

B 005 02

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Creating the Governor's Task Force on Chronic Wasting Disease

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Colorado, I, Bill Owens, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order creating the Governor's Task Force on Chronic Wasting Disease.

1. Background and Need:

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal neurological disease found in free-roaming deer and elk in northeastern Colorado, for the most part, in 19 game management units—encompassing about nine percent of the state's entire area. This area includes Rocky Mountain National Park. In most of the endemic area the rate of infection is less than 3 percent, but ranges as high as 15 percent in deer and less than one percent in elk. The disease attacks the brains of infected animals, causing them to become emaciated, display abnormal behavior, lose coordination and eventually die.

Until recently, no cases of the disease had been found in wild deer or elk populations west of the Continental Divide. On March 29, 2002, laboratory test results confirmed the first case of CWD in a wild deer that was harvested on the Western Slope in Routt County, Colorado. Further spread of the disease into wild herds could substantially affect deer and elk populations.

CWD has also been diagnosed in farmed (captive) cervids in the states of Colorado, Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Kansas (members of the family Cervidae include deer and elk species). Furthermore, the disease has been confirmed in wild (free-ranging) deer and/or elk in the states of Wyoming, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin and the Canadian Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. The total number of states known to have the disease either in game farms or the wild (or both) is eight.

The Colorado Department of Natural Resources and the Colorado Department of Agriculture have been pursuing both research and management strategies to control the disease.

Research has been focused on discovering more about transmission of the disease, developing a live test to discern the presence of the disease and experimentation on the susceptibility of livestock to CWD. Management strategies are aimed at preventing its spread and reducing its occurrence in affected deer and elk herds. Specific efforts have included policies precluding relocation of deer and elk from the affected areas, enforcement of regulations prohibiting deer and elk feeding, prompt elimination of deer exhibiting disease symptoms, and herd culling in disease hot spots. Immediately upon any discovery of CWD, the State Veterinarian has issued moratoriums on any movement of domestic cervids within the state. The Wildlife Commission and the Agriculture Commissions also recently strengthened rules for the importation of domestic deer and elk to ensure that no more captive diseased animals will enter Colorado from other states.

Because this is a serious issue facing the State of Colorado I am creating a task force to help address CWD.

2. Mission:

- A. The Governor's Task Force on Chronic Wasting Disease (the "Task Force") is hereby created to review and provide recommendations on the State's efforts to manage Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in wild and domestic cervid populations.
- B. The Task Force shall hold its first meeting within 30 days of the issuance of this Executive Order. The ongoing duties of the Task Force shall include:
 - (1) Monitoring the incidences of CWD outside of the endemic area and in other states; and
 - (2) Interfacing with scientific experts, local leaders, and other interested parties; and
 - (3) Reporting regularly to the Governor's Office on its progress.
- C. Within six months of the issuance of this Executive Order, the Task Force shall submit a report detailing its findings and making preliminary recommendations to the following state governmental entities: The Governor's Office; the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee; and the House Agriculture, Livestock, and House Natural Resources Committee.
- D. I direct each state department to assist and cooperate with the Task Force.

3. Membership:

The Task Force shall consist of not more than 10 members. All members shall be appointed by the Governor and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Membership of the Task Force may be revised at any time as determined by the Governor. Members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation. The Governor may also appoint ex-officio members for terms expiring at the pleasure of the Governor.

4. Task Force Operations:

The Governor shall appoint two members to co-chair the Task Force. The Task Force chair persons shall adopt such procedural rules as necessary to conduct meetings and other business. A quorum shall consist of 7 members, and any final recommendation of the Task Force submitted to the Governor shall be approved by at least 6 voting members of the Task Force.

5. Duration:

This Executive Order and the Task Force shall continue in existence until December 31, 2003, unless terminated or extended by the Governor.

GIVEN under my hand and the
Executive Seal of the State of
Colorado this 9th day of
April, 2002.

Bill Owens
Governor