



Janet Milek &lt;janet.milek@wyo.gov&gt;

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**Fwd: Fw: Feedgrounds and the Future**

1 message

**WGF Contact** <wgf-contact@wyo.gov>

Tue, Sep 12, 2023 at 2:01 PM

To: Janet Milek &lt;janet.milek@wyo.gov&gt;

**Wyoming Game and Fish Department***Conserving wildlife, serving people*

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From: **Chuck Harris** <[wyobowbender@msn.com](mailto:wyobowbender@msn.com)>

Date: Mon, Sep 11, 2023 at 3:44 PM

Subject: Fw: Feedgrounds and the Future

To: [wgf-contact@wyo.gov](mailto:wgf-contact@wyo.gov) <[wgf-contact@wyo.gov](mailto:wgf-contact@wyo.gov)>

Guys,

I've been here for a while, and not surprisingly, I have opinions.

As a very frequent State Lands/Public Lands/Forest user, life-long Bow and Gun Hunter, BHA Member, Predator Advocate, Biologist, and someone who is paying attention to what is happening on our Wildlands, I would like to share my thoughts.

My opinions are also informed by formal training and work as a Wildlife Biologist, as well as a career working with Infectious Diseases as a Medical

Professional here n WY.

I believe that WYGFD and the Commission have taken an "Ostrich Approach" to CWD, and we all have a lot of work to do to catch up with the threat that the Feedgrounds and CWD itself represent.

I believe that the role of Large Predators is VERY important in the future management of CWD, and that the Department has done a terrible job managing and advocating this.

I believe that WYGFD should do a MUCH better job of asking for public input about Feedgrounds, and not just from hunters. NOWHERE in the many email updates that I receive from WYGFD do I see a link for input/request for comments on this issue with the above email address/link. For instance, the request for input and comments on the CWD management plan is nowhere to be found on the web-page (without MUCH searching) and the many newsletters/posts that I receive from WGFD do not publicize the recently-closed comment period, or ask for the public's involvement.

I believe that the State of Colorado and increasingly Montana are facing this issue head-on and that we would do well to partner with and learn management from these States, and not act as if it's "not really a problem".

I believe that WYGFD should include a "Phase-out-option" in the Feedground management plan. Somehow, ALL of the other elk-rich Western States are capable managing elk without feedgrounds, and it's time for the Department to face the reality of this rapidly expanding and devastating prion disease.

I believe that healthy Large Carnivore populations will help with CWD management and should be encouraged.

I believe that WGFD is deeply misguided with the plan to "manage" CWD AFTER the problem is present in a large number of elk on Feedground. The Science for this approach is sorely lacking. Imagine "beginning to manage" a Viral Infectious Disease like

Sars-CoV-2 when it reached a population threshold of 20% in the world population. We'd a be a "bit-behind-the-curve"!

I believe that the Department's suggestion that Feedgrounds are supported by the North American Model of Wildlife Management. This is very simply NOT TRUE.

I believe that the WGFD DOES NOT have authority of the many State Feedground on Federal Land. WGFD is a lessee on these lands, owned by the American Public.

I believe that expanding seasons and elk and deer harvest numbers will be a wonderful step forward, and I applaud the Departments' recent proposals to do this. Late season hunts like that which occurs with the Elk Areas 73-6, 84-7, 85-7 and partnership with Private Landowners will be key. This concept can work to resolve the elk/landowner issues.

I believe that the way forward for our healthy herds requires a partnership between WYGFD, hunters, and non-hunting Wildlife advocates. The time has come for the Department to recognize this very-real and present danger of CWD and the existing multiple feedground-prevalent diseases, and face this issue as an agency advocating and managing for Wildlife, not just special-interests. Difficult? Absolutely. Impossible? Not with good direction and leadership from the Department and coordination with ALL of the interested parties.

Sincerely,  
Chuck Harris  
Wildlife Biologist-Retired  
Wyoming Physician Assistant, License #76

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