**CWD Working Group Recommendations**

Notes: The working group listed 5 recommendation “themes’. Below are the 8/13/18 NRC approved deer regulations **(*in bold italic and underlined*)** under each ‘theme’.

**THEMES**

**1. The Natural Resources Commission should pursue the help of an outside marketing agency in development of messaging Michigan’s vision for CWD Surveillance and Management.**

**2. The Natural Resources Commission should take the lead in forming a consortium of states and provinces to seek federal, state and private funding and share research on CWD surveillance methods, diagnostic tools, transmission pathways and management practices.**

**3. The Natural Resources Commission should work cooperatively with the Agriculture and Rural Development Commission to assess the effectiveness and direction of the farmed cervidae program, with a focus on biosecurity and CWD risk factors.**

**4. The Natural Resources Commission should continue to employ science-based strategy for the regulatory framework of CWD management.**

**5. The Natural Resources Commission should develop statewide, science-based management plans based on regional prevalences of CWD.**

**THEMES with 8.13.18 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Communication**

Following the CWD Symposium, there was one highlight that the CWD Working Group felt warranted special attention. The importance of education, outreach and messaging about Chronic Wasting Disease was a reoccurring theme from every state in attendance. The social science aspects of chronic diseases such as CWD necessitate the involvement of outreach professionals keenly aware of information overload and disease fatigue.

The Natural Resources Commission should pursue the help of an outside marketing agency in developing the messaging of Michigan’s vision for CWD Surveillance and Management.

This messaging should place emphasis on the importance of herd health and Michigan’s commitment to sustainable, healthy deer populations across the state. In alignment with the other recommendations included in this document, messaging should:

• Build direct partnerships between the DNR and hunting organizations

• Educate hunters on the importance of doe harvest for population management and the movement/disposal of carcasses

• Develop public education for CWD

• Help people understand management steps

• Learn from other state experiences (i.e. Wisconsin)

***In October 2017, Michigan hosted a CWD symposium that brought together roughly 200 wildlife scientists and other experts from across the country.***

***Shortly after the symposium, the DNR and the Natural Resources Commission announced the creation of a nine-member Chronic Wasting Disease Working Group. This group was charged with developing recommendations on additional steps and actions to substantially mitigate CWD in Michigan, and in January presented initial recommendations centered around messaging, partnership funding, regional management, and the importance of continuing a solid science-based approach.***

***Throughout April and May of this year, the DNR hosted a series of public engagement meetings in Bay City, Cadillac, Detroit, DeWitt, Gaylord, Houghton, Iron Mountain, Kalamazoo, Marquette, Newberry and Rockford. These meetings provided many opportunities for the DNR to share the latest information and recommendations about CWD, while encouraging the public to offer their best ideas on how to slow the disease.***

**2. Multi State & Province Research Consortium**

The Natural Resources Commission should take the lead in forming a consortium of states and provinces to seek federal, state and private funding and share research on CWD surveillance methods, diagnostic tools, transmission pathways and management practices.

Research priorities for the consortium should include:

• Development of a live animal test,

• Improved high throughput diagnostics,

• Disinfectant development and techniques,

• Mitigation and management of infected sites,

• Management techniques to remove disease from landscape,

• Human dimension studies for prevention and management,

• Advanced techniques for surveillance, and

• Transmission pathways, including evaluating possible vectors of disease

**3. Farmed Cervidae**

The Natural Resources Commission should work cooperatively with the Agriculture and Rural Development Commission to assess the effectiveness and direction of the Farmed Cervidae Program, with a focus on biosecurity and CWD risk factors.

This assessment should consider, but not be limited to, the following:

• Mandatory participation in the Herd Certification Program for all facilities (with exemptions for Class III facilities) \*

• A review of program requirements for infrastructure of facilities

• The creation of a standard manifest for the movement of live cervids\*

• A reduction on the reliance of Fish and Game funds

**4. Science based regulatory framework**

*Harvest and Removal*

The Natural Resources Commission should continue to employ science-based strategy for the regulatory framework of CWD management.

This strategy should include, but not be limited to:

• Reinstatement of 2002 CWD response plan statewide ban on the feeding and baiting of deer

o Although the CWD Working Group passed this recommendation, a minority report is required. One member of the Working Group could not support the reinstatement of a statewide feeding and baiting ban.

• Consideration of a statewide ban on the sale of agricultural commodities for deer bait

o One member of the Working Group could not support a statewide ban on sales.

The Working Group also concluded that the Natural Resources Commission should continue to rely on the Natural Resources Department and provide the Department with needed tools for CWD surveillance and management.

***Effectively immediately, a statewide ban on the use of all natural cervid urine-based lures and attractants, except for lures that are approved by the Archery Trade Association.***

***An immediate ban on baiting and feeding in the 16-county area identified as the CWD Management Zone. This area includes Calhoun, Clinton, Eaton, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Ingham, Ionia, Isabella, Jackson, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Ottawa and Shiawassee counties.***

***A ban on baiting and feeding in the Lower Peninsula, effective Jan. 31, 2019, with an exception to this ban for hunters with disabilities who meet specific requirements. The start date on this regulation is intended to allow bait producers and retailers time to adjust to the new rule.***

***Effective immediately in the CWD Management Zone and four-county bovine tuberculosis area (in Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency and Oscoda counties), hunters with disabilities who meet specific requirements can now use 2 gallons of single-bite bait, such as shelled corn, during the Liberty and Independence hunts.***

**5. Statewide, science-based management plans based on regional prevalences of CWD.**

These plans will be specific for areas where the disease is prevalent, areas where it may be emerging, and for the remainder of the state. Management objectives should be designed for the disease, not the cervid population, and may differ based on established versus emerging infections.

These management plans should include:

1. Best management practices for carcass handling and disposal

2. A mechanism to expand CWD sampling protocol statewide

3. Harvest considerations:

a. Clear deer surveillance goals where disease risk warrants. If these goals are not achieved through traditional hunting season and practices, other non-traditional methods should be considered and implemented

b. All deer management and regulatory tools for hunting seasons, including season timing, length, antler point restrictions (APRs), etc., should be considered through the lens of science-based CWD management.

c. Continue aggressive surveillance in prevalent and emerging disease areas, with optional surveillance in other areas.

d. Metrics for deer population management for disease transmission and risk reduction.

***Reduced the 4-point on-a-side antler requirement on the restricted tag of the combination license in the 16-county CWD Management Zone. Under the new regulation, a hunter in the CWD Management Zone can use the restricted tag of the combination license to harvest a buck with antlers as long as it has at least one 3-inch antler.***

***Created a discounted antlerless license opportunity in the CWD Management Zone on private land; if purchased, the license will expire Nov. 4, 2018.***

***Allowance of all legal firearms to be used in muzzleloader season in the CWD Management Zone.***

***A purchase limit of 10 private-land antlerless licenses per hunter in the CWD Management Zone.***

***Restrictions on deer carcass movement in the five-county CWD Core Area (Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm and Newaygo counties) and the CWD Management Zone.***

***Antlerless options on deer licenses/combo licenses during firearms seasons in the five-county CWD Core Area.***

***Expansion of early and late antlerless seasons in select counties.***

***Changes to regulations regarding wildlife rehabilitators.***

***An experimental mandatory antler point restriction regulation in a five-county CWD Core Area, including Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm and Newaygo counties. The restriction would begin in 2019, provided a survey of hunters shows support for the requirement and specific department guidelines are met. This is intended as a tool to evaluate the effects of antler point restrictions on the spread and prevalence of CWD, along with deer population reduction.***

***A hunter-submitted proposal for mandatory antler point restrictions in Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, St. Clair and Lapeer counties. If hunter surveys support this regulation and specific department guidelines are met, it would be implemented in 2019.***

The success of these recommendations is dependent on stakeholder engagement and support, partnerships, clear messaging, transparency, and appropriate funding.