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BAYFIELD COUNTY
AD HOC CERVID STUDY COMMITTEE

Rob Lombard        Jon Gilbert        Fred Strand        Mike Amman
Sandra Naas        Tim Bratley        Jason Fischbach    Ben Dufford

Advisory Members:  Rob Schierman, Planning & Zoning Administrator
                   Mark Abeles-Allison, County Administrator

Dear Committee Members:
This letter is written to inform you of the Bayfield County Ad Hoc Cervid Study Committee Meeting scheduled for Thursday February 7, 2019, 5:00pm, at the County Board Room, Bayfield County Annex Building, Washburn, WI. The agenda for this meeting is as follows:

Notice is hereby given that a majority of the Bayfield County Board may be present at the meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision-making responsibility. This constitutes a meeting of the Bayfield County Board pursuant to State ex rel. Backe v.Greendale Village Bd., 173 Wis. 2d 553, 494 N.W.2d 408(1993), and must be noticed as such, although the County Board will not take any formal action at this meeting.

AGENDA

1) Call to Order
2) Public Comment
3) Discussion and Possible Action regarding minutes of December 6, 2018 meeting.
4) Introduction of Tami Ryan, DNR. Fred Strand
5) Presentations Tami Ryan, DNR
6) Introduction of Laurie Seale, Whitetails of Wisconsin, Tim Bratley
7) Presentation by Laurie Seale
8) Questions and Answers.
9) Draft Work Plan Review: Jason Fischbach and Fred Strand
10) March Meeting, Other Presenters? Begin to synthesize and develop summary
document with recommendations.

   a. March 7
   b. April 4

12) Adjournment

Should you have any questions in the meantime, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Mark Abeles-Allison
Bayfield County Administrator

MAA/kak

Any person planning to attend a Bayfield County meeting that has a disability
requiring special accommodations should contact 373-6100, 24-hours before the
scheduled meeting, so appropriate arrangements can be made.

cc: Bayfield County Board of Supervisors
    The Daily Press, via fax
    The County Journal, via fax
BAYFIELD COUNTY
AD HOC CERVID STUDY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
December 6th, 2018 (to be approved)

Present: Committee: Fred Strand, Chair; Mike Amman, Vice Chair; Rob Lombard; Jon Gilbert; Tim Bratley; Jason Fischbach (5:42pm); Travis Tulowitzky; Advisory Members: Rob Schierman-Planning & Zoning Administrator; Others Present: Dave Clausen-Midwest Environmental Advocates; Al Horvath, Vice Chair; WI Conservation Congress, Deer & Elk Committee; Sue Clausen-citizen; Melissa Kraft, Conservation Assistant, & Mark Abeles-Allison (5:15-6:30pm).

1) Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Fred Strand

2) Public Comment: None.

3) Review and approval of minutes of November 1, 2018: Motion by Mike Amman, seconded by Jon Gilbert. Motion carried with one change regarding WI DNR data regarding Lincoln & Oneida Co. and one name correction.

4) Introduction of Dave Clausen by Fred Strand: Dave is a retired veterinarian from Amery WI. He served on the WI Natural Resources Board from 2006 to 2013, which included two terms as Board Chair. He is the current Chair of the Midwest Environmental Advocates. Dave is a longtime advocate for science-based, natural resources and environmental policy. He is interested in Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and has studied the subject extensively. He is a life-long hunter and outdoor enthusiast and especially enjoys the muzzle loader gun deer season.

Other brief introductions were made roundtable.

5) Presentation by Dave Clausen. Summary:

Dave Clausen began noting that he is speaking today for himself not on behalf of the Midwest Environmental Advocates. He was a USDA accredited and certified veterinarian for 40 years. He tested animals for intra state interstate and international shipments of animals and was a certified cervid veterinarian. He was also in the beef cattle business and raised/showed steer for 35 years. He and his wife owned and showed registered Holsteins as well. He explored starting a deer farm for meat production but found it was not economically feasible.

He discussed his opinion on whether you can count on the Department of Agriculture to watch out for the public’s deer herd. While it can be technically argued that as part of the administrative branch of state government there are some vague public trust responsibilities, the statutes that govern the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), make no mention of wildlife or the wild deer herd. DATCP has one function and job. That is to protect and promote agriculture. They are concerned with wildlife only when it poses a threat to commercial mainstream agriculture. With that in mind, he went on to comment on the USDA Voluntary CWD Certification Program. Regulatory Veterinarians like to think that many, if not most, domestic animal diseases can be controlled or eradicated if only proper regulations are in place. For the most part they are correct, and they have been successful with diseases such as brucellosis and tuberculosis. Most USDA programs for disease control in domestic livestock have been quite successful because of 1) Good live test; 2) Effective vaccination; 3) 100% surveillance at slaughter; 4) Based on sound science and epidemiological principals; and 5) They are mandatory not voluntary.

Dave went on to say that he cannot say the same of the CWD Certification Program. As to USDA Voluntary CWD Certification: The Voluntary Certification or Herd Status program will not accomplish its goal of controlling CWD on game farms. First, there is the lack of a good live test. Even if such a test is developed, the lag time between infection and enough prion present to detect will likely limit
the effectiveness. Current tests do not give a negative result, only a non-detect. Wider use of tests such as RT QuC will improve the situation but will not eliminate it.

In areas within 5 miles of a CWD occurrence in wild deer, captive facilities are required to double fence to protect the captive deer. In Wisconsin, we currently have 6 or 7 high fence operations that are infected with CWD that continue to operate because DATPC claims that properly handled carcasses leaving the facility pose “no threat”. Dave believes these cesspools of infection pose a significant risk to the wild deer herd in Northeastern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Fence failures, nose to nose contact and escapes from captive facilities are well documented and pose significant threats to public wildlife. From an epidemiological perspective it makes no sense unless USDA has come up with a one-way woven wire fence that blocks the outward passage of prions. Dave is not aware of any other animal or human disease where such focal points of disease would be allowed to keep fermenting such infectious material. Dave gave some examples of nose-to-nose contact to deer from fences, escapes from captive fences, and runoff from fences where prions could leave through water, trucks, boots, etc.

In all other USDA disease control programs that Dave is aware of, Certified-Accredited Veterinarians are required to collect all samples. CWD certification is the only one where the owner gets to select the animals to be tested and collect those samples. Proponents say finding CWD on a captive cervid operation is proof that the system is working. Dave feels however, that it is an indication of failed biosecurity at that facility.

Dave also noted that only a portion of slaughtered animals are tested.

He questions why the Cervid CWD rules are so lax compared to all the other USDA disease control rules. Basically, the cervid industry had the major input in formulating those rules. Dave followed the development and read some of the concerns that conservation organizations and wildlife agencies submitted. Those comments and concerns were basically ignored by USDA. In Wisconsin, CWD Certification is a voluntary program for those facilities wishing to move inter or intrastate. Premises not participating are forbidden from moving deer off their farm except directly to slaughter. He gave an example of possessing a buck that scores very high and its worth if marketed to the right place, but only options if not participating would be to watch it die of old age or send it to slaughter. Dave pointed out that the effectiveness of the program ultimately and completely depends entirely on everyone following the rules exactly. Dave also noted that most everyone involved in the game farming industry is honest and hard-working, however if you Google Lacy Act Violations for example it shows this does not apply to everyone. With a disease like CWD it only takes one “rascal” to inflict major harm on the public’s deer.

In conclusion, Dave doesn’t believe the program is effective for the reasons stated above.

Deer farms- 24 CWD positive herds in WI with 300 positives. 25% of US total and more positives than any other state.

There is a concern for AG markets. A month ago, Norway enacted a ban on hay and straw imports. Example of US alfalfa exports to China possibly being jeopardized.

Actions to Combat CWD were discussed:

1) Contain the geographic spread of CWD by enacting and enforcing an immediate ban on the movement of all live cervids, all potentially CWD-infected carcasses, animal parts, products, exposed equipment, trailers, or other sources of infectious materials.

2) Mandate and implement for hunters, convenient, cost-free, rapid testing of all animals harvested from CWD-affected areas.

3) Ensure that no CWD-infected material reaches the food or feed chains, and that it is instead properly disposed of. (Example of disposal in a lined landfill)

4) Establish and fund accountable research and science-based policy to protect public interest (health, wildlife and related industries, agriculture, our economies and communities).

Dave also noted an important source of information to draw from: The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), recently put out a Technical Report on Best Management Practices for Prevention, Surveillance, and Management of Chronic Wasting Disease. Dave will send a link to the report to Fred Strand to pass on to the committee for review.

Our Mission: To assist the public in protecting, enhancing, and restoring the natural resources of Boyfield County
6) Questions and answers on Dave’s presentation—Summary:

Dave’s answers to some of the questions that were presented:

Governor Walker had asked DATCP to come up with best practices for cervids last April and to Dave’s knowledge DATCP did not.

In 2013 there was a change in policy where prior to that when CWD was detected in herds the procedure was to test all the animals and herds were depopulated. However, after 2013 federal funding for depopulating evaporated and while the state felt it was important to talk about doing something about CWD they didn’t put dollars into it.

Clarification that all deer farmers do not cherry pick which deer are chosen to be tested as not all deer in the wild tested even show signs of being sick and it could take a couple months for prions to affect deer to show signs of CWD. Dave’s point is that from a disease-controlled program giving any option other than testing all the animals leaves a potential hole that doesn’t exist in other animal disease program, but how often it’s applicable he doesn’t know. The example was given that if tuberculosis is found in cows the entire herd must be tested. Also, when they are sold at auction or shipped interstate for example there are no exclusions.

As to whether Dave thinks the county should be concerned about other animal diseases right now: In regards to Tuberculosis, it was found on a dairy farm in Southern Wi recently and those animals were tested and steps were taken to eradicate it there. Dave said it isn’t very common and it can be eradicated if it does show up. Deer however react different to the tests for TB. As far as EHD (Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease) and Blue Tongue, although it could wipe out a considerable portion of a deer herd, the disease doesn’t persist in soil. It’s transmitted by black fly/midges, but the disease will stop when the midges freeze and within a few years the deer herd would be right back to where it was before.

Biosecurity measures and commercial agriculture: Generally good cooperation between the regulatory agencies but doesn’t think that cervid farms are up there on the regulatory agencies radar.

Even if an individual takes all the steps they can think of to prevent the CWD there could still be possible contamination somehow through various ways-someone throwing out a contaminated deer carcass, nose to nose contact through fences, possible contaminated feed, people coming to visit carried in by tires or boots for example. Dave gave the example of the Iowa turkey farm that was depopulated after the bird flu was detected. News trucks drove right up to the farm and people walked all over and they left and went to another farm afterwards. This is an example of how biosecurity measures can fail.

Discussion on single and double fencing and proven spread from nose to nose contact thru fences, contamination from baiting through saliva. Also, discussion on a new article in the last few months about the occurrence of CWD prions at mineral lick sites which causes significant risk of spreading the disease if you have CWD in an area.

We still have large areas in Wi free of CWD so limiting geographical spread is critical. WI ranks one-third of all game farms in the country that have tested positive for CWD. Other states are enforcing strict rules such as a ban on any importation of any cervids into the state.

Discussion on the possibility of whether landscape is creating an environment where it is making it easier for CWD to start for example deer grazing in one big food plot such as alfalfa. It has been proven that when a deer urinates, drools, or defecates on a plant such as alfalfa the prions that are present in that bodily fluid can bind to that plant and rain isn’t going to wash it off. Our organic alfalfa market to Asia may be in jeopardy. Canada talked about banning exports of grain out of a certain part of Saskatchewan because of the deer that were grazing in the fields and there was a concern about contamination. Science isn’t quite there yet to go in a field and pick up a sample and find it, however prions were found on plants in Rocky Mountain National park.
Concern of CWD becoming more prevalent in our area. Currently, there isn’t evidence that it goes to people. Concern that people won’t take it seriously until it is confirmed that it can go to a domestic animal or to people. If evidence is found in the future that it could be transmissible and, therefore, people stop hunting, it would be devastating to eco systems all across the state.

Dave will share a link to an article he was co-author of regarding APW-Alliance of Public Wildlife. And the update to the article as well.

7) **Introduction** of Al Horvath: Al is from Superior, WI. He is the Vice Chair of the Douglas Co. Conservation Congress, Vice Chair of the Deer & Elk Committee, member of the DNR’s Deer Advisory Council, and Chair of the Douglas Co. Deer Advisory Council. Al is also an outdoor enthusiast and avid hunter.

8) **Presentation by Al Horvath.**

PowerPoint on file for review and attached hereto.

6:15pm Rob Schierman left meeting.
6:30pm Mark Abeles-Allison left meeting.

In addition to What’s At Risk: our wild deer herd is in jeopardy; our hunting traditions are in jeopardy; our environment is at risk; and also there is a human hazard too. In-vitro studies show scientists have been able to take the human protein and convert it to CWD positive by exposing it to positive reindeer and elk meat. Also, in a macaque study which macaques contracted CWD from eating CWD positive deer meat has proven it isn’t out of the realm of possibility that CWD can jump the species barrier however it hasn’t happened yet.

It was noted that one issue that was to be looked at in the Emergency Rules was to stop transportation of deer from infected facilities within the state but was shot down by a citizen panel on DATCP so it didn’t even make it to the State.

It was also noted that due to (Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease) otherwise known as Mad cow disease, which was noted by Al that it is a sister disease to CWD and Scrapie, that the Red Cross says that if you have spent time in the United Kingdom for a specified time period since 1980 that you are not eligible to donate blood.

9) **Questions and Answers:**

Recommendations to prevent CWD coming into Bayfield County and what should happen if identified:

Have an actual plan. Increase surveillance and testing to see how broad it is. Educate the public by providing information on CWD and bio security measures & how to prevent it and contain it. Limit baiting for at least 2 or 3 years. Regulate proper disposal of deer carcasses and regulate it to not allow transport. Discussion of what landfills accept animal remains and availability of dumpsters for carcass disposal and the need for funding dollars to provide dumpsters and also kiosk sampling stations at DNR level. Discussion of lined landfills for carcass disposal. Discussion of the need for testing sites for counties where CWD isn’t known to be prevalent with CWD or surveillance areas. Important to practice good habits now to reduce risk factors.

Question as to where are the moratoriums on feeding, scents, and licks. Discussion on how to change behavior.

Question regarding breeding deer resistant to CWD. How would it be applied to the wild deer population. In a wild un-hunted population, it is thought it would take 100-150 years to happen. Discussion that prions are not stable and they have the ability to adapt and change to survive just like other diseases. Therefore, we can’t ignore the fact that trying to breed resistant deer to CWD could prove to be unsuccessful due to changing prions. It is believed that at least four strains of prions exist but possibly even seven.

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Tami Ryan has been working with the Wisconsin DNR Wildlife Management Program since 1993. She is currently serving as the Chief of the Wildlife Health program and has been in this role since 2009. Tami’s been involved with Chronic Wasting Disease throughout her career starting with serving on the incident command team during the original detection response in 2002 and through each management and response phase to present. She is an alumni of UW Steven’s Pont College of Natural Resources and UW Milwaukee with an MS in Wildlife Biology and Management and BS in Biological Sciences.