

Idaho Department of Fish and Game



2018

STRATEGY FOR

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

PREVENTION, DETECTION, AND MANAGEMENT

FOR IDAHO'S WILD CERVIDS (DEER, ELK, AND MOOSE)

COMMUNICATIONS

A critical component of this Strategy is effective communication about CWD, both with the public and among government agencies with animal and public health responsibilities.

The Chiefs of the Communications Bureau and Wildlife Bureau will assign a team, with Regional Office participation, to support communications planning under an adaptive approach that prepares content and processes. Communication planning will describe the various communication roles, or functions, required to achieve communication objectives.

Communication goals, objectives, and functions will differ between pre-detection and post-detection scenarios, IDFG is currently engaging in messaging and information campaigns for pre-CWD detection.

Coordination with Cooperating Agencies

Federal, state, and local public health agencies are responsible for making public health recommendations regarding CWD. These agencies have concerns over the potential introduction of CWD into Idaho and will have responsibility for communications regarding some aspects of CWD. ISDA is the lead agency in Idaho for communications on health of captive elk, fallow deer, and reindeer in Idaho. Should CWD be detected in the state, ISDA will be providing recommendations to protect captive herds and facilities.

IDFG will rely on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), IDHW and local Idaho Public Health Districts (PHDs) for recommendations regarding potential human health risks associated with exposure to CWD. IDFG communications will link or otherwise refer to CDC, IDHW, and PHD recommendations regarding CWD's potential effects on human health, including safety risks associated with the consumption of meat from CWD-positive animals. Since the late 1990s the recommendation has been, for any prion disease, to make every effort to keep high risk tissues out of the human food supply (<https://www.cdc.gov/prions/cwd/index.html>). More recently, the CDC has recommended that hunters in areas known to have CWD positive animals have their meat tested and to avoid consumption of any tissue from CWD-positive animals.

Pre-Detection

Pre-detection communication focuses on raising awareness about CWD with Idaho hunters and the general public. Messaging includes the role hunters and the public can play in preventing CWD in Idaho and how hunters can help in CWD surveillance.

IDFG currently provides general information about what CWD is, how it is transmitted, and why IDFG is concerned about the potential for CWD in Idaho cervids. A website with a platform to create text and video content to address questions and provide links to other resources regarding CWD is under development. These resources include the CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) and the Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance (<http://cwd-info.org/>).

IDFG's web content will include current sampling surveillance areas, with video links explaining the purpose of CWD sampling and testing. Each fall, IDFG will issue a news release to inform

hunters and the general public of the updated sampling and surveillance areas in the state and provide information on ways to submit samples for CWD testing. IDFG will also develop materials for use at hunter check stations.

Management of approvals for pre-detection communications is consistent with agency communications of statewide interest.

Post-Detection

The objective of post-detection communication is to inform hunters, cooperating agencies, and the general public about the presence of CWD in Idaho and IDFG's management actions.

IDFG will notify designated contacts within ISDA and IDHW of a CWD detection. These agency contacts will be responsible for informing Public Health Districts, the CDC, and other agencies (USDA, FDA, USGS) per internal agency protocol. IDFG's Communications Bureau will maintain a list of ISDA and public health communication points of contact and will coordinate communications planning with these agencies as their priorities allow.

Post-detection, the CWD Management Team will identify communication objectives; consistent messaging across agencies, identify staffing of communication functions and roles, and management of approvals for communication. IDFG has developed templates for internal information packets and a draft press release to communicate a CWD detection.

Details of communication and messaging for post-detection depend on the management action chosen. Signage posting, information packages, and web-services may need to be expanded depending on the services IDFG decides to provide to hunters in CWD positive areas.

In a post-detection scenario, the CWD Management Team will identify communication objectives and functions as described below.

Communication Functions

- **Communication Leadership:** Overall responsibility for development of communication objectives, strategies, and tactics
- **Liaison(s):** Internal coordination (IDFG and Commission) and external coordination with officials and other government agencies. Establish communications coordination mechanisms to enable efficient and effective communication with cooperating agencies
- **Message Development and Material Production:** Transform information into messages, questions and answer documents, video, and other communications tools to help audiences assess risk and take action, provide input to agency decisions, and access additional resources

- **Media Relations:** Responsibility for providing information to media, including social media (e.g., arranging press conferences, ensuring spokespersons are adequately briefed on common messaging goals)
- **Website Management:** Ensures that the latest information on the web regarding CWD is timely, and that web traffic, trends and questions are acknowledged and answered
- **Management of Internal Approvals:** Coordinate clearance and approval for the public release of information, communications materials, etc.
- **Listening:** Responsibility for gathering and analyzing perceptions and knowledge gaps surrounding CWD and reflect findings back into communication decision making
- **Communication Evaluation:** Ensures that communication processes and outcomes are assessed and measured, taking into account any identified knowledge gaps. Applies the results of evaluation to improve communication response efforts during current and future outbreak and in future responses

Communication Resource Needs regarding Hunter Notification of Sample Results

IDFG has identified a need to promptly inform hunters of sample results from their harvested animals. IDFG is evaluating methods of doing so, including a web-based reporting interface that would streamline the reporting process and allow hunters to follow-up based on their own interest. The Communications Bureau is developing that interface. Staff are also developing a CWD communications plan separate from this document to address the communication challenges and identify pre- and post-detection messaging to the public and hunters.