



State of Utah

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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 17, 2025

To: Wildlife Board and Regional Advisory Council Members

From: Virginia Stout, DWR Wildlife Veterinarian, Wildlife Health Program

Subject: 2026 mandatory chronic wasting disease sampling (informational)

The DWR will implement mandatory sampling for chronic wasting disease (CWD) for one season, on one hunt unit in the fall of 2026.

Mandatory sampling for fall 2026:

Ogden (Unit 3), General-season, any legal weapon buck deer hunt

In accordance with Utah's Statewide Mule Deer Management and CWD Management Plans, the DWR's CWD sampling efforts are designed to detect $\geq 1\%$ prevalence of CWD with a 95% confidence. It has become increasingly difficult to obtain adequate sample sizes to achieve statistically meaningful results. Very few of our target units have reached the necessary sample size to determine prevalence. To reach our goal of improving detection in units without detected CWD, especially if they are next to positive units, DWR is implementing mandatory sampling.

In accordance with Utah's "Taking big game" rule, R657-5-44(2)(a-d), the DWR will implement mandatory sampling for chronic wasting disease. The rule authorizes the division to identify units where successful hunters can be required to submit samples for chronic wasting disease testing. The DWR must identify those units in the big game guidebook, notify hunters in writing before the hunt about the testing requirements, and hold hunters accountable for complying with the mandatory testing requirements.

Mandatory testing will begin in the Ogden unit for the general-season, any legal weapon buck deer hunt (Oct. 17-25, 2026). The Ogden unit was selected because it has the most recent detection of CWD in the state, with the closest positive on the East Canyon unit. In addition, the detection was in an elk, with no other deer detections nearby, which is abnormal for the typical progression of CWD. DWR would like to learn more about how CWD is behaving in this unit and determine accurate prevalence.

