

May 2023 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

Members of the Ad hoc CWD Committee have met informally on several occasions in the last year (virtual meetings, 2022 Deer Technical Committee meeting, etc.)

Committee Members

Chair: Jason Sumners (MDC) Co-chair: Mike Tonkovich (OH)
Social Science: Emily Pomeranz (MI), Craig Miller (IL), vacant
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: Scott Hull (WI), Tami Ryan (WI), Bryan Richards (USGS) and Gabe Jenkins (KY)

Executive Summary

The Committee's work over the last 12-months has been focused on hiring the regional health coordinator and collaborating with federal agencies and other partnership efforts focused on supporting efforts to understand the challenge associated with implementation of CWD management interventions, and assisting in the development of an adaptive harvest management strategy to mitigate the impacts of CWD.

- 1) Hiring Regional Health Coordinator: 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 chair coordinated closely with the chair and vice-chair of the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee to complete the process for hiring the MAFWA wildlife health coordinator.
- 2) CWD Social Science: The Committee is partnering with Nicholas Cole and Brad Milley (USGS/FWS) who are leading development of social-ecological model for CWD management. This work is focused on better understand social constraints to implementing BMPs and effective harvest management strategies, and effective social science integration. We facilitated a workshop on the social-ecological model for CWD management with the members of the Deer Technical Committee during their annual meeting.

- 3) Adaptive Management Strategy: The Committee is partnering with Dan Walsh (MT) and Scott Hull (WI) are leading a CWD Consortium group focused on evaluation of management strategies across state boundaries. The committee will be working with them to determine the feasibility of a regional adaptive management project focused on reducing prevalence of CWD.

Director Action Items

No action items for the Directors.

Director Information Items

1) CWD Social Science Update

Summary Prepared by: Nicholas Cole (USGS) and Brad Milley (USFWS)

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a difficult to manage threat to cervid herd health and there are limited effective management practices available. Fostering stakeholder support for these best management practices (BMP) is challenging due to the complexity of interconnected social systems. In the Midwest region, these management actions require stakeholder buy-in, or at the very least, a lack of opposition or resistance. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have partnered with MAFWA ad-hoc CWD Committee, and member agencies to better understand social constraints to implementing BMPs and effective social science integration. These ongoing projects employ novel mixed method approaches and include: an effort to conceptually map CWD management at a national scale (disseminating results); describe management interventions within related complex social systems (disseminating results); and understand constraints to accepting BMPs (ongoing). Work is also underway to support a state-led effort that addresses AFWA priorities to improve social science capacity and cooperation across CWD management by creating a clearinghouse of published and unpublished reports and data served on [HDgov](#), an interagency site for all things social science of natural resources (ongoing, active Fall 2023). USGS and USFWS continue to be committed to supporting MAFWA's efforts to maintain healthy cervid populations for the benefit of wildlife, habitat, and people.

2) North American Interdisciplinary Chronic Wasting Disease Research Consortium

Summary prepared by Scott Hull (WI DNR) and Jess Krohner (MT Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit) for MAFWA Directors Meeting June 2023

The [North American interdisciplinary chronic wasting disease research consortium](#), also known as the CWD research consortium, is a formal multi-state research project supported by the State Agricultural Experiment Station network funded through the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Launched in 2020, the project includes over 50 participants from multiple universities, federal and state agencies. The CWD research consortium has 5 primary objectives one of which is Objective 4: Regional CWD adaptive management, the focus of this summary.

Objective 4 Background:

As CWD policies from one jurisdiction may influence the trajectory of neighboring jurisdictions, the only way to resolve uncertainty and understand the efficacy of management actions is through joint management actions and adaptive monitoring and management of CWD at a regional level. **Thus, long-term, sustainable ‘success’ will require coordinating efforts across jurisdictional boundaries through joint adaptive management to fully leverage resources and knowledge and support rapid response under high uncertainty.**

Objective 4 Goal:

By applying adaptive management jointly across the Midwest region, **we aim to achieve our goals of limiting the geographic extent of CWD through the development of more effective and publicly-acceptable management tools that reduce disease intensity and slow the rate of geographic spread** from regions and/or areas within states where CWD is still in the early phases of establishment making the likelihood of management success higher.

MAFWA Integration and Consideration:

- The CWD research consortiums’ objective 4 goal aligns well with the work of the MAFWA Ad-hoc CWD committee who also called for more regional cwd management action and collaboration
- The CWD research consortium is seeking:
 - Continued collaboration and participation from the MAFWA ad-hoc CWD committee, fish/wildlife health committee and deer committee in the development of an adaptive management research project centered around potential regional management actions
 - State agency participation in a CWD research consortium hosted workshop in late summer/early fall 2023 to further define a CWD regional adaptive management research project and steps leading to implementation
 - Additional guidance and input from MAFWA directors as the adaptive management project moves from development to implementation over the next calendar year

Time and Place of Next Meeting -

TBD