

January 7, 2015

Dear Lyme Commission members -

On behalf of everyone at Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, let me wish you all a very happy new year!

We are pleased that the work of the Loudoun County Lyme Disease Commission is now focused on public education. We also believe that much of the information in existing county educational materials is valuable in helping all of us to prevent Lyme disease - and we hope and expect that Loudoun County's new updated literature can become a model for other jurisdictions facing similar challenges.

Following on the topics discussed at your most recent meeting on November 21, we respectfully offer the following recommendations regarding updates to the "[Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases in Loudoun County](#)" brochure and associated materials:

1) Topic Order and Prominence

We recommend that newly updated materials give greatest prominence to personal protective measures such as those described in the Preventing Tick-Borne Disease and Tick Removal section of the current brochure. We also recommend expanding upon the specific methods for personal protection, to give people the detail they need.

2) "Applying Permethrin to Vegetation and Grass" section

We understand that your Commission plans to omit from future brochure editions the image of a homeowner spraying shrubs - and as you know, we strongly support this move.

We also request that if permethrin or other pesticides are described in the county literature, the description should include key risks and cautions such as those outlined in the National Pesticide Information Center fact sheet <http://npic.orst.edu/factsheets/Permttech.pdf> and the Fairfax County web page <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/westnile/permethrin.htm>. These documents indicate, for example, that the U.S. EPA has classified permethrin as “likely to be carcinogenic to humans”; that permethrin is highly toxic to honey bees and other beneficial insects; and that studies have shown cats to experience particularly severe reactions and even death from exposure.

The new literature should also note that many suburban yards are NOT tick

habitats - a la the University of Rhode Island Tick Encounter Resource Center [http://www.tickencounter.org/prevention/perimeter\\_spray](http://www.tickencounter.org/prevention/perimeter_spray), which states: "In most situations, treatment is NOT needed on open or sunny LAWNS!!"

3) "Discourage Deer" section

We ask that you update this section to reflect new research indicating that tick ecology is more complex than originally believed, and that preserving a rich array of wildlife may be one key to reducing the spread of tick-borne diseases.

One example is a study in the July 2012 Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22711825>, which found "that increases in Lyme disease are frequently uncorrelated with deer abundance and instead coincide with a decline of a key small-mammal predator, the red fox." Another example is research described at <http://www.caryinstitute.org/newsroom/biodiversity-impacts-lyme-disease>, indicating that animals that are the greater sources of Lyme disease tend to dominate when biodiversity declines - and that, therefore, the greater the diversity of animal species, the less chance Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases will spread to people.

Thank you, as always, for your service to all of us in Loudoun County, and thank you for incorporating Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy's input into your Commission's work process and product.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Alysoun Mahoney  
Conservation Advocacy Chair  
Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy