

**Final Meeting Record  
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative (KVRI) Hybrid Board Meeting  
Boundary County Annex Building  
February 10, 2025 6:00 p.m.**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Dave Bobbitt, Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG)  
Dave Gray, Social/Cultural/Historical  
Carson Watkins, IDFG  
Ed Atkins Jr., Corporate Agriculture/ Landowner  
Gary Aitken Jr., Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI) & KVRI Co-Chair  
Kennon McClintock, Conservationist/Environmentalist  
Lee Colson, Social/Cultural/Historical  
Rick Alonzo, Mayor of Bonners Ferry & KVRI Co-Chair  
Remington Daniels, Business/Industry

**Others in Attendance:**

Austin Terrell, Idaho Office of Species Conservation (OSC)  
Caleb Davis, U.S. Representative Fulcher's Office  
Cindy Lewis, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Chris Bachman, Conservation Director of the Yaak Valley Forest Council  
Jada Fairchild, KTOI & KVRI Admin Assistant  
Jake Garringer, Executive Office of Governor Little  
Jeremy Gaffield, IDFG  
Kathryn Larson, Citizen  
Keegan Bordeaux, KTOI  
Marc Kilmer, Representing Senator Risch's Office  
Michelle Richman, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR)  
Patrick Lair, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
Shane Robinson, USDA  
Shelby Therrian, KTOI  
Suzette Seuell, Citizen  
Theresa Wheat, KTOI & KVRI Facilitator

- **Welcome and Introduction** were led by Mayor Rick Alonzo at 6:00 p.m. to begin the meeting.
- **Presentations:**

**Carson Watkins**, Idaho Fish and Game, provided an update and explained what Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is and how it has impacted our community. Like other Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs), CWD affects the prion protein in the deer family (white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, moose, caribou). Normally, prion proteins are broken down and recycled by the body after they complete their function(s). However, in the case of CWD, normal prion protein changes shape making them very resistant to breakdown. As a result, disease-associated prions persist in infected animals for a long time and increase in abundance as additional normal prions are contacted and misfold.

Over time, the accumulation of these abnormal prions causes degeneration of the host's motor skills, particularly in the brain, impairing the deer's ability to focus and defend itself from environmental threats. Bucks are more likely to spread CWD because of their increased movement and social interactions during breeding season, where they encounter several other deer across a larger territory. This leads to a higher chance of contact with infected deer through bodily fluids like saliva, urine deposited on scrapes, and other scent making behaviors. If a pregnant doe contracts Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and gives birth, it is likely that the offspring can be infected. While the disease is primarily spread through direct contact or contaminated environments, there is evidence suggesting that the prions responsible for CWD can be passed from mother to offspring, either in utero or through contact after birth.

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The likelihood of transmission to the fawn depends on various factors, including the stage of pregnancy and the presence of prions in the mother's bodily fluids. However, more research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms of maternal transmission of CWD. Chronic Wasting Disease has an incubation period of about 18-24 months and clinical symptoms are generally not displayed until 16 months. CWD is 100% fatal and there is currently no vaccine or cure, ultimately leading to the death of the infected animal.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is transmitted between hosts through direct contact with infected animals (such as saliva, urine, and feces) or indirectly through contaminated environments, including soil, vegetation, and feeding sites. Current research and evidence indicate that CWD cannot be transmitted to humans through the consumption of infected animals. There is an incidence rate of 1 : 1,000,000 of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (the TSE that affects humans) worldwide and that rates have been very stable over decades, even while CWD has increased in both local prevalence and distribution in North America. No link has been established between cases of CJD and the consumption of CWD-positive venison. However, due to the potentially fatal nature of the disease, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization advises against consuming meat from CWD-positive animals out of an abundance of caution; while CWD has not been shown to transfer to humans, it is possible.

Although it is thought not possible for humans to contract Chronic Wasting Disease, the deer population remains significantly impacted and requires management. In July 2024, Boundary County reported its first CWD-positive animal, which was found deceased on private land. In response, surveillance efforts were initiated, including the establishment of a CWD management zone, carcass restrictions that prohibit the movement of brain tissue and carcasses outside the zone, and the implementation of mandatory sampling for all hunters, requiring them to submit their animals for testing. At the conclusion of the hunting season, a total of 1,000 samples were collected from deer in the CWD management zone. After testing all the samples, only three were confirmed as CWD-positive. Each of the CWD positive animals were all located throughout Boundary County, which left no pattern. These patterns were in addition to the initial positive samples found in the Summer of 2024 and the two positives found during the surveillance hunt.

Because there are currently no vaccines or cures for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) this limits the available management options. Whether the disease is managed aggressively or not, the deer population will decline. The question is whether most of the deer represented in the population are sick or healthy. Reducing deer density and altering the demographic structure (e.g. reducing the buck-doe ratios) of the population can reduce the rates of infection in a population and ensure that most hunter-harvested animals are healthy. Unfortunately, CWD can persist in the environment for decades, influenced by factors such as UV radiation, soil conditions, and other environmental variables. The prions responsible for CWD are highly resistant to degradation, allowing them to remain viable to soil, vegetation, and water sources for extended periods. This prolonged environment presence of CWD significantly contributes to its spread, as animals may come into contact with contaminated areas long after an infected animal has died.

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- **Legislative Updates:**

**Marc Kilmer**, representing Senator Risch’s office, explained that they are in the process of settling in following the inauguration of the new president. However, they are actively working to renew federal funding, as it is set to expire in March. Additionally, they are focused on advancing the Farm Bill.

**Jake Garringer**, representing Governor Little’s office, discussed their ongoing efforts to reduce bureaucratic red tape.

**Dave Bobbitt**, Idaho Fish and Game Commissioner, explained that the commission is still deliberating on whether Idaho should transition to the lottery system for out-of-state tags or continue with the over-the-counter method. He also provided information about upcoming scoping meetings, including one in Bonners Ferry on February 12, 2025, and another in Coeur d'Alene on February 20, 2025.

- **Sub-Committee Updates**

**Forestry Sub-Committee** – March 13 and November 12, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. located at the Boundary County Annex

**Grizzly Bear Sub-Committee** – July 24 and November 13, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. located at the Boundary County Annex

**Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Sub-Committee** – April 10 and October 15, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. located at the Boundary County Annex

**Next Meeting** is scheduled to be held on March 17, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Boundary County Annex

The meeting ending at 7:15 p.m.

Meeting Recorded by Jada Fairchild