

How a “French cart” was used to co-create an outreach plan with stakeholders, not for them!

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) in Michigan’s deer population is having statewide public impacts, well beyond traditional hunting groups. As more is learned about the disease, broader stakeholders may be affected by regulations, legislative policy, impacts on retail, and environmental contamination. Impacted stakeholders and the public need information about the disease and related policies that may affect them. To address this need, the National Charrette Institute, Michigan State University Extension, and Michigan Department of Natural Resources convened a broad set of viewpoints including, agriculture producers, deer co-operatives, hunters, local businesses, local government, privately-owned Cervidae (deer, elk, reindeer, and moose) producers, processors, public health organizations, sports shops, tribal government, and youth to co-create a CWD education and outreach plan using a unique community engagement process called a charrette.

The goal of this project is to help individuals from across Michigan better understand the scope of CWD effects and communicate the strategies that can be undertaken to minimize the impact of the disease and reduce its spread. While the community-engagement activities will take place in the Montcalm/Ionia County area, “the hotspot for CWD prevalence in Michigan,” it is anticipated that components of the plan will be relevant for audiences statewide.

Hear the story about this process: how we used a viewpoint-diverse steering committee to develop the engagement process, persevered through Covid, delivered the charrette, and what the outcomes were. Extension professionals will learn how they can utilize and adapt the charrette process in their own communities as a community engagement and needs assessment strategy.



Katie Ockert

As the statewide Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) educator, Katie looks to create, deliver, and evaluate local and statewide communication strategies and innovative educational programs that meet current and projected outreach needs related to white-tailed deer management and CWD.

Katie works with key partners and audiences to identify communication strategies to increase awareness of CWD, increase hunters’ confidence in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ ability to make informed decisions and take necessary management actions regarding CWD, and increase key stakeholders’ acceptance association with CWD management options and outcomes.

Katie holds a bachelor’s degree in agriculture and Natural Resources Communication with a specialization in Animal Science from Michigan State University and a master’s degree in Public Administration, specializing in Homeland Security & Emergency Management from Penn State University.

**Holly Madill**

Holly Madill, AICP, is the director of the National Charrette Institute at Michigan State University where she trains practitioners on the methodology of charrettes, community engagement, and facilitation. She has conducted several charrettes and prepared and facilitated countless engagements for the private, nonprofit, institutional and public sectors. She has more than 20 years of project coordination, grant writing and management, and leadership experience spanning a wide range of topics including community engagement, placemaking, transportation and walkability, natural resources, and capacity building. Madill is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and holds certificates from the National Charrette Institute and Form-Based Codes Institute. She holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from the University of Alabama and a master's degree in Urban & Regional Planning from Michigan State University.