

Ad hoc CWD Committee Report

Background

The Ad Hoc Committee of the MAFWA Board was established in 2021 to: enhance and expand external communications; improve internal coordination among the members and with other federal agencies and partners; design and pursue an economic impact study; develop funding and management plans; recommend a shared position statement; and evaluate the need for a dedicated coordinator; develop and continue iteration of shared information, research and funding resources with organizations within and outside of MAFWA; and facilitate communication among member states

Meeting Time and Place

The ad hoc CWD committee has held monthly virtual meetings since March of 2022.

Committee Members

Social Science: Emily Pomeranz (MI), Craig Miller (IL) and Faren Wolter (SD)
Deer Committee: Mike Tonkovich (OH), Levi Jaster (KS), and Chad Stewart (MI)
Health Committee: Mitch Marcus (IN), Charlie Bahnson (ND) and Kelly Straka (MN),
Support roles: Tami Ryan, (WI), Bryan Richards (USGS) and Gabe Jenkins (KY)

Executive Summary

The committee's initial work has been to understand the actions taken regionally and nationally since the finalization of value stream mapping effort that led to the establishment of this group. Here we highlight a few of the most significant efforts.

- 1) Nicholas Cole and Brad Milley (USGS/FWS) are leading development of social-ecological model for CWD management. The initial phase of conceptual modeling included several members of the committee. The second phase of this project will work to identify areas in the model where agency/organization interventions show the most promise for positively affecting CWD management has begun. In Phase II, a multidisciplinary, cross-sector team will also work to identify CWD management successes, failures, and contributing factors. Phase II of this project will result in a decision framework and guidance document that will be disseminated to help managers use the identified interventions and employ them at the local, regional, state/tribal, and national level to improve CWD management outcomes.
- 2) Dan Walsh (MT) and Scott Hull (WI) are leading a CWD Consortium group focused on evaluation of management strategies across state boundaries. Specifically, they are working to determine the influence of harvest regulations, with early work being done based on data from Wisconsin. The intent is to simulate harvest strategies to help inform where and how to implement surveillance and management interventions. The committee will be working with them to determine the feasibility of a regional adaptive management project focused on reducing prevalence of CWD.
- 3) Many MAFWA states are updating or considering updates to CWD management plans. The consensus is that most state's response plans are designed for the first few detections

and don't represent a long-term strategy to management of CWD. Several states are utilizing newly developed systems models, structured decision-making, and increased social science information to update management strategies. One take home from the early modeling efforts is that it does take substantial effort to shift population density, sex and age ratios, etc., to alter disease outcomes. These efforts have clearly identified need to shift from initial response more quickly in planning to implementation of strategies that can meaningfully alter outcomes.

- 4) USFWS support for regional wildlife health coordination creates an opportunity to have a MAFWA wildlife health coordinator with capacity to facilitate the work of this committee. The committee will be working closely with the Fish and Wildlife Health to support the position and creatively find ways to increase the capacity of states to address CWD and other wildlife health related challenges that limit agency's ability to implement meaningful CWD management actions.

The committee has also completed review of existing CWD-related MAFWA resolutions. All standing resolutions seem appropriate, except for the 2017 resolution "Supporting restricting importation of hunter-harvested cervid carcasses from known CWD-infected states and provinces." The committee is concerned that with the continued inter- and intra- state movement of high-risk cervid carcass parts and will work with fish and wildlife health and deer technical committees to propose, if appropriate, an update to this resolution.

Over the next year, the committee plans to focus on: facilitation of communications between the fish and wildlife health, and deer technical committees, and among member states; support to existing efforts to update management plans, develop adaptive management strategies and socio-ecological modeling to design potential interventions; regional and national communication efforts with the Wildlife Management Institute; and support for social science work targeted at identified knowledge gaps.

Director Action Items

No action items for the Directors.

Director Information Items

No information items for the Directors

Time and Place of Next Meeting -

TBD