

Fighting the Spread of Chronic Wasting Disease

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Seven timber companies and four conservation organizations are joining together to fight the spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD) among deer, elk, and other species of the deer family (known as "cervids"). The new CWD coalition will promote practices that help discover, manage, and mitigate the negative impacts of CWD. The Coalition includes the Forest Investment Associates, Molpus Woodlands Group, PotlatchDeltic, Rayonier, Resource Management Service, The Westervelt Company, Weyerhaeuser, Alabama Wildlife Federation, Boone and Crockett Club, Georgia Wildlife Federation and National Deer Association. This footprint spans to well over 20 million acres across the nation.

"We are pleased to join with so many other private landowners and other stakeholders in addressing this critical problem," said Brian Luoma, The Westervelt Company President and CEO. "Federal and state agencies, the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, researchers and sportsmen conservationists are all doing their part in educating the public about this critical issue. We are fully supportive of all efforts to prevent further spread and are grateful to everyone who is participating in the coalition, including our own employees, who have taken the lead in combating CWD."

The new coalition acknowledges it will take the cooperation of state wildlife agencies, hunters and private landowners working together to slow the spread of the disease. The group has developed a list of voluntary "best management practices" to help monitor, manage and prevent the spread of CWD. The coalition will also support communication, research, policy, and public health.

"These private landowners bring a vital push to the nationwide effort to control Chronic Wasting Disease" said Tony A. Schoonen Chief Executive Officer for the Boone and Crockett Club. "CWD is deadly to wildlife, deeply concerning to hunters and conservationists, and still a challenging mystery. Today's announcement adds promise for a comprehensive effort."

These categories parallel the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies CWD recommendations and are tailored to address the challenges facing private landowners and managers in the U.S. with large numbers of recreational users.

Chronic wasting disease is transmitted animal-to-animal and from contact with infectious material. The disease is contagious and can be transmitted freely within and among cervid populations. No treatments or vaccines are currently available, and CWD is 100% fatal to cervids. To date, no known transfer of CWD to humans has occurred. Continued expansion of the disease negatively impacts the economic, environmental, and cultural values associated with deer, and private landowner involvement will be critical for success.

For more information on the CWD Coalition contact Kevin McKinstry, 800-281-7991 or kmckinstry@westervelt.com.



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