

TICK-BORNE DISEASE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

The committee's work is progressing well – here's our news:

- Committee name. We have changed our name from the Lyme Disease Prevention Committee. The reason for this is that through our research we've learned that the deer tick can transmit as many as 12 diseases. Lyme disease, anaplasmosis and babesiosis are the most common. While Lyme is the only one that has been diagnosed on Islesboro, the new name is more accurate.
- Tick Count. The Vector-borne Disease Laboratory, which conducted a tick count in November 2010, has reported that of the 93 ticks found per hour, 49.4 percent were infected with Lyme disease. In the fall of 2009, 48.4 percent were infected.
- Deer Counts. In early January we learned from Lee Kantar, State Deer and Moose Biologist, that Inland Fisheries & Wildlife had begun to use the Potvin Survey, a double count visual survey from helicopters that was developed in Quebec, Canada to estimate deer populations. IF&W is now testing the applicability of this survey to Maine. Because Islesboro took a survey using the pellet counting method in 2010 and plans to have a second one, IF&W was interested in doing a Potvin survey here for comparison purposes.

The helicopter survey was flown on Thursday, January 20th. Unfortunately snow conditions were such that deer were likely staying close to the spruce and fir cover and not flushing upon the helicopter's approach. Therefore the ability to detect deer was low and the survey was not able to provide a reliable estimate. When snow conditions change in the spring and deer are moving freely around the island (due to less snow), IF&W may attempt the survey again.

Stantec Consulting will take the second pellet count in March, after the snow is gone and before the trees leaf out. Stantec has set up the new transects, and in the next month committee members will be obtaining landowner permissions for access. This year the on-the-ground work will be done entirely by Stantec biologists; no volunteers are required.

Both the IF&W and Stantec surveys will include 700 Acre Island, which has not been surveyed before.

The cost of the Stantec survey will be \$13,500. As \$7,500 was approved at the 2010 Town Meeting for survey work in 2010/11, additional funds will be required. At the Special Town Meeting on February 26, 2011 the Selectmen will propose a further allocation of \$7,000, which will cover the cost of the Stantec count plus \$1,000 for expenses that the committee may have.

- Going forward. Work continues on the committee's report/recommendations, which we expect will be ready in the spring.

If you have questions about the Tick-borne Disease Prevention Committee's work, please call chair Laura Houle (734-2040) or secretary Linda Gillies (734-6452).

January 26, 2011