



ANNUAL REPORT

2003

**Boone and Crockett Club
Mule Deer Foundation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
National Shooting Sports Foundation
Pope and Young Club
Quality Deer Management Association**

**Wildlife Management Institute
Cabela's
Bowhunting Preservation Alliance
Izaak Walton League of America
Camp Fire Conservation Fund
Bio-Rad Laboratories**

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE ALLIANCE

Annual Report - 2003

Introduction

In January, 2002, in response to their growing concerns regarding chronic wasting disease (CWD) the Boone and Crockett Club, Mule Deer Foundation and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation initiated a collaborative project called the **Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance**.

These organizations were deeply concerned about the impact CWD was having, and may continue to have, on North America's wild deer and elk populations. They were also concerned about the impact this disease may have upon millions of hunters' desire and opportunity to hunt deer and elk each fall, and upon their confidence to continue to put healthful wild venison on their families' tables. During the following two years, other nationally respected organizations joined the effort. As of December 31, 2003, the Alliance had grown to a total of 12 participants (* = new partners added in 2003):

Boone and Crockett Club	Wildlife Management Institute
Mule Deer Foundation	Cabela's (sponsor)
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	*Bowhunting Preservation Alliance
National Shooting Sports Foundation	*Izaak Walton League of America
Pope and Young Club	*Camp Fire Conservation Fund
Quality Deer Management Association	*Bio-Rad Laboratories (sponsor)

Alliance Summary

The mission of the CWD Alliance is to *promote responsible and accurate communications regarding CWD, and to support strategies that effectively control CWD to minimize its impact on wild, free-ranging deer and elk populations.*

Alliance partners pool resources, share information and cooperate on projects and activities to positively impact the CWD issue. The Alliance encourages the development of solutions that do not necessitate the depopulation of wild cervid populations.

The Alliance recognizes that appropriate public information and education are vital to the resolution of the CWD dilemma. In an effort to promote responsible, timely and accurate communications the Alliance has:

- Developed and maintained a comprehensive, informative CWD website;
- Co-sponsored and/or participated in CWD conferences and seminars in numerous locals throughout North America;

- Served as a credible resource for media sources seeking information about CWD;
- Published responsible and accurate CWD articles in their respective organization's member magazines;
- Collaborated on the development of a CWD training video for hunters;
- Participated on several interdisciplinary, multi-agency CWD work groups and committees;
- Worked with state and federal agencies to develop policy recommendations for the management and eradication of CWD; and
- Provided expert testimony to Congress, and supported legislative actions that provide adequate funding and other positive measures for the control and eradication of CWD.

Alliance partners and sponsors collectively contributed more than \$102,000 during 2002-2003 to support the CWD Alliance project.

2003 Project Activity Detail

Dr. Gary J. Wolfe serves as the Alliance's project leader, and represented the Alliance on many fronts during 2003.

Website

The CWD website (www.cwd-info.org) is the Alliance's flagship project. It was launched in July 2002, and by all accounts has been well received by wildlife professionals, hunters and the media. The operational philosophy has been that the site should be a clearinghouse for responsible, accurate and timely information about CWD. Several comments from website users were included in the 2002 Annual Report, and are indicative of the positive feedback the Alliance website continued to receive during 2003.

Pyron Technologies, a Missoula-based website company, provides the technical support for the website. Pyron's automated tracking system reported an estimated 130,256* visits to the CWD Alliance website during calendar year 2003, bringing total website visits during the first 18 months to more than 212,000. Monthly visits during 2003 ranged from a low of 8135 in June, to a high of 14,072 in November (Appendix A).

* Unfortunately, the actual usage data for January – March 2003 was deleted from Pyron's database before the information was recorded for this report. Actual website visits for April – December were 97,692. This was extrapolated to estimate 130,256 visits for the entire year.

Additional information was continually added to the website throughout the year to make it a more thorough and useful resource. Major revisions during 2003 included restructuring the NEWS AND UPDATES section to make it more user-friendly; revising and updating the “CWD Overview” page and adding a “Magazine Articles” category to the LEARN ABOUT CWD section; adding several new categories to the RESOURCES section and annotating many of the “Bibliography” references; expanding the RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUNTERS section to include categories on “Carcass Transportation Regulations”, “Units Where CWD has been Detected”, and “USDA Guidelines for Hunters in Canada”; the addition of new agency policies and proposed legislation to the POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE section; and continuing to expand the number of CWD information sources in the CWD LINKS section. Plus, the NEWS AND UPDATES pages were updated several times weekly.

Additionally, dozens of individual questions were received through the website’s “contact form” and were answered via e-mail. Questions were received from a wide variety of sources including students working on school projects, hunters, news media, wildlife biologists, veterinarians, other scientists, agency personnel, and the general public.

CWD Symposia and Other Speaking Opportunities

There were numerous requests throughout the year to speak at CWD conferences and symposia. Dr. Wolfe represented the CWD Alliance at the following events:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Jan. 11, 2003 | Alberta CWD Symposium
Sponsored by Alberta Conservation Association and Alberta Cooperative Conservation Research Unit
Edmonton, AB <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gave a presentation about the CWD Alliance Project |
| Feb. 13 – 15, 2003 | SHOT Show
Orlando, FL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participated in CWD Panel Discussion for the Outdoor Media, Sponsored by NSSF. (see also Media Outreach) |
| Feb. 27 – 28, 2003 | Pacific Northwest Tribes CWD Conference
Sponsored by the Yakama Nation Wildlife Dept.
Toppinish, WA <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gave a featured presentation on CWD and the CWD Alliance Project; and participated in CWD workshop for tribal biologists. |

- June 14-15, 2003 Outdoor Writers of America Association annual meeting
Columbia, MO
- Chaired (and presented) 2-hr panel discussion on CWD. Approximately 100 outdoor writers were in attendance. (see also Media Outreach)
- July 11-12, 2003 Quality Deer Management Association annual convention
Lafayette, LA
- Presented keynote address on CWD and the CWD Alliance Project.
- Sept. 23, 2003 Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus CWD Task Force Hearing
Washington, D.C.
- Gave presentation on CWD Alliance’s activities to this congressional task force. (see also Congressional and Legislative)
- Sept. 29, 2003 Met with Cabela’s CEO and executive staff at corporate
headquarters in Sidney, NE.
- Gave update on CWD and CWD Alliance Project
- Nov. 17, 2003 CWD Public Meeting in Dodgeville, WI hosted by Congressman
Ron Kind (meeting attended by about 100-125)
- Gave presentation on CWD Alliance’s activities
- Dec. 3-6, 2003 Governor’s Symposium on North America’s Hunting Heritage
Houston, TX
- Gave two presentations on CWD and the CWD Alliance project.

Media Outreach

There were fewer interview requests in 2003 than in 2002; however, there were increased opportunities to formally address groups of media.

- Jan. 7, 2003 Interview with Don Thomas, The Edmonton Journal, Edmonton,
AB. He was preparing an article on the upcoming CWD
Symposium in Edmonton.
- Feb. 13 – 15, 2003 Participated as a speaker in a CWD panel discussion for the
outdoor media. This event was sponsored by NSSF and held in
conjunction with the SHOT Show in Orlando, FL.
- May 1, 2003 Interview with Carolee Boyles, “Rural Sportsman” (an insert in
“Progressive Farmer” based in Birmingham, Alabama). This was
a good interview about sportsmen not overreacting to CWD.

- May 12, 2003 Interview with Evan Moore, Houston Chronicle. He was doing an article on Texas exotics and wanted some information on CWD.
- June 14-15, 2003 Chaired a 2-hr special panel discussion on CWD at the Outdoor Writers Association of America's annual meeting in Columbia, MO. This included a presentation on the CWD Alliance project. Approximately 100 outdoor writers were in attendance.
- July 11, 2003 Interview with John Cassin. He was writing an article for "Arrow Trade" on deer lures and needed information about CWD risks.
- November, 2003 Worked with Barrett Productions on an episode for the RMEF's "Elk Country Journal". Made arrangements to film an elk hunt with an outfitter in the CWD endemic area in Colorado, worked with the camera crew to identify key CWD elements which should be included, arranged for an interview with Dr. Elizabeth Williams at the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory, and provided an on-camera interview about the CWD Alliance.

CWD Working Groups and Committees

Dr. Wolfe represented the CWD Alliance on the Multi-State CWD Working Group, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Fish and Wildlife Health Committee and at other professional meetings throughout the year.

- February 5-6, 2003 Multi-State CWD Task Force Meeting
Laramie, WY
- Participated as a member of the task force and gave CWD Alliance Project Update
- March 26 – 29, 2003 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference
Winston-Salem, NC.
- Participated as a member of the IAFWA Wildlife Health Committee
 - CWD Alliance updates were given at:
 1. CWD Alliance Partners meeting
 2. IAFWA Wildlife Health Committee meeting
 3. AWCP meeting
 4. B & C meeting
- June 10-11, 2003 CWD Data Standards Forum
Madison, WI
- Participated in this 2-day workshop to help develop standards and guideline for a national CWD database, and define a role for the CWD Alliance.

- Sept. 9-12, 2003 International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies annual meeting
Madison, WI
- Participated in WI CWD field trip
 - CWD Alliance partners luncheon meeting
 - Participated as a member of the IAFWA Wildlife Health Committee, and provided CWD Alliance update
- Sept.30, 2003 Multi-State CWD Task Force Meeting
Sidney, NE
- Participated as a member of the task force and gave CWD Alliance Project Update

Congressional and Legislative

The Alliance took the lead drafting a letter to the House and Senate appropriations committees in mid-April requesting full funding in fiscal 2004 for the "National Plan to Assist States, Federal Agencies and Tribes in Managing CWD in Captive and Free Ranging Cervids" (National CWD Plan). The letter was ultimately signed by more than 20 wildlife conservation organizations.

Dr. Wolfe spoke on behalf of the CWD Alliance at the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus CWD Task Force Hearing held September 23rd in Washington, D.C. He gave a presentation on the CWD Alliance's activities to several members of congress, and offered suggestions as to how congress could assist in the effort to control CWD. As an outgrowth of this presentation, Congressmen Ron Kind (WI) later invited Dr. Wolfe to speak at a CWD public meeting he hosted in Dodgeville, WI.

CWD Hunter Training Video

The Alliance collaborated with American Outdoor Productions, a video production company based in Fort Collins, CO, to develop a CWD hunter education and training CD-ROM in partnership with the CWD Alliance. The objection is to provide hunters with the information they need to confidently continue hunting in CWD areas, and the knowledge to skillfully comply with the growing body of hunter transportation regulations.

It will be released in spring of 2004, and the CWD Alliance project will receive a 10% royalty on all sales.

Budget Summary

The CWD Alliance's 2003 actual project expenses were \$66,124, which was \$21,376 under the budget of \$87,500. The project account began the year with a carry-over cash balance of \$25,378, Alliance partners contributed another \$50,254 in 2003, and project expenses totaled \$66,124...leaving a total of \$9,508 available for 2004 project activity.

Membership in the Alliance is expected to continue growing. Several other organizations and companies have expressed an interest in joining the CWD Alliance, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) invited the Alliance to submit a grant request. A formal proposal requesting \$25,000 in matching funds was submitted in July, 2003. NFWF's decision is pending.

Future Needs and Opportunities

With the recent detection of BSE for the first time in both the United States and Canada, public interest in prion diseases will most likely continue to grow. In fact, during January and February, 2004 the website received more visitation than anytime during the previous 12 months...perhaps as a direct result of the interest generated by the discovery of BSE in Washington state in December, 2003.

As state wildlife agencies have stepped-up their CWD surveillance activities, the known range of CWD has continued to expand and more state wildlife agencies have adopted deer and elk carcass transportation regulations for hunters. Because potential human health risks are still not quantified and impacts on wildlife population dynamics remain uncertain, CWD will likely continue to be a priority wildlife management and public relations issue for the next several years.

There is certainly an important continuing role for the CWD Alliance. Communication of timely and accurate information to the public and media will continue to be a priority.

- There are ongoing opportunities and needs to expand the scope and depth of information provided on the website.
- The National CWD Plan Implementation Team has indicated it will be looking to the CWD Alliance to assist with its public information and outreach efforts, and the National Biological Information Infrastructure's (NBII) CWD Module Group (housed at the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, WI) has indicated they would like to "officially" collaborate and partner with the Alliance in 2004
- The CWD hunter training CD-ROM needs to be completed, marketed and distributed to hunters.
- There will continue to be many opportunities to sponsor and/or present at CWD conferences.
- Undoubtedly, there will continue to be numerous opportunities to provide media interviews and direct the media to reasonable and accurate information sources.
- There will be continuing opportunities to participate in various CWD task forces and committees, and to provide input into legislation and public policy development.

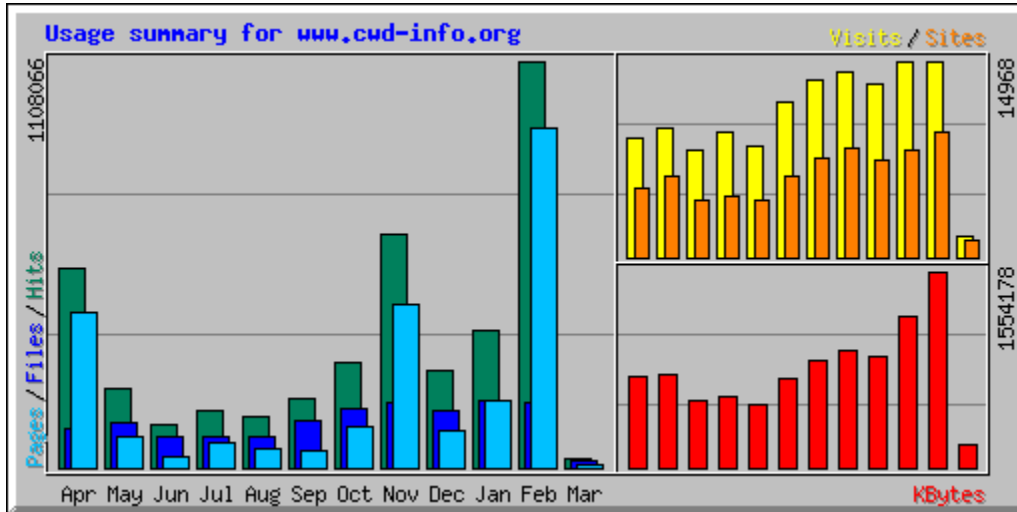
APPENDIX A

Website Statistics

Usage Statistics for www.cwd-info.org

Summary Period: Last 12 Months

Generated 03-Mar-2004 09:00 MST



Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Mar 2004	8992	5759	3013	512	1365	186601	1537	9039	17278	26977
Feb 2004	38209	6120	31862	516	9571	1554178	14968	924026	177501	1108066
Jan 2004	12039	5863	5962	482	8141	1202708	14966	184834	181754	373222
Dec 2003	8503	5041	3239	423	7473	872567	13137	100439	156280	263597
Nov 2003	21255	5845	14788	469	8271	929460	14072	443648	175355	637651
Oct 2003	9247	5219	3588	436	7560	856098	13540	111248	161805	286676
Sep 2003	6274	4331	1590	394	6215	702563	11844	47718	129946	188240
Aug 2003	4557	2725	1625	274	4385	497885	8518	50383	84475	141294
Jul 2003	4986	2812	2153	306	4714	570708	9514	66767	87172	154575
Jun 2003	3864	2752	983	271	4377	526089	8135	29513	82562	115921
May 2003	6902	4033	2745	318	6251	741653	9861	85106	125036	213989
Apr 2003	21695	4323	16997	362	5270	718314	9071	424932	108088	542384
Totals						9358824	129163	2477653	1487252	4052592