

**Conservation Federation of Missouri
2013 Resolutions**

**Committee: Deer, Wild Turkey and Elk
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40

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

WHEREAS, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a contagious and 100% fatal disease that attacks the nervous systems of cervids, such as white-tailed, mule and other types of deer; and

WHEREAS, Transmission rates of CWD are increased through activities that unnaturally concentrate deer; and,

WHEREAS, The only currently practical and effective test for CWD must be performed on dead animals; and,

WHEREAS, Commercial trade in live deer among breeders and the Big Game Hunting Preserves industry has been a consistent factor in the geographic spread of CWD to previously uninfected areas throughout North America; and,

WHEREAS, CWD is just one example of the risk posed by the commerce in and confinement of species which can introduce dangerous diseases that threaten both public wildlife resources and our livestock industry; and,

WHEREAS, Deer infected with CWD are infectious for eighteen months or more before presenting detectable symptoms, thus infected deer may appear completely healthy when sold and shipped commercially; and,

WHEREAS, The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has permitted approximately 27 Big Game Hunting Preserves in Missouri with white-tailed deer, and approximately 277 white-tailed deer Class I Wildlife Breeders; and,

WHEREAS, The MDC has tested more than 36,000 free-ranging deer for CWD from all parts of the state since 2002 and up to 2013; and,

WHEREAS, CWD had never been detected in Missouri until two cases were found in 2010 and 2011 at

a Big Game Hunting Preserve located in Linn and Macon counties. Subsequently the first two cases of CWD in free-ranging deer were confirmed in 2012 within one mile of the northwest corner of the Big Game Hunting Preserve; and,

WHEREAS, Late in 2012, ten more cases of CWD were documented in caged deer within the Big Game Hunting Preserve in Macon County; and,

WHEREAS, Of the 36,000 wild deer tested, including more intensive testing in the 6-county CWD testing zone, only six wild whitetails have tested positive for CWD, each within 2 miles of the northwest corner of the Big Game Hunting Preserve in Macon County; and,

WHEREAS, As a result of that testing, scientists have determined it is highly unlikely that CWD has been present in the state prior to its recent discovery at the Big Game Hunting Preserve in Macon County; and,

WHEREAS, CWD has not been shown to be transmissible to humans or commercial livestock outside of the laboratory, but researchers caution there are no guarantees this will remain the case in the future; and,

WHEREAS, Research has shown that CWD has resulted in 45% reduction in some wild cervid populations and can reduce the expected life span of deer so that bucks do not reach maturity and maximum antler growth; and,

WHEREAS, Missouri has more than 511,000 deer hunters who spend \$690 million in the state each year on deer hunting and related activities; and,

WHEREAS, The deer hunting industry has an overall economic impact of \$1.1 billion in Missouri each year and supports almost 12,000 jobs; and,

WHEREAS, CWD poses a serious threat to the cultural, social and economic benefits that a healthy wild white-tailed deer herd provides to all Missouri citizens; and,

WHEREAS, CWD has caused Missouri landowners to suffer loss of property value, a situation which could be exacerbated by the spread of the disease; and,

WHEREAS, Slowing the spread of CWD requires costly investigation, testing and surveillance efforts

for many years and often requires drastic reductions in deer populations. There is currently no known way to decontaminate an environment once CWD is present; and,

WHEREAS, Common fencing and maintenance practices in the confined deer industry are currently designed to protect the economic interests of that industry, rather than the protection of the public resources impacted by their activities. Mandatory standards adequate to ensure the protection of wild herds, including double fences, routine inspection and properly-funded ongoing fence-maintenance protocols after CWD infection is detected in an enclosure are not currently in place; and,

WHEREAS, The approximately 304 currently permitted confined deer businesses across Missouri are not subjected to any routine fencing inspection; and,

WHEREAS, The Missouri Department of Agriculture has chosen not to require big game hunting preserves to test harvested deer for CWD despite assurances given to the Missouri Department of Conservation when it rescinded CWD testing regulations in 2009, and,

WHEREAS, The Missouri Department of Agriculture does not have the Constitutional authority to regulate white-tailed deer in Missouri, and,

WHEREAS, The Conservation Federation of Missouri is a strong supporter and defender of the private property rights of landowners, but does not extend that support to activities which pose a dire threat to the future of a resource of such significant fiscal and social value as the health of Missouri's wild deer population: now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, On this 24th day of February, 2013, that the Conservation Federation of Missouri finds CWD is an extremely serious threat to the wild herd of white-tailed deer in Missouri: and be it further

RESOLVED, That the CFM urges the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Missouri Department of Agriculture, and the Missouri Legislature to focus all resources and move quickly to provide the statutory and regulatory structure required to minimize, contain and eliminate the threat to the wild herd of white-tailed deer caused by CWD: and be it further

RESOLVED, That the CFM suggests that such further statutory and regulatory measures should

include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. A moratorium on new or expanded Big Game Hunting Preserves and Class I Wildlife Breeders; and
2. MDC resume the comprehensive management and regulatory responsibility for the Big Game Hunting Preserves and Class I Wildlife Breeders, the movement of cervids into and within Missouri, including the management or oversight of a CWD program that requires a system of inventory for breeders and preserves that includes permanent physical identification of animals, date of birth, gender, date, and source of acquisition, date of removal, destination of animal removed, mortality date, cause of death, official CWD test result for all cervids one year of age or older at time of death, and the method and location of carcass disposal; and
3. Ban the importation of out-of-state cervids to Big Game Hunting Preserves and Class I Wildlife Breeders; and
4. Require, at a minimum, more detailed fencing specifications including double fencing consisting of 10' and 8' fences to prevent escape and contact with wild deer; and
5. Require Big Game Hunting Preserves and Class I Wildlife Breeders to obtain a financial assurance instrument, such as a \$1 million dollar performance bond, to secure a source of funds to effectuate a response to positive detection of CWD in captive whitetails in the event the Big Game Hunting Preserves or Class I Wildlife Breeders refuse or are unable to perform adequate response, depopulation or closure activities; and
6. Mandatory CWD testing of all whitetails that die or are harvested within Big Game Hunting Preserves and Class I Wildlife Breeders; and
7. Impose more stringent herd and fence surveillance requirements with meaningful penalties and enforcement for violations; and
8. Require Big Game Hunting Preserves and Class I Wildlife Breeders which have cervids that test positive for CWD to depopulate and maintain a deer proof fence for a minimum of 30 years; and
9. Require Big Game Hunting Preserves and Class I Wildlife Breeders to enroll deer one-year or older in a CWD program; and
10. Prohibit the holding of cervids at temporary exhibitions and auction/sale facilities; and
11. Review the standards and regulations surrounding all wildlife confinement and commerce to determine the level of risk posed to public resources and identify changes needed to address those risks.