

**League of Women Voters of Mountain Lakes
Lyme Disease Consensus
March 2000**

The League of Women Voters of Mountain Lakes acknowledges that Lyme Disease is prevalent in New Jersey and that Lyme Disease is indeed a problem for many residents in Mountain Lakes. Given our current environment and level of understanding of this disease, there exists a range of actions that can and should be taken within the community in the areas of education about, and prevention of, Lyme Disease. These actions should be targeted to enhance awareness of symptoms of the disease, and to reduce the risk of contracting the disease.

The League encourages the Borough Council, Board of Education, and Morris County to support them in this process, and recommends the following action by the identified groups:

A. Role of Borough Council:

- **Form a Lyme Disease Committee** – This committee, working in conjunction with the Board of Health, would be responsible for coordinating the various forms of community education and prevention discussed below, as well as keeping abreast of current research.
- **Conduct ‘drag tests’** – Drag tests would help the Borough to assess the magnitude of the problem by quantifying where and to what extent there are infected ticks. The League strongly recommends that these be carried out this fall on the beaches, parks, playing fields, hiking trails, selected wooded Borough property, and even a sampling of some private yards. These drag tests should be done by professionals experienced in this procedure.
- **Disseminate ongoing information to the community on an ongoing basis** – As part of educating the public on Lyme Disease awareness and prevention, the League suggests the following: including seasonal Lyme Disease information in the Borough newsletter and Home & School Bulletin, a mailing of Lyme Disease brochures to all households, putting information in the proposed ‘Newcomer’s Packets,’ including links on the Borough web page to Lyme Disease web sites, and placing Lyme tick warning signs in public places around town where ticks might be present.

- **Maintain Borough properties for better tick control** – A number of measures can be taken to minimize the number of ticks in the public use areas of Borough property. These include: pruning trees, removing leaf litter accumulations, and clearing underbrush.
- **Coordinate with children's programs in Mountain Lakes** – Encourage preschools, private schools, summer camps, recreation programs, and the YMCA to follow similar guidelines regarding property maintenance and individual protection.
- **Keep abreast of current research** – There are continual developments in the area of Lyme disease. Example of some areas of research that the League encourages pursuit of are deer feeding stations and organic alternatives to pesticide control.

B. Role of the Board of Education:

League members support an ongoing program to increase the awareness of Lyme Disease in the schools. The program would address not only the school nurses and teachers, but also include informing children and parents. School ground maintenance was also a major concern. Some ideas on implementing education and maintenance are:

- **Train school nurses** – The League recommends in-service training including updated information on tick removal and recognition of the symptoms of Lyme Disease for all school nurses.
- **Train teachers** – A Lyme Disease video shown at a faculty meeting could help focus teacher training on an understanding of the symptoms of Lyme Disease and how to work with children who have these symptoms.
- **Health education aimed at the students** – One idea is that the school nurse might provide Lyme Disease awareness and prevention education by visiting the health class.
- **Implement a new school policy on proper student attire** – When there is to be a planned activity in the woods, send home notes to parents advising that students dress in appropriate attire. This is similar to the school policy of sending home notes recommending sunscreen and hats on Field Day.

- **Conduct drag tests on school property and the woods adjoining school grounds –** These are recommended for the same reasons as outlined above for the Borough.
- **Maintain school grounds for better tick control –** Some ideas included gravel borders, investigation of organic methods of tick control, and ensuring that there are no large accumulations of leaf litter.

C. Role of the League of Women Voters:

Although the League recognizes the limited time and resources of its members, the consensus at the meetings was that the League could play an important role in the above suggestions by sharing information with various town organizations and aid in ‘kick-starting’ the recommended Borough Lyme Disease Committee. The League initially could get involved in the following ways:

- **Update The League of Women Voters of Mountain Lakes 1995 consensus on Leaves and Brush**
- **Share information with other organizations within Mountain Lakes** (AAUW, Seniors, Home & School Association, etc.)
- **Publish at least the first ‘seasonal’ Lyme Disease article in the H&S Bulletin**
- **Obtain an appropriate video for teacher training**
- **Share information with the Morris County Interleague Organizations –** This effort may heighten awareness among other League and encourage their action locally, and ultimately lead to county-wide action, grants, etc.
- **Send out tick information in the fall fund-drive letter**

D. Role of the County:

At the county level, the consensus is that the League, with support from Borough Council, would urge the county to address the Lyme Disease problem by the following actions:

- **Research the extent of infected infestation in Morris County** – Deer control becomes a major issue here. In addition, the League recommends that a drag test be conducted in the Tourne.
- **Sharing information among towns**
- **Pursuing grants**