

CWD in Canadian National Parks?:

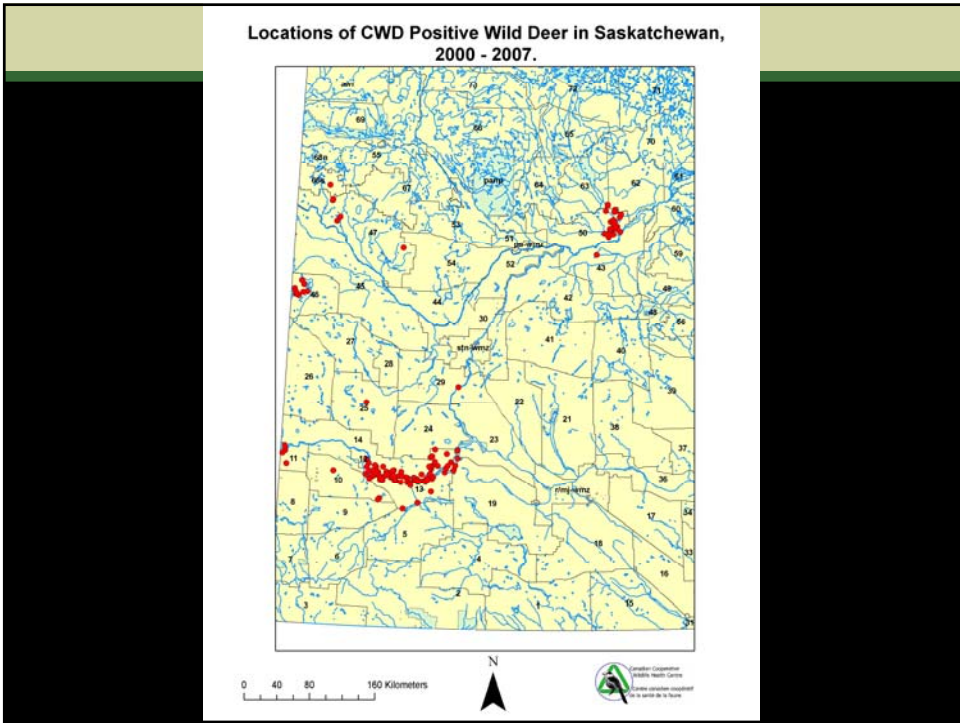
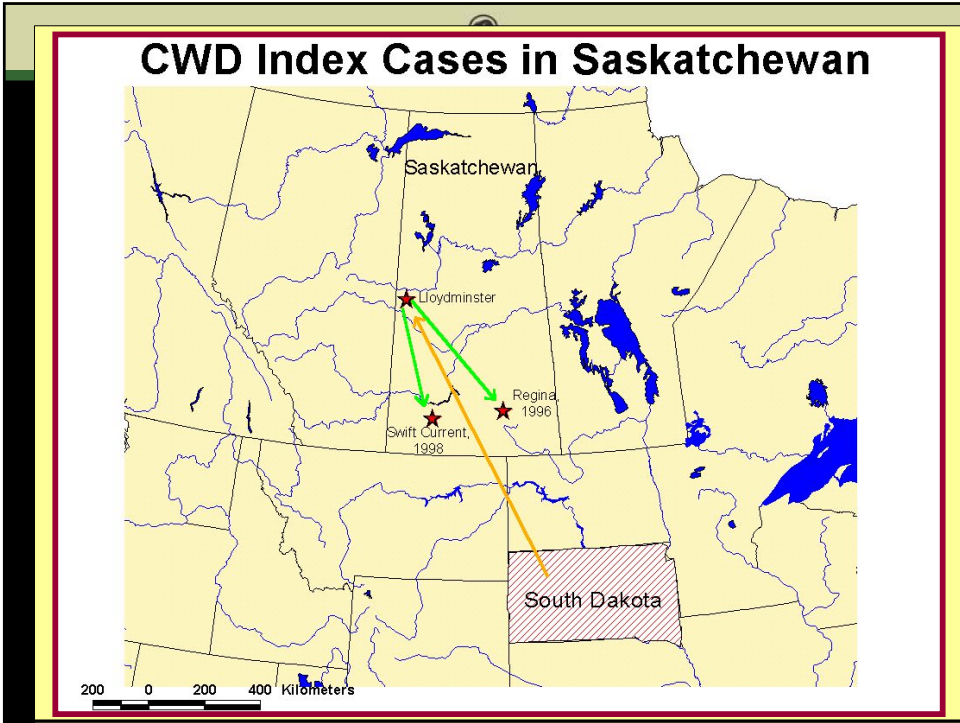


Where we've been and where we're going

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42 National Parks
5 Marine Conservation Areas
So far, CWD-free ☺





National Parks Act 2000

8.2 - Maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity, through the protection of natural resources and natural processes, shall be the first priority of the Minister when considering all aspects of the management of parks.



Ecological Integrity

"...a condition that is determined to be characteristic of its natural region and likely to persist, including abiotic components and the composition and abundance of *native* species and biological communities, rates of change and supporting processes."



Guiding Principles & Operational Guidelines 1994

In fulfilling its mission in this regard [*sic The Convention on Biological Diversity and Protected Heritage Areas*], Parks Canada promotes the protection of ecosystems and natural habitats, the maintenance and recovery of viable wild populations of species in natural settings, as well as the environmentally sound management of surrounding or adjacent areas.

Operate at an ecosystem level



Protecting & Managing Park Ecosystems

3.1.2

Human activities within a national park that threaten the integrity of park ecosystems will not be permitted. Where ecosystem integrity is threatened by human activities outside the park, Parks Canada will initiate collaborative action with adjacent land management agencies or owners to try to eliminate or reduce the threat.

Does CWD threaten ecosystem integrity?



Protecting & Managing Park Ecosystems

3.2.3

National park ecosystems will be managed with minimal interference to natural processes. However, active management may be allowed when the structure or function of an ecosystem has been seriously altered and manipulation is the only possible alternative available to restore ecological integrity.

What the heck constitutes serious alteration?



Protecting & Managing Park Ecosystems

3.2.5

Where manipulation is necessary it will be based on scientific research, use techniques that duplicate natural processes as closely as possible, and be carefully monitored.

3.2.11

All *practical* efforts will be made to prevent the introduction of exotic plants and animals into national parks, and to eliminate or contain them where they already exist.



Where we've been....

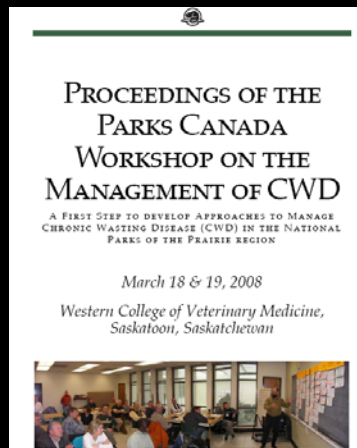
Limited surveillance since 1998

- Road/rail killed cervids (Banff, Jasper, Waterton, PANP, EINP, Point Pelee)
- Active sampling (RAMALT EINP 2007)
- Clinical suspects

Participation in planning exercises

- 2004 Expert Panel Report
- 2004-2006 National CWD Strategy

March 2008 CWD Workshop Saskatoon



Develop a Parks Canada CWD research strategy

Develop a CWD communications strategy

Develop a CWD surveillance strategy

Strengthen inter-jurisdictional collaboration on CWD

Renew the national CWD strategy

Manage CWD risk factors at a landscape level



Major concerns

Jurisdictional coordination

- Not the same in every province

Limiting/stopping spread to caribou

Parks as 'reservoirs' of disease

Urgent need for national coordination & leadership

Silos/fences inhibit communication & coordination

Baiting and feeding: its not helping!



Common Ground

CWD is not native to ecosystems

It has been recently introduced to Canada (via South Dakota and Colorado)

Eradication in the wild is not practically possible

"Control" may be possible....but do the future benefits warrant the current 'costs'?

Very crude tools currently = bitter pill to swallow





Implications for Parks

- May jeopardize EINP elk reintroduction projects in North America
- Fear of reduced visitation in some parks
- May affect EI of some parks (how much?, difficult to model)
- Potential for impact on Species at risk (i.e. caribou)



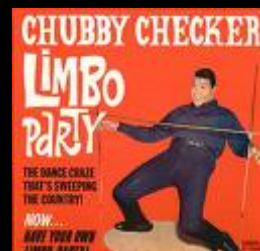
Where we're going.....

- Parks Canada CWD Strategy within the next year
- Agreement on scope of problem
- Different strategies to manage within individual park units
- Research on alternative management strategies (predation) & test and removal.
- Cannot plan in isolation
- Different response plans in different jurisdictions....



Barriers to progress

- No evidence of zoonotic transmission
- Not a threat to domestic animals
- Wildlife are a public resource
- Conflicting mandates & values
- Lack of effective management tools
- Hard sell to senior management/ministers



Summary

CWD can't be managed effectively within jurisdictional silos

National/regional coordination absolutely necessary

Protected areas can contribute towards understanding of disease ecology & management

One size doesn't fit all – many approaches

Other disease issues will most likely attract focus and funding in short term