

## **DEER MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE**

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### Summary

The Town of Ogden Dunes should take a multi-faceted approach to deer and tick management. This includes educating the residents on ticks and related diseases, implementing strategies for reducing tick populations, documenting and analyzing the impact of deer on plant life in town, discouraging residents from feeding the deer, and managing the size of the deer herd in Ogden Dunes. Based on the information provided to the Deer Management Task Force, Ogden Dunes is experiencing the same issues with the increased deer population that Dune Acres, Beverly Shores, and the National Lakeshore identified years ago.

While the direct link between deer population and incidence of tick-borne illness is debated, there is evidence that the deer population in Ogden Dunes is too high. The November 2011 report from John Ervin of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and anecdotal evidence indicate damage to vegetation from the increased deer population. The Town should conduct a similar survey and report annually or semi-annually, preferably with photographs or video footage. This would document the state of public areas over time, provide evidence of further damage or improvement, and provide data for analyzing the connections between number of deer and the state of vegetation. This would also help educate Town leaders and residents of the signs to look for in assessing the impact of deer on plant life. It is in the Town's best interests to protect the unique plant life native to the Indiana dunes.

My areas of concentration on the task force were the incidence of Lyme disease in Ogden Dunes and Community Education.

### Lyme Disease in Ogden Dunes

The Porter County Health Department reported in November 2011 that year to date Lyme disease cases in Ogden Dunes were 2 suspected, 4 probable, and 4 confirmed, which made up half of the total Porter County cases. More than 30 residents reportedly had suspected or confirmed cases of Lyme disease in the past two years. Based on the disparity in the number of confirmed cases from the county and suspected or reported cases of Lyme disease by residents of the Town, cases may be underreported. This may be due to the definition of a confirmed case (required testing, reporting to the county health department, and health department following up with the patient), lack of testing (possibly due to cost/benefit of

testing when it does not impact treatment of a tick bite), inaccurate test results, lack of awareness of local incidence of the disease by health care professionals, and residents seeking medical care outside Indiana.

The Town may want to track the possible broader incidence of Lyme disease in Ogden Dunes than county and state Health Department records reflect. The Town should consider a mechanism for allowing members of the community to self-report suspected or confirmed cases (if outside Porter County) of Lyme disease. A brief questionnaire could be posted to the Town website and available at the Town Hall for residents to allow them to report the date of the suspected or confirmed case, treatment sought, if testing was done and type, the results, if treatment was sought locally, and whether the case of Lyme disease was confirmed by the county or state.

A questionnaire could ask for the following information:

Did you seek medical treatment for a tick bite?

Did you exhibit the bull's eye rash (erythema mygrans)?

Did your health care provider perform the Western Blot test for Lyme disease?

If so, what was the result?

Do you know if your case was reported to an Indiana county or state Health Department?

Were you contacted by an Indiana county or state Health Department regarding your test results?

Did the Health Department confirm your case of Lyme disease?

#### Community Education on Lyme Disease, Ticks, and Deer

On May 30, the Town hosted an educational session for residents presented by Dr. Jennifer House and Bryan Price of the Indiana State Department of Health. More than 70 people attended. This was the second educational presentation to the Town residents on this topic. The Town should request another session in Spring 2013 and videotape it and post to the Town website, if permitted by the State.

Lyme disease, tick management, and other educational materials should be made available at the Town Hall for residents. Educational materials, such as information on integrated tick management, may be sent to residents with the spring and fall water bills to increase the dissemination of information.

The Town has a page on its website regarding Lyme disease and tick management. There are abundant resources that may be listed on the Town's website or added as a link, including the following:

Purdue University's Department of Entomology website provides comprehensive information on Lyme Disease, diagnosis and treatment, and protection against ticks.

HYPERLINK "http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/eseries3/view.php?article=articles/lyme\_disease.txt&id=2&section=Medical" [http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/eseries3/view.php?article=articles/lyme\\_disease.txt&id=2&section=Medical](http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/eseries3/view.php?article=articles/lyme_disease.txt&id=2&section=Medical)

The CDC has information on their website including fact sheets and trail signs. Perhaps post signs at some of the entrances to wooded areas around Town to alert and remind residents and visitors of the tick risk. HYPERLINK "http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/" <http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/>

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department urges residents to not feed the deer and explains why in this bi-fold brochure HYPERLINK "http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Wildlife\_PDFs/More\_harm\_deer\_brochure.pdf" [http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Wildlife\\_PDFs/More\\_harm\\_deer\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Wildlife/Wildlife_PDFs/More_harm_deer_brochure.pdf)

Kirby Stafford's Tick Management Handbook, 2004 is a 70 page document produced as part of the Connecticut community-based Lyme disease prevention projects in cooperation with the following Connecticut health agencies: The Connecticut Department of Public Health, The Westport Weston Health District, and The Torrington Area Health District. HYPERLINK "http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/publications/bulletins/b1010.pdf" <http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/publications/bulletins/b1010.pdf>

Encourage the Town and residents to consider an integrated tick management approach including the following actions:

- Keep grass mowed.
- Remove leaf litter, brush and weeds at the edge of the lawn.
- Restrict the use of groundcover, such as pachysandra in areas frequented by family and roaming pets.
- Remove brush and leaves around stonewalls and wood piles.
- Discourage rodent activity. Cleanup and seal stonewalls and small openings around the home.
- Move firewood piles and bird feeders away from the house (see section on small mammals and birds).

Manage pet activity, keep dogs and cats out of the woods to reduce ticks brought back into the home.

Use plantings that do not attract deer or exclude deer through various types of fencing.

Move children's swing sets and sand boxes away from the woodland edge and place them on a wood chip or mulch type foundation.

Trim tree branches and shrubs around the lawn edge to let in more sunlight.

Adopt hardscape and xeriscape (drier or less water demanding) landscaping techniques

with gravel pathways and mulches. Create a 3-foot or wider wood chip, mulch, or gravel

border between lawn and woods or stonewalls.

Consider areas with decking, tile, gravel and border or container plantings in areas by the house or frequently traveled.

Widen woodland trails.

Consider a least-toxic pesticide application as a targeted barrier treatment.

Consider using Damminix® Tick Tubes in mouse habitats to kill ticks, reducing the population early in the life cycle.