



Report: Emergency Response to Disease Outbreaks in Wildlife

Covering the Period October 1 –December 31, 2020

As required by Minnesota Session Law 2019, 1st Special Session, Chapter 4

4/26/2021

Report to the Minnesota Legislature

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

651-259-5024

bob.meier@state.mn.us

mndnr.gov

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 3.197, we estimate that it cost approximately \$240 produce this report. This includes staff time for drafting and reviewing the report.

Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. Printed on recycled paper.

DNR CWD Spending Legislative Report

This report fulfills the quarterly reporting requirement of Minnesota Session Law 2019, 1st Special Session, Chapter 4, Article 1, Section 3, Subdivision 6(b) “\$1,595,000 the first year and \$275,000 the second year are from the general fund, and \$1,125,000 the first year and \$1,675,000 the second year are from the game and fish fund for planning for and emergency response to disease outbreaks in wildlife. The commissioner and board must each submit quarterly reports on the activities funded under this paragraph to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources and agriculture.” (Table 1)

CWD Activities, October 1-December 31, 2020

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) spent approximately \$747,000 during the second quarter of FY21 on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)-related activities (Figure 1, Tables 2 and 3). The spending this quarter primarily supported sample collection efforts including salary for full-time staff, fleet, and travel expenses for staff involved in sample collection and extraction, student labor contracts, dumpsters, and diagnostic testing (Table 2). A detailed list of activities includes:

- During fall 2020, a total of 7,167 deer were tested for CWD in 5 areas of the state (Figure 2), including the following:
 - North-Central CWD Management Zone tested 951 deer; no positives were detected
 - East-Central CWD Surveillance Area tested 356 deer; no positives were detected
 - West-Central CWD Surveillance Area tested 446 deer; no positives were detected
 - South Metro CWD Management Zone tested 1,077 deer; 3 new cases of CWD were detected. The south metro CWD surveillance area tested an additional 247 deer; no positives were detected.
 - The Southeast CWD Management Zone tested 3,667 deer; 19 new cases of CWD were detected. The southeast CWD control zone tested an additional 423 deer; no positives were detected.
- A total of 22 new cases of CWD were detected in deer harvested in the south metro (n=3, Figure 3) and the southeast (n=19, Figure 4) CWD Management Zones. Most of the new detections occurred in areas that had previous cases of the disease; however, several cases appear to indicate spread may be occurring. Four of the positives found in the southeast were either found dead by hunters and landowners or killed by a vehicle.
- Hunter participation in the voluntary CWD sampling implemented due to COVID-19 was lower than expected. Sufficient samples were collected in all 3 CWD Management Zone to adequately monitor changes in apparent prevalence and disease spread. However, insufficient data were collected to meet sampling goals in the East-Central and South Metro surveillance areas. The West-Central surveillance area did achieve its sampling goal in half of the zone (DPA 213), but the other half (DPA 275) fell about 50% short of its sampling goal.
- No in-person CWD testing was conducted at check stations in order to protect hunters and staff from potential COVID-19 exposure risk. Instead, 76 self-service sampling stations were set up across all surveillance areas. Hunters choosing to participate in testing could simply deposit the lymph nodes or head of their deer in a collection barrel and fill out an information tag. DNR staff collected heads three times per week during archery season and daily during the firearm season and transported the heads to centralized sites where DNR staff and university students extracted samples. Test results were received within 5 business days and posted to the CWD webpage on the DNR website.

- A total of 33 dumpsters were strategically placed in the North-Central (n=6), South Metro (n=7), and Southeast (N=20) CWD Management Zones to provide hunters with a safe disposal option for butcher remains from their harvested deer. Over 200 tons of deer remains were collected and transported to lined landfills or incinerators through 232 pick-up/haul events. Total program costs are still pending as not all invoices have been received from vendors, but we have paid out \$108,969 in the second quarter.
- Taxidermists and meat processors were contacted in all CWD surveillance areas and asked to participate in collection efforts. Participating businesses were offered \$5-15/sample (depending on number of tissues being collected). We had 240 taxidermists and meat processors enroll in the program. Of these, 42 vendors submitted a total of 1,469 samples. Only a small proportion of these invoices were received during Q2 (\$1,670, Table 2), and we anticipate another approximately \$18,000 in vendor invoices to be receipted during Q3.
- Two late-season hunts were planned and implemented in response to new disease detections in the south metro and southeast surveillance zones. These late hunts occurred Dec 26-27 and Jan 2-3; resulting in 831 additional samples.
- Planning for post season agency culling began, which included establishing a contract with USDA-Wildlife Services to assist with the deer removal work. DNR competed for and was awarded \$250,000 in USDA-APHIS funding to support the overall culling project. This work will occur during the third quarter.
- The southeast deer study continues to monitor collared animals and also completed data analyses on dispersal movements and home range use. More information on the study can be found here: www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwd/deer-movement-study.html.
- Biologists conducting the forest deer study, aimed at understanding habitat requirements and drivers of population performance, monitored deer at two study sites in northcentral and northeast Minnesota. Collars were purchased and a helicopter capture contract was secured to deploy additional collars this winter.

Communication efforts this reporting quarter continued to encourage hunters to participate in the voluntary CWD testing during the firearms season. Deer hunting communications started in July with the release of the hunting regulations book and included the following during the second quarter:

- Continuous updates to the numerous deer hunting webpages, including: updating the dedicated CWD webpages to provide hunter information about the season, by area, and the resources available to them (including updating a webpage walking hunters through the process of submitting a sample); developing a new webpage to remind hunters of the importance of making a plan that highlighted getting deer tested for CWD, which is highlighted on the DNR webpage.
- A series of news releases occurred throughout the deer season, highlighting new detections of the disease and continued effort to encourage hunter participation.
- CWD updates in both weekly (Minnesota Wildlife Newsletter) and monthly (Deer Notes) newsletters.
- Numerous radio interviews with DNR staff, and supplied soundbites to radio stations that supported CWD messaging and urged hunters to make a plan for the hunting season.
- Local outreach, including staff interviews with local newspapers and local radio stations, in addition to paid advertisements in local newspapers emphasizing CWD-related requirements for hunters.

Table 1. Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation Allocation FY20-21.

Fund	FY20 Appropriated	FY21 Appropriated	Total App FY20-21
General Fund	1,595,000	275,000	1,870,000
Game and Fish-Emergency Response	1,125,000	1,675,000	2,800,000
Cervid Health – Adopt a Dumpster	50,000		50,000
Total	2,770,000	1,950,000	4,720,000

Figure 1. Quarterly spending activity of the Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation Allocation FY20-21.

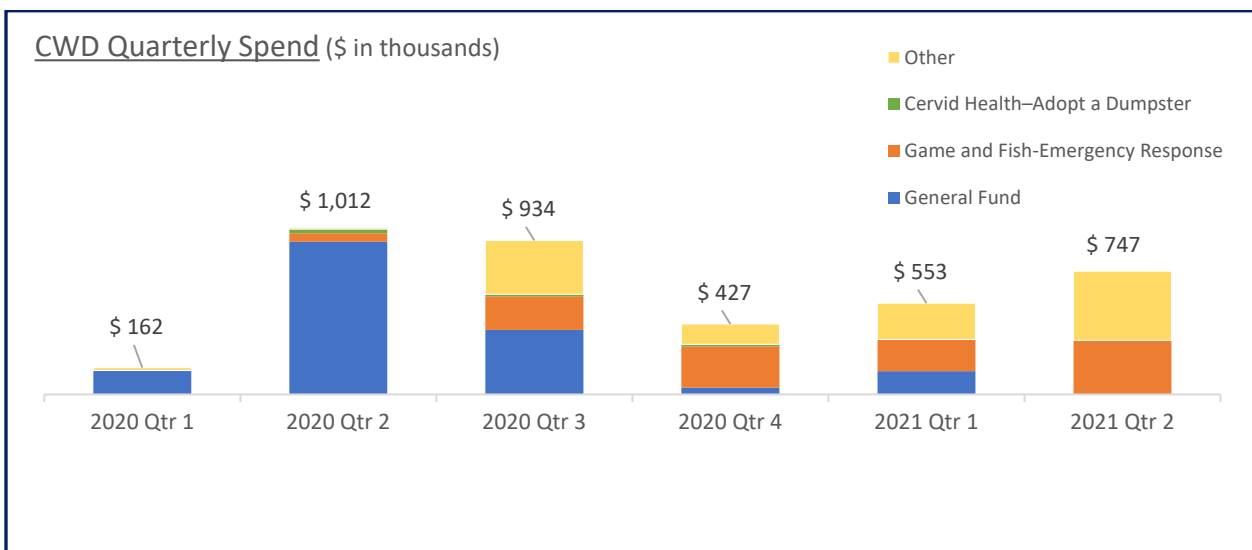


Table 2. Detailed spending by expense type for Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation, FY21 Quarter 2 only, October 1 through December 31, 2020.

Expense Type	General Fund	Game and Fish- Emergency Response	Other**	Total Spend
Salary	-	34,182	339,126	373,307
CSU/UW CWD Sample Testing	846	21,300	73,778	95,924
USDA-Culling Contract	-	-	-	-
Travel/Fleet	151	56,196	5,464	61,810
Supplies	151	29,988	-	30,139
Dumpsters	-	108,969	-	108,969
Contracts: CWD Tissue Sampling	507	-	-	507
CWD Attitude Survey	-	18,000	-	18,000
Meat Processor/Taxidermists	-	1,670	-	1,670
Equipment	-	-	-	-
Printing & Advertising	-	26,930	802	27,732
Deer Collars	-	18,238	-	18,238
Helicopter Deer Capture/Surveys	-	-	-	-
Crow Wing Landfill	-	-	-	-
CWD Office Lease - Rushford	-	7,199	-	7,199
UMN CWD Testing (elk/moose)	-	-	-	-
Other	-	3,428	-	3,428
Total	1,655	326,100	419,169	746,924

** Other includes Game and Fish Operating Account, Deer Management Account, Deer/Bear Account, Cervid Health Account, and Heritage Fund.

Table 3. Detailed spending by expense type for Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation, July 1, 2019, through December 31, 2020.

Expense Type	General Fund	Game and Fish- Emergency Response	Cervid Health– Adopt a Dumpster	Other**	Total Spend
Salary	677,196	62,660	-	834,479	1,574,335
CSU/UW CWD Sample Testing	337,681	21,300	-	73,778	432,759
USDA-Culling Contract	-	200,000	-	95,209	295,209
Travel/Fleet	89,915	149,626	124	93,933	333,599
Supplies	108,116	123,580	-	4,069	235,765
Dumpsters	100,098	116,688	49,876	6,936	273,598
Contracts: CWD Tissue Sampling	103,837	-	-	-	103,837
CWD Attitude Survey	-	98,000	-	-	98,000
Meat Processor/Taxidermists	70,884	23,290	-	-	94,174
Equipment	25,216	41,406	-	-	66,622
Printing & Advertising	51,426	36,714	-	1,708	89,848
Deer Collars	-	71,098	-	-	71,098
Helicopter Deer Capture/Surveys	-	51,178	-	5,112	56,290
Crow Wing Landfill	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
CWD Office Lease - Rushford	19,197	14,398	-	-	33,595
UMN CWD Testing (elk/moose)	1,896	-	-	-	1,896
Other	10,133	13,904	-	95	24,132
Total	1,645,594	1,023,843	50,000	1,115,319	3,834,757
\$ Encumbered	118,359	896,172		38,370	
% of Budget Spent	88.0%	36.6%	100.0%		
% of Budget Encumbered	6.3%	32.0%			
% of Budget Spent/Enc	94.3%	68.6%	100.0%		

** Other includes Game and Fish Operating Account, Deer Management Account, Deer/Bear Account, Cervid Health Account, and Heritage Fund.

Figure 2. Hunter-harvested deer tested for chronic wasting disease (CWD) during fall 2020 in Minnesota.

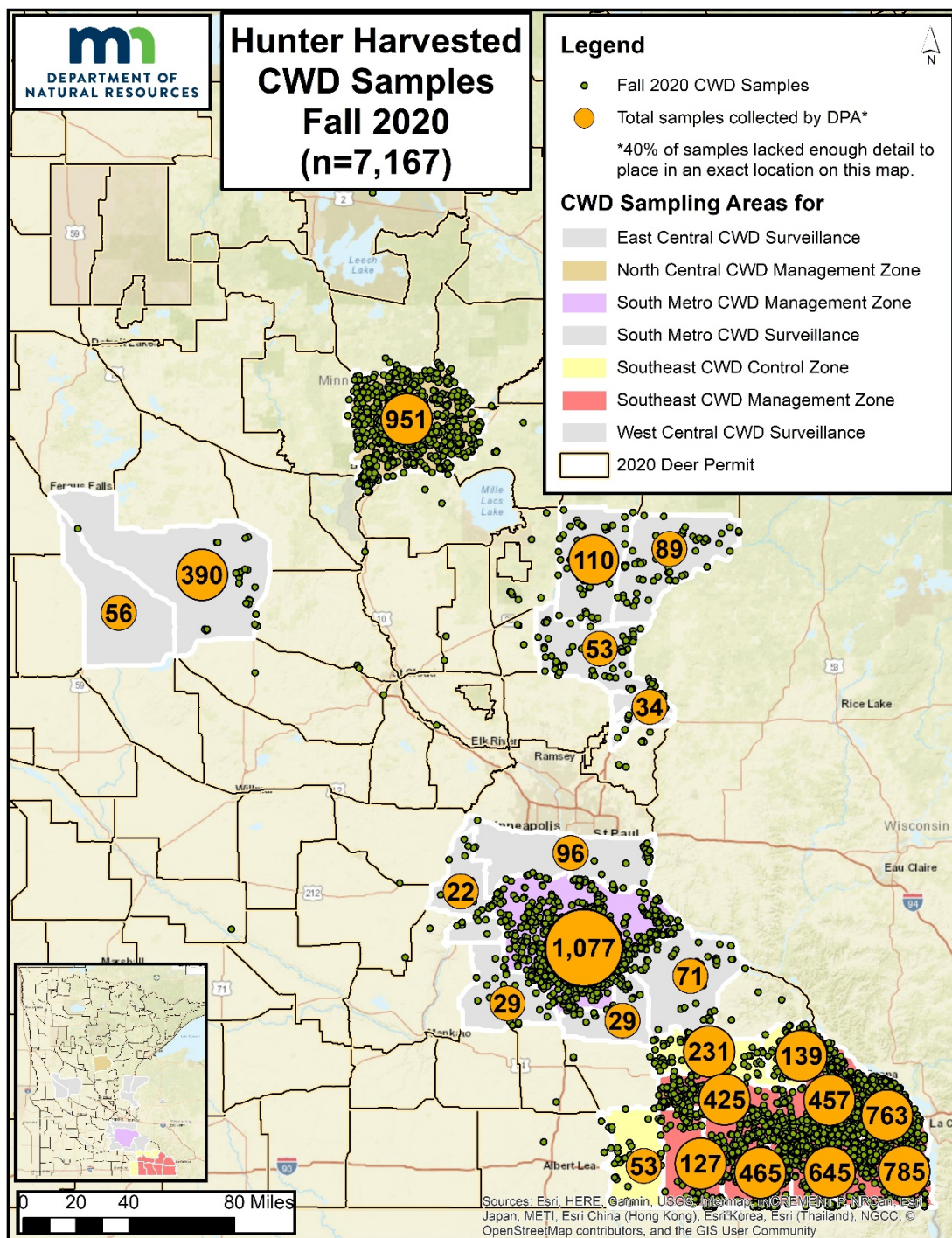


Figure 3. Locations of deer (n=3) harvested by hunters during fall 2020 that were infected with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in the south metro CWD Zone (Deer Permit Area 605).

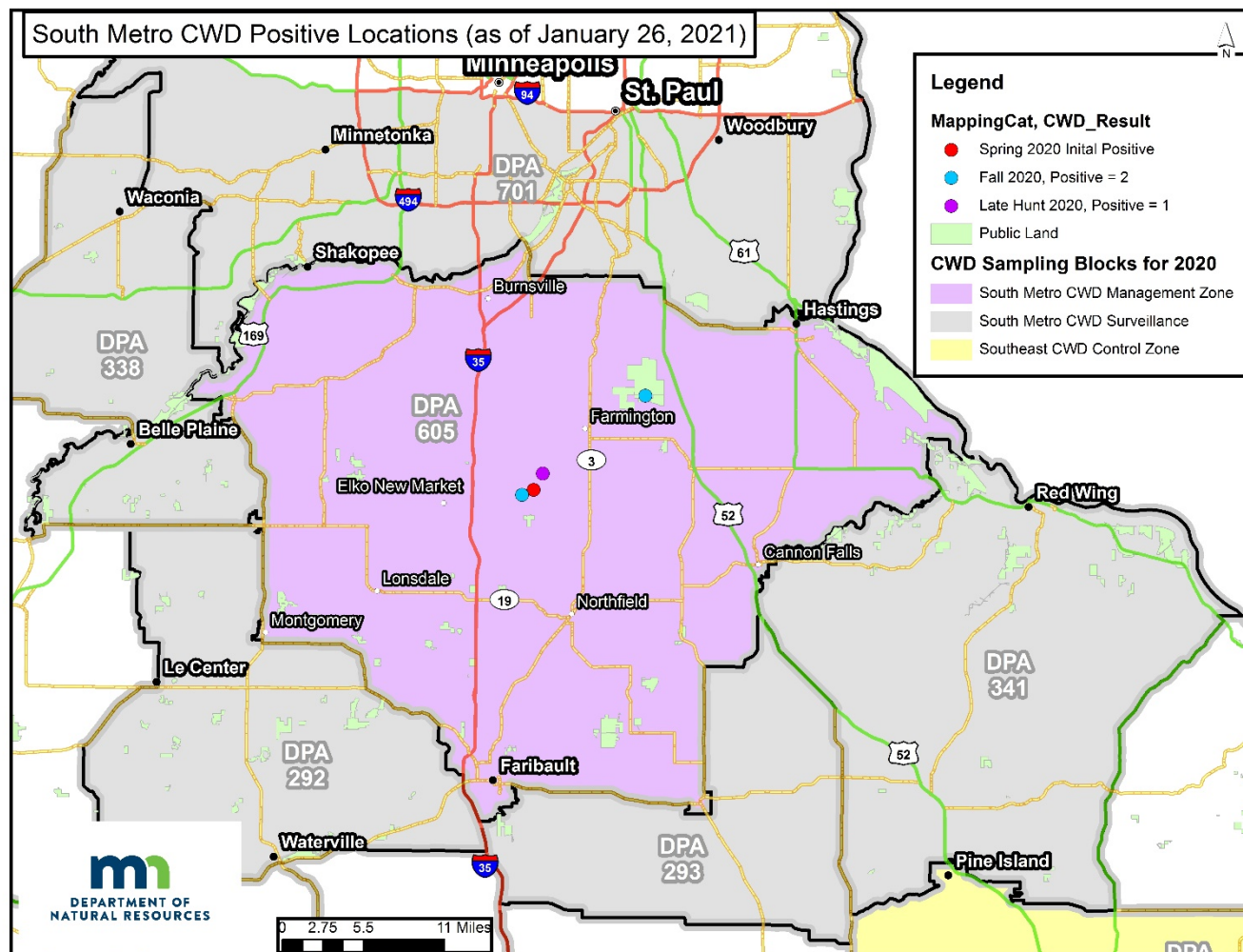


Figure 4. Location of deer (n=19) that were positive for Chronic Wasting Disease in southeastern Minnesota during fall 2020.

