

MIFD Report
Mason's Island Tick Control Program
May 16, 2025

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 2025 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 162 property treatment preferences for this year representing a ~82% resident response rate which is very similar to last year. Results are as follows:

- Bio Tech Inc chose not to bid this year so SeaScape Lawn Care Inc. is now treating a total of 159 properties with either Talstar (granular fertilizer product with bifenthrin insecticide) or Tick Killz (cedar oil based natural product) this year compared to 157 last year. These 159 properties being treated represents ~82% of those properties eligible. 3 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.
- Like previous years, Sea Scape also does the treatment of some MIFD trails between Money Point / Black Duck Roads and Old South / Hickory Ledge with Talstar (granular bifenthrin fertilizer product). Like Bio Tech last year, Sea Scape is now treating the Secret Beach walkway, the Skiff Lane Boat Launch area and the Community Garden with Tick Killz which is a cedar oil based product.

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 applications of the season of both Talstar and Tick Killz. MIFD is on contract for 2 more treatments of each product (summer & fall) but based on discussions with experts from the CT Agricultural Station who published the Tick Handbook which is on the MIFD website, we may adjust the treatment schedules to mid-May - June for the Tick Killz and we will drop the 2025 Summer Application of Talstar.

II: Survey Results for 2024 -2025: TBD

As mentioned above, MIFD used an on-line survey tool again this year for the annual resident tick information survey. The results of the responses will be briefed out at the Annual MIFD Resident Meeting.

III: The 4-Poster Deer Feeder Program:

- MIFD continues its “4-Poster Deer Treatment System” on Mason’s Island and we are ~16 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.
- MIFD is now back up to 4 deer feeders like in years 2022 and before. The contractor servicing these stations is Sea Scape. The HOA that encompasses Cormorant and King Fisher Way agreed to help fund this program like they do for the MIFD Guard House so we can use the traditional location again which is in their common area just north of the intersection of Heron and School House roads. The other 3 locations remain: 2 stations that are spread out on the Old South - Hickory Ledge extension on the nature conservancy dirt road; 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;

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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 2025, MIFD hosted a talk on tick control by Dr. Scott Williams, Chief Scientist and Head, Department of Environmental Science and Forestry, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. He recommends that we continue our 4-Poster Deer Feeder Program. He also said we could consider changing our cedar oil tick control treatment schedules to treat more from mid-May to June

timeframe to address the tick nymphs. He also opined that 1 annual treatment of the Talstar product is probably sufficient versus the current 3 which could be better for the environment. The MIFD Board is considering his recommendations with the MIFD budget in mind.

- The MIFD Board, Tick Control Committee, and other MIFD resident stakeholders continue to consult with subject matter experts on tick control in attempt to stay abreast of the latest tick control research.
- At the 2025 annual MIFD meeting in May, a MIFD resident will be presenting a recommendation for a vote from MIFD residents to discontinue the current tick control lot-perimeter program from one that is included in everyone's taxes and revert to a program MIFD where individual property owners decide on their own whether they want to treat their property. This vote will not affect the current 4-Poster Deer Feeder Program which is scheduled to remain in place for 2026.

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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 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 treatment option (Talstar or Tick Killz cedar oil) or opt out on an annual basis if desired.
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- The 2025-2026 MIFD budget continues to include the tick control program for all single-family homes/eligible properties. However, there will be a vote by the residents at the 2025 Annual Meeting as to whether MIFD-funded lot perimeter treatments of either Talstar or Tick Killz (cedar oil) should continue. This is because there are MIFD residents who are questioning the efficacy of cedar oil as

a treatment method because it is more of a repellent and is more susceptible to sun/rain/environmental conditions. These residents feel that the Deer Feeder Program should be sufficient tick control on its own and that individual property owners can treat their properties at their own expense.

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- 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.