

TOWN OF ISLESBORO

TICK-BORNE DISEASE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

MEETING – WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2011 – 4:30 PM – TOWN OFFICE

MINUTES

Present: Andrew Coombs, Linda Gillies, Philo Hutcheson, Laura Houle, Seth Wilbur Alison Wood, PA-C

Invited but unable to attend: Jeffrey Grossman

Laura Houle, chair, called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm.

The minutes of the committee's meeting of February 24, 2011 were approved.

Stantec Report. Linda Gillies reported that Stantec Consulting had found a typo in their report submitted after the deer survey taken in April. The total number of deer estimated to be on Islesboro should read 528, not 744. Michael Johnson has amended the report. He also added an explanation of the calculation of square miles for the total deer population estimate in the 2010 and 2011 reports. In 2010 the calculation was 12.04 square miles. In order to give a more precise total population estimate, in 2011 Stantec excluded salt marshes and tidal creeks, areas that aren't deer habitat, and used the figure of 11 square miles (Appendix B).

Draft of Report to the Selectmen. There was discussion of the draft report, which had been circulated in advance to all committee members. Allie Wood suggested that the section describing mammals that contract tick-borne diseases could be expanded. Andrew Coombs suggested adding the Vita-Rack Lick Site® in the section about prevention measures. Questions and answers as to whether the committee plans to recommend "getting rid of all the deer on Islesboro" and whether "sharpshooters will be used" will be added to the FAQ section.

Most of the discussion focused on the committee's recommendations, particularly those involving deer management. The committee agreed unanimously on the following recommendations, which will be included in Part 5 of the report.\*

- Personal Protection. The Islesboro Health Center should continue and expand its efforts to inform Islesboro residents about personal protection against the possibility of tick bites.
  - Risk awareness
  - Protective clothing
  - Frequent tick checks
- Pesticide Use. The Health Center should provide information/education to residents about the use of sprays in small areas, particularly those made from "food grade" botanical compounds.
- Landscape Management. The Health Center should provide information/education to residents about landscape management. Landscapes can be modified so as to be less hospitable to small animals, deer and deer ticks.
- Wildlife Management. Islesboro should institute a deer management program with the goal of reducing the deer herd on Islesboro and 700 Acre Island to 10 or less deer per square mile. The

program would be implemented over a period of years. During that time, a long-range plan for deer control on Islesboro and 700 Acre Island would have to be developed.

- Our research indicates that the most appropriate way to begin to meet the goal is to establish a locally-controlled special hunting season as described in Section 3 of the MDIF&W's Deer Protocol of June 2001.<sup>1</sup> The special hunting season would last for approximately two weeks and would include the use of firearms. Under the terms of the Protocol, participation in this deer management option is restricted to "landowners, landowner-designees, or to local residents."
- The special hunt would be in addition to Islesboro's expanded archery season.
- The Town should establish a permanent committee to develop and oversee the deer management program, both in the short-term and the long-term.
- During the preparation of this report committee members worked closely with staff from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and discussed the possibility of a special hunt. However, the committee has not formally presented a proposal to the Department, pending approval from the Town. The Department would authorize the program and would assist in its development and implementation.

\*In accordance with the committee's mission, this report's conclusions and recommendations relate only to tick-borne disease prevention. However, we note that during our research it became evident that in addition to impacting the health of humans and domestic animals, browsing deer cause extensive damage to Islesboro's environment by eating indigenous plants and hardwood saplings in the forested habitats and garden plants in cultivated areas.

It was agreed that the committee's recommendation to reduce Islesboro's deer population to 10 deer per square mile would have to involve a good many local hunters and strict enforcement. Members felt that it should be "shotgun only" and that all deer should be tagged on Islesboro. There was discussion as to whether "'mainland" hunters who over the years have had permission to hunt from landowners should be permitted to participate in the special hunting season; no consensus was reached. These types of conditions will be worked out with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W).

#### Next Steps.

It was agreed that the committee should present the completed report to the Selectmen at its next meeting, scheduled for May 25, 2011. Laura Houle will present the report and Linda Gillies will outline its various components. Discussion about the substance of the report should wait until the Selectmen have had a chance to read it.

Next Meeting. To be scheduled after the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting with the Selectmen.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Gillies, Secretary, May 30, 2011

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<sup>1</sup> Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, *Actions to Remedy Nuisance Problems Resulting from Locally High Deer Densities, Deer Reduction Protocol*, June 27, 2001, p. 3.