



REPORT

To: Solid Waste Committee

Report Number: ENV-SWC-014

From: Paulo Eichelberger, General Manager of Environmental Services Date: September 3, 2020

Subject: Chronic Wasting Disease Program Support

RECOMMENDATION #1:

That the Solid Waste Committee recommend that the Regional Board provide support for Brian Patterson's work on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) by allowing him access to wildlife carcasses brought into the Bessborough Landfill from August 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

That the Solid Waste Committee recommend that the Regional Board waive tipping fees, for up to \$500, for the disposal of sample materials associated with the Provincial Chronic Wasting Disease program between August 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal nervous system disease known to naturally infect deer, moose, and elk, which is similar to mad cow disease (BSE) in cattle. CWD is prevalent in southeast Alberta and has spread west of Edmonton into wild populations. There is concern about CWD entry into British Columbia (BC), and the Peace Region is one of the areas of greatest concern. To date, CWD has not been detected in BC.

Brian Paterson is the CWD Coordinator that has been contracted by the Province to conduct CWD outreach and research. One of his roles is to collect samples and continually increase the sample size collected of deer, moose, and elk heads and to test for the presence of CWD.

Over the last two years, the CWD Coordinator has been working to increase sample sizes in the region. The target sample size of the region is 300 samples, as it is important to have confidence that CWD is not present in the wildlife. Last year, 150 samples were collected as part of this program in the region, which was half of the target goal. Sampling efforts have occurred provincially since 2002, though few samples were collected for many years. If enough samples aren't collected, there will be little confidence that the region is "disease free." Additionally, if the disease is not detected early, implementing an effective response would be much more difficult.

The CWD Coordinator is requesting access to the Bessborough Landfill to collect and sample road-kill deer, moose, and elk. This process would work as follows:

- When Agro brings in road-kill to the Bessborough Landfill, landfill staff would direct Agro to drop off the road-kill into a designated area.
- Landfill staff would then call Brian Patterson to let him know that road kill was brought in, and it would be available to pick up by 4:00pm that business day.

- If the road-kill was not picked up by end of day, landfill staff would bury it within the landfill; per standard procedure to avoid risk of odour and other vectors.

This would be minimal extra work for the landfill and could be absorbed into their daily operations.

The reason for conducting the work at the Bessborough Landfill is that the CWD Coordinator lives nearby in Arras (approximately 10 minutes away). The close proximity allows for easy collection and access to road-kill that would be dropped off. In the event the CWD Coordinator is unable to make it to the site, operations staff will dispose of the carcasses as usual.

Road-kill deer, moose, and elk represent a large sample source that the CWD surveillance program has barely been able to utilize. Roadkill samples are extremely important as compromised animals (such as those with later stages CWD) are likely more susceptible to collisions with vehicles. The heads of road-kill are occasionally collected from road-kill under permit; however, there are many of these carcasses that go straight to the landfill and are not sampled. In the past, the CWD Coordinator has tried to coordinate with the current and previous road maintenance contractors, but it has not worked out. It is believed that the easiest option for obtaining road-kill samples would be for the CWD Coordinator to have access to the material dropped off at the landfill.

Supporting this program would allow for more representative sampling to be collected and more information gathered of CWD within the region.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Solid Waste Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- ☒ Partnerships

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

Tipping fees for the disposal of deer, moose, and elk associated with the Provincial CWD program in the region is estimated at \$200-\$500.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

None.

Attachments:

1. July 23, 2020 Email from Brian Paterson – CWD Support