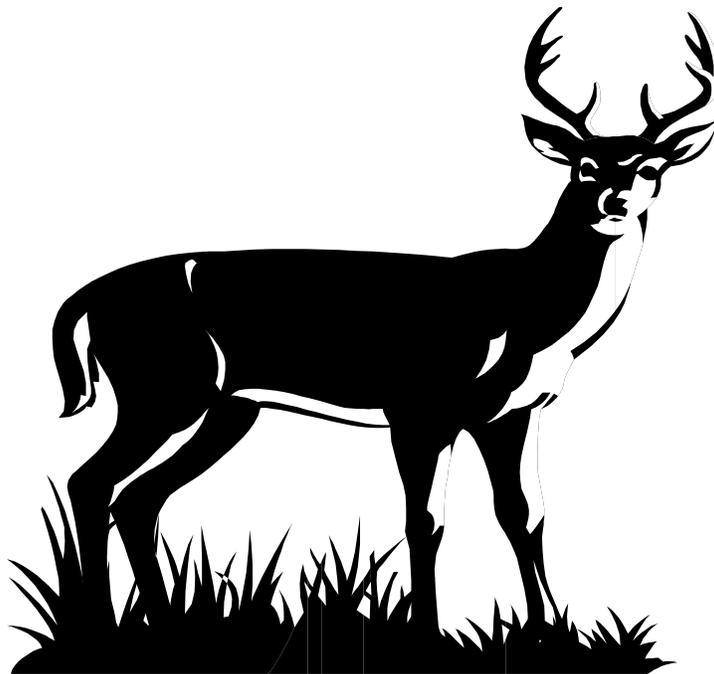


# CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE RESPONSE PLAN



**July 2021**

## FOREWORD

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) and North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) have authority over free-ranging and farmed cervids respectively and share a mutual need to combat Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The NC CWD Task Force was developed in early 2019 to facilitate a united front focused on CWD prevention, surveillance and response. Current members of the NC CWD Task Force include representatives from NCWRC and NCDA&CS.

The NC CWD Task Force conducted a series of meetings beginning in April 2019 to update the NCWRC CWD Response Plan and develop the NCDA&CS Response Plan. Successful implementation of both plans involves communication and cooperation with the public and numerous state and federal agencies. Close collaboration between the NCWRC and NCDA&CS is an integral component for a successful response if CWD were to be found in North Carolina. Both plans separately address the possibility of CWD being detected in either free-ranging or farmed cervids, and are compatible in all facets, which include consistent language and cooperative administrative and field responses. To further ensure a united response, both agencies will operate under unified command with a joint information center in all possible CWD detection scenarios.

The NC CWD Task Force has and will continue to facilitate meetings with relevant agencies to ensure an effective response should CWD be detected in North Carolina.

## CWD RESPONSE PLAN LOG

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Section Edited</b>	<b>Changes/Updates</b>	<b>Editor</b>

## ACRONYMS

<b>APHIS</b>	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
<b>CDC</b>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<b>CMDE</b>	Communications, Marketing and Digital Engagement
<b>CWD</b>	Chronic Wasting Disease
<b>DEQ</b>	North Carolina Dept. of Environmental Quality
<b>DMAP</b>	Deer Management Assistance Program
<b>DWM</b>	North Carolina Division of Waste Management
<b>FRT</b>	Field Response Team
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>JIS</b>	Joint Information System
<b>LRT</b>	Logistical Response Team
<b>NCAC</b>	North Carolina Administrative Code
<b>NCDA&amp;CS</b>	North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
<b>NCDEQ</b>	North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
<b>NCDHHS</b>	North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
<b>NCDOT</b>	North Carolina Department of Transportation
<b>NCWRC</b>	North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
<b>PSA</b>	Primary CWD Surveillance Area
<b>SCWDS</b>	Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study
<b>SEAFWA</b>	Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
<b>SSA</b>	Secondary CWD Surveillance Area
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WMD</b>	Wildlife Management Division

## DEFINITIONS

**Animal:** Any deer, elk, moose, or other cervid.

**Approved Laboratory:** A diagnostic laboratory approved by the APHIS Administrator to conduct official tests for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in accordance with 9 CFR 55.8.

**Cervid:** All members of the family Cervidae and hybrids, including deer, elk, moose, caribou, reindeer, and related species.

**CWD:** A fatal, neurological illness occurring in cervids (members of the deer family), including white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, moose, and reindeer/caribou.

**CWD-Positive Animal:** An animal that has had a diagnosis of CWD established through official confirmatory CWD testing conducted by the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa.

**CWD Testing:** Any test for the diagnosis of CWD approved by the APHIS Administrator and conducted in a laboratory approved by the Administrator in accordance with 9 CFR 55.8.

**Check Station:** A location established by the WRC where a hunter brings their harvested deer to have it examined and sampled for CWD.

**Deer, Elk, and Moose:** All animals in the genera *Odocoileus*, *Cervus*, and *Alces*, and hybrids of these species. This includes white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*) and any associated subspecies. Also includes North American elk or wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), and Sika deer (*Cervus nippon*).

**Executive Director:** The Executive Director of NCWRC.

**Farmed or Captive:** Cervid that are privately or publicly maintained or held for economic or other purposes within a perimeter fence or confined area, or temporarily captured from a wild population for interstate movement and release.

**Free-ranging:** Wild populations that are not held in confined areas or temporary capture.

**Herd:** One or more cervids.

**Incident Command System:** A cooperative hierarchal structure of communication, command and control during an emergency response involving multiple agencies with decision making authority.

**Index animal:** The first CWD-positive animal detected in an area more than 30 miles of any prior detections.

**Index location:** The location of mortality of the first CWD-positive animal detected in an area more than 30 miles of any prior detections.

**Index sample:** The first CWD-positive sample detected in an area more than 30 miles of any prior detections.

**Landowner:** A person who owns land.

**NC CWD Task Force:** A collaborative group comprised of staff from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) and North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) focused on CWD prevention, surveillance and response in North Carolina.

**National Veterinary Services Laboratory:** The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa.

**Primary CWD Surveillance Area (PSA):** The approximate 5-mile radius area around the index sample location calculated based on the estimated average dispersal distance for yearling males in NC.

**Secondary CWD Surveillance Area (SSA):** The approximate 5 to 30-mile radius area surrounding the index sample location calculated based on the estimated maximum dispersal distance for yearling males in NC.

**State:** Each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and all territories or possessions of the United States.

**State Veterinarian:** The NCDA&CS veterinary official authorized by the State to supervise and perform the official animal health work of the State.

**Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy:** A group of progressive, invariably fatal, conditions that are associated with prions and affect the brain (encephalopathies) and nervous system of many animals, including humans, cattle, and sheep.

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## INTRODUCTION

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a contagious neurological disease specific to species within the deer (Cervidae) family, including white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus elaphus*), moose (*Alces alces*), and others. The disease is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy and is characterized by spongy degeneration of brain tissue resulting in emaciation, abnormal behavior, loss of bodily functions, and ultimately, death. CWD was first observed in the 1960s at a research facility in Colorado, and later detected in a free-ranging elk in Colorado in 1981. While CWD poses a serious threat to cervid populations, there have been no reported cases of CWD infection in humans. However, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have [precautionary recommendations for handling carcasses and venison preparation and consumption in areas where CWD occurs](#).

All management actions implemented by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) have been designed to prevent introduction or spread of CWD into North Carolina, or to increase the likelihood of disease detection should it occur. Discovery of CWD in Wisconsin in 2002 prompted the NCWRC to develop a preventative disease management strategy in May 2002. Preventative actions include increased efforts to minimize the occurrence of illegally held cervids and limiting the importation of high-risk carcass parts from cervids harvested outside of the State. Revisions to administrative rules pertaining to captive cervids were implemented in 2002, including testing, tagging, and inspection requirements, and a short-term buyout program that provided monetary compensation to licensees voluntarily relinquishing their cervid herds and captivity licenses to the NCWRC. On September 30, 2015 oversight and regulation of farmed cervids was transferred to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS). The NCWRC and NCDA&CS continue to work collaboratively to monitor for the disease and minimize risk of CWD infection in captive and free-ranging cervids in North Carolina.

CWD surveillance efforts for both captive and free-ranging cervids were initiated in 1999, and focal sampling occurred in 2002 from hunter harvested and roadkill deer in the vicinity of captive

cervid facilities known to have imported cervids into North Carolina. Additionally, the NCWRC conducted systematic statewide surveillance in 5-year intervals in 2003, 2008 and 2013. Testing of any deer exhibiting CWD symptoms and some opportunistic sampling occurred in years between the 5-year systematic statewide surveillances. A revised annual surveillance strategy was implemented in 2018 aimed to improve detection of CWD by targeting sources where CWD is most likely to be detected (mature and roadkill cervids), eliminating 4-year gaps where few samples are collected, and nearly doubling the number of samples collected over prior 5-year surveillance efforts. Information has been, and continues to be, disseminated to increase public awareness of CWD and disease management actions implemented by the NCWRC.

The first CWD Response Plan was developed by NCWRC staff and approved by the NCWRC Commissioners in May 2006. As CWD was discovered in more states and countries, additional information on assessing and responding to this disease became available. In 2012 and 2015, the Response Plan was updated to incorporate new approaches for immediate response. As of July 2021, CWD has been confirmed in 26 U.S. states, four Canadian provinces, South Korea, Finland, Norway and Sweden. North Carolina has the fortune of learning from the experiences of others. The most effective CWD responses include best management practices that are often counter to hunter traditions and short-term hunter desires, including but not limited to immediate localized reduction in deer numbers, elimination of baiting, and restrictions on deer carcass transportation and disposal. Implementation of these best management practices are necessary for the long-term viability of the statewide herd and deer hunting, and successful implementation of these strategies is dependent on public support. Therefore, communication with constituents is an integral component of this response plan. The primary purposes of this revision include adjusting response strategies based on the best available science, enhancing the communications component of the plan, updating changes in NCWRC staff organizational structure, incorporating the transfer of regulatory authority of farmed cervids to the NCDA&CS, and integrating the NCWRC CWD Response Plan with the NCDA&CS Response Plan for CWD of Farmed Cervids.

## **Purpose of NCWRC CWD Response Plan**

CWD would have significant biologic, economic, and social ramifications if discovered in North Carolina. The NCWRC created this CWD Response Plan to guide initial (~ 12 months) efforts if CWD is detected in cervids in North Carolina or within 30 miles of its borders. This plan outlines a general strategy for collecting disease prevalence and distribution information after the index case has been reported, which is essential information needed for future development of a suitable long-term CWD management plan. This is a dynamic document that can be adapted to different epidemiologic scenarios. Different pathways are provided based on the most likely scenarios in which CWD could be detected. Action items provide direction necessary for immediate response but are nonspecific. Response details are intended to be adaptive to the most current CWD management strategies and fit a broad spectrum of potential situations in which CWD could be detected on the landscape.

In the event of a positive diagnosis, the initial objectives will be to determine the baseline prevalence and distribution of the disease and implement immediate actions to minimize spread of the disease from areas where CWD is detected. To ensure maximum effectiveness of the NCWRC's response to a positive diagnosis of CWD, the CWD Response Plan is subject to revision as new information concerning CWD and appropriate disease management strategies become available. Additionally, information gained during the initial response period will aid in development of a long-term CWD management strategy. North Carolina's CWD Response Plan will be available online at [ncwildlife.org](http://ncwildlife.org).

## **Goal and Objectives**

### **Goal**

Minimize occurrence and spatial distribution of CWD within North Carolina's cervid populations.

### **Objectives**

1. Implementation of a sampling strategy that will inform the NCWRC on the prevalence and spatial distribution of CWD in North Carolina.

2. Development of a CWD response protocol to guide initial disease management activities in the area(s) where the disease is detected.

## **RESPONSE IF AN UNCONFIRMED POSITIVE IS DETECTED WITHIN NORTH CAROLINA OR WITHIN 30 MILES OF ITS BORDERS**

Upon notification of the first CWD-positive sample processed at a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved laboratory, the following actions will occur as soon as practical:

- Suspected positive samples collected within North Carolina will be sent to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa for confirmatory testing.
- DNA will be collected and genotyped from CWD-positive sample tissues collected within North Carolina.
- The NC CWD Task Force and other individuals as deemed necessary and appropriate will meet to review the NCWRC and NCDA&CS response plans, review communication strategies, and initiate immediate action items with guidance from executive offices.
- The following will be notified that an unconfirmed positive CWD case has been found and that confirmation is being sought:
  - o NCWRC and NCDA&CS staff with specific instructions on handling media and public inquiries prior to the official announcement;
  - o the Governor's Office;
  - o North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ);
  - o North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS);
  - o North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT);
  - o United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) APHIS Wildlife Services;
  - o Southeast Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS); and
  - o Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) member states.
- The Chief of the Wildlife Management Division (WMD) will establish a Field Response Team (FRT) to coordinate and conduct field response activities and a Logistical Response Team (LRT) to provide support for the FRT.
  - o FRT: Regional Operations Program Supervisor (Team Leader), District Wildlife Biologist, regional Land and Water Access Supervisor, Deer Biologist, Wildlife Disease Biologist, Wildlife Law Enforcement District Captain, an agency Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist, and/or other individuals as deemed necessary.

- o LRT: WMD Division Chief (Team Leader), Deer Biologist, Wildlife Disease Biologist, Game and Furbearer and Operations Program Coordinators, Communications, Marketing and Digital Engagement (CMDE) Section Chief, Information Technology representative, Wildlife Law Enforcement Major of Field Operations, Raleigh Office administrative assistant, and/or other individuals from the NCWRC or other agencies as determined necessary.

### **FRT Roles and Responsibilities**

- The FRT will determine the location of the mortality site and carcass disposal site for the unconfirmed CWD-positive sample and will forward that information to all WMD senior staff. If the index sample comes from a hunter harvested deer, the hunter will be contacted by the FRT. DNA samples will be collected from antlers or other tissue, if available, to cross reference with DNA tissue from the CWD-positive sample.
- CWD Surveillance Areas:
  - o A map will be prepared using land ownership, roads, waterways, and/or other land features to best delineate an approximate 5-mile (8-km) radius circle around the index location called the Primary CWD Surveillance Area (PSA).
  - o A map will be prepared indicating farmed cervid facility locations, previous CWD sample locations, and land parcel ownership information within the PSA.
  - o A secondary 5- to 30-mile radius area called the Secondary CWD Surveillance Area (SSA) will be delineated using land ownership, roads, waterways, and/or other land features from the index location.
- The FRT Leader will determine the best location for a CWD operations facility, using NCWRC properties if available.
  - o The FRT and local Land and Water Access crews will begin making necessary modifications to the location that will serve as an operations facility. Such modifications may include the establishment of an area for storing supplies and processing samples, as well as an area to properly dispose of animal tissue.

- The FRT Leader will appoint a CWD data coordinator responsible for managing all data and samples that are collected.
  - o The CWD Data Coordinator, Wildlife Disease Biologist, and an Information Technology representative will monitor the existing data collection and management system to ensure it continues to allow hunters to check the testing status of deer they harvested in a timely manner.
- The FRT will finalize a list of all supplies and materials needed to conduct field activities and collect appropriate CWD samples from a minimum of 3,500 animals (approximate number of samples needed to meet PSA and SSA sampling objectives with average statewide deer density).
  - o The supply list will be forwarded to the Wildlife Disease Biologist.
  - o The Wildlife Disease Biologist will coordinate with the testing laboratory and will be responsible for ensuring staff have all necessary supplies and follow sampling, shipping, and data entry protocols.

### **LRT Roles and Responsibilities**

- The LRT will work in a unified command under the Incident Command System with NCDA&CS. The unified command will include a joint information center (JIC) to develop a custom communications plan incorporating traditional and digital communication components.
- The LRT will identify stakeholders and begin preparations for a public information meeting.
- The LRT will prepare a contact list with names and addresses of private landowners within the PSA, and taxidermists, deer processors, and fawn rehabilitators statewide.
- The LRT will review General Statutes, Session Laws, and other local laws that may affect the ability to discharge firearms for the purpose of collecting animals for CWD testing and/or the ability for lawful hunting to occur in the PSA and SSA.
- The LRT will coordinate with the North Carolina Division of Waste Management (DWM) to secure access to a disposal location (landfill) for carcasses, tissues, and other contaminated materials. If a cooperating landfill cannot be identified in a location convenient for the FRT,

the LRT will determine other appropriate means for disposal of materials associated with CWD sampling activities which may include incineration or burial.

- The LRT will identify options for carcass processing and disposal of carcass parts for hunter-killed deer harvested within the PSA and SSA.
- The LRT will coordinate with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to obtain permission to post notification signs along roadways entering the area delineated by the PSA and SSA.
- The LRT will coordinate with appropriate agencies, including NCDA&CS, USDA, NCDEQ, and NCDHHS representatives and keep them apprised of all actions taken.

If additional tissue samples for the confirmatory testing are not available, the index sample result(s) will be considered positive.

If the confirmation sample is not positive, all previously mentioned entities will be notified, and the LRT's custom communication plan will guide what traditional and digital communication components should be used to notify constituents and citizens of North Carolina. No further actions will be taken. Routine CWD surveillance will continue.

## **RESPONSE IF A CWD-POSITIVE DIAGNOSIS IS CONFIRMED**

Upon confirmation of the first CWD positive sample, the following actions will occur as soon as practicable:

- The NCWRC will immediately advise the following that a positive case of CWD has been confirmed:
  - o NC CWD Task Force,
  - o all agency personnel,
  - o the Governor's Office,
  - o NCDEQ,
  - o NCDHHS,
  - o NCDOT,
  - o USDA-Wildlife Services,
  - o SCWDS, and
  - o All member states of SEAFWA.
- Upon notification of a confirmed case of CWD in North Carolina, a custom communication plan will be initiated by the LRT.
- The LRT will notify fawn rehabilitators, taxidermists, and known deer processors, alerting them to the change in North Carolina's CWD status and the disease management actions the agency will be implementing.
- The Wildlife Disease Biologist will immediately procure the items requested by the FRT and have them delivered to the CWD field operations location.
- The Deer Biologist will determine necessary sample collection sizes for the PSA and SSA based on estimated regional deer abundances.
- The LRT will conduct a public information meeting as near as possible to the index location for landowners and stakeholders.

## **REGULATORY ACTIONS IF CWD IS CONFIRMED FROM A FREE-RANGING OR FARMED CERVID WITHIN OR PROXIMATE TO NORTH CAROLINA**

The Executive Director, under authority of [G.S. 113-306\(f\)](#) and [15A NCAC 10A .1201](#), or as delegated to him by the Wildlife Resources Commission or the Governor by virtue of an Executive Order, may initiate actions within both the PSA and SSA to:

- Prohibit the rehabilitation or transfer of fawns or elk calves.
- Regulate supplemental feeding and baiting of wildlife.
- Establish mandatory CWD testing of all legally harvested deer.
- Liberalize season lengths and bag limits, or otherwise implement modifications to season frameworks and rules to facilitate sample collections and population reduction.
- Prohibit exportation of cervid carcasses or infectious carcass parts from PSA and SSA to reduce the potential of spreading infectious tissues outside said areas.
- Facilitate and enforce proper disposal of carcasses and carcass parts to reduce the potential for further infections within the surveillance areas.
- Increase Wildlife Law Enforcement presence to ensure rules and other wildlife-related laws are strictly enforced.
- Develop and implement rules to minimize the spread and amplification of CWD as necessary.

# **FIELD RESPONSE IF CWD IS CONFIRMED IN A FREE-RANGING CERVID**

## **Objectives**

1. Obtain tissue samples from 50% of the estimated free-ranging cervids present in the PSA to determine CWD prevalence and distribution and to minimize disease transmission risk. Samples will be obtained through passive and active surveillance methods.
2. Obtain a sufficient number of samples to detect at least 1 positive animal at 95% confidence level when assuming a minimum of 100 positive animals within the SSA. This objective is designed to determine, as feasibly as possible, if CWD occurs outside of the PSA using the recommended surveillance strategy of the United States Geologic Survey National Wildlife Health Center.

## **Initial Actions**

- Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers will immediately begin securing access to private and public lands within the PSA.
- The FRT will coordinate the posting of notification signs along roadways entering the PSA (pending permission from the NCDOT).
- The FRT will conduct an evaluation of possible environmental contamination from the positive carcass or high-risk carcass parts, and if necessary and possible, minimize the likelihood that cervids will acquire CWD from the affected environment.

## **Baiting and Feeding**

The Commission will prohibit intentional baiting and feeding of free-ranging cervids using the NCAC rule-making process within both the PSA and SSA. Recognizing the complexity associated with prohibiting the intentional baiting and feeding of free-ranging cervids, any prohibition would not begin during an ongoing, active deer hunting season.

## **Fawn Rehabilitation**

No new fawns will be taken from within the PSA or SSA for the purpose of rehabilitation effective immediately following confirmation of CWD in the index sample. Fawn rehabilitation facilities within the PSA or SSA will cease accepting new fawns and shall not release, transport, or transfer existing fawns to other facilities without prior approval from the NCWRC.

## **Sampling**

Where and when possible, sampling will be maximized through collection of samples from hunter-harvested deer and from other mortality sources. Sampling teams will be assembled by the FRT and used as necessary to meet target sampling objectives.

## **Mandatory Testing**

- Initial efforts within the PSA will sample all hunter harvested deer throughout the duration of one full blackpowder/gun deer season, including any partial season from the previous year if CWD was confirmed during that season.
- Check stations, sample drop-off locations, and/or other means to facilitate testing will be established within the PSA and SSA during the blackpowder/gun deer season following or coinciding with the confirmation of a positive CWD diagnosis.
- Mandatory testing in the PSA will occur for at least one full blackpowder/gun deer season, plus the remaining partial season in the event confirmation of the index sample diagnosis coincides with an ongoing blackpowder/gun deer season.
- The FRT Leader will assign agency employees to operate check stations and monitor sample drop-off locations as needed.
- All hunters receive a harvest authorization number to record on their Big Game Harvest Report Card when reporting their harvest. Each deer carcass or head submitted for testing will be affixed with an identification tag that includes the harvest authorization number. This identification tag will stay with the deer carcass or head until CWD samples have been collected.
- Mandatory testing within the SSA may be closed if/when the sampling objective is achieved, with voluntary testing remaining available thereafter.

### Other Mortality Sources

- Hunters harvesting deer outside of time periods when mandatory testing is in place or outside of the PSA or SSA, can voluntarily transport a harvested deer carcass or head to any designated site established for CWD sample collection.
- The LRT will establish a network of agencies and individuals to report vehicle-killed cervids for testing, which will include the NCDOT, other enforcement agencies (state, county, and local), and cooperating entities.
- The FRT Leader will secure additional tissue sampling sources such as depredation permits, voluntary drop off locations, and other miscellaneous sources within both the PSA and SSA.

### Special Program for Landowner/Lessee Sampling

A voluntary program may be initiated on properties within the PSA and SSA to increase harvest opportunity for landowners/lessees and facilitate CWD sample submission through the NCWRC Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP).

### Sampling Teams

If confirmation of a positive occurs outside of the blackpowder/gun deer season, an appropriate number of sampling teams consisting of NCWRC staff and other state or federal agency staff may be assembled to collect animals for CWD testing.

- Sampling teams may begin operations after a local public information meeting and may continue as necessary until the next blackpowder deer season opens in the PSA. Sampling teams will not operate during the blackpowder and firearm deer seasons unless it is determined the PSA cannot be effectively sampled using licensed hunters due to land ownership and use characteristics, local law restrictions, or other factors within the PSA and SSA.

### Sample Processing

Samples collected will be processed in a timely manner and testing results will be made available to hunters through the [NCWRC's website](#).

## **FIELD RESPONSE IF CWD IS CONFIRMED IN A FARMED CERVID**

The following response actions will be implemented if the NCWRC is notified that CWD has been detected in a farmed cervid facility within North Carolina, or if a farmed cervid facility within North Carolina has, within the past 5 years, transferred cervids to or received cervids from a captive facility where CWD has been detected.

- The NC CWD Task Force and other individuals as determined necessary and appropriate will meet to review NCDA&CS and NCWRC response plans, review communication strategies, and initiate immediate action items with guidance from executive offices.
- Field response activities for free-ranging cervids in the area of a CWD-positive farmed cervid facility will occur as if the confirmed positive was in a free-ranging cervid. A PSA and SSA will be established and all field response activities described for free-ranging cervids will be implemented.
- If CWD is confirmed in a free-ranging cervid that is traceable to a farmed cervid facility, a PSA and SSA will be established around the location of the CWD-positive animal and NCDA&CS will immediately be notified to investigate the farmed cervid facility. If CWD is subsequently confirmed within the facility, a PSA and SSA will also be established around the affected facility and the previously described management actions pertaining to confirmation of CWD within a farmed cervid facility will be implemented.

The status and disposition of a CWD-positive farmed cervid facility will be subject to the conditions of the NCDA&CS's CWD response plan.

## **FIELD RESPONSE IF ILLEGAL LIVE CERVIDS, CERVID CARCASSES OR CARCASS PARTS ARE IMPORTED INTO THE STATE**

The importation of cervid carcasses and certain cervid carcass parts into North Carolina is prohibited by [15A NCAC 10B .0124](#), and importation of live cervids is restricted by [G. S. 106-549.97](#). In the event the NCWRC becomes aware of the importation of illegal cervid carcass parts or illegal live cervids, the Wildlife Law Enforcement Division will investigate the circumstances of the importation and, if necessary, cervids or cervid carcass parts will be confiscated, applicable tissue will be tested for CWD, and high-risk carcass parts will be incinerated or disposed of in a sealed landfill. If the live cervid or carcass parts test positive for CWD, an evaluation of possible environmental contamination will be conducted by the District Wildlife Biologist, and if determined to be necessary and feasible, efforts will be taken to minimize the likelihood that other cervids will contract CWD from the contaminated environment.

## **FIELD RESPONSE IF CWD IS DETECTED WITHIN 30 MILES OF NORTH CAROLINA'S BORDERS**

The NCWRC will coordinate with state wildlife and/or agriculture agencies in the adjoining state where CWD has been detected. An attempt will be made to obtain the following information from the adjacent state:

- location of the index animal;
- the positive state's planned management and surveillance response;
- the location of all captive cervid facilities;
- the location of all previously collected CWD samples; and
- information concerning deer density and distribution in the area of the index animal.

If the index location is within 30 miles of the North Carolina border an SSA will be established. Additionally, a PSA will be established if the index location is within 5 miles of the North Carolina border. Previously described sampling and management actions will be implemented within the PSA and SSA.

## **ZONE EXPANSION AND LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING**

If additional cervids are found to be CWD-positive in a PSA or SSA, these areas will be expanded to accommodate the new positives and the sampling strategy will be adapted to the increased size of the surveillance areas. If a CWD-positive cervid is found outside the PSA or SSA, it will be treated as a new index location and the response plan will be initiated for that outbreak.

Once the initial response has identified disease prevalence and distribution within the PSA and SSA, long-term goals and strategies for CWD monitoring and management will be developed and implemented by the agency.

## **TESTING OPTIONS FOR DEER HARVESTED OUTSIDE OF ESTABLISHED CWD SURVEILLANCE AREAS**

- Hunters harvesting deer outside of the established PSA and SSA can transport a harvested deer carcass or head to any NCWRC depot or other designated site for CWD testing.
- The location of NCWRC depots, other testing sites, and potential testing costs will be listed on the [NCWRC's website](#) in the event this CWD Response Plan is implemented.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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