



**COLORADO**

**Parks and Wildlife**

Department of Natural Resources

6060 Broadway  
Denver, CO 80216

## **Colorado Chronic Wasting Disease Advisory Group**

**September 21<sup>st</sup> 2018 Meeting**

**Summit County Community and Senior Center**

**83 Nancy's Place, Frisco, CO 80443**

**9am - 4pm**

**Members in attendance:** Craig McLaughlin, Dan Gates, JT Romatzke, Marty Holmes, Matt Dunfee, Matt Eckert, Reid DeWalt, Wayne East

**Members absent:** Chris Jurney, Don Cook, Keith Roeher, Mark Leslie

**Members on phone:** Marie Haskett, Troy Sweet

**Technical advisors in attendance:** Bryan Lamont, Lauren Truitt, Marie Haas, Mike Miller, Travis Duncan

**Technical advisors on phone:** Bill DeVergie, Brad Bannulis, Brian Dreher, Darby Finley (for Brad Petch), Lisa Wolfe, Mike Quartuch, Rachel Herlihy

**Technical advisors absent:** Janet George, Scott Wait

**Guests in attendance:** Jamie Sherman, Katie Dirsmuth, Mary Wood, Steffi Muller, Stephanie Kurth

### Meeting Summary

**Presentations:** “The Wyoming CWD Experience” by Dr. Mary Wood

**Discussions:** Review status of the CWD Response Plan, Address issues/concerns of the plan, Timeline for public review and Commission action, future role of CWDAG

#### **Key Points:**

- This meeting was called to address any remaining concerns of the CWDAG in regards to the CWD Response Plan. No specific concerns were voiced over the plan.
- This plan is consistent with the recently published WAFWA CWD best practices.
- This plan is not prescriptive or regulatory; it creates guidelines for local managers to use. Several approaches are expected to be implemented throughout the state.
- A major hurdle to CWD research is funding. There are three bills currently going before the US Congress to create funding for CWD research.
- Members want to emphasize future progress by adding a section devoted to “future needs” to the plan.
- CO has had success with CWD management but hasn't done enough to publicize those successes. This needs to be part of future communications to the public.
- Recap of Dr. Wood's presentation: WY has never done on the ground management for CWD. They are getting concerned about increasing prevalence and plan to undertake a similar process to CPW's advisory group. WY's first



case of CWD in a captive facility was in the 1970's and in the wild was in 1985/1986. Agency surveillance for CWD began in 1997. The mid 2000's showed lots of federal funding but both concern and funding waned until recent years. CWD does not eliminate normal population dynamics; WY is still seeing herds fluctuate from other factors. Biologists are not seeing older age-class bucks in areas with high CWD prevalence and are seeing a change in age structure. They are over objective on buck/doe ratios in some areas and realize this may not be good, even though the public may want it. Messaging will be really important in order to convey the issues of CWD to the public. The media often shows examples of skinny, sick-looking animals but the majority of CWD+ animals will appear normal. WY's biggest lesson is that this disease is measured in decades, not years. WY made the decision to not manage CWD, thinking that it wasn't going to be population limiting. 30 years later, they see that is not the case and have to work now to shift messaging and perception. Management will take a long time and deep commitment from the agency and the public. They aren't talking about your ability to hunt next year; they are talking about your grandchildren's ability to hunt.

- Dr. Wood's comments based on questions:
  - She does not see the necessity to sample everywhere, every year, because it will be difficult to get good sample sizes.
  - An example of potential success would be a herd in the northeast part of the state that had ~1.5% prevalence many years ago, has maintained high buck harvest and a late season each year, and the recent prevalence estimate shows it is still ~1.5%.
- No concerns were raised over the previous comment that the plan "calls for killing uninfected deer".
- Waiting until an animal shows clinical signs (i.e. obvious appearance of being sick) exposes the animals and environment around it for a prolonged period of time. Therefore, management is optimal prior to when the animal shows clinical signs of infection.
- Since we can't identify CWD+ animals from CWD- animals, we have to manage on a population level rather than on an individual animal level.
- The idea behind adaptive management is to try out different management prescriptions and compare the outcomes over 5 and 10 years; not try to do everything at once.
- If we wait until a 10% prevalence threshold is met before taking management actions, the rate of disease transmission will be higher than at 5% and it may make it more difficult to control the disease. A prevalence threshold of 5% gives us a chance to take slower or less drastic management actions.
- If a 10% prevalence threshold was selected, it puts the agency in a difficult position when explaining why we chose not to take action before prevalence got this high, knowing that actions could have been taken at lower prevalence.
- Darby Finley presented a simulated modeling exercise of what predicted buck ratios, buck harvest objective, buck license numbers, and population trends would look like over the next 4-5 years to achieve a buck ratio of 25:100 in D-7, which is the lower end of the objective range in the existing herd management

plan. Over the 5-year period, license numbers would not need to change significantly in order to maintain the same population level and achieve the desired buck ratio.

- No further concerns were raised from the group in reference to a CWD prevalence threshold.

#### Follow-up Required:

- Internal brainstorming of future needs.
- Provide Dr. Wood's presentation to the group.
- Create handout for the public explaining how feeding animals can lead to disease hotspots.
- Matt Eckert and Mike Miller will discuss options to update visual aids to show prevalence rates throughout the state.
- October 1 - October 31: the plan will be on the website for public comment.
- The plan will go before the Parks and Wildlife Commission on November 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> in Burlington, CO.
- The CWDAG agreed to serve on a panel if requested at the November or January PWC meeting to discuss the CWD Response Plan.  
The public survey results will be presented in coordination with the CWD Response Plan in January.