

## Michigan Deer Management Initiative (DMI): Tribal Work Sessions Report

Prepared by: Alexa Warwick (facilitator from Michigan State University)

### **Tribal DMI Process:**

*Step 1:* MDNR conducted virtual meetings with some Tribes in late February 2024.

*Step 2:* Tribes were invited to attend sixteen, two-hour virtual sessions hosted by the MDNR, in which experts in their respective fields gave formal presentations, along with Q&A, on multifaceted issues related to deer and deer management (Table 2).

*Step 3:* A pre-work session form was sent out to 15 Tribal participants to complete prior to meeting.

*Step 4:* Two virtual work sessions were held on May 7<sup>th</sup> and May 8<sup>th</sup> with up to 12 participants (Table 1) from five different Tribes at any time; not all could stay for both sessions. DNR staff and leadership also attended the sessions. Sessions were facilitated by PERM faculty from Michigan State University.

*Step 5:* This Deer Management Initiative 2024 Tribal Report was shared with all Tribal work session participants for feedback, comments, and suggestions of amendment.

*Step 6:* The MDNR will share/present the Tribal DMI's recommendations to the Michigan Natural Resource Commission.

*Table 1: List of participants during the Tribal DMI Work Sessions.*

<b>Tribal DMI Participants</b>	
Mallory Verch (BMIC)	Sean Hollowell (LRBOI)
Austin Ayres (KBIC)	Doug Craven (LTBB)
Blake Chosa (KBIC)	Kevin Haynes (LTBB)
Jake Dessellier (KBIC)	John Keshick (LTBB)
Erin Johnston (KBIC)	Bill Parsons (LTBB)
Kyle Seppanen (KBIC)	Brad Silet (Sault Tribe)

Table 2. List of virtual speaker session topics and presenters.

Topics	Presenters
Deer Population Dynamics	Dwayne Etter
Harvest Estimation & Reporting	Brian Frawley
Northern Hardwoods	Gray Roloff & Mike Walters
Wisconsin Deer Management	Jeff Pritzl & Dan Storm
Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation	Todd Grischke
Privately Owned Cervidae	Ryan Soulard
Climate & Weather	Chris Hoving
Sportsmen Against Hunger	Joe Presgrove
Impacts on Natural Communities	Jesse Lincoln
Impacts on Agriculture	James DeDecker
Deer Winter Complex	Kristie Sitar & Tom Seablom
UP Predator/Prey & Deer Migration	Tyler Petroelje
Wolf Management	Brian Roell
CWD & TB	Melinda Cosgrove & Mitch Marcus
Bear, Coyote, & Bobcat Management	Cody Norton

### **Tribal DMI Session 1:**

*Activity 1:* Tribal DMI participants reviewed their goals for the work session using the online platform Jamboard, with pre-populated ideas summarized from the pre-work session form.

*Activity 2:* Participants reviewed and added to their perceived top deer management challenges, again using Jamboard, pre-populated with ideas from the pre-work session form. Ideas were grouped into nine overall challenges, then prioritized by the group (Table 3). Four were identified.

*Activity 3:* For each of the four top challenges, participants worked in small groups to draft potential action items that would address the challenge. The actions were compiled into a single list (Table 4).

Table 3. List of deer management challenges. Top four in bold.

List of Challenges (no order)	# listed as a higher priority
<b>1. CWD</b>	x 2
<b>2. Habitat management - cooperation across land owners, poor timber harvesting practices, etc.</b>	x 2
<b>3. Ecological impacts</b>	x 4
4. Varying perceptions and expectations of deer management.	x 0
<b>5. Tribal co-management, treaty rights.</b>	x 1
6. Data needs - deer population, density, movement, habitat.	x 0
7. End goal for deer management / regulations.	x 0
8. UP vs. LP differences (not enough deer vs. too many deer), private property in LP.	x 2
9. Deer hunter decline.	x 0

Table 4. List of deer management challenges, brainstormed action items. Top eight in bold.

Challenge	Who	#	Action item	Overlap?	#	Priority?
1	Tribal	39	<b>Develop a CWD Prevention/Response Plan.</b>		1	High priority
1	DNR	46	<b>Update/Develop a CWD Response Plan.</b>		1	High priority
1	Joint	40	<b>Incentivize testing.</b>	#45, 53, 60, 66, 70, 73	2	High priority
1	DNR	45	<b>Statewide, annual testing.</b>		2	High priority
1	Tribal	53	<b>Promote lymph node testing at no cost to the hunter</b>		2	High priority
1	DNR	60	<b>Increase CWD testing, reward hunters</b>		2	High priority
1	Tribal	66	<b>Continuation of CWD testing grant in collaboration with tribes and MDNR</b>		2	High priority
1	Joint	70	<b>More testing - incentives, increasing expansion and availability of testing</b>		2	High priority
1	DNR	73	<b>Follow and implement the CWD plan for positive testing</b>		2	High priority
1	DNR	44	<b>More State oversight on captive cervid facilities. (or even eliminate)</b>	#59	3	High priority

1	DNR	59	<b>Reduce risk by eliminating cervid facilities</b>	#44	3	High priority (same as #59)
1	Joint	41	<b>Outreach and Education</b>		4	High priority
3	Joint	7	<b>Stakeholder education</b>	Similar to #23?	4	High priority
3	DNR	23	<b>Educating the public</b>	Similar to #7?	4	High priority
2	Tribal	48	<b>Promote conifer regeneration/restoration for deer wintering habitat within the Reservation.</b>	#3, #76	5	High priority
2	Joint	76	<b>Conifer regeneration and protection for deer uses</b>	#48, #3	5	High priority
3	Tribal	3	<b>Promote more conifer regeneration within the Reservation</b>	#48, #76	5	High priority
1	DNR	72	<b>Eradicate and severely reduce deer population in CWD positive areas through novel methods (commercialization, bounties)</b>		6	High priority
3	DNR	9	<b>More liberal regulations and harvest (in regions of the UP that currently don't allow doe harvest)</b>		6	High priority
3	Tribal	31	<b>Creative ways to use treaty rights for hunting to reduce impact - (subsistence hunting, facilitate culls, commercial harvest)</b>		6	High priority
5	Joint	19	<b>Increased Subsistence opportunities. Commercial Harvest opportunities made available. Statewide interest - including the area outside of 1836 treaty area (members may live outside of it)</b>		6	High priority
3	Tribal	82	<b>Identify species that are impacted by overpopulation of deer and their ecosystems/location. Culturally important species.</b>		7	High priority
5	Joint	21	<b>Co-manage, Partner, Collaborate with the tribe on Deer management and research. Managing deer in UP and LP differently; as well as southern LP vs. northern LP.</b>	#27	8	High priority
5	Joint	27	<b>Recognition of co-management and effective cooperation in implementing co-management</b>	#21	8	High priority
5	DNR	28	<b>Recognition of tribal expertise and resources that help improve/contribute to better management</b>		8	High priority - tied to 21, 27
5	DNR	30	<b>Better and earlier consultation (designing the process, 3-4 months in advance).</b>		8	High priority -- part of 21, 27, co-management
1	Joint	42	Discourage supplemental feeding of deer			
1	Joint	56	Incorporate K9 detection for CWD			

1	Joint	57	Education and outreach to the public		
1	Joint	58	Share culling data with partners		
1	DNR	61	Cull CWD hot spots and border counties		
1	DNR	62	Discontinue rehabilitation permits		
1	Tribal	67	Detection dog - CWD in dead deer		
1	Joint	68	Outreach and education		
1	Joint	69	Demarcation zone between CWD zone areas and non-CWD areas.		
1	DNR	71	Utilize federal, state, tribal, strike-teams to cull deer in CWD tribal areas		
1	DNR	74	Eliminate/reduce captive cervid facilities		
1	Joint	80	Consider new technologies available (i.e., AI-powered drone to harvest / shoot deer)		
1	Joint	81	Research on or using genetics / immune response tools (i.e., making CWD resistant deer)		
2	Tribal	47	Collaboration with private timber	#1	
2	Tribal	49	Working with forestry on deer exclosures		
2	Joint	50	Return fire to the landscape (promote natural disturbance).	#14	
2	DNR	51	Restoration of deer wintering complexes - tree planting and harvesting practices.	#10	
2	DNR	52	State purchase land or enter into conservation easement programs within deer wintering complexes.		
2	Tribal	55	Educate membership on best forest practices (on private lands)		
2	Joint	63	Promote and Implement RX Fire (collaboration with state and tribes)		
2	Joint	64	Improve and protect deer wintering areas		
2	DNR	65	Promote selective cutting over clear cuts, invasive species management		
2	Tribal	75	Closing educational gap - public announcements		
2	Joint	77	Improvement of winter/summer habitat		
2	DNR	78	Being mindful of ecological impacts of deer management (food plots)		
2	DNR	79	Better access to private property (that is open to hunting) in SLP - incentives, address liability issues, etc.		
3	Joint	6	Collaboration with Forestry to lessen the impact of deer on biodiversity and regeneration of habitat		

3	Joint	8	Recruit more hunters			
3	DNR	10	Restoration of deer wintering complexes - tree planting and harvesting practices	#51		
3	DNR	11	Increase funding to support deer habitat improvements			
3	Tribal	14	Prescribed fire back on landscape	#50		
3	Tribal	15	Culling deer in areas with rare natural communities			
3	Joint	16	Reduce degradation of cultural, rare plant species, and biodiversity with a decrease in deer populations			
3	Joint	17	Non-lead ammo			
3	Joint	18	Forest Regeneration- promote planting with climate change in mind, increase collaborating with MDNR/FRD on forest management			
3	DNR	22	Culling deer in high density areas (Southern LP) to decrease spread of diseases			
3	Joint	32	Manage for entire ecosystems instead of only deer			
3	Joint	33	Create diversity of available species for harvest (elk, woodland caribou)			
3	Joint	34	Protecting predator populations			
3	Joint	35	Sharing data/information on culturally significant species			
3	DNR	36	Lack of value placed on uses or species outside of deer			
3	DNR	37	Recognizing that deer were not over populated before European colonization			
3	DNR	38	Change DNR funding model			
5	Tribal	1	Work more collaboratively with private timber companies	#47		
5	Joint	4	Research projects that recognize traditional values			
5	DNR	5	Meaningful Government-Government consultation			
5	Tribal	12	Increase tribal hunting opportunities			
5	Tribal	13	TEK			
5	Joint	20	Modify 2007 Inland Consent Decree to address deer harvest/regulation/ habitat management			
5	Tribal	24	Participation - sharing TEK, in organized meetings.			

5	Tribal	25	Developing standards/norms around TEK or Indigenous Knowledge (IK). Intertwined with Western or modern science / holistic model		
5	Joint	26	Tribal philosophy - 7 generations		
5	DNR	29	Co-development		
1, 2	Joint	43	Harvest more deer		
1, 2	Tribal	54	Harvest more deer/reduce population (both 1 & 2)		
3, 5	Tribal	2	Share more TEK with State employees	#13	

**Tribal DMI Session 2:**

*Activity 4:* Tribal DMI participants reviewed their challenges and action items from Day 1 and added any additional items. Then they indicated any action items that were of high priority, which were grouped with other similar action items. A total of 8 different sets of action items were selected.

*Activity 5:* Participants worked in small groups to develop implementation plans for each of the eight action items, listed below. These plans are in progress.

**Tribal Implementation Plans** (not in any order of preference or priority)

**Proposed action #1: Prevention/Response Planning**

**Challenge category:** CWD

**Objective** (how to measure success): Keep CWD from establishing in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula

<b>Specific task</b>	<b>Who will take the lead?</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Co-creation of a UP CWD Prevention Plan and LP CWD Response Plan	Tribes MDNR	November 2024
Testing for CWD across the UP, targeting areas with high deer movements (Wisconsin border); also near captive cervid facilities (3? In UP).	Tribes MDNR	Annual
Consider carcass disposal options (dumpsters, incinerators) to reduce potential spread (if CWD is detected)	Tribes MDNR	Include in plan developed by Nov 2024
Increase understanding of deer movements across the UP (especially on the Wisconsin border); collaring deer, long-term study	Tribes MDNR	Annually for the next 3 years
Ban on baiting and supplemental feeding for deer in UP	Tribes MDNR	When CWD is detected
Identify trigger points for moving through each stage of CWD response (if detected – MN CWD Plan)	Tribes MDNR	Nov 2024



**Proposed action #2: Incentivize / expand CWD testing**

**Challenge category:** CWD

**Objective** (how to measure success): How much of an increase in testing is desired? (look at past grant efforts: >100 heads tested)

Specific task	Who will take the lead?	By when?
<p><b>Continue CWD testing grant in collaboration with tribes and MDNR</b></p> <p>Broaden the scope:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Involve all Tribes in MI</li> <li>2. Increase testing in areas that are more of a threat to CWD.</li> <li>3. Explore incentives: non-lead ammo (limited), grocery cards, lottery</li> <li>4. Awareness</li> <li>5. Partnered check stations [Tribal collection container]</li> <li>6. Increase the number of samples, check stations, work together to find a sample size that meets prevalence standards (work with Epidemiologist)</li> </ol>	<p>WTC group, CORA</p> <p>Reach out to southern tribes to encourage to submit/apply for CWD grant</p> <p>BMIC can help with APHIS funding</p> <p>MTEG [Michigan Tribal Environmental Group]</p>	<p>ASAP</p> <p>2024. APHIS Tribal Nations Wild Cervid CWD due June 2024 for Sept 2024 start</p> <p>Annual funding [500K]</p> <p>2. Wild Cervid CWD Funding</p> <p>3. Other funding opportunities:</p>
<p>Lottery- elk tag, pure Michigan hunt</p> <p>(10 deer head, mega millions) – low cost ways for DNR to encourage testing</p>	<p>DNR</p>	<p>2024 ASAP</p>
<p>Reach out to private companies (Farm bureau, fertilizing companies, ag accompanies) → funds to have employees at check stations, funds for incentives</p>	<p>DNR – fund employees</p>	<p>2024/ASAP</p>

**Proposed action #3: More State oversight on captive cervid facilities**

**Challenge category:** CWD

**Objective** (how to measure success): Reduction in CWD positive cases from cervid facilities [could list what the annual # now]

<b>Specific task</b>	<b>Who will take the lead?</b>	<b>By when?</b>
1a. Close cervid facilities that test positive for CWD. 1b. Facility responsible for shipping cervid into Michigan banned from further cervid activity.	MDNR	ASAP
Reduce total number of facilities. Remaining facilities can only contain cervid species native to Michigan.	MDNR	ASAP
Annual testing for CWD and TB for all remaining facilities.	MDNR/MDARD	ASAP
No transferring of licenses when selling the business. Or if sale is allowed - time of sale improvements (double fencing required, etc.)	MDNR/MDARD	ASAP

**Proposed action #4: Information Sharing with Tribal and State Citizens**

**Challenge category:** CWD & Ecological impacts

**Objective** (how to measure success): # Citizens Informed or reach of the message to multiple regions (including places with high human population densities)

<b>Specific task</b>	<b>Who will take the lead?</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Deer Management Updates	MDNR	Annually by Sept Prior to deer season.
CWD & TB Updates - Numbers	MDNR - to State Hunters & Tribes Tribes to Members	Annually by Sept Prior to deer season.
Brochures Identifying CWD & TB with Associated health risks	Joint	Shared during License renewal
Youth Hunts & Community Deer Harvest	Tribes	Annually during Season
Brochures for more general deer management (various topics beyond disease)	Joint	Shared during License renewal
Tribes/MDNR collaborating with other organizations (non-DNR) or a celebrity (could be someone with a connection to hunting - Meat Eater). Examples of products: social media campaigns, public service announcement. → Need to identify the organization / celebrity; Get funding to pay them.	Joint	By May 2025

**Proposed action #5: Develop and implement conifer regen and protection plan (deer wintering complexes)**

**Challenge category:** Ecological Impacts / Habitat improvement

**Objective** (how to measure success): Acres of deer wintering complexes improved, protected, or enhanced; measure of condition

<b>Specific task</b>	<b>Who will take the lead?</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Identify ownership within deer wintering complexes.	MDNR (Office of Public Lands)	July 2024
Develop a working relationship with Private and Federal land owners with viable deer wintering complexes.	MDNR Tribes across the UP	On-going (6 months from start of engagement)
Prioritize and assess current status of deer wintering complexes. [could do in parts]	MDNR (Wildlife & Forestry) Tribes USFS Private Timber	2-3 years to complete and share results
Partners develop an Action Plan to enhance, protect, and restore deer wintering complexes.	MDNR (Wildlife & Forestry) Tribes USFS Private Timber	2+ years
Land purchases and easements [identify in action plans]	MDNR Private Timber Tribes	Long-term (3+ years)
Conifer plantings (protected), selective harvesting to promote conifer regeneration. [identify in action plans]	MDNR (Wildlife & Forestry) Tribes - may lead planting even on other properties USFS Private Timber	Long-term (5+ years)

**Proposed action #6: Identifying culturally important species impacted by deer**

**Challenge category:** Ecological Impacts

**Objective** (how to measure success): Increase density of culturally significant spp. and overall biodiversity

<b>Specific task</b>	<b>Who will take the lead?</b>	<b>By when?</b>
Identify culturally significant species in areas with and without deer on the landscape. (done in some areas already)  Compare presence/absence of species between both areas. Where possible, look at population trends over time (are they declining/becoming rare?).	Tribes	ASAP
Determine maximum deer density to allow for maximum # of culturally significant spp.	Joint	ASAP
Manage habitat to promote culturally significant spp. (i.e. Rx Fire)	Joint	ASAP
Reduction in deer densities	Joint	

**Proposed action #7: Severely reduce deer population in some areas – commercial harvest, etc.**

**Challenge category:** Ecological impacts, CWD

**Objective** (how to measure success): \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in]

Specific task	Who will take the lead?	By when?
Establishing a standard for success (acceptable deer density - can relate to ecological factors such as disease, or ag damage, diverse ecosystem, etc.)	Joint	By 2025
Focus on CWD/TB zones	Joint	By 2025
Target over populated areas where deer have a negative effect on other native species and/or ag	Joint	By 2025
Creating a commercial harvest program (limited season outside of deer hunting season; geographic area limits) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific numbers of harvest (regulated permits per region)</li> <li>• Methods of harvest (night-time hunting, spotlight hunting, baiting)</li> <li>• Require that any deer that is harvested be tested (ideally before processing)</li> <li>• Support for infrastructure (funding, local processing - limit disease spread)</li> <li>• Education and outreach (this has been done in other places - Australia)</li> <li>• Private property owners - access for hunting (# of permits, money or other incentives - Pure Michigan Hunt, etc.).</li> </ul>	Joint - adding any other regulatory agencies (USDA), private landowners	Start 2024 (long process)
Culling by action teams (strike forces) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of infrastructure - hot spots (successful in Illinois)</li> </ul>	Joint (LTBB, KBIC interested)	Start 2024

Bounty system (\$x per deer, reward systems - drawings)	Joint	Start 2024
AI Drone	Joint	Year 2027

**Proposed action #8: Co-management**

**Challenge category:** Tribal co-management, treaty rights

**Objective** (how to measure success): \_\_\_\_\_ [fill in]

Specific task	Who will take the lead?	By when?
Co-development (being involved from the beginning for design of the process)	DNR	Now
Share schedules with close contacts at different agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated contact information (e.g., biologists)</li> <li>• Easier to set up meetings, etc.</li> </ul>	Joint	??
Cultural shift in MDNR - top down supporting co-management - training in legal rights that tribes have (could happen in orientation for new hires)	Joint	2024
Tribal, state, fed summit/conference on an annual basis (good start with MAMWG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-annual meetings (e.g., work planning meeting in spring, report out in Nov/Dec)</li> </ul>	Joint	2024
Tribal input on DMU writeups; work with DNR biologists	Joint	TBD
Clarify how to store shared information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tribal, DNR, fed biologists acknowledged in white papers, etc.</li> <li>• Decide on a method of storing shared data and information – Google Drive repository, etc.?</li> </ul>	Who manages the repository?	TBD
Maintain and share organizational chart of relevant MDNR wildlife staff. Currently: Deer (and elk and moose) specialist: Chad Stewart; Deer biologist: vacant but hiring is in process; CWD lead: Keith Kintigh; bTB lead: Emily Sewell; Captive cervid: Ryan Soulard.	MDNR	2024