

Wisconsin Conservation Congress

Deer and Elk Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES



ORDER OF BUSINESS	10-20-2021	6:30 PM	Virtual
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY	Alan Horvath at 6:43 PM (technical difficulties delayed start of meeting)
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B. Roll Call

ATTENDEES	Alan Horvath, Eric Wojchik, Mike Riggle, Andy Geiger, James Morning, Dale Ebert, Mark Noll, Stan Brownell, Larry Gohlke, Doug Seidl, Charlie Brown, Rick Olson, Lars Loberg, Ken Risley, Joe Stuchiak, Dave West, Noah Wishau, Larry Bonde. From DNR: Scott Bowe, Kari Lee-Zimmermann
EXCUSED	Thomas Ryden, Kevin Smaby, Rob Bohmann, David Breunig, Tony Grabski, Duane Beyer, Marlin Laidlaw, Wright Allen, Mike Burkart, Doug Williams, Kieran Kramer
UNEXCUSED	Robert Lombard
GUESTS	Public Speakers: Ryan Rodenkirch, Roxanne Lotts, Brad Heath, Jerome Donahoe, Laurie Seale, Scott Follett

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

DISCUSSION	No repair made.
ACTION	Chair declared agenda approved by consensus.

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

DISCUSSION	Read by Vice Chair Mike Riggle.
ACTION	Chair declared mission statement approved by consensus.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

DISCUSSION	<p>All six guests gave statements that will be sent and attached to these minutes. We only received two written public speaker statements as requested, so some key points from Deer Farm operators will be included here. We have a time line to get these minutes in, and if they come in after this date (10-25-21) they will not be included in the minutes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ryan Rodenkirch indicated they had 5 research projects dealing with bio-security. That alfalfa was the cause of recent CWD positives. That deer farms were the most regulated industry and that we should be working together, not fighting each other. b. Roxanne Lotts comments in addendum to minutes. c. Brad Heath has participated in DMAP and the CDAC process. Stressed that more research needed to be done by farming interests and interested parties, and that everyone should be working together. d. D. Jerome Donahoe...written talking points provided as attachment. e. Laurie Seale. Has been a deer farmer for 32 years. Found CWD on her operation which was a closed operation for the last 6 years. Buying out all deer farms would cost over 79 million dollars, and asked where we intended to get that money. According to her there are 15,837 animals in deer farms, and the cost would be \$5,000.00 per animal. She asked how the WCC would plan to implement rules. <p>She also broke in to our voting process after we had a motion and second, to insist that we include the Sandhill facility in the question. She was out of order, as the public comments portion of the meeting was over and the DNR had already publicly announced the closing of the Sandhill facility.</p>
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	f. Scott Follett said he has raised deer in Oconto since 2008 and has 20 miles of fence with 4 strands of hot wire. Five years ago he had his first positive. He has bred his herd for the resistant gene and has that in 460 does. He has three research programs in effect including breeding for the resistant gene, humic acid in the deer feed, and supplements of Ginkgo biloba.
ACTION	None

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

AI read part of an interdiction that was sent out with the agenda. See attached.

Proposed resolution #1. Motion by Rick Olson, seconded by Charlie Brown to support the following resolution: "Do you support or oppose the presence of captive cervid operations (game farms and shooting preserves) in Wisconsin?"

_____ Support
 _____ Oppose
 _____ Unsure"

DISCUSSION	Larry Bonde stated that both sides DNR/DATCP must work together. Ken Risley stated that they got rid of all deer for 10 years and still had CWD. Eric Wojchik asked who drafted the resolution. Al answered that he and Mike Riggle had done the drafting. Mike Riggle mentioned that this was in line with what our neighboring states are doing. Minnesota has bill pending to buy out existing cervid farms. Rick Olson stated that in the North the major vector for CWD seems to be deer farms.	
ACTION	Olson/Brown motion to support. Vote 17-0 passed.	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

Proposed resolution #2. Motion by Rick Olson, seconded by Erick Wojchik to support the following resolution: "Would you support or oppose a moratorium on the issuance of new captive cervid operation licenses in the State of Wisconsin?"

_____ Support
 _____ Oppose
 _____ Unsure"

DISCUSSION	Rick Olson stated that the deer farmers are doing lots of good research but we should have the moratorium to control the spread of CWD. Larry Bonde stated that he can't support this. Good things are going on with deer farm research. Eric Wojchik supports because this applies only to new farms. Lars Loberg stated that questions 2-4 seem to attack deer farmers. Mike Riggle suggested that just the first question seemed to be enough to cover the point. Olson and Wojchik withdrew their motion and second.	
ACTION	Motion by Rick Olson, seconded by Eric Wishau to pass on proposed resolutions 2-4. Motion passed unanimously.	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

II. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	Larry Bonde stated that the district leadership council should work more closely with DATCP. Noah Wishau felt that Sandhill was closing down based on an October 6 th news article. He also stated that funding for CWD research should come for DATCP and not from DNR. Larry Gohlke stated that DATCP is more of a promotional agency than an enforcement agency. They are "Alice in Dairyland!" Ken Risley thinks deer farmers are, and that not near enough CWD testing is being done and that only 7% of Green County deer are
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	tested. Mark Noll said WI efforts to control or deal with CWD were a failure doing more research than the DNR. Mike Riggle thinks that everyone is passing the political football. Lars Loberg stated that the Congress should take a stronger stand on the wolf issue. Larry Bonde is very concerned about the DNR going rogue with not accepting the Board's wolf recommendation. He stated that it would take lots of money to fight this and that the Wildlife Federation isn't that well funded. Also, that the Congress cannot fight it in court. Noah Wishau said it is imperative for the DNR and the Board to stand down. Rick Olson asked that everyone step back and complete the wolf plan. The DNR has lost their research arm.
ACTION	None.

A. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	8:35 Charlie Brown made a motion, seconded by Douglas Seidl to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.
SUBMITTED BY	Larry Gohlke, Secretary
DATE	October 21, 2021

Written Addendums addressing meeting topic which were submitted by public speakers as requested Committee Secretary Larry Gohlke:

Roxanne Lotts:

Captive Cervid Operations are whitetail deer that originated from the wild and contained behind high fences like Sandhill Wildlife Area or the Elk that were reintroduced from Michigan and Kentucky into WI. Sandhill Wildlife Area consists of free roaming deer, that were captured from the wild, and held behind high fences. Not domesticated deer that were purchased from deer farms. The Elk herds introduced to WI were free roaming, captured and then transported to WI and held behind high fences until released. Free roaming deer and elk are regulated under DNR except for the Sandhill Wildlife Area as it also has a Deer Keepers license that allows hunting behind the high fence as a Hunting Preserve.

Deer farm operations are domesticated livestock regulated by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Whitetail deer farm fencing is initially inspected and approved by both DNR and DATCP and reinspected when the license is up for renewal by DNR. DNR does not have any other jurisdiction over the deer farms. All rules and regulations concerning the license to own, move and operate deer farms are governed by state statute under DATCP's jurisdiction, not DNR's.

Instead of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress providing recommendations to get rid of deer farms that DNR has no jurisdiction over, why not start working with our industry to find solutions to CWD.

Our industry has multiple ongoing research efforts:

- 1) A preserve that was positive for CWD in 2017 was allowed to harvest or slaughter all the animals in it with no new detections of CWD. Any new animals introduced and harvested are tested 100% with no new detections occurring in the past 4 years.

CWD in that preserve was detected early and eliminated just like the single occurrence of CWD in the wild deer in Shell Lake, in Washburn County. Deer farms test 100% of the animals that die and when CWD is detected it can be eliminated, showing the regulations governing the deer farms work to detect it early and eradicate it. When found early and in small numbers it is possible to eradicate the disease as these two examples have shown.

- 2) Two other preserves are enrolled in a collaborative research effort partnering with USDA/APHIS, WI Department of Agriculture and Consumer Protection, many research labs and expert scientists looking at genetic resistance like scrapies in the sheep industry as well as prion disease transmission. We are seeing results, and it would be a shame if the answers we and hunters alike are all looking for are stopped by efforts like this meeting to eliminate deer farming and our research.

What types of research is the WI Department of Natural Resources doing to stop the spread of CWD? Monitoring and reducing numbers of potentially infected animals will not stop this disease.

If you eliminate all the deer farms in the state, the disease will continue to move across the landscape with the free ranging deer's movements and hunters by moving and not properly disposing of carcasses.

WI DATCP has been active in looking at biosecurity on our farms on a research effort with Dr. Wells and the U of M in the CWD multi-state study and is currently working on the USDA funded CWD resistant genome project with Dr.

Seabury to detect what animals on deer farms have genetic resistance and to encourage farms to start breeding with those animals to cull or breed out CWD susceptible Whitetails.

Because of the prevalence of CWD in WI when a new positive from a free ranging deer is detected in a new county, DNR does a press release to inform the public and the response I hear from the public is something like this: That's unfortunate but given the other counties around it that are positive and how prevalent it is in the state it was only a matter of time before that county became infected or the county is probably already infected, we just don't know it yet because not enough deer get tested annually.

But when a new detection in a deer farm is announced, there is an outcry to eliminate the deer off the farm. If the farm is depopulated early, many times only the original detected animal was positive, and the rest of the herd never succumbed to CWD. This shows again that the regulations governing deer farms (with the requirement of 100% testing of our animals) is working and that CWD can be detected early and eliminated when detected in a herd. We need your help and I believe you could use ours if you are willing to work with us and not against us. I urge you to reconsider the purpose of this meeting and take into consideration that there are other resources at your disposal. Invite us to the table, ask us about our research, start to work with us to find a solution to CWD.

Roxanne Lotts
2644 10th Ave Chetek WI 54728 – Barron County

Good evening, my name is Ryan Rodenkirch and I am the President of Whitetails of Wisconsin. We represent the whitetail deer farmers and hunting ranches of Wisconsin. It has come to our attention that a survey is being circulated with a very one sided agenda, causing harm to an industry who is working to fight and solve CWD.

Currently, our association is a part of 5 different research projects with the likes of USDA APHIS at Ames, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and Dr. Chris Seabury from Texas A&M, University of Minnesota and Dr. Scott Wells, and lastly Dr. Nick Haley. We have multiple studies focused on genetic resistance (which is being shown to work), biosecurity, and transmission pathways. Not just cutting off heads to put dots on the map.

Most, if not all epidemiology reports from positives herds lead directly back to the free ranging herd. Positives in our herds have been linked to movement of free range carcasses and improper disposal left for scavengers to consume and spread. Agricultural products such as alfalfa, which is scientifically proven to uptake prions, is believed to be the cause of recent positives. Just as a note, Zero regulations are being enforced on carcasses or ag products from the endemic zone.

The farmed deer industry continues to be the scape goat while we are the only private individuals seeking a solution through our private herds and funds. The last two spring hearings myself and Jerome Donahue have submitted proposals, which passed quite easily, to form a working group between our industry, datcp, Dnr, hunting groups, and the tribes. These proposals were killed off higher up. Yet, We are then supposed to sit here and listen while individuals attack us? We are working to solve cwd every day, who else can say that?

The Deer farm industry is the most regulated agricultural industry in the nation. We test 100% of our mortalities in animals over 12 months of age and are also part of TB and Brucellosis programs. We have farms that test more heads than entire counties. We are part of a federal regulations program. This program is so strict that it even has the Dnr considering closing sandhill, the oldest hunting ranch in the state. If one agency regulating another agency to the point of closing up shop doesn't open your eyes I'm not sure what will.

We don't want the disease and we are fighting to stop it. We should be working together not fighting. If any of the members on this board would like to visit a farm and see what they are really like feel free to reach out. I'm very open to any and all discussion in a civil manner.

Laurie Seale

Where would the funding come from to buy out deer farms? It would need to be a fair market value, not the state's current indemnification value of \$1500 per animal for condemned/diseased herds. When "taking" one's business, it doesn't just include animals. The funding would also need to include land, fence, lodges, equipment, etc.

DATCP estimates there to be 15,837 farmed cervids in the state. At an estimate of \$5000 each, that would amount to \$79 million to buy out all the herds. Where is this funding going to come from?

Even if we eliminate all deer farms in the state, CWD is still going to continue to spread by animals and by hunters moving infected carcasses around the state to non-infected areas.

In question 1, please add Sandhill to the list of cervid operations so that the general public understands this is not just private farms that would be affected by the closure of all game farms.

Several deer farms in Wisconsin are currently conducting very valuable CWD research and are very close to solving CWD. Why would we want to end research that aims to solve the problem?

How would the Conservation Congress plan to eliminate all deer farms when the DNR does not regulate deer farms in the state? This is a DATCP issue that would require statutory changes on their part, not DNR.

I would like to thank you all for allowing me to address your committee.

My name is Brad Heath I was born in Plainfield and live in Central Wisconsin. I have been deer hunting for over 50 years. I have participated in the Deer Management Assistant program and have served on my county CDAC.

I would like to give you my two cents worth on what we can do to ensure we have a good healthy population of Whitetails across the Wisconsin landscape. CWD has been spreading across the state for the last 20 years and yet we still know very little about it. More has to be done than just monitoring where the disease is, we need answers. To do this we need more research and cooperation between Cervid farms, Wildlife agencies and the conservation Congress and all other parties with a vested interest in CWD. The only way to solve CWD is for Everyone to work together.

Brad Heath

In 2019, a resolution (410619) for Cooperative CWD Research that passed by the citizens of Milwaukee County 72 to advance vs. 11 not to advance. This resolution was reviewed by the Deer and Elk Advisory Committee and forwarded onto the DLC committee. This resolution did not make it out of DLC review.

In 2020, a re-submitted resolution (410220) for the second year for Cooperative CWD Research vote by the citizens of Milwaukee County. This resolution passed / approved to forward by the citizens by an 867 approval vote to a 157 no vote. This resolution was just 1 of 5 submitted by citizens of the state and voted on by the citizens in their respective counties (resolutions 140220, 170120, 440220, 570120, 700420). These collectively passed 2664 yes vote to an 888 no vote. These resolutions were again reviewed by the DEER and ELK Advisory Committee. None of these made it out of committee.

In 2021, even when the NRB submits a resolution titled "Collaborative scientific CWD working group" the people of the state voted 7179 to approve / forward to a 1635 no votes. The WCC did not even acknowledge nor discuss this resolution by the NRB on any committee in the WCC for advancing with WCC support to the NRB as supporting this resolution where as the people of the state are requiring the DNR to do something in working together about CWD as outlined in the resolution.

Question is, what is the WCC going to do about it at any level representing the people of the state concerning the public's request for collaborative research re CWD with ALL stakeholders?

As an FYI, Wisconsin 20 years of recording CWD positive deer as of 10-20-2021:

- **Hunter Harvested – 8,206 positive CWD deer**
- **Farm Deer - 672 positive CWD deer**

Thank you, Jerome Donohoe, ag_o3@earthlink.net

President - Wisconsin Commercial Deer and Elk Farmers Association