

Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission: Ojibwe tribes endorse new regulations to curb deer disease

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ODANAH, Wis.—As the always-fatal deer ailment chronic wasting disease continues to spread northward into the Wisconsin Ceded Territory, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) officials are encouraging state lawmakers to accept new regulations designed to protect Wisconsin's wild deer and elk herds.

“The entire culture of Wisconsin fall deer hunting is threatened by the unabated spread of CWD,” said Michael J Isham, GLIFWC executive administrator. “The Joint Committee should allow the emergency rule to become effective October 1.”

Isham yesterday sent a letter to Senator Stephen Nass, chair of the Senate Committee on Administrative Rules, in support of a rules package passed by the Department of Natural Resources Board that restricts deer carcass transportation and upgrades captive deer fencing requirements. Nass has scheduled a meeting, also on October 1, to consider suspending all, or part, of the CWD rules.

“The emergency rule is a smart and conservative measure to address the growing threat that chronic wasting disease poses to tribal and non-tribal interests,” Isham wrote on behalf of GLIFWC's Voigt Intertribal Task Force. The Task Force is comprised of 10 Ojibwe tribes that reserved off-reservation rights to natural resources through the 1837 Treaty and 1842 Treaty. The lands and waters sold to the United States by treaty are collectively known as the Ceded Territory.

White-tailed deer are a primary food source for thousands of Wisconsin Indians and

many more state residents. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends people avoid consuming venison, or deer and elk meat, from infected animals.

Please contact Charlie Rasmussen for more information at coras@glifwc.org, or call 715-685-2107. See www.glifwc.org for more on Ojibwe treaty rights in Wisconsin, Minnesota & Michigan.