

**MIFD Committee Report****I: Current Status:**

At the 2021 MIFD Annual Meeting, taxpayers approved the inclusion of tick treatments for single family homes in the MIFD 2021-2022 budget. This inclusion has continued to be approved in the following year's budgets. The MIPOA email list distributed the sign-up information via the web site and emails to MI residents for the 2024 tick control program. An on-line survey tool was used again this year to gather information from residents regarding incidents of tick disease in humans and pets (results discussed below).

We have 161 property treatment preferences for this year representing a ~82% resident response rate which is very similar to last year. Results are as follows:

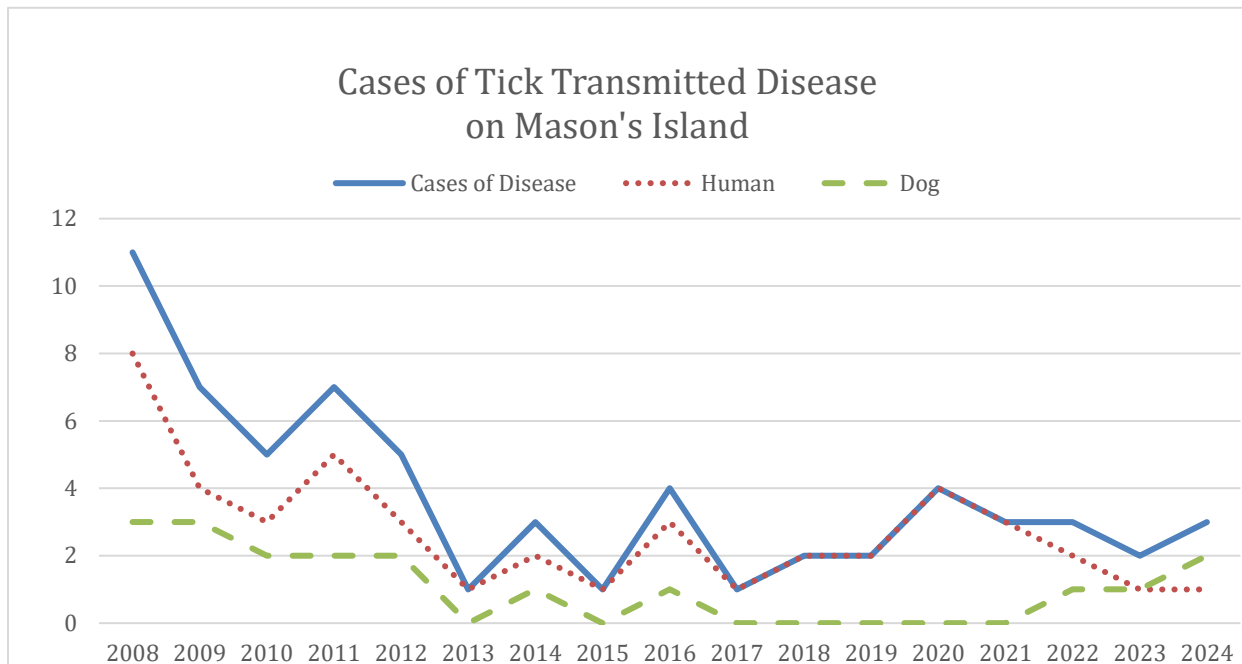
- SeaScape Lawn Care Inc. and BioTech Pest Control are treating a total of 157 properties this year compared to 153 last year. These 157 properties being treated represents ~80% of those properties eligible. 4 property owners specifically requested no treatment by any company. Everyone pays for the Tick Programs in their MIFD property taxes but some property owners chose to opt out or not respond.
- In addition, MIFD contracts with Seascope for treatment of some MIFD trails between Money Point and Black Duck Roads and with Biotech for the Secret Beach walkway, the Skiff Lane Boat Launch area and the Community Garden.

Hopefully, the more universal our MIFD tick control program is, the more we should be protected from Lyme and other tick-borne diseases.

SeaScape has completed their first application of the season. There will be two additional SeaScape applications this season: one in mid-to-late summer and one in early fall. Seascope uses a synthetic pyrethrin (active ingredient is bifenthrin). BioTech has also completed their first treatment of the season and will do one more in late fall. BioTech uses an organic cedar oil product with an additive of an insect growth regulator.

**II: Survey Results for 2023:**

As mentioned above, MIFD used an on-line survey tool again this year for the annual resident tick information survey. Out of the 64 responses received, there was 1 potential report of human Lyme disease but that respondent wasn't sure if they had it or not. In 2023, 2 survey respondents reported their dogs had a tick illness. These results are roughly in line with recent years and a significant reduction since the eleven cases reported in 2008 when the program began.



### III: The 4-Poster Deer Feeder Program:

- MIFD continues its “4-Poster Deer Treatment System” on Mason’s Island and we are ~15 ½ years into the original 3-year scientific study. We believe the 4-Poster Program significantly enhances the benefits of our Tick Disease Control Program.
- The 4-Poster system is designed to kill the adult ticks on deer’s ears, heads, necks, and shoulders where 90% of adult ticks are normally attached. The device uses corn to attract deer and, as the deer feed on the corn, they rub their head against EPA approved pesticide-impregnated rollers.
- There are currently 3 Deer Feeder locations on Mason’s Island that are operated and maintained by MIFD. The contractor servicing these stations is Sea Scape. Locations: 2 stations that are spread out on the Old South - Hickory Ledge extension on the nature conservancy dirt road and one station that is in the small clearing south of School House Road and approximately 500 feet west of the intersection of Mallard and School House Road.

### IV: Research:

- In March 2020 the results of a one-year study undertaken by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) indicated what types of ticks are found in Connecticut and how many are infected. 46% of all adult deer ticks collected were infected with Lyme disease. In addition, 13% tested positive for babesiosis, 9% anaplasmosis, 2% hard tick relapsing fever and 1% for Powassan encephalitis. For the first time, a new species of tick was found in New London County, the Asian long horned tick.
- In April, 2022, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station called the tick situation in Connecticut a “major public health concern”. It notes that ticks can carry multiple pathogens simultaneously.
- Our primary goal continues to be to have a program that is 1) effective at preventing Lyme Disease and other tick-borne diseases, 2) affordable and 3) environmentally neutral. Over the years, we have had conversations with various tick scientists asking for guidance as to

how to proceed. All have recommended tick avoidance, which they refer to as “Integrated Tick Management” (ITM).

- In the spring of 2024, MIFD posted several tick control-related web site links for residents that might want to do some of their own research.
- In April of 2024, MIFD hosted a small team of tick researchers from Western Connecticut University (WesConn). These researchers will be conducting a Tick Population study this summer and they did some preliminary sampling to ascertain whether Masons Island was a good candidate for the full study. The researchers searched 6 different properties for about 2 hours but they found no deer ticks. There could have been a variety of reasons for this but the team concluded that Masons Island was not a good candidate for the full study. MIFD should be able to get access to the results of the WesConn study when it's published which will give us valuable future information to consider.

#### **V. Recommended Actions for Homeowners:**

For homeowners, experts recommend creating a tick-safe zone on their landscapes:

- Selective use of insecticides combined with a comprehensive property management program.
- Property owners should continue to exercise good tick management techniques such as:
  - Treat pets with tick control products,
  - Wear protective clothing and shower after working outside,
  - Keep areas under bird feeders clean,
  - Place three-foot wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration into recreational areas,
  - Remove leaf litter, brush and weeds at the edge of lawns, and
  - Check yourselves, your children and your pets frequently for ticks and tick bites.

#### **VI: Going Forward:**

- The 2024-2025 MIFD budget continues to include the tick control program for all single-family homes/eligible properties. The MIFD mil rate also includes the 4-Poster Deer Feeder program and treatment of several common areas. Inclusion in the mil rate streamlined administration of the program and boosted participation substantially. Resident's choices on which option of MIFD tick control they prefer (cedar oil or bifenthrin or do not treat) will remain in effect until a change is requested by the resident. New and existing homeowners will still be able to select or change their MIFD-approved vendor (currently SeaScape or BioTech) or opt out on an annual basis if desired.
- Dave Ludwig on Yacht Club Road and Fran Hoffman on Money Point Road are the MIFD Points of Contact for the tick control programs. They coordinate the administration of the program with the MIFD Board, the past coordinators of the MIFD tick prevention control programs (MIFD residents Jean Anderson and Mary McCauley) and other residents that provide information on the program.
- Please make sure that MIPOA has your best email address.
- Feel free to contact Dave Ludwig at lud1nj@comcast.net or Fran Hoffman at franceshoffman1@gmail.com or the MIFD President with any questions or comments you may have.