

NWRS/Biology  
WM 2.6  
Mail Stop 60130

October 29, 2004

To: Director  
Assistant Director, National Wildlife Refuge System

From: Acting Regional Director /s/ Mary Henry

Subject: Chronic Wasting Disease Accountability Report

This memorandum is to meet the Director's reporting requirements set out in his May 2004 memorandum regarding Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) FY04 funding allocations. Those reporting requirements include a synopsis "that clearly explains how these funds were expended" and "include a copy of your surveillance or disease contingency plan if one was developed with this funding." This report is to be submitted to the "Director and to the Assistant Director of the National Wildlife Refuge System by November 1, 2004."

Overview:

The Mountain-Prairie Region (Region) received \$210,548 in CWD funding in late spring FY04. We were directed to use the funds to 1) develop and implement Regional CWD surveillance and response plans, 2) support logistical needs associated with surveillance and management, and 3) implement Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) responsibilities of the joint States/DOI/USDA CWD implementation plan including compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The final products produced in our Region include development of 28 CWD surveillance and response plans and/or ancillary NEPA documents at Regional Refuges, Wetland Management Districts (WMD), Fish Hatcheries, and Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Offices (FWMAO) (see attachment 1 and appended CWD plans). Funding was sufficient for some implementation, and we produced NEPA compliance documents at a couple of Refuges in high risk areas where active surveillance is being conducted. The plans (forwarded electronically under separate cover to the Special Assistant to the Director and the Assistant Director, National Wildlife Refuge System) are finalized drafts that will undergo Regional review over the next couple of months. Further, because knowledge, distribution, and epidemiology of CWD are changing rapidly, we consider these plans to be living documents that will require revision as local circumstances and knowledge change.

Our eight-state Region has five states with endemic CWD in wild cervids and an additional two states that have had CWD-affected captive cervids. Because of the endemicity of the disease and

high variability across the Region in both CWD risk and surveillance/response needs, we took a step-wise approach with our limited funding to address the most critical needs in the Region. We assessed risk and need at the local level, and developed plans in coordination with the States to address local situations. We took the following steps to develop and implement these plans (Regional FY04 CWD funding allocation use is indicated by “CWD funded” in blue type):

1. We provided the technical expertise in late FY03 and early FY04 to develop the drafts and eventual finalized versions of “Chronic Wasting Disease Planning Guidelines for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Lands” (Guidelines). These Guidelines were approved by the Director of the Service on June 4, 2004. Plans produced through these Guidelines are considered the Service contribution to the “Plan for Assisting States, Federal Agencies, and Tribes in Managing Chronic Wasting Disease in Wild and Captive Cervids” as developed by the National CWD Plan implementation committee. The Service was co-chair of the National CWD planning committee.
2. We developed a Risk-Needs Assessment (RNA) tool to quantify the diversity of site-specific CWD risks and surveillance/response needs. Part of the quantification of need in this tool included the type and level of State-specific response to CWD, and the State interest in participation of Service lands in State-led CWD activities. We developed an automated database linked to the RNA. Field stations (Refuges, WMDs, Hatcheries, and FWMAOs) were able to complete the RNA by simple “check-offs” to multiple choice questions. Responses were automatically quantified for risk and need, and downloaded into our database. We used the rankings based on this RNA to prioritize funding of field stations for CWD plan development and implementation. Part of a technician’s annual personnel cost to maintain and analyze this database was CWD funded.
3. Simultaneously, we developed and provided CWD training workshops for Regional field personnel using Quick Response funding from the U.S. Geological Survey. These workshops were held in Colorado (January 2004, covering Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and Utah) and Nebraska (April 2004, covering North and South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas). Approximately 100 Service personnel attended these workshops. Guest speakers included the CWD-responsible representatives from all State conservation agencies and provided an opportunity for integration of Service efforts with State-led responses to CWD. We specifically addressed the Service CWD Guidelines and goals for CWD management and surveillance in these workshops. The workshops also included hands-on experience with safety, sampling, live affected animals, disposal, and surveillance techniques.
4. The training, early review of the Guidelines, and RNA provided field stations with solid preparatory foundation to address development of site-specific CWD plans. We created a Planning Outline from the Guidelines that provided step-by-step instruction to the field on CWD plan development.
5. We provided stations high on the Regional priority list with CWD funds in late June 2004. Because of the short time frame to the end of the fiscal year, we allowed the maximum available time, and set a deadline for completion by mid October. Stations used CWD funds in several ways: for personnel costs to develop and write plans, purchase of supplies and equipment for surveillance, cooperative agreements with the State for surveillance and/or response, contracts for localized CWD research with States and/or universities, and development of NEPA documents.

6. Several stations have begun implementing portions of their plans with limited available resources. Work is being conducted with cooperators, especially State conservation agencies, on surveillance, studies on cervid movement and distribution, census flights, refuge resource sampling, and preventive management actions to decrease cervid densities. FY04 [CWD funding](#) is being used to augment these activities, though funding levels are minimal.

#### Current Status:

We have 28 plans and associated documents under Regional review and anticipate the review process being completed before the end of the calendar year. Implementation is minimal at this time, and several stations in the Region were not funded and have yet to develop a site-specific CWD plan. North and South Dakota drafted State-wide generic CWD plans that will be adapted locally this coming year. Only three funded stations have not yet completed their draft CWD plan (Jones Hole NFH, Arapaho NWR, and Leadville NFH). The arrival of FY04 funding late in the fiscal year resulted in considerable constraints for effectively utilizing CWD funds. However, Service field stations rose to the occasion and in a few short months produced and partially implemented these comprehensive CWD surveillance and response plans. We plan to use FY05 funding to complete our planning efforts at stations that were not funded in FY04 and to begin more widespread implementation of completed plans. To effectively accomplish those tasks, we need FY05 CWD allocations as early in the fiscal year as possible.

Please contact Dr. Tom Roffe at 406-994-5789 for more information or if you have questions.

#### Attachments

cc: w/atts.

Casey Stemler, Special Assistant to Director

bcc: all w/atts.

Mike Stempel, ARD, Fisheries

Rick Coleman, ARD, NWRS

Tom Roffe, Chief, Wildlife Helth

Steve Berendzen, Refuge Supervisor, MT/WY/UT

David Wiseman, Refuge Supervisor, KS/CO/NE

Rod Krey, Refuge Supervisor, ND/SD

Bob Barrett, Deputy Refuge Supervisor, ND/SD

Wayne King, Regional Biologist

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## Attachment 1: CWD Plans Completed

NWR:	National Wildlife Refuge
WMD:	Wetlands Management District
FWMAO:	Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Office
WPA:	Waterfowl Production Areas
NFH:	National Fish Hatchery

Benton Lake Complex CWD Plan  
Bowdoin Complex CWD Plan  
Boyer Chute NWR CWD Plan  
Brown's Park NWR CWD Plan  
Charles M. Russell NWR CWD Plan  
Crescent Lake NWR CWD Plan  
Crescent Lake CWD Surveillance Environmental Assessment  
Flint Hills NWR CWD Plan  
Ft. Niobrara NWR CWD Plan  
Leadville NFH CWD Plan  
Lost Trail NWR CWD Plan  
Marais des Cygnes NWR CWD Plan  
Medicine Lake NWR CWD Plan  
National Bison Range CWD Plan  
National Elk Refuge Bison and Elk Management Plan and EIS  
Ninepipe NWR CWD Plan  
Ouray NWR CWD Plan  
Quivira NWR CWD Plan  
Rainwater Basin WMD CWD Plan  
Red Rock Lakes NWR CWD Plan  
Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR CWD Plan  
Seedskaadee NWR CWD Plan  
J&L Seier NWR CWD Plan  
North Dakota-South Dakota Comprehensive CWD Plan  
Sully's Hill National Game Preserve CWD Plan  
Swan River NWR/ NW Montana WMD CWD Plan  
Valentine NWR CWD Plan  
Wind River Reservation CWD Plan

Attachment 2: Stations Funded with FY04 CWD Funding. (Funding was provided to Refuge Complexes).

NWR: National Wildlife Refuge  
WMD: Wetlands Management District  
FWMAO: Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Office  
WPA: Waterfowl Production Areas  
NFH: National Fish Hatchery

**Montana:**

Benton Lake Complex  
Black Coulee NWR  
County WPAs  
Charles M. Russell Complex  
UL Bend NWR  
National Bison Range Complex  
Lost Trail NWR  
Ninepipes NWR  
Swan River NWR  
Northwest Montana WMD  
Pablo NWR  
Bowdoin Complex  
Bowdoin NWR  
Lake Thibadeau NWR  
Creedman Coulee NWR  
Hewitt Lake NWR  
Red Rock Lakes NWR  
Medicine Lake NWR  
Northeastern Montana WMD

**Wyoming:**

National Elk Refuge  
Lander FWMAO  
Seedskaadee NWR  
Cokeville Meadows NWR

**Colorado:**

Arapaho NWR  
Leadville NFH  
Browns Park NWR

**Utah:**

Ouray NWR  
Jones Hole NFH

**North Dakota:**

- Tewaukon NWR
  - Tewaukon WMD
- Des Lacs Complex
  - Lostwood NWR
  - Lake Zahl NWR
  - Shell Lake NWR
  - Crosby WMD
  - Lostwood WMD
- Kulm WMD
- Long Lake Complex
  - Slade Lake NWR
  - Long Lake NWR

**South Dakota:**

- Lake Andes NWR
  - Karl Mundt NWR
  - Lake Andes WMD
- Lacreek NWR
- Sand Lake Complex
  - Sand Lake NWR
- Devil's Lake Complex
  - Sully's Hill National Game Preserve

**Nebraska:**

- Crescent Lake NWR
  - North Platte NWR
- Ft. Niobrara NWR
  - Valentine NWR
  - John and Louise Seier NWR
- Rainwater Basin WMD

**Kansas:**

- Quivira NWR
- Flint Hills NWR
- Marais Des Cygnes NWR