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Section A

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DNR requires more testing before issuing CWD plans

By MICHELLE DREW
NEWS EDITOR

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) discussed chronic wasting disease (CWD) at a recent virtual meeting, and although officials are not certain about what to do next about the disease in local whitetail deer, one thing is for sure — that more testing is necessary.

CWD has been an ongoing topic of discussion and concern in Wisconsin since it was first detected in the state in 2002. More recently and a bit closer to home, the disease was discovered in a 3-year-old antlerless deer shot within the city of Eagle River limits in November 2021 as part of the city-managed archery hunt.

The deer appeared healthy and was submitted to a DNR

kiosk for testing. It was confirmed positive Dec. 3, 2021.

Now that the illness has been found in the wild deer population in Vilas County, conversations must be had to decide what the next steps are to keep the disease to a minimum in the northern part of the state.

Baiting and feeding bans have already been in place in the area, and with the confirmed new positive case those bans will be extended for at least another three years.

At the meeting, the DNR addressed questions from members of the public about the disease and what steps are being taken to deal with it. DNR Wildlife Biologist Michele Woodford led the meeting which also featured DNR staff from the area, Tribal leaders, and members of the Conservation Congress (CC) and County Deer Advi-

sory Council (CDAC).

Woodford explained that the disease strikes the wild deer herd and is also often discovered in deer farms. This can cause issues for hunters who harvest venison from the hunt and hope to consume it.

Although no reported human infection has been reported, health officials from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and World Health Organization warn against consuming meat from a deer that has tested positive for CWD.

According to Woodford, CWD is a prion disease that affects the brain and central nervous systems of deer, elk, moose and reindeer. It is a very contagious disease that is passed through saliva, feces, urine, and other deer-to-deer contact.

Mandy Kamps of the Wisconsin DNR noted during the meeting that it can also be spread by a contaminated environment which can occur from people moving vehicles, hunting gear and machinery that has not been cleaned properly between locations — although the nose-to-nose contact between deer remains the main way it is transmitted.

Woodford explained that CWD is always fatal and there is no known cure, and many deer that are infectious may appear healthy. Clinical symptoms of the disease take about 16 months to display, and advanced signs of infection include skinniness with ribs showing, no fear of humans, the inability to stand, drooping of the head or ears, and drooling.

Local wildlife staff are

To CWD, Pg. 6A



The discovery of CWD in the wild deer herd here will lead to more intensive testing in the fall of 2022. —STAFF PHOTO

Referendum passes for Northland Pines

By MICHELLE DREW
NEWS EDITOR

Voters of the North Woods have spoken and again passed Northland Pines School District's (NPSD) 3-year, \$4.6 million operational referendum that was on the Feb. 15 primary ballot.

The referendum passed with 1,315 people voting "yes" over the 601 who voted "no," according to results provided by the Vilas County Clerk of Courts office.

The funding will go toward covering basic operating costs for the district over the next three years.

NPSD Administrator Scott Foster shared his gratitude and enthusiasm over the decision.

"The Northland Pines School District is grateful and humbled for the support the community showed in the election on Tuesday. It was a great message to our staff and board of education

to have the referendum pass in all townships and the city of Eagle River by a large margin," he said.

The previous operating referendum — also \$4.6 million which was approved by voters in February 2019 — will expire June 30. The new referendum will keep the same amount on the tax levy each of the next three years, 2022-'24.

Foster noted that as fixed costs and expenses continue to increase and revenues and state funding continue to decline, NPSD will have a projected average budget shortfall of more than \$4 million dollars per year for the next three years. The district asked for the same amount as the current three-year referendum, thanks to efforts that budget dollars wisely and

To PINES, Pg. 7A



BLIZZARD BLAST — An estimated 1,500 people braved Saturday's temperatures in the low single digits to attend the eighth

annual Northwoods Blizzard Blast event held in Conover. More photos will appear in next week's newspaper. —STAFF PHOTO

Committee approves additional costs for 2nd courtroom

By KEN ANDERSON
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

"Be careful what you ask for 'cause you just might get it."

That was the view of members of the Vilas County Finance Committee when they met last week to consider approving needed communication between the second courtroom in the old portion of the courthouse and the hearing room being built on the second floor of the new courthouse addition.

"This needs to be done by March 31 which does not give us time to advertise for bids," County Clerk Dave Alleman

said. "Therefore it needs to come from the general fund."

The additional costs for visual upgrades, cable raceway for connections, security cameras, and key fob doors are expected to add more than \$55,000 to the cost, bringing the total to over \$155,000.

Vilas County Board Chairman Ron DeBruyne indicated the county made several requests for a second judge and now must provide the courtrooms.

"We made the commit-

To COURTROOM, Pg. 2A

Vilas' second sledding fatality occurred Sunday in Washington

By NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

The Vilas County Sheriff's Office reported a second snowmobile-related fatality on Feb. 20.

According to the report, Vilas County 911 received a call at 2:13 p.m. of an unconscious snowmobiler who had struck a tree on Trail 17 near marker 149 in the town of Washington.

Deputies at the scene identified the snowmobile had struck a metal gate and also trees. The operator was transported to the hospital and later pronounced deceased. The name of

the deceased is not being released at this time pending notification of the family.

Assisting with the investigation was the Vilas County Sheriff's Office, Eagle River Ambulance, Eagle River Fire Department, Vilas County Medical Examiner, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The accident remains under investigation by the DNR.

Other fatalities

The DNR urges the public to be safe while out on the trails after three additional crashes were reported state-

To FATALITY, Pg. 2A



A traveling mobile snowmobile safety sign by the Wisconsin DNR and the Vilas County Health Department was recently placed along a snowmobile trail in Eagle River to remind sledders to ride safely.

—Staff Photo By ERIC JOHNSON

