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(S.D.)-Critics Worry That Elk Plan Could Spread Disease

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 02/26/2013 08:37 AM

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) - Some critics of a plan to relocate elk in the Black Hills are worried about the spread of chronic wasting disease.

Wildlife officials at Wind Cave National Park and adjoining Custer State Park plan to use helicopters to push hundreds of elk out of Wind Cave, where they have outgrown available habitat.

John Wrede, former state Game, Fish & Parks Department wildlife specialist, says Wind Cave is a troubled area for chronic wasting disease and forcing elk out of the park works against containing the fatal brain disorder.

John Kanta, Game, Fish & Parks regional manager in Rapid City, says officials have discussed the possibility of spreading the disease, but doesn't believe the impacts will be dramatic.

The relocation is planned for early March.

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