



Report: Emergency Response to Disease Outbreaks in Wildlife

Covering the Period July 1 –September 30, 2021

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

01/11/2022

Report to the Minnesota Legislature

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Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 3.197, we estimate that it cost approximately \$190 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, 2021

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) spent approximately \$260,000 during the first quarter of FY22 on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)-related activities (Figure 1, Table 2). This spending includes the purchasing of supplies necessary for fall 2021 sample collection efforts, salary for unclassified full-time staff, printing of CWD informational materials, and diagnostic testing. New activities that occurred this past quarter focused on planning fall 2021 CWD surveillance, and operations at the start of archery season. A detailed list of activities include:

- From July 1 to Sept 30, a total of 185 samples were collected and submitted for CWD testing:
 - Opportunistic sampling (i.e., 10 vehicle-killed deer, 7 sick deer, 3 found dead, 10 depredation permits, and 1 other): 31 samples, collected statewide; none of these deer were CWD-positive.
 - Hunter-harvested sampling: 154 samples; 3 of these deer were CWD-positive. The 3 new cases of CWD were detected in wild deer during this quarter were all harvested by archery hunters in southeast Minnesota, 2 deer in Deer Permit Area (DPA) 646 and 1 deer in DPA 645.
- Ordering of supplies for CWD sampling and setting up new contracts for diagnostic testing, dumpsters, and student labor.
- 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 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 seasons. 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 surveillance and management for fall 2021 were the primary activity for Wildlife Health Program staff during this quarter. The recent discovery of CWD at a captive cervid facility in Beltrami County led to the creation of a new surveillance area this fall (Figure 2). This new area for CWD surveillance was the focus of much of the planning, and permission to place self-service stations was secured from private businesses, county fairgrounds, and other state-owned sites. Further, the location of this new area is adjacent to three tribal nations, White Earth, Leech Lake, and Red Lake. Staff had several meetings 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. Further, we wanted to ensure hunters outside of opening weekend 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 highlighted getting deer tested for CWD.
- Direct mailing of approximately 26,600 postcards about CWD testing to hunters in our new CWD surveillance area (Northwest CWD Surveillance Zone) and 500 hunters around DPA 199, at the request of Fond du Lac Band.
- A series of news releases around deer season, highlighting the importance of CWD testing in designated areas, 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.

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 Enhancement	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.

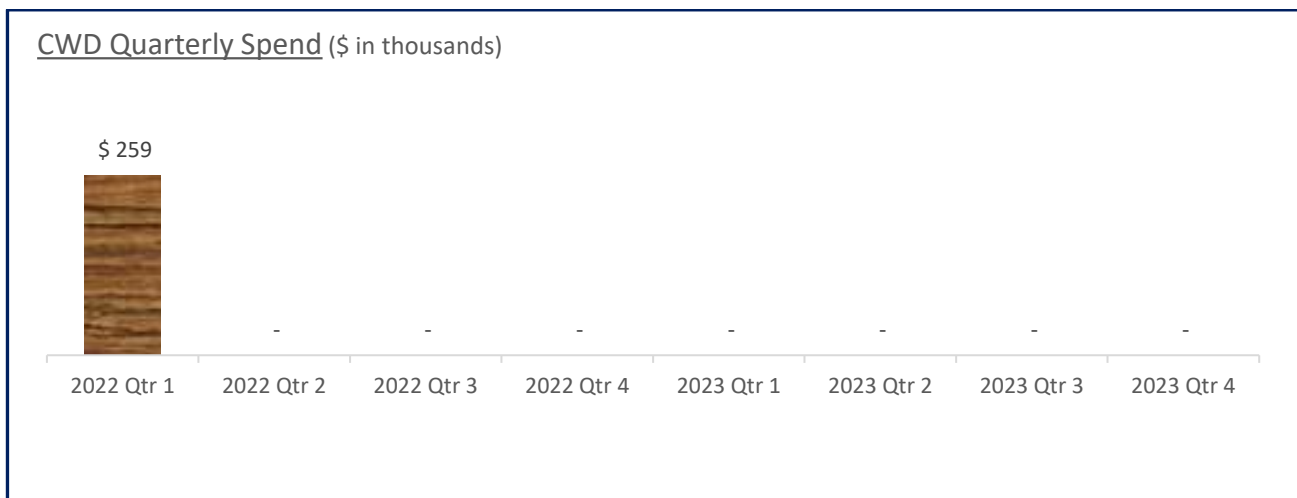


Table 2. Detailed spending by expense type for Chronic Wasting Disease Appropriation, July 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021.

Expense Type	General Fund	Game and Fish- Emergency Response	Heritage	Other**	Total Spend
Salary	618	133,159	-	62,019	195,796
CWD Sample Testing	-	-	-	-	-
Contracts: CWD Tissue Sampling	-	-	-	-	-
USDA-Culling Contract	-	-	-	-	-
CWD Office - Rushford	7,835	-	-	-	7,835
Dumpsters	10,024	-	-	-	10,024
Supplies	30,734	-	-	-	30,734
Travel/Fleet	2,677	-	-	17	2,694
Printing & Advertising	8,198	-	-	-	8,198
Other	4,040	-	-	49	4,089
Total	64,126	133,159	-	62,085	259,370
\$ Encumbered	1,222,596	-	400,000	-	-
% of Budget Spent	4.2%	7.9%	0.0%	-	-
% of Budget Encumbered	80.0%	0.0%	53.3%	-	-
% of Budget Spent/Enc	84.2%	7.9%	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.

