



## Michigan State University CWD Extension Educator

Principle Investigator: Sonja Christensen, MSU Dept. of Fisheries & Wildlife

Since chronic wasting disease (CWD) was first detected in Michigan in 2015, over 200 deer have tested positive for CWD across nine Michigan counties. In 2017, the Michigan Natural Resources Commission established the Chronic Wasting Disease Working Group to develop recommendations on steps and actions to mitigate or eliminate CWD in Michigan. A key recommendation proposed by Michigan's CWD working group was the development of public education to address CWD. To assist in connecting with new audiences and to amplify messaging around CWD, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension's Community, Food and Environment Institute (CFEI) collaborated with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to hire a statewide extension educator to create, deliver, and evaluate local and statewide communication strategies and innovative educational programs that meet current and projected outreach needs related to white-tailed deer management and CWD. The MSU Extension Educator works with partners and key audiences to identify communication strategies to increase awareness among diverse audiences about CWD and efforts associated with this position will help individuals from across Michigan better understand the scope of CWD and strategies that can be undertaken to reduce spread, prevalence, and overall impact of CWD.

Several educational programs and products have been developed with the Michigan DNR through the addition of this position such as videos on Deer Lymph Node Extraction for CWD testing, the various videos that highlight the current CWD Research, programs on general deer management, resources for venison processors to reduce potential cross contamination of CWD prions during the intake and cutting of venison products, and much more.

Many of the informational products that have been developed can be found by visiting the MSU Extension CWD webpage at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/chronic-wasting-disease/index> and navigating through the various categories.

Thanks to funding provided by the Michigan state legislature through PA207 of 2018, the Department of Natural Resources, the Fisheries and Wildlife Department at Michigan State University, and Michigan State University Extension has been able to connect in a meaningful way with the communities that are in the core CWD zone and provide local education and communication to help people learn strategies to slow the spread of CWD.

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