

# **MICHIGAN UNITED CONSERVATION CLUBS**

## ***Policies Related to Chronic Wasting Disease and CWD Response Plan Actions***

In light of the first confirmed case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Michigan and the ban on baiting recently enacted, MUCC Policy Staff have compiled all of the most recent policies related to CWD, deer baiting and feeding, privately-owned captive cervid operations, and high fence harvest that have been adopted by the voting delegates at past MUCC Annual Conventions. The adopted language is presented in its entirety and the year adopted is in parentheses. If you have any questions, please refer them to Amy Spray at [muccpolicy@mucc.org](mailto:muccpolicy@mucc.org).

In summary:

- MUCC supports the recommendations of the CWD Task Force (2004) and encourages the state and federal government to accept and fund the recommendations. MUCC also supports education efforts on CWD
- MUCC opposes the use of bait as a means to harvest white-tailed deer, due to the concerns of disease transmission. MUCC also opposes recreational feeding of deer.
- MUCC supports limited supplemental feeding programs in the Upper Peninsula during severe winter conditions.
- MUCC participated in and supports the recommendations from the Captive Cervid Working Group (2006) that developed strict standards and regulations for the existing captive cervid industry. MUCC also calls for regulation and enforcement to be funded by the captive cervid industry.
- MUCC supports the fair and equitable phase out of captive cervid facilities in Michigan through a moratorium on new/expanded facilities and voluntary buy-out incentives.
- MUCC does not recognize the act of taking wildlife within high fence enclosures as “hunting”, but encourage those captive cervid facilities that offer commercial harvest to do so in a manner which incorporates sufficient size and design to allow for a reasonable opportunity for “fair chase” and animal sanctuary.
- MUCC defines “fair chase” as: the ethical, sportsmanlike, and lawful taking of free-ranging wild game animals, which extends beyond the hunt itself as an attitude and a way of life based in a deep-seated respect for wildlife, for the environment, and for other individuals who share the bounty of this state’s natural resources.

## **Chronic Wasting Disease**

### **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE EDUCATION AND ACTION (2004)**

WHEREAS, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a neurological disease of deer and elk and is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy similar to mad cow disease in cattle and scrapie in sheep, characterized by loss of body condition, behavioral abnormalities, and death, and

WHEREAS, CWD can have a serious effect on the health of deer and elk populations, and is of great concern for wildlife managers across North America, and

WHEREAS, there is no reliable live animal testing method available for diagnosing CWD, nor a treatment available, and

WHEREAS, Governor Jennifer Granholm appointed a Task Force of animal and human health leaders to review the status of CWD and recommend methods to protect Michigan's deer and elk from this disease, and

WHEREAS, this Task Force held public hearings and brought in CWD researchers and state veterinarians from around the United States to present information about and share their knowledge of this serious disease, and

WHEREAS, after hearing this testimony and reviewing much information of CWD, the Task Force issued a list of recommendations specific to the concern of protecting Michigan's deer and elk from CWD, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) continues its efforts to protect Michigan's deer and elk from CWD by encouraging the state and federal government to accept and fund the recommendations of the task force, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MUCC develops and promotes an educational program to inform all MUCC members about CWD and the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force.

### **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE RESOLUTION (2002)**

WHEREAS, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a progressive and always fatal Neurological Disorder that affects deer and elk, and

WHEREAS, CWD has been found in game ranches and in free-ranging deer and elk in several Western States and at least one Canadian Province, and

WHEREAS, recent disease survey results have revealed that CWD exists in free-ranging

White-tailed deer in Wisconsin, and

WHEREAS, research has revealed that the disease develops slowly and. At present, cannot be diagnosed with live animal testing procedures, and

WHEREAS, the highest prevalence rate have occurred in captive cervid facilities and Game Ranches where close contact among animals is more prevalent than that which occurs among Free-ranging wild animals, and

WHEREAS, exotic game species are frequently held on captive cervid facilities, and

WHEREAS, research from Colorado has suggested that the movement of animals infected with CWD is the greatest risk to uninfected animals, and

WHEREAS, in response to the positive CWD cases found in Wisconsin, the State of Texas has stopped the import of all deer and elk into its boundaries, and

WHEREAS, other mid-western States are considering supplemental protective fencing Measures around existing game ranches in their states, and

WHEREAS, if CWD were to be transmitted to Michigan, its likely effects would be potentially devastating for free-ranging deer and elk with serious economic implications to Michigan residents and businesses, now.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Michigan United Conservation Clubs urge the State of Michigan to take whatever measures necessary to immediately stop the import of all deer, Elk, and exotic game species except boned meat, capes and antlers into its boundaries, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State initiate a moratorium on the registration of new privately owned cervid farms and on the expansion of existing facilities, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this action shall additionally require exiting facilities that enclose deer and elk to install supplemental (double) fencing in an effort to further separate captive animal from those in the wild, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution adopted at the Michigan United Conservation Clubs 2002 Annual Convention may be amended by board action to take any additional action necessary as based upon good science to protect our white tail deer and elk herds from CWD, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Michigan United Conservation Clubs work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Agriculture, and United States Department of Agriculture to develop a public program to increase public awareness of Chronic Wasting Disease and its associated risks.

## **Deer Baiting and Feeding**

### **DEER BAITING [REAFFIRMS BAN STATEWIDE] (2007)**

WHEREAS, the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) passed a resolution at its 2000 annual convention asking for a complete ban on the practice of deer baiting and feeding in the lower peninsula – effectively putting MUCC on record as opposing deer feeding and baiting in the Lower Peninsula; and

WHEREAS, since this resolution passed in 2000, the state of Wisconsin has discovered Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in its free ranging whitetail herd; and

WHEREAS, Michigan's Upper Peninsula (UP) shares a border with Wisconsin and a deer wandering Wisconsin's forest today may be found in the Upper Peninsula tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, baiting limits enacted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) are impossible to enforce with the violation rate being high throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, bait stations become gathering spots that help facilitate the transmission of communicable diseases, such as Bovine Tuberculosis and CWD.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MUCC be on record as opposing the continued use of bait as a means of harvesting whitetail in Michigan.

### **DEER BAITING [BAN STATEWIDE] (2003)**

WHEREAS, the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) passed a resolution at its 2000 annual convention asking for a complete ban on the practice of deer baiting and feeding in the lower peninsula, and current MUCC Policy supports limiting baiting to (2) five gallon containers, an amount which exceeds current (2002-03) regulations, and

WHEREAS, since this resolution passed in 2000, the state of Wisconsin has discovered Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in its free ranging whitetail herd, and

WHEREAS, Michigan's Upper Peninsula (UP) shares a border with Wisconsin and a deer wandering Wisconsin's forest today may be found in the UP tomorrow, and

WHEREAS, baiting limits enacted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) are hard to enforce with the violation rate being high throughout the state, and

WHEREAS, bait/feed stations become gathering spots that help facilitate the transmission of communicable diseases such as Bovine Tuberculosis and CWD, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Michigan United Conservation Clubs be on record as opposing the continued use of bait as a means of harvesting whitetails in Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MUCC work with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to end the practice of baiting/feeding in the entire state of Michigan.

**SUSTAIN SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING PROGRAMS  
IN THE UPPER PENINSULA (2003)**

WHEREAS, the whitetail deer in the Upper Peninsula is recognized as the most important wildlife species to occupy the region for recreational, economic, and aesthetic reasons and is therefore one of the most treasured natural resource of the citizens of the Upper Peninsula, and

WHEREAS, the natural conditions required to support populations required to sustain adequate animals for harvest and recreational viewing fluctuate widely depending on winter conditions including snowfall depth, severe temperatures, wind chill, duration, and

WHEREAS, the migratory and wintering behaviors exhibited by the animal combined with the climatic factors and the absence of essential natural habitat (food and/or cover), often related to human activity (past and present) will under certain conditions cause depletions leading to excessive mortality (best measured by Winter Severity Index WSI), and

WHEREAS, these conditions exist for only short periods in any given year but may lead to depletions in the population causing an inability to sustain goal populating for harvest, recreational viewing, and other uses of the animal, and

WHEREAS, factors of disease such as Bovine Tuberculosis and Chronic Wasting disease which have led to concerns over winter feeding programs and the projected elimination of such programs in the coming year, have not been found to exist anywhere in the Upper Peninsula nor has any sound scientific evidence been advanced which relate this type of activity to prevalence of these diseases, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Michigan United Conservation Clubs encourage the Michigan Natural Resource Commission to allow supplemental feeding programs in the Upper Peninsula when the WSI reaches 50 where population goals and/or objectives could be jeopardized due to malnutrition caused by winter weather conditions.

**DEER BAITING BAN RESOLUTION [LOWER PENINSULA] (2000)**

WHEREAS, the baiting of deer puts the deer herd and Michigan's cattle herds at increased risk of disease, notably tuberculosis, and

WHEREAS, the baiting of deer alters their distribution and can negatively impact their habitat, and

WHEREAS, the use of bait has created an adversarial situation among hunters that has resulted in violent altercations over perceived rights to hunting locations on publicly owned lands,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Michigan United Conservation Clubs will work with the DNR and NRC to eliminate deer baiting and feeding, including recreational, in Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

### **Privately-Owned Captive Cervid Operations**

#### **REGULATION OF THE CAPTIVE/PRIVATE-OWNED CERVID INDUSTRY (2006)**

WHEREAS Michigan has a long and proud history of scientific wildlife management by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and its predecessor agencies, resulting in nearly a century of wildlife management what has best served the resources, the public and hunters, and;

WHEREAS, a comprehensive audit of the captive/privately-owned cervid facility conducted by the MDNR in 2004 confirmed the existence of numerous violations, most of which could be avoided through improved oversight measures, and;

WHEREAS these inspections cited violations, which although are believed to have been substantially abated, could pose unnecessary health risks to the free-ranging wildlife if left to reoccur,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and Safari Club International (SCI) urge that the inspection and enforcement functions regulating captive cervid facilities be placed under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and that adequate funding for this regulation and enforcement be provided by the captive cervid and game ranch industry, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MUCC commit to continued participation in the Working Group composed of sportsmen's, conservation, and industry representatives to develop standards for privately-owned cervids by August 2006, which address herd testing, animal health and animal husbandry, and harvest conditions, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MDNR expeditiously implement those recommendations adopted by the Working Group, and that the necessary enforcement measures be in place to eliminate captive cervid facilities whose owners and operators demonstrate a pattern of non-compliance or illegal animal movement, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MUCC and SCI further encourage those captive cervid facilities which offer commercial harvest to do so in a manner which incorporates sufficient size and design to allow for a reasonable opportunity for “fair chase” and animal sanctuary.

**REGULATION OF THE CAPTIVE/PRIVATELY OWNED  
CERVIDS INDUSTRY (2005)**

WHEREAS, Michigan has a long and proud history of scientific wildlife management by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) or its predecessor agencies, resulting in nearly a century of wildlife management programs that have best served the resources, the public and hunters, and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Michigan overwhelmingly approved and supported the continued scientific management of wildlife resources by approving Proposal G in 1996, and

WHEREAS, the existence of approximately 740 captive / privately owned cervid facilities in the state create an immediate and real threat to the health of wild cervids in this state through the potential spread of disease, especially Chronic Wasting Disease and Bovine Tuberculosis, requiring that these facilities be stringently regulated and the laws governing these operations be uniformly and effectively enforced, and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive audit of the captive / privately owned cervids industry conducted by the MDNR in 2004 confirmed the existence of many violations and conditions that document the real and immediate threat to native and wild cervids in Michigan, and

WHEREAS, experience in other states which have suffered CWD contamination in native herds has proven that if CWD is spread to the wild cervid population in Michigan it will create very serious problems relative to wildlife management, hunter participation and health, MDNR budget impacts, and a general negative economic impact throughout the state due to loss of hunting-related revenues, and

WHEREAS, historical experience in Michigan and other states has proven without a doubt that the captive / privately owned cervids industry is most effectively regulated by a wildlife management agency that has experience and expertise in wildlife management, wildlife diseases, and has an effective and trained law enforcement branch capable of enforcing all laws related to the captive / privately owned cervids industry, and

WHEREAS, efforts are underway in the legislature and special interest groups to have the regulatory and enforcement activities, and oversight of the captive / privately owned cervids, transferred to the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), and

WHEREAS, through actual experience, and by testimony provided by the Director of the MDA, that agency lacks the necessary expertise and ability to oversee and regulate this industry, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) strongly opposes the transfer of licensing, inspection and enforcement functions regulating the cervids industry from the MDNR to the MDA, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the MUCC strongly believes that adequate funding and staffing for the regulation of this industry must be appropriated, and that therefore licensing fees paid by all classes of private cervid operations should be raised to reflect much more of the actual cost of running the captive / privately owned cervids program, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that MUCC strongly urges that the recommendations made in the MDNR Final Audit Report (March 10, 2005) be implemented as quickly as possible, that unlawful or inadequate conditions discovered at captive/privately owned cervid facilities be immediately corrected, and that necessary statutory amendments be enacted to correct legal and technical shortcomings in current standards, which were identified in the audit.

#### **BUY OUT AND PHASE OUT OF CAPTIVE CERVID BUSINESSES (2005)**

WHEREAS, captive cervid farms and ranches rear deer and elk to be sold and shot as trophies or sold as meat, antlers and other products, and

WHEREAS, the captive cervid industry has been linked to the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) to wild and domesticated stocks of cervids in many areas of the US and Canada, and

WHEREAS, in spite of the threat the spread of CWD poses, the captive cervid industry has a record of abuses and violations of regulations established to safeguard wild deer and elk from the spread of disease, and

WHEREAS, some level of regulatory non-compliance by the cervid industry is to be expected, the threat and endangerment to wild deer and elk resources posed by the cervid industry can be expected to continue regardless of regulatory safeguards or enforcement, and

WHEREAS, the costs of enforcement, administration and regulation of the captive cervid industry are being borne largely by sportsmen, a burden that is not only unfair but diverts money from important resource management priorities, and

WHEREAS, the economic and social benefits of the captive cervid businesses are in no way commensurate with the overwhelming financial and quality of life risks they pose to our resources and our society, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MUCC supports captive cervid facilities in Michigan being phased out in a fair and equitable way including:

1. A moratorium on any new licenses or expansions of existing facilities;
2. A voluntary buy-out and retirement by the state or federal government of existing licenses based on their business value including buy-out of specialized fencing, buildings and equipment, but not to include land, stock, or unspecialized buildings or equipment;
3. Special incentives for early license retirement.

### **High Fence Harvest**

#### **HUNTING AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT [HIGH FENCE HARVEST] (2006)**

WHEREAS, Wildlife management practices and principles are an integral part of American Conservation efforts, and;

WHEREAS hunting has been established and accepted as one of the legitimate tools used in American wildlife management, and;

WHEREAS hunting is a sport filled with values that comes from our long standing practices in regards to traditions and heritage and;

WHEREAS hunters abide by a code of ethics, recognizing an inherent responsibility and respect for all wildlife including the lands and water they inhabit and;

WHEREAS the practice of confining wildlife within high fences for the purpose of using hunting methods for the “act of taking” violates many of the long held accepted wildlife management practices and principles.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) does not recognize high fenced enclosures of wildlife as a form of accepted wildlife management nor conservation practice except for scientific research, and furthermore,

MUCC does not recognize the “act of taking” wildlife within high fence enclosures as hunting.

#### **PRESERVING THE HUNTING TRADITION [DEFINES “FAIR CHASE”] (2006)**

WHEREAS, in order to preserve the hunting tradition, we must ensure that hunting in Michigan is practiced in an responsible, ethical manner also in a way that conforms with long-standing fair chase practice’s and;

WHEREAS premises of fair chase have been defined by National and State organizations such as the Boone and Crockett and also The Pope and Young Club and;

WHEREAS it is these sponsors belief that the majority of our states hunters follow the spirit of fair chase and;

WHEREAS non-hunters, except, as well as accept the premises of fair chase.

WHEREAS the act of fair chase, will enhance our mission to preserve our hunting opportunities and traditions for future generations.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that on this day, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) adopt the premises, spirit, ethic of fair chase as the following: Fair chase is the ethical, sportsmanlike, and lawful taking of free-ranging wild game animals and it does, extend beyond the hunt itself; as an attitude and a way of life based in a deep-seated respect for wildlife, for the environment, and for other individuals who share the bounty of this States natural resources.