



CWD MANAGEMENT



Dear Montana Taxidermist,

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks needs your help in managing and monitoring chronic wasting disease (CWD). For the 2025 hunting season, FWP will be conducting surveillance and monitoring in Priority Sampling Areas in northwestern and central Montana. Adult deer bucks are among the highest priority animals for testing, and they are among the animals most likely to be received by taxidermists.

How you can help

1. Please notify hunters that FWP is interested in sampling and testing adult deer, elk, and moose harvested from any of our sampling areas (see map). You can encourage them to take their harvested animal to a [CWD Sampling Station](#) or a regional office so FWP can collect samples for our CWD surveillance and monitoring after the taxidermist's work is complete. If the hunter wants a shoulder mount, we recommend having the cape removed before bringing the head and neck of the animal to our sampling stations.
2. If hunters harvest an animal outside of the areas highlighted in the map below, they may still have their animal tested free of charge. They may bring the head and neck with the cape removed to a CWD Sampling Station or regional office or collect their own samples and mail them to the Wildlife Health Program (instructions are online at fwp.mt.gov/cwd).
3. If you are interested in learning how to collect the correct lymph nodes and obex samples as a service you can offer your clients, please visit the FWP website (fwp.mt.gov/cwd), which provides a video explaining how to collect these samples.

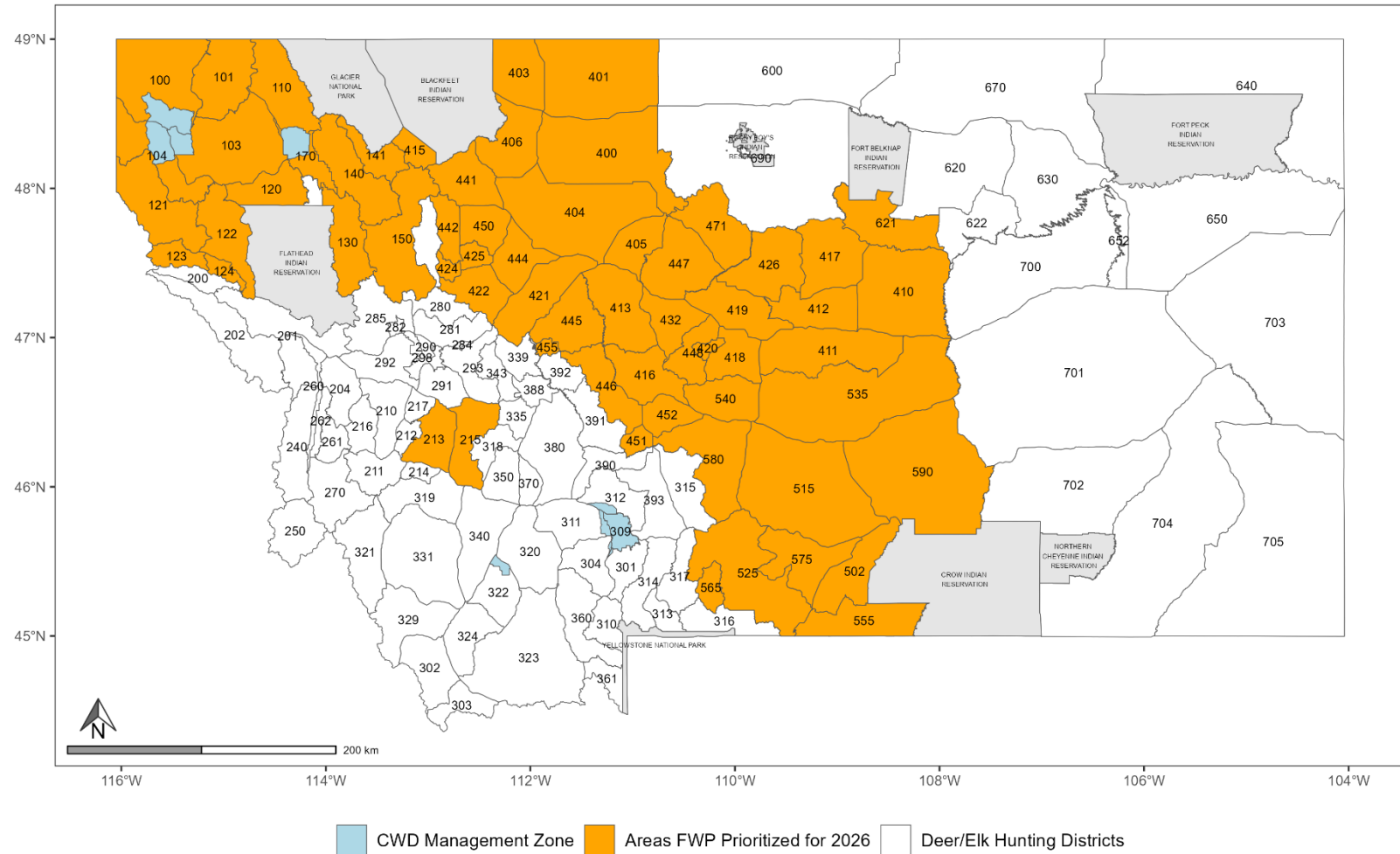
CWD Best Practices – CWD “prions” are the infectious agent for CWD and are extremely resistant to conventional disinfecting techniques (e.g. soap, boiling water, etc.). These misshaped proteins are found throughout the body of an infected animal but are most concentrated in the brain, spinal cord, and lymph nodes. We recommend taxidermists wear rubber gloves and eye protection when working with wild game, especially when handling 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 the taxidermist's work is complete. All carcass waste (tissue, bone, etc.) must be disposed of in a Class II landfill (see map/list of landfills on FWP website: fwp.mt.gov/cwd) 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 Sampling 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.