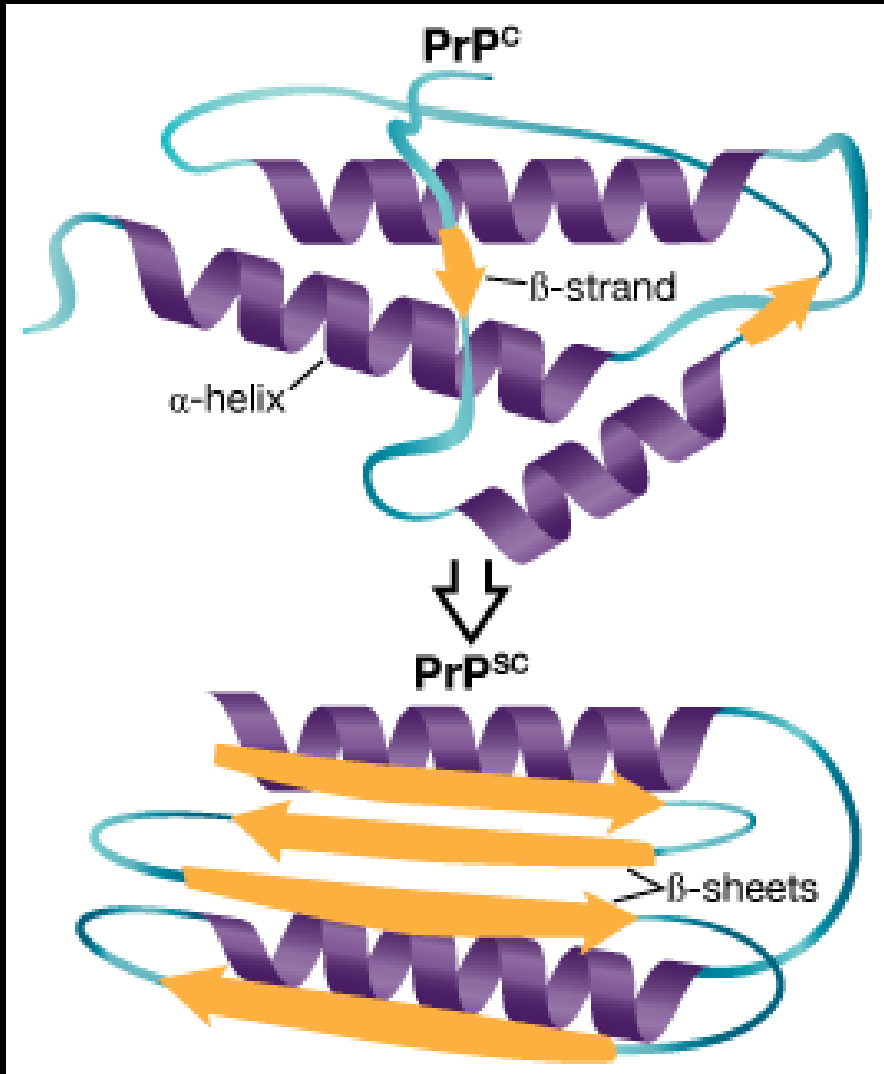


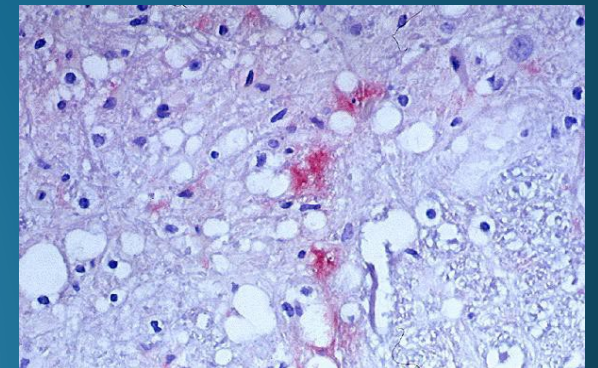
# CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE IN BC

Cait Nelson, BC Wildlife Health Program  
Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

# Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)



- Infectious disease of cervids  
**Deer, Elk, Moose, Caribou**
- Caused by abnormal protein “prion”
- Prions accumulate in the brain  
**Neurological disease**
- 100% fatal, no treatment or vaccine







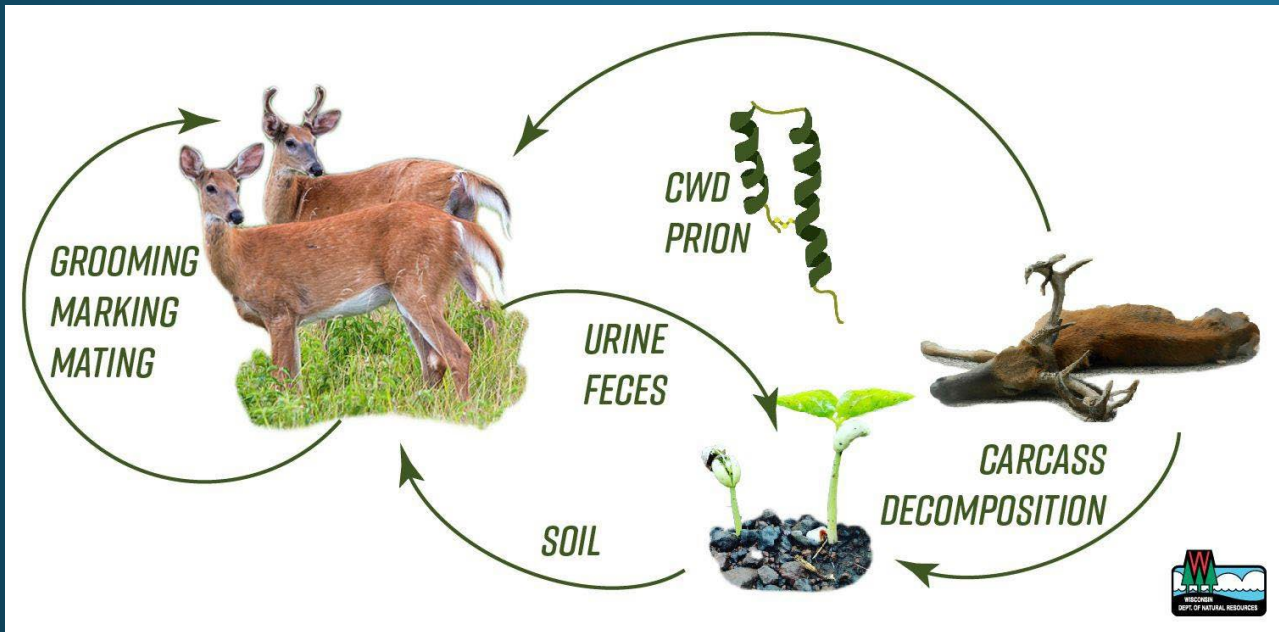
# Silent Carriers of CWD

- Most animals appear healthy
- Rarely see “sick” animals in the wild
- Symptoms take 18+ months to show
- Only way to know for sure is through testing





# CWD in the Environment



- Prions shed through urine, saliva, feces, blood and carcasses
- Prions can be present in contaminated hay
- Resistant to disinfectants, burning, cooking, freezing
- Remain infectious for several years



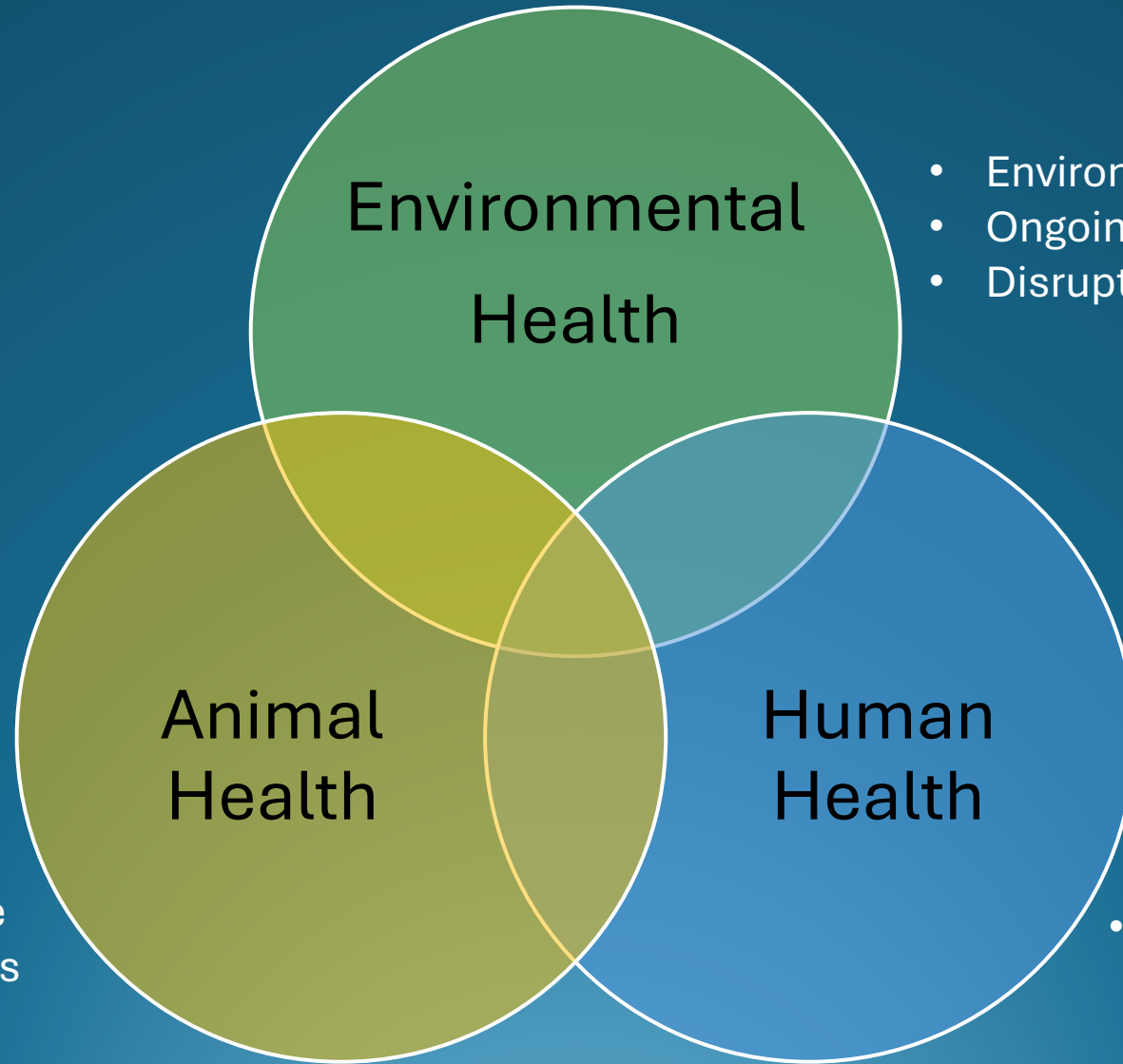


# Human Health Risk?

Public Health says:

- There has never been a human case of CWD
- There is no direct evidence of transmission
- Recommend a precautionary approach
- Positive animals should NOT be eaten

# One Health Implications of CWD



- Environmental contamination
- Ongoing source of disease
- Disrupt ecological balance

- Degenerative disease
- 100% fatal in all cases
- Population declines

- Risk to people?

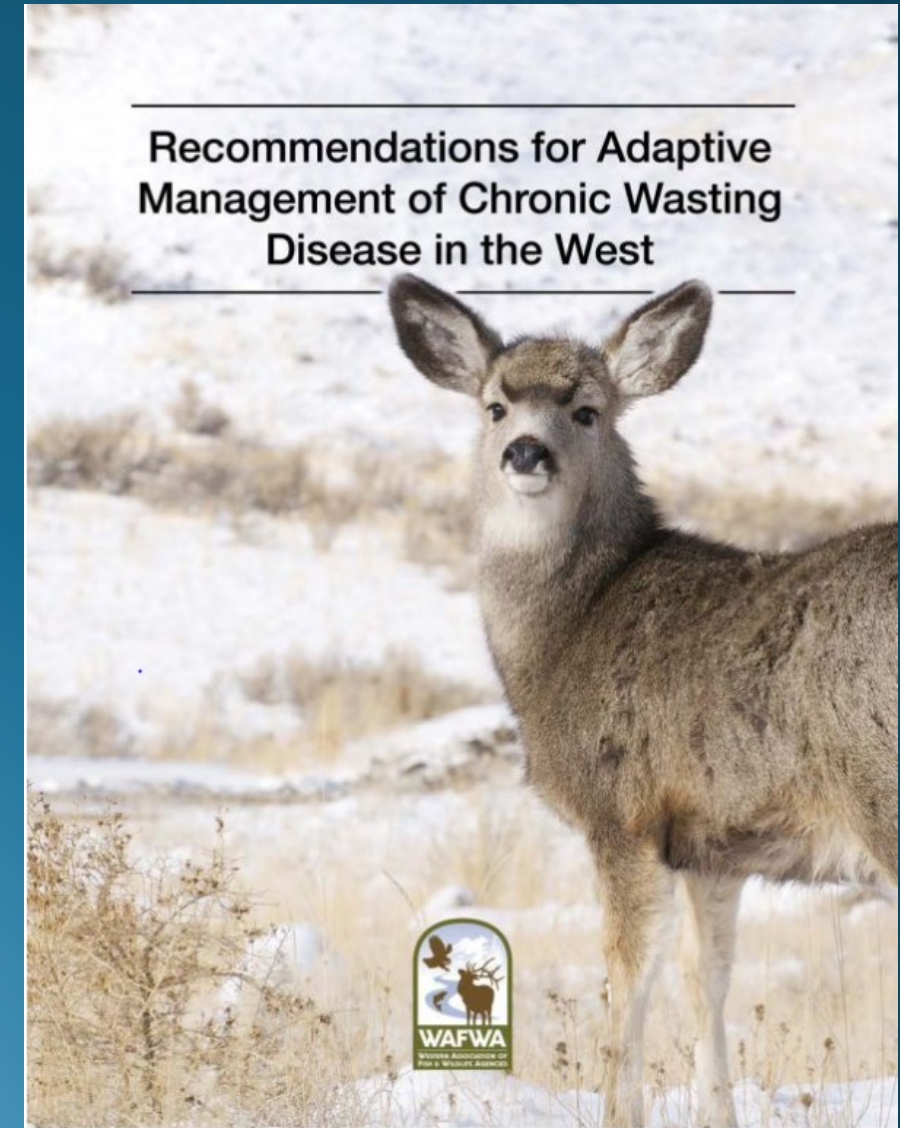
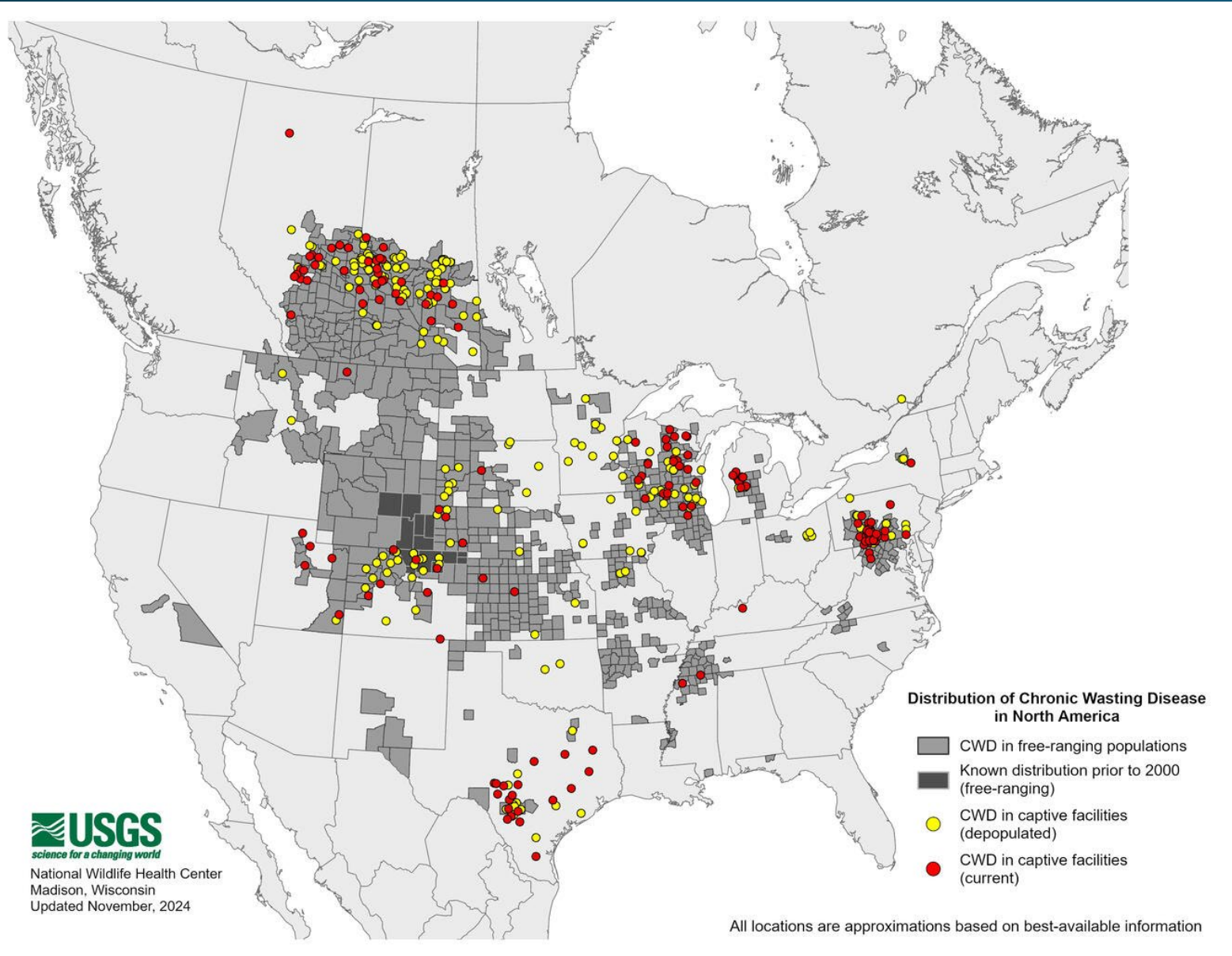




# Human impacts of CWD

- Hunting culture
- Food security
- Access to traditional foods
- Cultural / ceremonial practices
- Mental health

# History and Lessons Learned





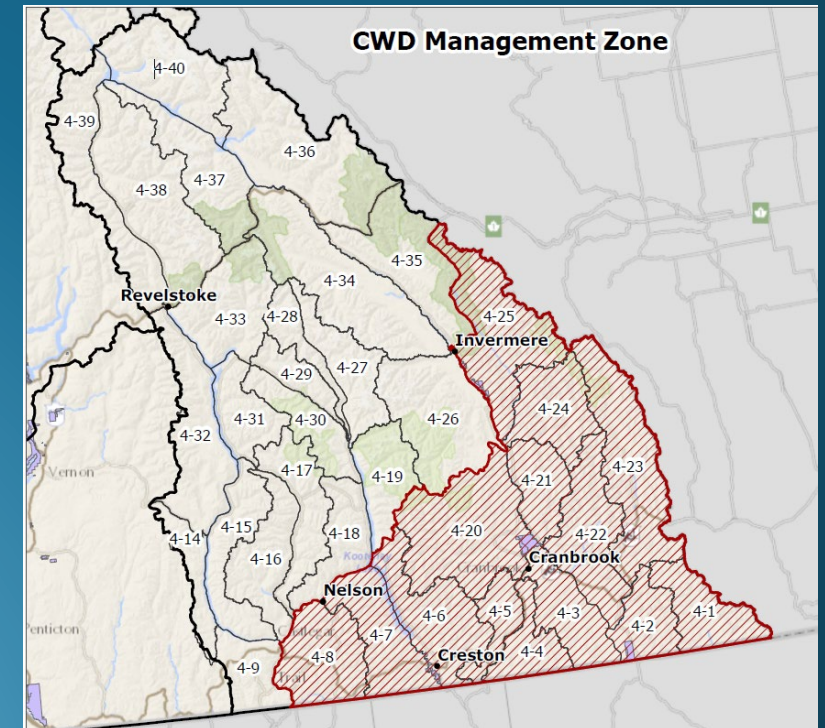
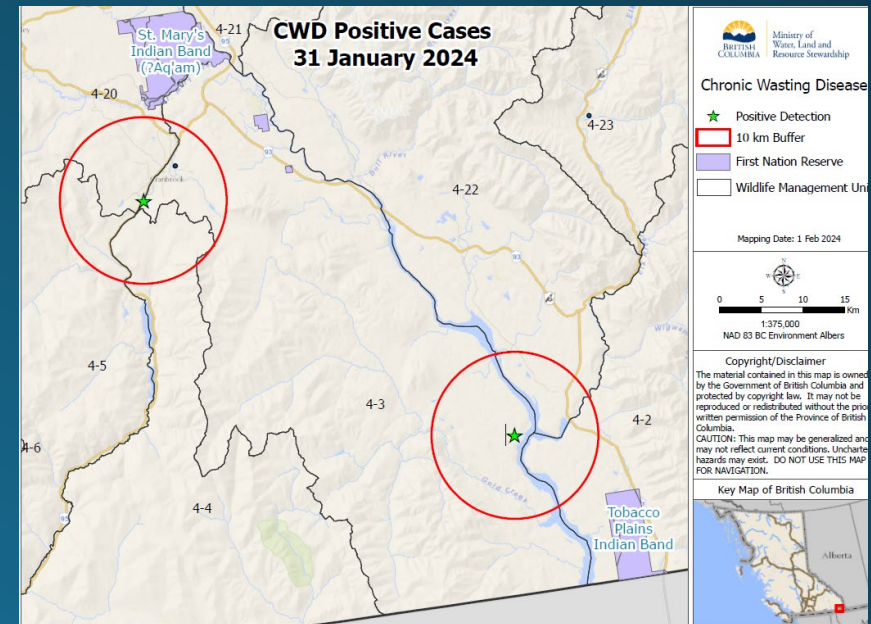
# CWD Response in BC

## First cases in BC confirmed January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024

- White-tailed deer and mule deer in Kootenay Region
- Established CWD Management Zone
  - Carcass transport restrictions
  - Disposal requirements
  - Mandatory testing

## 2024 Surveillance

- Tested 2000+ deer, elk and moose
- Low disease prevalence (<0.6%) ~ Early detection
- Excellent participation from local community and hunters!







# Goals for CWD Management

- Collaboration and partnerships
  - Research and monitoring
    - Population ecology / genomics
    - Human dimensions
    - Disease surveillance
- Limit disease spread, disease prevalence and environmental contamination
- Limit impacts to wildlife populations and communities that rely on them







This work takes place in Ktunaxa Nation Territory. Grateful for the privilege to visit this land and work in partnership with Ktunaxa Nation and communities.

# Ktunaxa Perspectives

- Uncertainty of impacts on the Ktunaxa community, concern over safety of harvested meat
- The Ktunaxa Nation has taken steps to educate and raise awareness about CWD
- Focus on food security for Ktunaxa hunters and families
- Protecting ʔa·kxam̓is q̓api qapsin (all living things)
- This holistic approach recognizes the interconnectedness of ecosystems
- The health of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa (Ktunaxa territory) is intricately linked to the well-being ʔamak ɕ wuʔu (land and water)
- Acknowledging diverse of perspectives within the Ktunaxa Nation.
- A balanced approach to CWD reflects the Ktunaxa's commitment to protect both their community and their ancestral lands.

Provided by Payton Gravelle, Ktunaxa Nation Council





# Thank you.

For more information on BC's CWD Program:  
[www.gov.bc.ca/chronicwastingdisease](http://www.gov.bc.ca/chronicwastingdisease)

Contact BC Wildlife Health:  
Email: [CWD@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CWD@gov.bc.ca)  
Phone: 250-751-3219

