



Report: Emergency Response to Disease Outbreaks in Wildlife

Covering the Period October 1 –December 31, 2021

As required by Minnesota Session Law 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 6

7/31/2023

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 \$320 to 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 2021, 1st Special Session, Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 3, Subdivision 6(b) “\$1,529,000 the first year and \$2,532,000 the second year are from the general fund and \$2,425,000 the first year and \$2,425,000 the second year are from the game and fish fund for planning for and emergency response to disease outbreaks in wildlife. Of the game and fish fund appropriation, \$750,000 the first year and \$750,000 the second year are from the heritage enhancement account and are onetime (Table 1). The commissioner and the Board of Animal Health must each submit quarterly reports on chronic wasting disease activities funded in this biennium to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources and agriculture.”

CWD Activities, October 1 – December 31, 2021

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) spent approximately \$1,123,000 during the second quarter of FY22 on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)-related activities (Figure 1, Table 2). This spending includes the purchasing of supplies necessary for sample collection efforts planned for fall 2021, staff salary and travel expenses for collecting samples at stations, dumpsters, printing of CWD informational materials, and diagnostic testing. New activities that occurred this past quarter were focused on implementing CWD surveillance efforts for fall 2021 and the late season hunts. A detailed list of activities include:

- From Oct 1 to Dec 31, a total of 14,094 samples were collected and submitted for CWD testing:
 - Opportunistic sampling (i.e., 178 vehicle-killed deer, 10 sick deer, 22 found dead, 129 depredation permits, and 28 other): 367 samples, collected statewide; none of these deer were CWD-positive.
 - Hunter-harvested sampling: 13,727 samples; 26 of these deer were CWD-positive. These samples were collected from 7 areas of the state (Fig 2), including:
 - 1,378 from the East Central CWD Surveillance Zone
 - 440 from the West Central CWD Surveillance Zone
 - 1,834 from the Northwest CWD Surveillance Zone
 - 1,245 from the North Central CWD Management Zone
 - 6,072 from the Southeast CWD Management and Control Zones
 - 2,571 from the South Metro CWD Management and Surveillance Zones
 - 187 from Climax area (Deer Permit Areas 261), northwestern Minnesota
- The 26 new cases of CWD were detected in wild deer during this quarter were all harvested by hunters and included 1 deer in Deer Permit Area (DPA) 261, 22 in the southeast, 2 in the south metro, and 1 deer in DPA 604 (Figs 3,4,5).

- The new detection of CWD occurred in a wild deer near Climax (DPA 261) from a hunter-submitted sample from an adult buck harvested during youth season in October. This is the first time CWD was found in this area of the state and >200 miles from any known occurrence in wild deer in Minnesota or North Dakota. Voluntary collection efforts were implemented during the firearm season and 65 samples were collected; all deer tested not detected for CWD. Discussions occurred with North Dakota Game and Fish staff and they planned to collect samples across the border from this case during fall; 92 samples were collected and all were not detected for CWD.
- Overall sample collections were less than anticipated during mandatory testing weekends, which represents both a drop in harvest and hunter compliance with the rule. In fall 2019, hunter compliance with mandatory testing was >90% in most areas; this past fall compliance averaged 68% across all zones with a range of 45% (East Central CWD Surveillance Zone) to 91% (Southeast CWD Management Zone).
- All samples were processed, organized, and submitted to veterinary diagnostic laboratories at Colorado State University or the University of Wisconsin-Madison for testing. Results were uploaded onto the DNR website and available to hunters, typically within a week of sample submission.
- DNR staff from Fish and Wildlife and other Divisions led to 224 staff working 21,645 hours on CWD surveillance efforts this quarter.
- Student labor was contracted from 13 different universities and colleges in the state (plus one in Iowa) and resulted in 184 students that worked at least one shift along DNR staff to collect samples.
- Ordering of supplies and equipment for 87 CWD sampling stations located throughout the state.
- Dumpster sites were secured at 32 locations in our 3 CWD management zones.
- A Partner Sampling Program was established to recruit taxidermists and meat processors to collect samples for CWD testing with surveillance zones. Approximately 1,800 samples have been collected by 48 vendors that participated in the program.
- Late CWD hunts were planned and implemented in southeast, south metro, and northwest areas of the state during the last 2 weekends in December. Hunters harvested 1,078 deer and 2 deer were found positive for CWD (both occurred in southeastern Minnesota).
- Met with tribal biologists to coordinate sampling efforts in northwest Minnesota. Federal funding was available to support collection and testing efforts for tribal hunters and these efforts were coordinated through University of Minnesota staff.
- Contingency planning for implementing a CWD sampling effort during an ongoing pandemic. Due to ongoing threat of Covid-19 and the need to protect human health, we adopted a hybrid model of sample acquisition that included both self-service and staffed CWD sampling stations. In addition, we included mandatory sampling for all adult deer harvested during the opening weekend of firearm season and voluntary sampling options available for CWD management zones throughout all season. Coordination between Wildlife Health and Division safety staff led to the development of new protocols to ensure social distancing and other precautions could be implemented to reduce the spread of the virus among hunters, DNR staff and students.

Planning efforts for CWD-related winter work began, based on detections of new cases of CWD this fall.

Landowner shooting permits will be offered to landowners with ≥10 acres of property near harvest locations of CWD-positive deer. A contract with USDA-Wildlife Services for deer removal work was established and key areas where culling may be utilized this winter were identified.

Communication continued this reporting quarter to ensure hunters were aware of the mandatory CWD testing rules during the firearm season opener and how to best comply with the regulation. We wanted to ensure hunters outside of opening weekend understood the voluntary testing options available to them. Deer hunting communication intensified as hunting season approached and included the following:

- 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.
 - Providing information related to dumpster locations.
- A series of news releases highlighting the importance of CWD testing in designated areas, and a CWD-specific release.
- Multiple social media posts on the DNR's Facebook page.
- CWD reminders in both weekly (Minnesota Wildlife Newsletter) and monthly (Deer Notes) newsletters.
- Numerous radio interviews with DNR staff, as well as supplied soundbites to radio stations, to support CWD messaging and urging 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.
- Brochures were provided to every hunter that submitted a sample for CWD testing at in-person registration stations as well as self-service sampling sites.

Table 1. Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation Allocation FY22-23.

Fund	FY22 Appropriated	FY23 Appropriated	Total App FY22-23
General Fund	1,529,000	2,532,000	4,061,000
Game and Fish-Emergency Response	1,675,000	1,675,000	3,350,000
Heritage	750,000	750,000	1,500,000
Total	3,954,000	4,957,000	8,911,000

Figure 1. Quarterly spending activity of the Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation Allocation FY22-23.

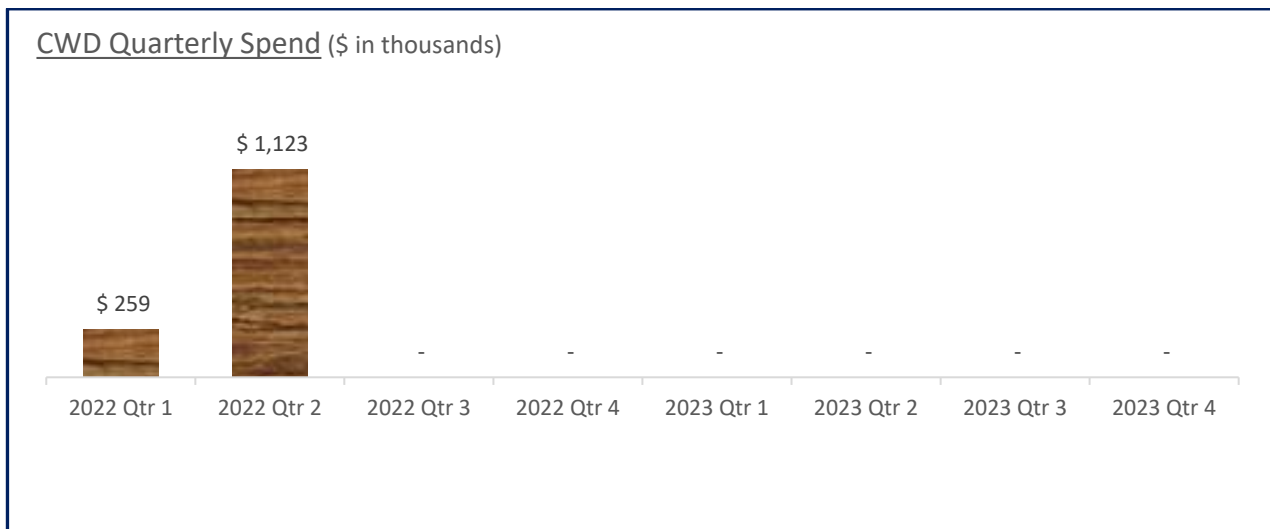


Table 2. Detailed spending by expense type for Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation, July 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

Expense Type	General Fund	Game and Fish-Emergency Response	Heritage	Other**	Total Spend
Salary	618	640,152	-	219,631	860,401
CWD Sample Testing	37,163	-	-	42,000	79,163
Contracts: CWD Tissue Sampling	40,436	-	-	-	40,436
USDA-Culling Contract	-	-	-	-	-
CWD Office - Rushford	16,335	-	-	-	16,335
Dumpsters	73,789	800	-	-	74,588
Supplies	132,691	2,046	-	5,028	139,764
Travel/Fleet	42,805	55,749	-	175	98,729
Printing & Advertising	26,226	13	-	-	26,239
Other	24,561	27	-	22,210	46,798
Total	394,623	698,786	-	289,045	1,382,454
\$ Encumbered	836,492	299,101	400,000	-	
% of Budget Spent	25.8%	41.7%	0.0%		
% of Budget Encumbered	54.7%	17.9%	53.3%		
% of Budget Spent/Enc	80.5%	59.6%	53.3%		

** Other includes Game and Fish Operating Account, Deer Management Account, Deer/Bear Account, Cervid

Figure 2. Areas for chronic wasting disease surveillance of hunter-harvested deer planned for fall 2021 in Minnesota.

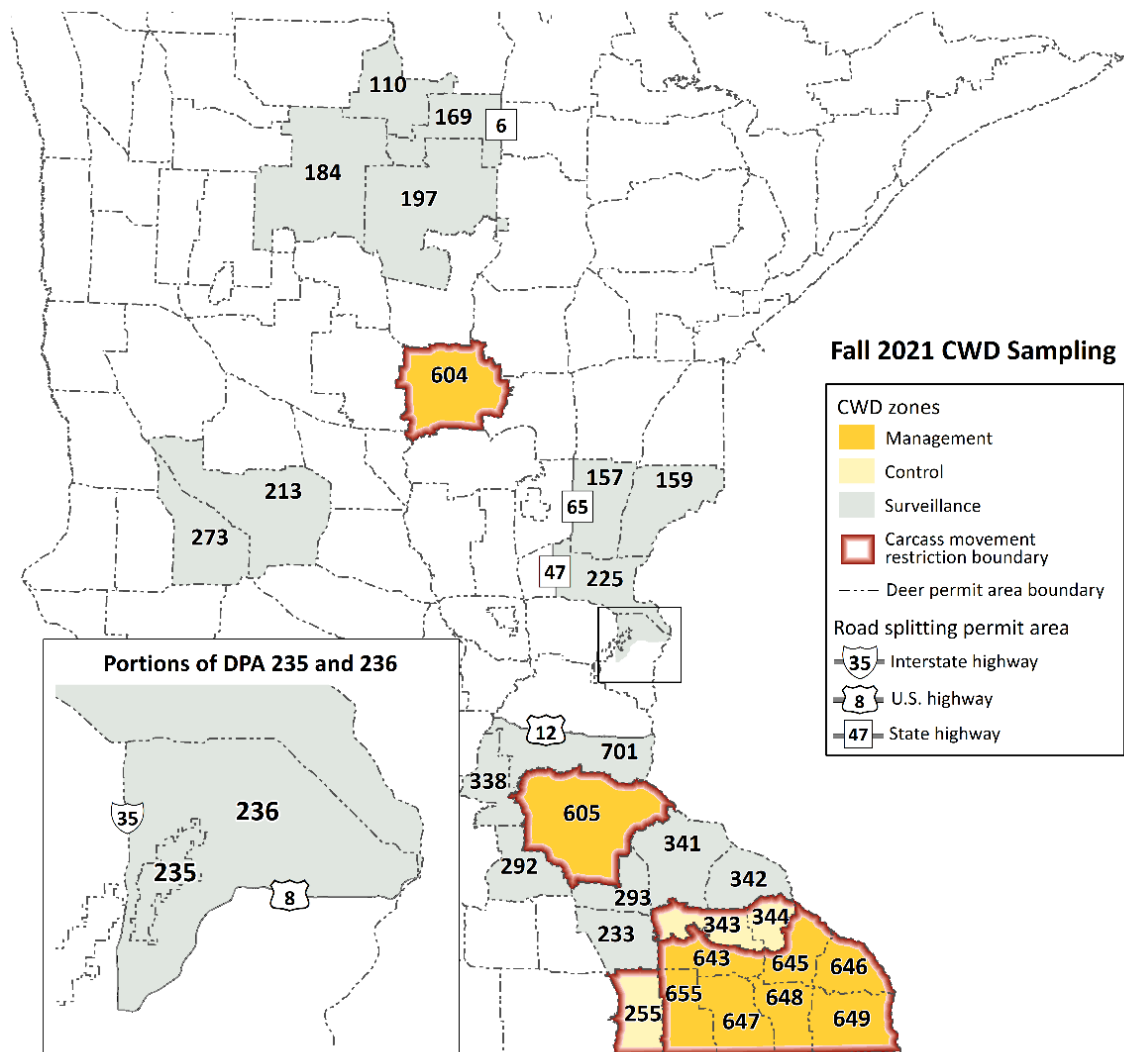


Figure 3. Sampling distribution of hunter-harvested samples collected in the northcentral CWD management zone, fall 2021, and location of newly discovered infected deer.

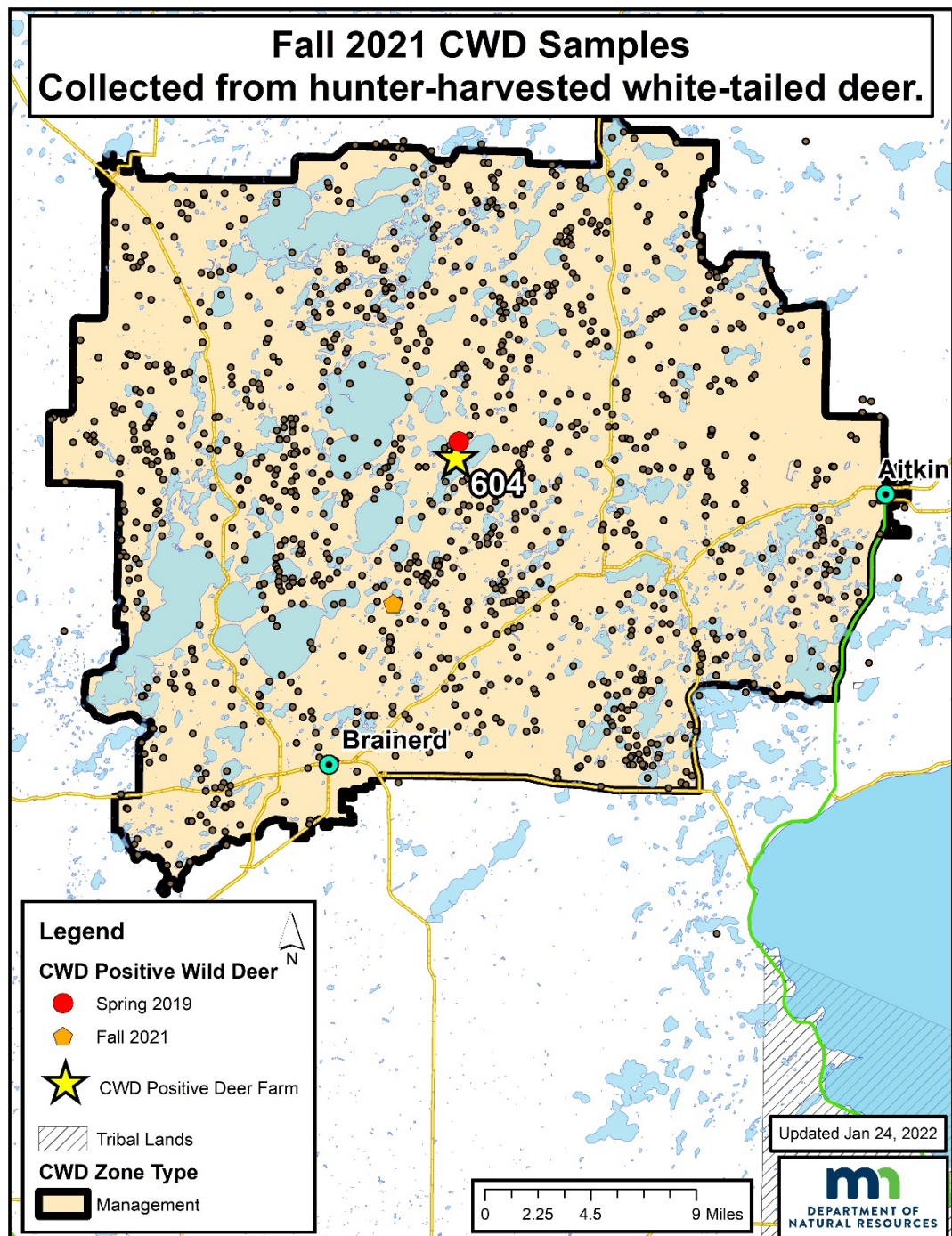


Figure 4. Sampling distribution of hunter-harvested samples collected in the south metro CWD management zone, fall 2021, and location of newly discovered infected deer.

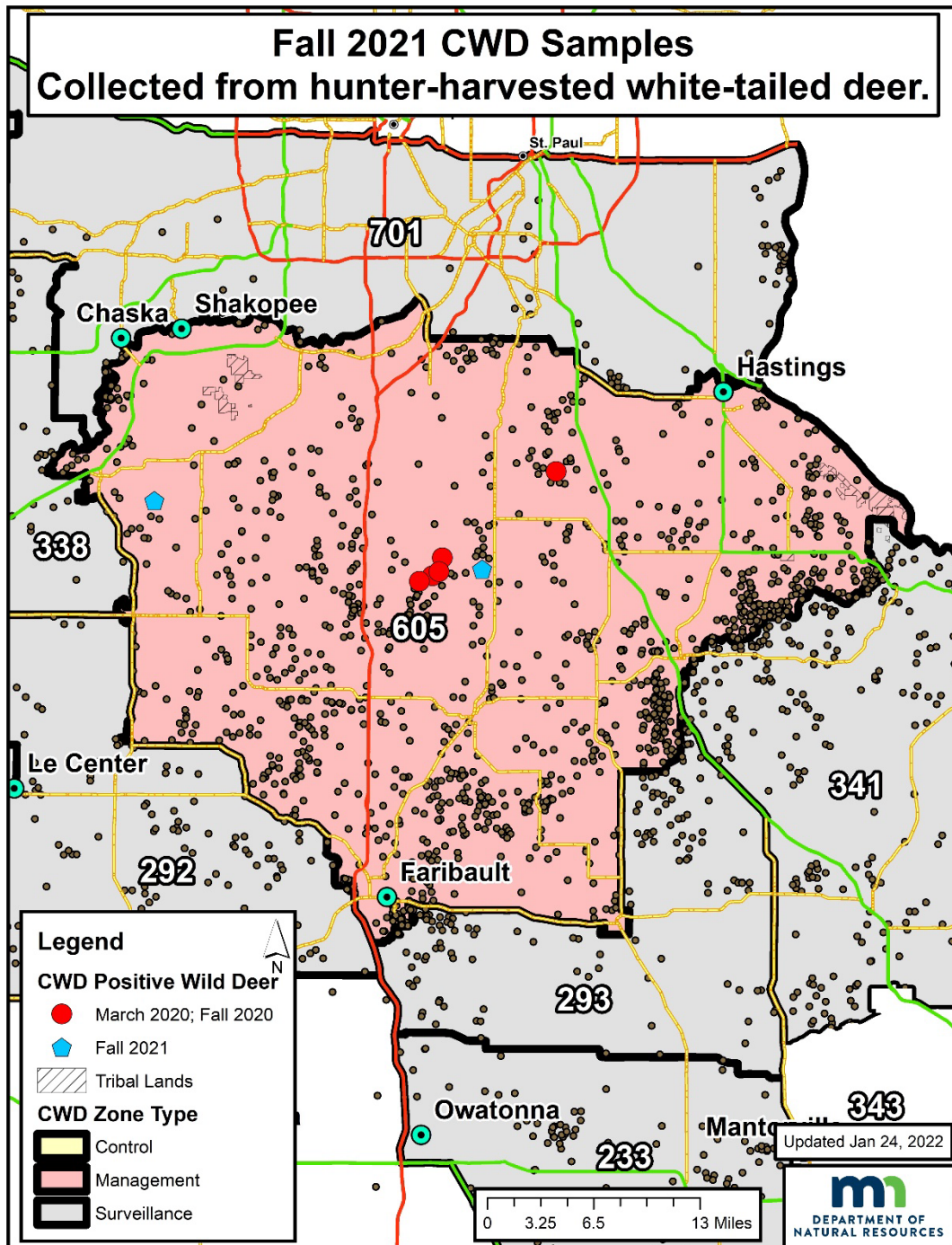


Figure 5. Sampling distribution of hunter-harvested samples collected in the southeast CWD management zone, fall 2021, and location of newly discovered infected deer.

