

## ATTENTION TRIBAL MEMBERS: Chronic Wasting Disease has been detected on the Flathead Indian Reservation

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has been detected in the Hog Heaven Management Unit from a harvested mule deer. The sample was recently submitted by the CSKT Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Recreation and Conservation (DFWRC) staff and the positive results were received from the State Laboratory on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025. CWD is a fatal neurological disease that effects deer, elk and moose. The disease is spread by animal to animal contact, but can *also be spread by dumping carcasses in unaffected areas*. The CSKT Wildlife Program is implementing the initial response protocol from the Tribe's CWD Surveillance and Management Plan.

Objectives for CWD Management include:

- Minimizing spread of CWD to surrounding big game
- Communicating with Tribal Community on the status of Chronic Wasting Disease within the identified CWD Management Zone (Hog Heaven and Irvine; see map):
  - Including Wildlife Management Units where CWD positive animals might be
  - How to test animals prior to consumption and safely process and dispose of carcasses



(find more information at <https://cskt.org/chronic-wasting-disease/>; printed materials also available at DFWRC offices; 406 6<sup>th</sup> Ave East, Polson)

- Collect samples from 150 mule deer harvested from Hog Heaven and Irvine herds to determine how many animals in the area have the disease (prevalence)

CSKT Wildlife needs the help of Tribal hunters to meet our sample goal of 150 mule deer from the CWD Management Zone (See Map). The DFWRC has more detailed maps available for hunters planning on harvesting in the area.

**NOTE: It is extremely important for the health of our Tribal people and our big game herds that any deer, elk or moose harvested from this area is tested for Chronic Wasting Disease before consumption.** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has issued guidance that animals that test positive for CWD should not be consumed. There currently no vaccine for CWD, and if it were to spread to humans it would likely be through consuming infected meat.

Under these circumstances we advise all CSKT hunters on the Flathead Reservation get all big game animals tested for CWD and wait for test results before you process further or move the carcass for processing. Protect the carcass from contact with other animals. Please stop at any hunter check station you see for testing. DO NOT dump carcasses anywhere on the Reservation. Carcasses can be disposed of at the Polson Transfer station, or put the hide and bones in plastic garbage bags and dispose of them as household trash.

DFWRC will be proposing a Tribal member CWD Hunt within the Management Zone to help collect mule deer samples from the area and reduce the population to contain spread of the disease.

Please notify CSKT Wildlife (**406-675-2700 ext. 7284**) if you have, or plan to harvest within the CWD Management Zone this season to help biologists meet CWD objectives and prevent further spread.