



Report: Emergency Response to Disease Outbreaks in Wildlife

Covering the Period July 1 –September 30, 2022

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

7/31/2023

Report to the Minnesota Legislature

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Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 3.197, we estimate that it cost approximately \$350 produce this report. This include 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, July 1 – September 30, 2022

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) spent approximately \$214,000 during the first quarter of FY23 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 2022, salary for unclassified, full-time staff, printing of CWD informational materials, and diagnostic testing. New activities that occurred this past quarter were focused on planning for CWD surveillance for fall 2022. A detailed list of activities include:

- From July 1 to Sept 30, a total of 99 samples were collected and submitted for CWD testing:
 - Opportunistic sampling (i.e., 38 vehicle-killed deer, 4 sick deer, 2 found dead, 2 depredation permits, and 1 other): 47 samples, collected statewide; none of these deer were CWD-positive.
 - Hunter-harvested sampling: 52 samples; none of these deer were CWD-positive. These included:
 - 13 sampled from self-service sampling stations.
 - 9 hunter mail-in kits.
 - 17 samples from the Partner Sampling Program (taxidermist).
 - 13 walk-in appointments with local wildlife staff.
- Ordering of supplies for upcoming CWD sampling and setting up new contracts for diagnostic testing, dumpsters, and printing outreach materials.
- Following the recent detection of CWD cases in wild deer in novel areas (e.g., outside of areas identified by our CWD surveillance plan as having elevated risk of disease), we began to expand opportunities for hunters to have their deer tested statewide. This included sending letters to 563 taxidermists across the state to invite their participation in our expanded Partner Sampling Program. Through this effort, we are paying taxidermists \$20/sample to collect biological samples and data from deer processed through their business for CWD testing. Given that adult male deer are 3x more likely to have CWD if the disease occurs in the population, utilizing taxidermists to collect samples from this high value cohort can help us identify new foci of disease across the state. DNR staff also followed up on the letter with a phone call to every licensed taxidermist to further encourage participation. A total of 157 taxidermists enrolled in the program.

- A contract was established with the state prison to build sampling kits for taxidermists.
- Taxidermist supplies were organized and a detailed set of instructions was developed.
- Each taxidermist was mailed a package of all needed supplies, including self-address return envelopes for sending in samples throughout the fall.
- Staff also wrote a grant proposal to receive additional funds to support this program through USDA's CWD Cooperative Agreement for States program.
- DNR also plans to pilot the use of hunter mail-in kits, as another option for hunters anywhere in the state to test their deer for CWD. Information was collected from other states with experience with hunter mail-in kits to learn both successful and unsuccessful strategies. Decisions were made on what to include in the kit (Figure 2) and how to disseminate information about the pilot program.
 - A contract was established with the state prison to build mail-in hunter kits.
 - A video was taken to demonstrate lymph node collection in the field.
 - A webpage was developed for hunters to request kits on-line through a Google form.

Planning efforts for CWD surveillance and management for fall 2022 was the primary activity for Wildlife Health Program staff during this quarter. The recent discovery of CWD in a wild deer in Grand Rapids (15-March, 2022) combined with detection near Climax late fall 2021, led to the creation of new surveillance areas this fall (Figure 3). These new areas included two new management zones (DPA 679 and 661) and a new surveillance area (DPAs 256, 257, 262, and 265), and were a primary focus of much of the planning. This new area is adjacent to three tribal nations, White Earth, Leech Lake and Red Lake. DNR staff met with tribal biologists to discuss sampling plans for state hunters and how to support tribal participation in collection efforts.

Communication efforts intensified 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 also understood the voluntary testing options available to them. Deer hunting communication started in July with the release of the hunting regulations book and included the following:

- Continuous updates to the numerous deer hunting webpages, including: redesigning and organizing the deer hunting webpage to have a section that is devoted to CWD; 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 highlights getting deer tested for CWD.
- Direct mailing of approximately 130,000 postcards about CWD testing to hunters that identified any DPA in CWD surveillance areas across the state when they bought their license.
- A series of news releases highlighting the importance of CWD testing in designated areas, new statewide testing options (hunter mail-in kits and expanded Partner Sampling Program), and a CWD-specific release.
- CWD reminders in both weekly (Minnesota Wildlife Newsletter) and monthly (Deer Notes) newsletters.
- Virtual events to provide ways for the public and the media to engage on deer hunting topics including CWD.

- 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.
- Supporting fact sheets distributed to regional staff, enforcement staff and the information center to answer public questions.
- A public meeting was held in Grand Rapids to discuss the most recent discovery of CWD and plans for the fall hunting season.

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.

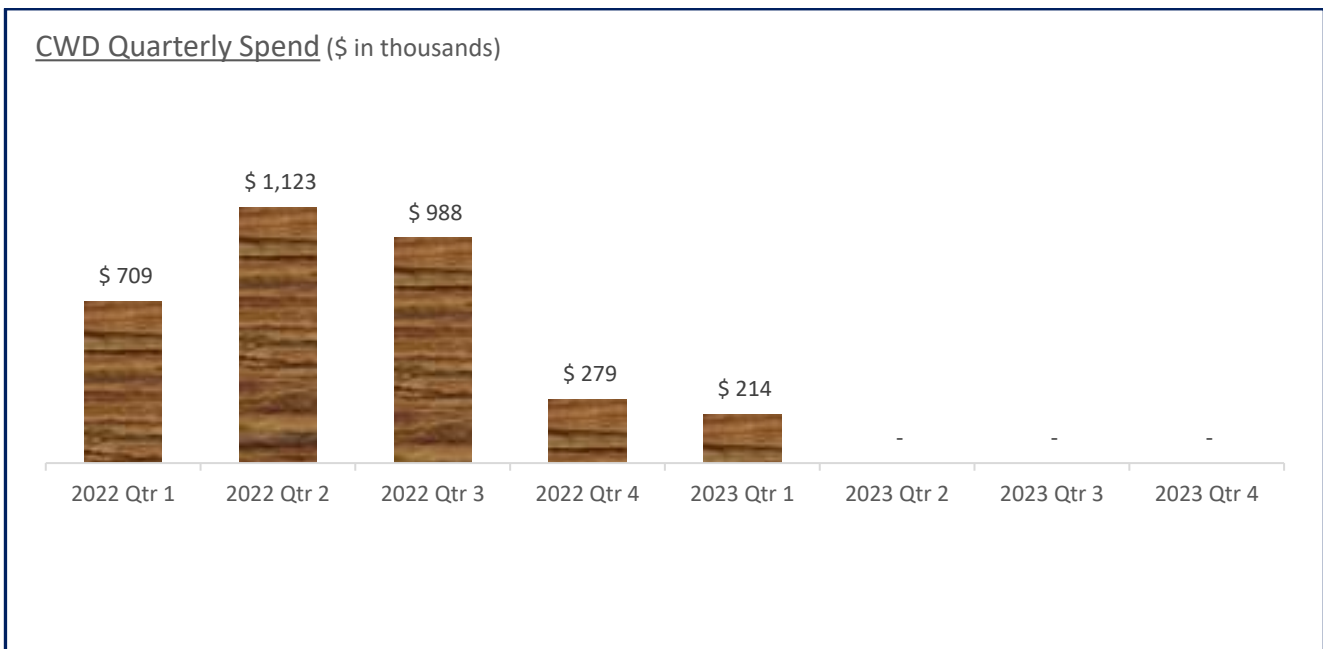


Table 2. Detailed spending by expense type for Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation, July 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022.

| Expense Type | General Fund | Game and Fish- Emergency Response | Other** | Total Spend |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---|---------------|----------------|
| Salary | - | 105,066 | 12,035 | 117,102 |
| CWD Sample Testing | 10,710 | - | - | 10,710 |
| Contracts: CWD Tissue Sampling | - | - | - | - |
| USDA-Culling Contract | - | - | - | - |
| CWD Office - Rushford | 114 | - | - | 114 |
| Dumpsters | 2,217 | - | - | 2,217 |
| Supplies | 35,733 | 580 | - | 36,313 |
| Travel/Fleet | 3,308 | 485 | 2 | 3,796 |
| Printing & Advertising | 25,702 | 2,810 | - | 28,512 |
| Equipment | 5,918 | - | - | 5,918 |
| Other | 8,843 | - | 133 | 8,975 |
| Total | 92,545 | 108,941 | 12,170 | 213,657 |

** 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, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

| Expense Type | General Fund | Game and Fish-Emergency Response | Heritage | Other** | Total Spend |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Salary | 618 | 1,126,626 | - | 207,341 | 1,334,585 |
| CWD Sample Testing | 290,065 | 376 | - | 43,665 | 334,106 |
| Contracts: CWD Tissue Sampling | 134,051 | 1,240 | - | 4,205 | 139,496 |
| USDA-Culling Contract | - | - | 378,186 | - | 378,186 |
| CWD Office - Rushford | 36,796 | - | - | - | 36,796 |
| Dumpsters | 239,915 | 105,594 | - | 33 | 345,542 |
| Supplies | 168,424 | 19,295 | - | 5,028 | 192,747 |
| Travel/Fleet | 46,854 | 234,800 | - | 223 | 281,878 |
| Printing & Advertising | 48,160 | 13,232 | - | 9,687 | 71,079 |
| Equipment | 5,918 | 7,834 | - | 11,449 | 25,200 |
| Other | 31,525 | 2,816 | - | 139,699 | 174,040 |
| Total | 1,002,327 | 1,511,813 | 378,186 | 421,329 | 3,313,655 |
| \$ Encumbered | 1,223,351 | - | 425,000 | - | |
| % of Budget Spent | 24.7% | 45.1% | 25.2% | | |
| % of Budget Encumbered | 30.1% | 0.0% | 28.3% | | |
| % of Budget Spent/Enc | 54.8% | 45.1% | 53.5% | | |

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

Figure 2. Contents for the hunter mail-in kits as part of our expanded statewide effort to encourage hunters to participate in CWD testing.



Figure 3. Areas for chronic wasting disease surveillance of hunter-harvested deer planned for fall 2022 in Minnesota.

