

Tick controls pose potential hazards

Last Saturday I attended the Tick Control Awareness Day on behalf of the Jamestown Conservation Commission. There is no question that the spread of disease by ticks is a serious problem in Rhode Island and the presenters from URI did an excellent job of informing us on the hazards of tick bites. However, I have a very serious concern regarding the method they recommend for treating a homeowner's property with a high volume application of a powerful insecticide. The presenters suggest that the insecticide permethrin be sprayed from a tank truck onto a 2-4 foot buffer in forest or thick vegetation on the perimeter of a homeowner's lawn. The logic of this spraying is that if a resident goes into the forest right at the margin of the lawn, he or she will not run the risk of being bitten by a tick. While the presenters noted that permethrin has moderate to low toxicity to humans, it is well known to have a very high toxicity to fish, cats, and, of course, insects, including honey bees. The presenters also stated that the companies that apply the chemical are careful not to spray near water courses or ponds.

The toxicity and time that the chemical would remain in the environment is dependant on the concentration of the application, which appears only to be determined by the judgment of the man with the hose. Given the significant number of small water courses and wetlands in Jamestown, some of which fill our aquifers and others drain into the bay, there is a risk that landscape application of this chemical could pose an environmental hazard both on land and in adjoining waters. I have very little confidence that any commercial vendor would be qualified to distinguish appropriate and non-appropriate places to spray the chemical. The potential environmental impact of this chemical has not been well studied.

I suggest that Jamestowners not resort to applying permethrin as a landscaping insecticide. I don't think that this will at all diminish the campaign to control ticks, because by far and away the most effective prevention techniques are those that are applied to the person

and the pet. In any case, the spraying of this insecticide in a narrow perimeter band in the forest will have very limited effectiveness in controlling tick populations. All it takes is for the homeowner to step beyond the band of sprayed leaf humus and he or she will enter an area that could be inhabited by ticks. It seems logical that if a homeowner is very concerned about ticks in the forest, he or she could simply stay on the lawn where ticks do not survive. This simple precaution could reduce the possible contamination of water courses and also potential harmful effects of the forest and aquatic environment of Jamestown. Perhaps instead of spraying insecticide into the forest, we should simply stay on the grass.

Mark Baker
Jamestown Conservation
Commissioner

Concerns about NK fishing pier

It is my belief that the proposed North Kingstown fishing pier and adjacent park located at the old Jamestown bridge site will be an extravagantly costly albatross to the state and town in dollars, in adverse environmental impact, and in negative social consequences.

In this time of fiscal austerity, when the state is proposing such drastic measures as serious cuts in social programs, department cuts and state employee furloughs, do we need to finance a multi-million dollar project? If a large public fishing pier is essential there are opportunities within the state to build onto existing facilities, such as at Goddard Park in Warwick or Quonset Point/Davisville/Allen Harbor, as two examples. While the cost of building a fishing pier and park will be costly, it is the long-term maintenance, upkeep and security that are of even greater concern.

Some concerns that have been previously raised by stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- The incompatibility of building, maintaining and monitoring a large, busy public facility within the midst of a residential neighborhood
- The questionable feasibility

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of the building site. The R.I. DEM study of February 2006 "Public Access to Shoreline Recreational Fishing in Narragansett Bay" states "The greatest constraint is the limited area suitable for development...excluding ramps the maximum buildable area is slightly less than 1 acre...which may be overestimated due to environmental restrictions of the parcel and surrounding area..."

- A public park, Rome Point, exists less than 1 mile to the north.

- The proposed usage has been estimated at approximately 100 visitors daily (see report above) yet the parking cited as being available includes 42 on site, supplemented by 170 spaces at a Park and Ride off site (accessed by walking through the aforementioned neighborhoods). With 212 spaces available and two passengers per car that is the potential for 424 visitors!

- Environmental impact would include drainage issues, sensitive freshwater wetlands and sanitary facilities. The referenced study states "The study area within North Kingstown is not serviced by municipal sewers. Due to the environmental sensitivity of the immediate surroundings, an on site septic system would either require careful design or may not be feasible at all. It may also be difficult to site restrooms at this location due to limited area within the parcel."

- Public phones required. Security required. An attendant/ park ranger is needed.

- Scheduled trash pick-up. Day to day maintenance. Structure maintenance

- Fishing-related waste requires scrupulous maintenance both of the pier itself and to manage the individual fish waste. The CRMC Coastal Resources Management Program ("Red Book") state in section 300.4 that "No sewage, discharge, refuse, or waste of any kind may be discharged from the facility or any vessel using it." Daily waste removal would be necessary.

- Designated: Alcohol and drug free area.

- Potential nuisance of attracting children and young adults. Curfew established - hours of op-

eration. Vandalism. Graffiti.

- Traffic concerns include increased pressure on a two lane highway, increased accidents, and increased pressure on law enforcement.

I am also asking our state legislators to join together in representing their constituents' best interests and introduce legislation to repeal R.I. General Law 24-12-51.1. This twenty-year-old law (passed in 1987) mandates the development of the fishing pier and public park. I propose that this was a poorly advised piece of legislation and action should be taken to repeal it; thus removing any state mandate of this unmanageable project.

Dan Levy
North Kingstown

Highway barn decision factors

I had the opportunity to attend the Town Council work session that was held on May 21 for the purpose of discussing the site alternatives for the proposed DPW highway garage facility. The primary issues under discussion included: (1) Which alternative is the most suitable and cost-effective site?, and (2) Who should be the "decider" in this site-selection?... the Town Council, or the Jamestown residents, via a voter referendum sometime in the near future.

At the beginning of the meeting, Bruce Keiser, the town administrator, stated that the final site selection had been narrowed-down to two alternatives: (1) Lot 47 on the north end of the island, and (2) a site near the Newport bridge. I have my own personal thoughts and recommendations in this matter, some of which I discussed with Bruce Keiser immediately after the meeting, and which I subsequently forwarded to all council members. These include:

The "decider" issue: In order for the "decider" to make an objective, informed, non-partisan, non-NIMBY decision that is in the best interest of the entire community, the following must happen: (1) a thorough, highly objective and credible assessment of the alternatives must be undertaken, and (2) the details and results of this assessment must be fully communicated to and understood by the "decider." The foundation for a credible assessment, and a subsequent informed and impartial decision, is rigorous analysis of the technical merits and all of the relevant "facts," including the

pros and cons and cost-effectiveness of the two alternative sites. This rigorous analysis includes, but is not limited to, determination and quantification of the following "facts" for the two alternative sites: technical merit, design considerations, zoning issues, potential legal implications, environmental risks...a potential show-stopper; delivery schedule, all relevant costs, including: site acquisition and preparation costs, design costs, construction costs, possible legal implication costs, and full 25-year life-cycle operational and maintenance costs.

The daily transportation costs can be enormous, particularly during these times of high fuel prices, if the chosen site is in an out-lying location rather than placed near the center of the DPW's predominant daily tasking/activities. The road traffic maintenance costs must take into consideration the cumulative effect of the daily wear and tear of the roads traveled by the DPW and associated delivery trucks...over a 25-year life cycle. Such repair costs can add up to big dollars. Furthermore, there can be subjective negative community "costs" associated with DPW trucks and delivery trucks transiting selected streets in selected neighborhoods.

Once all of the relevant "facts" have been objectively quantified, they must be communicated to, and intelligently understood, by the "decider" in order that the "decider" can make an objective, well-informed, rational decision. I presume that the Town Council has been doing its homework and has been gathering, and/or will gather, all of the relevant "facts" in order to help them in this critical decision. However, I seriously doubt that a voter referendum (since it is impractical and improbable for all of the voters to receive, absorb and understand all of the complex issues and relevant "facts") would yield an informed, objective and credible decision. Rather, in the absence of the "facts", it would be more like a "beauty contest" driven primarily by subjective, NIMBY opinion. That is not good democracy, but rather a travesty of justice.

The site-selection issue: I suspect that once all of the relevant "facts" are obtained and considered, coupled with good engineering judgment and some good old common sense, the results of a rigorous cost-effectiveness assessment of alternatives will point to the direction of the centralized site

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