

FW: Elk Brucellosis

Furthmyre, Coleen; on behalf of; FWP Commission

Follow Up

TO: Kujala, Quentin

Quentin,

Should I forward this on to the Commission.....I didn't want to until you had a chance to review it. Thanks, Coleen

From: Mark Albrecht [mailto:mark@albrecht.com]

Sent: Wednesday, November 14, 2012 8:24 AM

To: FWP Commission

Subject: Elk Brucellosis

Please find attached and also pasted my comments on the elk brucellosis working groups recommendations

Dear Fish Wildlife and Parks Commission;

I volunteered to serve as a member of the elk brucellosis-working group. We met monthly for six months. Structured Decision Making(SDM) was a tool to be used in the process, and Mike Mitchell was tasked with helping us use that tool. One of the members had experience in the past with SDM and warned us all, that is was hard to use and gave them a product that made no one was happy. We did try to use the process/tool of SDM and it was more than difficult, I believe it was the wrong tool for this job. After a few meeting we all had a good idea of what might work, what wouldn't and where we wanted to go. We spent several additional meeting just trying to "respect" the process and we made little forward progress.

As a scientist I understand the desire to take subjective ideas and assign and objective value to help explain results. That is what SDM should be used for, in this case there are too many variables and honoring the process is hammering a square peg into a round hole. Tangential to the SDM process we had a parking lot of ideas that didn't fit the process, including using small working groups and more education. Those ideas – the use of small local working groups, with a toolbox of possible treatments, and increasing education were the ideas we felt would work best. The SDM process helped us see that working on risk management of disease transmission, using elk distribution manipulation was the best way for FWP to approach the problem.

So my expectation was that we would have time to spend on fleshing out how the groups

might be facilitated, what the tools might be and how we could help spread accurate information through education. We basically ran out of time and Quentin said this was enough and the Commission would take our thoughts as suggestions and make changes and additions. The suggestion was made to present it like a scientific paper with an introduction (background info that was generated when the decision was made to form the group), a methods section (this would outline SDM and other discussions), results (SDM graphs), discussion (what we thought might work and why some other ideas likely wouldn't), and a conclusion (outlining the best way to move forward based on our meetings). I believe everyone thought this to be a good idea and thought this would be the product of our efforts. Quentin and Justin actually offered for me to write this document, and I declined(which I guess I now regret), feeling the Department had folks getting paid to do that type of work.

Watching the Commission meeting last week, I felt our product was not well fleshed out, and then seeing in writing what was passed with the vote, I am very concerned. There really was no reason for the fundamental objectives to be included in a document to undergo a vote. SDM was a process used to help the working group objectify our feelings – now it appears that the FWP Department had a fundamental objective to ultimately eliminate brucellosis. – this can't be done! As I believe Commissioner Moody relayed to the working group, it is the legislature that will have the most say in this matter. Now they (legislators) have a document voted on by the Commission that states that FWP has a fundamental objective of eliminating brucellosis in elk. The working group felt this was not possible nor in FWP's control. So we sought to focus on minimizing the risk of disease transmission, at the local level with tools acceptable to the Commission, and now what passed appears to undermine our product and focuses on our process (SDM). I am very concerned that this will lead to continued problems and will act as a divider not a unifier – we need consensus. Several sportsman web sites are sounding the alarm, and that is the polar opposite of what this group intended. I don't believe this was the groups intent nor do I believe it is the Commissions, I do however believe the wording of the document leaves a LARGE opening for the FWP to be asked by the legislature why the are not eradicating brucellosis in elk. What FWP can contribute to this large issue is but a small piece to help reduce the risk of disease transfer. To have objectives that are more extensive allows for the misinterpretation of ideas. I am already seeing and hearing from sportsmen and ranchers who have very different ideas on what was passed. Please reconsider what you voted on, and look to facilitate the product – small local inclusive working groups, a toolbox approved by the commission of possible treatments, and increasing education and awareness. I think a document that states that plan, in clear language, will honor the intent of the working group and the Commission. That product and plan is the best way to move forward and will help keep this from blowing up into a war between sportsman and ranchers, which we all hope to avoid.

Respectfully;

Mark R. Albrecht DVM

