 meeting was attended by the following Committee members (by first name):

1. Amanda Falch, Wildlife Rehabilitation Advisory Council
2. Ben Johnson, Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
3. Dan Barr, Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
4. Bill McCrary, Wisconsin Bowhunters Association
5. Bruce Krueger, Wisconsin Deer and Elk Farmers Association
6. Joel Espe, Wisconsin Deer and Elk Farmers Association
7. Jerome Donohoe, Wisconsin Deer and Elk Farmers Association
9. Amy Horn-Delzer, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
10. George Meyer, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
11. James Lanier, Quality Deer Management Association
12. Kim Zuhlke, Quality Deer Management Association
13. Kim Pokorny, Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association
14. Larry Bonde, Wisconsin Conservation Congress
15. Mike Riggle, Wisconsin Conservation Congress
16. Al Shook, Wisconsin Conservation Congress
17. Laurie Seale, Whitetails of Wisconsin
18. Mike Spors, Whitetails Unlimited
19. Mitch King, Archery Trade Association
20. Dan Forester, Archery Trade Association
21. Rebecca Osborne, Wisconsin Department of Health Services
22. James Kazmierczak, Wisconsin Department of Health Services
23. Tony Grabski, Sporting Heritage Council
24. Harry Mattox, Safari Club International-Wisconsin Chapter
25. Drew Nussbaum, Wisconsin Department of Tourism
26. Peter Dunn, DNR-Law Enforcement
27. Tami Ryan, DNR-Wildlife Health

Stakeholder groups that were not in attendance:
1. Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors

The DNR staff who attended the meeting included:
- Bob Nack, Big Game Section Chief
- Kevin Wallenfang, Deer & Elk Ecologist
- Maggie Stewart, Assistant Big Game Ecologist
- Ben Beardmore, Social Scientist
Natural Resource Board members in attendance:
- Greg Kazmierski

The following citizens signed in for the meeting:
- Steve Gehrke, CDAC
- Dale L. Schluter
- Patrick Durkin
- Tom Hauge

Independent facilitation support for the meeting was provided by Credens LLC.
## Appendix II: Committee Meeting Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda Item</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Introductions; Follow-up items; Steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>Discuss comments on Objective 1 <em>(Template A)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss comments on Objective 2 <em>(Template A)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 - 12:30</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 – 1:30</td>
<td>Continue … Objective 2 <em>(Template A)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 – 2:45</td>
<td>Discuss comments on Objective 3 <em>(Template A)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>2:45 – 3:00</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 – 3:30</td>
<td>Citizen input</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 – 4:00</td>
<td>Reflections; Next steps; Adjourn</td>
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