



CWD MANAGEMENT



Dear Montana Processor,

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks needs your help in managing and monitoring chronic wasting disease (CWD). In the 2026 hunting season, FWP will be conducting surveillance and monitoring in Priority Sampling Areas in northwestern and central Montana.

You may see deer, elk, or moose arrive at your shop with a yellow ID tag, reading “MTFWP CWD TEST.” This tag indicates the animal has been sampled for CWD. Results should be available online within two weeks, if not sooner.

We are advising hunters to have a “Not Detected” CWD test result in hand prior to bringing their animal to a processor. If an animal tests CWD-positive, the hunter is advised not to consume the meat. If the positive animal was processed at a commercial facility, the Montana Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) will work with county health departments to notify the processor of the positive CWD test and determine whether the animal was processed in a batch with other animals. Any hunter that received meat processed as part of a CWD-positive batch should be contacted and advised not to consume the meat. It is important to keep records of which animals were processed together.

How you can help

1. If hunters have questions about CWD testing, please direct them to FWP’s website: fwp.mt.gov/cwd.
2. On our website, we have instructions on how to collect and submit samples for testing as well as a list of CWD sample collection locations around the state.
3. We are asking processors to consider single-animal processing or batch processing only animals testing negative for CWD, especially for animals that have been sampled for CWD and are being donated to food banks or other charitable organizations. Furthermore, we are asking processors to consider looking up the [CWD test result on our website](#) to confirm a negative CWD test result before releasing processed meat to a food bank for donation. Meat from any CWD-positive animal must be properly disposed of in a Class II landfill (see [map/list of landfills on FWP’s website](#)).

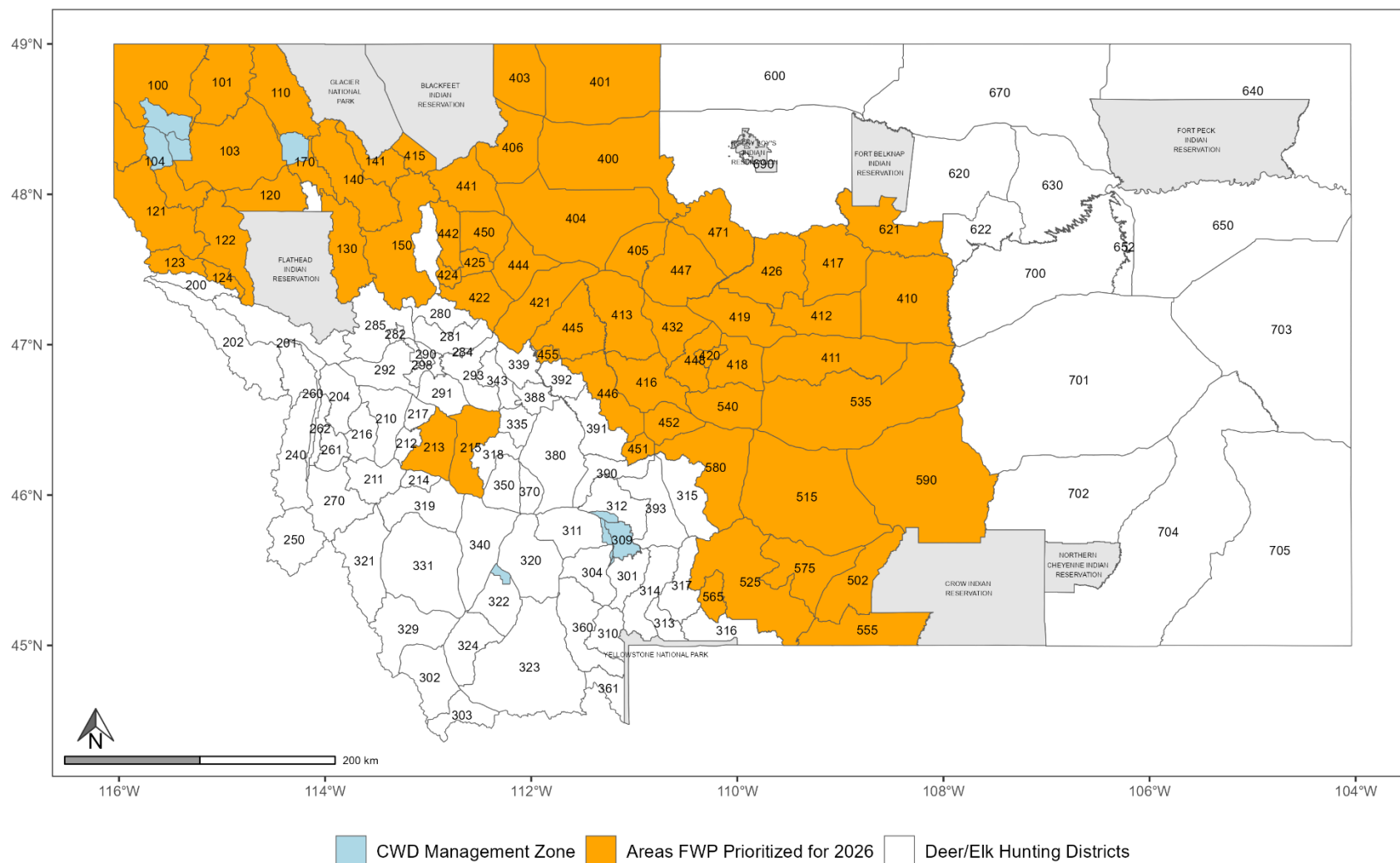
CWD Best Practices – CWD prions are the infectious agent of CWD. These misshaped proteins are extremely resistant to conventional disinfecting techniques (e.g., soap, boiling water, etc.). Prions are found throughout the body of an infected animal but are most concentrated in the brain, spinal cord, and lymph nodes. We recommend processors wear rubber gloves and eye protection when processing wild game, and avoid intrusion to the brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils, and lymph nodes of harvested animals. We also recommend disinfecting instruments and work surfaces with a 40 percent solution of household bleach for five minutes after processing is complete. All carcass waste (tissue, bone, etc.) must be disposed of in a Class II landfill to prevent the accidental spread of CWD.

Thank you for your help as we fight CWD together. For more information, please contact your local FWP office or visit fwp.mt.gov/cwd.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ramsey, Wildlife Veterinarian
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

CWD Priority Surveillance Areas for 2026



*If you are hunting in a CWD Management Zone, please review the 2026 hunting regulations to determine any CWD testing requirements for your area.