

DTR Herd Health/Chronic Wasting Disease Action Team

July 20, 2013 Progress Report

Implementation Action Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- All 14 draft proposals were reviewed and fine tuned followed by discussion of five parking lot items

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #1 - What does the CWD Management Zone mean? How should we define CWD Zones going forward?

Implementation Parking Lot Item Proposal:

Some sort of defined CWD zone is appropriate for items including, but not limited to cervid farms and carcass movement restrictions, but may not be necessary for harvest rules.

In general, we believe that CWD Zone designations should be defined using the current baiting/feeding format, i.e. using county boundaries, create a zone incorporating all areas within 10 miles of where a CWD test positive deer is identified.

However, there are many complex implications of declaring a CWD Zone (see below), so designating new zones/modifying existent zones should be done very carefully on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with local stakeholders.

The Team recommends naming such zones “CWD-affected areas.”

We suggest provisions for removing the CWD-affected designation when it can be confirmed that CWD is no longer a concern in this area.

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #1 - What does the CWD Management Zone mean? How should we define CWD Zones going forward? (*continued*)

Supporting data, references, rationale and other information behind it:

The following are likely implications of creating a CWD Zone, and therefore should be considered when decisions are being made about Zone designation:

- Carcass movement restrictions
- Deer processor/disposal guidance and/or restrictions
- Use of Zone by DATCP for certain aspects of deer farm management
- Use of Zone by other states to apply their disease transfer risk management
- Application of surveillance: mandatory testing, etc.
- The desire to have an intensive-surveillance-based CWD prevalence map to guide management decisions.

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- Parking Lot #1 - What does the CWD Management Zone mean? How should we define CWD Zones going forward? (*continued*)

Consider and describe potential implementation obstacles or drawbacks:

Based on WI's experience with CWD Zones to date, maybe they should only be used for some disease containment/management issues (such as carcass movement restriction, deer farm risk management, etc.), but not be used for other purposes, such as deer hunting season structure?

There needs to be additional discussion about how best to name a CWD Zone: Should this be a "CWD Affected Zone" rather than "Management Zone"? Or should it be a "CWD Prevalence Zone"?

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #1 - What does the CWD Management Zone mean? How should we define CWD Zones going forward? (*continued*)

Overall, how will this proposal simplify or complicate deer hunting, management, or research in Wisconsin:

As we know from WI's experience to date, the designation of CWD Zones both simplifies and complicates aspects of deer management and deer hunting. [For example, can you imagine trying to control the risks associated with deer processing by a processor-by-processor risk evaluation and control designation, rather than using a Zone?] The designation of a CWD Zone is of deep concern to some affected landowners, hunters, municipalities, and businesses, so involvement of local stakeholders is critical in these decisions.

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #2 - Revert to allowing harvest of white (albino, lutino) deer in the CWD-Management Zone

Implementation Parking Lot Item Proposal:

Restore in any CWD Management Zones, the state-wide rule protecting white deer from harvest.

The DNR received a letter from State Representative Fred Clark requesting that the Herd Health/CWD Action Team consider restoring protections for albino and white deer in the CWD Management Zone. The CWD-Management Zone-specific exemption allowing harvest of white and albino deer is a DNR rule change that was one of many liberalized harvest measures implemented for controlling and containing CWD to the southern portion of the state, . The current HH/CWD Team does not feel that there is sufficient value from harvest white deer for CWD management to make it worthwhile to have a different rule on white deer harvest in CWD Zones from the rest of the state.

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- Parking Lot #2 - Revert to allowing harvest of white (albino, lutino) deer in the CWD-Management Zone (*continued*)

Consider and describe potential implementation obstacles or drawbacks:

None, except the need for informing the public who hunts in CWD Zones that the rules about harvest of white deer have changed again.

This will simplify the hunting experience by reducing rule differences, and will simplify enforcement responsibilities for the game wardens.

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #3 - Do not continue with bans on orphaned fawn and injured deer rehabilitation associated with CWD affected areas (a request from a licensed rehabilitator from Washington County)

Implementation Parking Lot Item Proposal:

Do not change current DNR policy prohibiting deer rehabilitation in CWD areas. The DNR received a letter from a licensed wildlife rehabilitator from Washington County requesting that the DNR policy restricting the rehabilitation of deer due to detection of CWD be changed. This is due to the fact that CWD was detected in a wild deer in Waukesha County which resulted in the implementation of a ban of baiting & feeding and deer rehabilitation in Washington County.

Currently, rehabilitation and release is not allowed for wild deer from counties whose borders fall within 10 miles of where a CWD affected deer has been found. The HH/CWD Team feels that rehabilitation and release of deer is counterproductive to controlling the spread of CWD and that continuing this restriction is prudent.

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #4 - Reducing risk of new CWD introductions in WI needs to include control of human-facilitated spread of CWD prion

Implementation Parking Lot Item Proposal:

WI's CWD management needs to include

- Reducing the risk of spread of CWD from farmed cervids to wild cervids by continuing mandatory CWD surveillance on all WI deer farms (implemented by accredited veterinarians), mandatory depopulation and premise management of CWD-affected farms, and rigorous prevention and management of farmed cervid escapes (including financial responsibility by producers for the government costs of escape management).
- Regulation of movement and disposal of carcasses and carcass parts from deer harvested in CWD-affected areas (the intent is to reduce the potential for infectious material to be left on the landscape).
- Appropriate limitations on licensing so that taxidermy, deer rehabilitation, and deer farming activities cannot happen at the same facility.

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #4 - Reducing risk of new CWD introductions in WI needs to include control of human-facilitated spread of CWD prion (*continued*)

Supporting data, references, rationale and other information behind it:

To achieve the goal of limiting spread of CWD to new areas in WI, we need to do more than manage spread of infection in wild deer populations; we also need to reduce the risk of human-facilitated new introductions of CWD:

1. Deer farms are a proven source of new introductions of CWD to wild deer populations; CWD has been repeatedly found on WI deer farms. There needs to be continued attention to surveillance and control of CWD on WI deer farms and management to guard against mixing of farmed and wild deer.
2. Carcass exposure is a proven route of CWD infection for deer; therefore controlling how people move and dispose of carcasses of harvested deer is a prudent part of CWD risk management.
3. In at least one case where CWD was found in a new area (New York), it is suspected that the source was a facility where taxidermy (of cervids harvested in other states) and deer rehabilitation/release were both practiced. To reduce this risk for introductions of CWD in new areas, cross-licensing of facilities for taxidermy, rehabilitation, or deer-farming should not be allowed.

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #4 - Reducing risk of new CWD introductions in WI needs to include control of human-facilitated spread of CWD prion (*continued*)

Consider and describe potential implementation obstacles or drawbacks:

Effective implementation of all 3 of these proposals is dependent on collaboration between the DNR, other units in WI state government (especially DATCP) and the involved business communities (e.g. deer farmers, meat processors, taxidermists etc.).

We know that restrictions on carcass movements and disposal can create challenges for some hunters and have workload implications for DNR staff (Enforcement, Staff, Wildlife, etc.). However, the risk management approaches described here are important to limiting spread of CWD and therefore are important to the future of quality deer hunting in Wisconsin.

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #5 - Wisconsin needs to continue to support CWD research that will improve WI CWD management

Implementation Parking Lot Item Proposal:

WI state and federal governments need to continue to identify, facilitate, and financially support CWD research that is carefully selected to provide information for state CWD and deer management decisions. Research conducted on public or private landholdings must be approved by the appropriate landowner/property manager. Current high priority research areas include the role of environmental contamination in CWD spread, enhancing surveillance approaches to detect spread and prevalence trends, the efficacy of control strategies, and whether CWD will pose a risk for livestock and human health. WDNR, WI Universities, and other proven CWD research partners must collaborate to achieve this in a timely and cost effective way. WDNR routine surveillance data must be readily available (through a WDNR website), both to further some of the research goals, but also for citizen and stakeholder use in making choices about hunting and other activities.

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Parking Lot Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Parking Lot #5 - Wisconsin needs to continue to support CWD research that will improve WI CWD management (*continued*)

Supporting data, references, rationale and other information behind it:

There continue to be many areas of our understanding of CWD that need further research to inform good disease management in our state. High priority examples include:

- Understanding detection and trend monitoring capacities of various surveillance strategies
- Understanding the role that environmental deposition of CWD prion play in spread of infection
- Exploring how various control strategies impact further spread of CWD (potentially including, but not limited to, different hunter harvest season structures, incentives to hunters, agency culling, and vaccination)

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- Parking Lot #5 - Wisconsin needs to continue to support CWD research that will improve WI CWD management (*continued*)

Supporting data, references, rationale and other information behind it:

- Understanding how CWD prions adapt to new hosts in natural systems and what this means for potential risks to livestock and human health.
- Any changes to regulatory structure, proposed pursuant to research findings, must be appropriately reviewed (including public input) and approved by the Natural Resources Board prior to implementation.

Historically, WI made a strong commitment to supporting CWD research, but recently WDNR has invested less, been less active in fostering research important to WI CWD management, and been less open to facilitating research (e.g. through making surveillance data accessible, by leveraging unique resources like the Hall farm premise, etc.). This trend needs to be turned around.

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- Parking Lot #5 - Wisconsin needs to continue to support CWD research that will improve WI CWD management (*continued*)

Consider and describe potential implementation obstacles or drawbacks:

Nationally, there is less funding available for CWD research and there is less interest by agencies in stimulating/facilitating research. So, WDNR (with partners) really needs to be active in making important research happen.

Good targeted research on CWD should ultimately help simplify and improve deer management decision-making.