



**COLORADO**

**Parks and Wildlife**

Department of Natural Resources

**Colorado Chronic Wasting Disease Advisory Group**

June 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> 2018 Meeting

Summit County Community and Senior Center

83 Nancy's Place, Frisco, CO 80443

June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1pm - 4pm

**Members in attendance:** Chris Jurney, Craig McLaughlin, Dan Gates, Don Cook, JT Romatzke, Marie Haskett, Mark Leslie, Marty Holmes, Matt Dunfee, Matt Eckert, Troy Sweet, Reid DeWalt

**Members on phone:** Keith Roehr

**Technical advisors in attendance:** Andy Holland, Brian Dreher, Brad Bannulis, Brad Petch, Darby Finley, Janet George, Jon Runge, Lauren Truitt, Lisa Wolfe, Marie Haas, Mike Miller, Mike Quartuch, Travis Duncan, Wayne East

**Technical advisors on phone:** Bill DeVergie

**Technical advisors absent:** Scott Wait

**Guests in attendance:** Scott Cisco, Scott Limmer

June 15<sup>th</sup>, 9am - 4pm

**Members in attendance:** Chris Jurney, Craig McLaughlin, Dan Gates, Don Cook, JT Romatzke, Keith Roehr, Marty Holmes, Matt Dunfee, Matt Eckert, Troy Sweet, Reid DeWalt

**Members on phone:** Marie Haskett

**Members absent:** Mark Leslie

**Technical advisors in attendance:** Brian Dreher, Brad Bannulis, Janet George, Lauren Truitt, Lisa Wolfe, Marie Haas, Mike Miller, Mike Quartuch, Travis Duncan, Wayne East

**Technical advisors on phone:** Darby Finley,

**Technical advisors absent:** Scott Wait

**Guests in attendance:** Scott Cisco, Scott Limmer, Michelle Zimmerman

Meeting Summary

**Presentations:** "Remember the Motherwell: A brief history of CWD detection & response in the White River deer herd" by Dr. Mike Miller, "Investigation of management threshold for CWD in deer" by Matt Eckert & Jon Runge, and "Survey" by Mike Quartuch

**Discussions:** Investigation of management threshold for CWD in deer, review of current draft response plan, public survey

**Key Points:**

- In 2002, after two cases of CWD were confirmed from the Motherwell Ranch Game Farm, DOW opted for local culling in an effort to eradicate the disease. The management effort conducted at the Motherwell Ranch was not initiated as a result of robust scientific research; DOW (now CPW) did not have good data before prescribing a cull. At that time, the belief was that aggressive treatment might allow DOW to eliminate the disease. Some animals outside of the ranch fence were discovered to be infected so DOW tried to remove all deer & elk in the 5 mile radius of the ranch; this



needed to be completed quickly because it was along a migration corridor that would soon become active. In the Spring of 2002, DOW culled a little over 700 deer/elk in the Motherwell vicinity. '02-'04 CWD testing results from hunter harvest revealed that CWD was much more widespread than the Motherwell Ranch Game Farm.

- In 2002, the sentiment towards CWD was eradication and hit it hard. CO was relatively conservative compared to other state agency management actions (NY, IL, and WI).
- Based on the most recent results of mandatory testing, waiting to take action in some herds is a risk we don't want to take; CO data indicates that infection rates in some herds will increase at a higher rate now that prevalence exceeds 10% and 15%. It will be harder to control this disease if we let it get away from us and our existing management tactics may not be effective if prevalence exceeds 30% or 40%.
- There will always be more questions and more data on animal mortality but CWD is one cause of mortality that we can potentially have an effect on right now based on the tools we have.
- Very few infected animals show visible clinical signs. This is a common misconception. It can be hard to know for sure how many animals die from CWD because sick animals are more susceptible to other forms of mortality, such as from predators and vehicles.
- Hunter harvest is the primary approach that will be used to manage CWD. We are not looking at culling as a primary approach.
- CPW is currently suggesting a 15-year monitoring program that will target receiving 300 samples per herd unit in 6-8 herd units per year. The CWD Response Plan is intentionally adaptive over time and will change based on changing environments and new information.
- 10% prevalence levels in bucks mean a 2.5% doe mortality. This level of additive doe mortality would push many of CO deer herds into a decline or accelerate an existing decline.
- At 4% adult buck prevalence rate, CPW models that incorporate CO data suggest that doe population will decline by 7% over a ten year period; assuming prevalence does not go up and the all CWD mortality is additive.
- CPW is working to produce the most scientifically defensible threshold level that is pragmatic for management.
- It is possible to reduce herds and reach a level of keeping prevalence low while still maintaining the herd at management objectives. In deer herd D-04, the goal was to halve the 2003 prevalence rate. CPW has increased the herd and brought license numbers back up in the last 5-10 years, while keeping prevalence under 5%.
- The CWDAG Charter indicates the September commission meeting deadline for the draft CWD Response Plan because that is the meeting when they finalize brochure information. There may be time to push back the proposed schedule.
- We can't go back and change how things were handled in the past, all we can do now is work with the best available scientific information.
- As regards to genetic resistance to CWD, there is no known resistance to CWD at this time. Deer that have some level of resistance to CWD will die from the disease, it just takes a longer period of time to reach the terminal stages of the disease, which can lead to longer time in the field shedding prions. In addition, what are referred to as resistant deer represent a very small proportion of the population, which means their genetics are not being selected for and they are not the fittest animals in the population.
- Several states have taken management actions to curtail CWD, but only for a few years before prematurely terminating treatment. CPW is looking at implementing at

least 5-year treatments to allow time for management actions to show an effect, and possibly longer.

- The plan is written on a statewide level but management actions will be decided and enacted locally. It is intended to give “tools in the toolbox” for herd managers to use on a local level. No one specific action (or tool) is meant to be the edict.
- This plan is not exclusively a CPW document; it has been developed by the working group and should represent what this group collectively believes is the best way forward in management. Many of the CWDAG ideas and recommendations have been incorporated into this plan.
- This plan does not take the place of publicly agreed upon herd management plans. If prevalence levels reach a point where we would want to go below the HMPs, we would have to revise the HMPs and open up the public process.
- Harsh winters may kill off some of the sick animals but they also encourage sick animals to congregate more with healthy animals that may not normally have been exposed to CWD, causing increased transmission rates. We don’t have data on this yet because the last harsh winter was followed by extremely low CWD submission rates. In addition, the prions shed by the infected animals that die in an extreme winter remain in the environment.
- The Survey will go out to 3,000 people and break down to resident vs non-resident and whether they purchase licenses in a high prevalence area vs a low prevalence area. It will be a paper copy with the option for online response (mailings have been found to have higher response rates).
- There are 2 public meetings scheduled: in Meeker on June 26<sup>th</sup> and in Craig on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- CWD test results come back quicker during peak submission times because the lab needs a minimum sample size to run the test. It takes longer in early and late seasons because the lab has to wait for enough samples. It would cost more money to get quicker results and we don’t know if that is even an option as CWD is not the only testing going on at the lab.
- We want to emphasize internal education of CPW as well as external education to the public.

#### Follow-up Required:

- Post Motherwell Ranch information to the website
- Post “Investigation of management threshold for CWD” presentation to website
- Janet George will try to find the exact number of deer culled in D4
- Move next advisory group meeting to Glenwood Springs or Rifle
- Discussion on moving commission meeting presentation of the plan to the November and December meetings instead of September and November
- Considering including reference to the West Slope Mule Deer Strategy
- Implement public hunter CWD survey, potentially in the next 3 weeks
- Post Mike Quartuch’s hand out to the website
- Consider holding public meetings in every region
- Cancel July 6<sup>th</sup> optional webinar meeting