

DTR Herd Health/Chronic Wasting Disease Action Team

June 29, 2013 Progress Report

Implementation Action Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Recommendation D.8 - WDNR should work closely (through the local biologist) with the Conservation Congress in developing goals and strategies at the county level

Implementation Action Item Proposal:

We support regular meetings between WDNR and WCC for mutual education and issues discussion on CWD/herd health management on a county level or other appropriate geographic scale. But it is important to also maintain the independence of the two institutions. There are already regular WCC county and district meetings that could be the forum for these CWD/herd health discussions. And public and stakeholder input on CWD/herd health management issues should ALSO occur through other forums, particularly any local Citizen Advisory Groups that have been formed in response to a new CWD detection.

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Implementation Action Item Proposal: (*continued*)

There is a need for citizens to understand the roles and activities of the WCC in its work with the WDNR and the NRB.

The goals of the WDNR –WCC collaboration on CWD/herd health goals and strategies perhaps need to be better defined.

There is value in the Natural Resources Board hearing somewhat independently from WDNR staff and the WCC, so this should not be defined as WDNR and WCC bringing joint CWD/herd health recommendations to the NRB.

There is value in the interchange between WDNR staff and WCC members, to improve understanding of issues and different perspectives.

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Implementation Action Item Proposal: (*continued*)

Sometimes it will be appropriate for this interchange to be focused at the county level, but there should be recognition and flexibility so this interchange can happen with multiple counties represented or at the WCC district level, if appropriate.

The time that WDNR local biologists have available is not infinite and needs to be prioritized, so being thoughtful of how this is implemented is important (especially as DMAP implementation also is being considered).

Science based CWD/herd health management recommendations may not always be supported by the public.

The value that will be built by enhanced WDNR and WCC engagement should be respected and not compromised by legislative and higher executive branch decision-making.

Though more WDNR and WCC engagement will of course mean more time spent, the mutual education should hopefully also simplify the process of decision-making.

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Implementation Action Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Recommendation D.9 - We feel use of human dimensions research to anticipate, rather than reacting to issues as they arise would be very effective

Implementation Action Item Proposal:

We support the use of human dimensions research as part of optimal CWD management. However, this needs to be rigorous research (with well thought out targeted study subjects and approaches). We recommend consideration of studies closely tied to chosen CWD management actions, incorporating pre-action assessment of stakeholder attitudes and actions and monitoring of how the management action changes attitudes and actions.

Human dimensions research has been part of Wisconsin's CWD response over the last decade, but there is clearly need to better understand stakeholders attitudes and actions.

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- Recommendation D.9 - We feel use of human dimensions research to anticipate, rather than reacting to issues as they arise would be very effective

Implementation Action Item Proposal: *(continued)*

There is a need for rigorous research on stakeholders' attitudes and action choices, as they relate to CWD/herd health management. Surveys and other methods for collecting hunter/landowner input have value, but decision-makers need human dimension research with a well-defined study set and expert analysis and interpretation.

This work should be done collaboratively between the WDNR and independent and scientific (university) researchers to maximize credibility and use of state-of-the art approaches.

Good research takes money, time, and planning.

Good research may help simplify publically accepted management.

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Implementation Action Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Recommendation B.8 - Re-evaluate the effectiveness of the October antlerless seasons in the CWD Zone

Implementation Action Item Proposal:

This Team supports having an October antlerless season available statewide which would be used when and where needed for population management, including response to disease. Though it should be possible to qualify for bonus buck tags (where Bonus Buck has been applied) through antlerless deer harvested in an October season, there should be a limit (e.g.3) to the number of bucks harvested annually by one individual, total (all weapons). The WDNR deer management structure should be able to cancel the October season as needed in response to deer population changes. The availability of an October season was removed by an administrative order from the Governor in 2012.

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- Recommendation B.8 - Re-evaluate the effectiveness of the October antlerless seasons in the CWD Zone

Implementation Action Item Proposal: *(continued)*

Many hunters perceive that having an October hunt reduces sightings of deer, and hunting success when the 9-day season starts. There are also many hunters who like the extra opportunity of the October hunt. Decisions about implementing an October antlerless hunt should always include public input.

The Team's DNR advisors from the Northern Region view the October antlerless hunt as the best tool available for increasing antlerless deer harvest. This is a tool that may be needed in general to achieve CWD management goals in areas of new CWD detections.

This issue needs to be considered not just for the CWD Management Zone, but also in areas of new CWD detections, such as Washburn County. It also is a tool that should be available for other disease management and deer population management.

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- Recommendation B.8 - Re-evaluate the effectiveness of the October antlerless seasons in the CWD Zone

Implementation Action Item Proposal: *(continued)*

This is also a tool for accessing more deer for CWD surveillance testing, so if there is an October hunt, focus should be put on testing of the harvested deer where it is appropriate.

Currently the WDNR does not have clear authority to use an October season as a tool for deer management. As a standard procedure, authority to implement this tool should reside with the WDNR with public and stakeholder input.

This Team prioritizes having a simplified, statewide deer hunting season structure whenever possible. An October antlerless hunt is an important tool that WDNR should have available statewide, to be used when WDNR and its stakeholder partners decide it is needed for disease management and deer population and harvest management.

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Implementation Action Items proposed or discussed by the Action Team:

- Recommendation B.10 - Maintain the Bonus Buck Regulation in CWD Zone

Implementation Action Item Proposal:

This Team supports having a Bonus Buck Regulation available statewide which would be used when and where needed for population management, including response to disease. There should be a limit (e.g.3) to the number of bucks harvested annually by one individual, total (all weapons). A minimum of 2 antlerless deer should be required to qualify for a Bonus Buck tag. The WDNR deer management structure should be able to cancel the Bonus Buck Program as needed in response to deer population changes.

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- Recommendation B.10 - Maintain the Bonus Buck Regulation in CWD Zone

Implementation Action Item Proposal: *(continued)*

We recognize that some hunters are uncomfortable with higher buck harvest, but there are situations (including CWD affected areas) where allowing the harvest of more bucks is important.

It is important that the WDNR has tools that work to remove more deer, especially antlerless deer, to manage deer populations that are too high and to control disease impacts. Bonus Buck is an effective current tool to increase deer harvest and promote antlerless harvest.

The Bonus Buck Program needs to be applied thoughtfully and there needs to be continued creative thinking about how to provide incentives to private landowners and DMAP participants to contribute to deer population reduction, where needed.

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Implementation Action Item Proposal: *(continued)*

There must be continued attention to keeping hunting season structure simple, even while using the Bonus Buck Program.

Conflicts between private and public land users are likely.

Deer hunting management will be simplified when the same tool, the Bonus Buck Program, is available to be used for disease management and deer population management statewide.

Next Meeting Date is: July 20, 2013