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**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

September 24, 2024

The Honorable David W. Marsden  
Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources

The Honorable Alfonso H. Lopez  
Chair, House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

Dear Senator Marsden and Delegate Lopez:

As required by the Code of Virginia, the Department of Conservation and Recreation is writing to provide you with an annual report on the agency's progress in developing and posting signage related to Lyme disease in each state park and interstate park. This signage outlines the appropriate steps a visitor can take to prevent tick bites, how to identify Lyme disease, and where to seek treatment. This letter serves as our annual report.

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia § 10.1-200.01 et al., the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of State Parks has been actively working on developing and posting signage for tick-related and tick-borne disease education and prevention. During the past reporting period, running from October 2023 through September 2024, the agency has taken the following actions:

1. Agency staff served on the statewide Inter-Agency Tick-Borne Disease Committee. The Committee recommended including which ticks are prevalent at each park on the signage and materials for visitors.
2. As noted in last year's report, Virginia State Parks has expanded the scope to cover all ticks and tick-borne diseases found in Virginia and known to impact humans.
3. Signage has been developed (see attachment) covering tick identification, the diseases they carry, prevention of tick bites and mitigation through tick checks and proper tick removal.
4. This signage, in the form of an informational flyer, has been posted at all Virginia State Parks, with a total of 276 signs posted at park offices, kiosks and trail heads.

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***State Parks • Soil and Water Conservation • Outdoor Recreation Planning  
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In addition to posting required signage, Virginia State Parks have included tick awareness in programs offered to the public. This includes displaying a tick model and distributing tick ID cards. The educational efforts in state parks have reached an estimated 63,693 individuals, including 38,750 adults and 24,943 youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew S. Wells". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Matthew S. Wells, Director  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation



# TICKS CAN MAKE YOU SICK



## PREVENTION

Conduct frequent tick checks on yourself, your gear, your children, and your pets.

Upon returning home, dry clothing at high heat for 10 minutes to eliminate any remaining ticks.

Use an EPA registered tick repellent containing deet or a natural alternative like lemon eucalyptus oil.

Use tick control products for pets that your veterinarian recommends.

Wear a hat with your hair tied back, long sleeves, long pants tucked into high socks, and closed-toe shoes. Light-colored clothing makes it easier to see ticks.

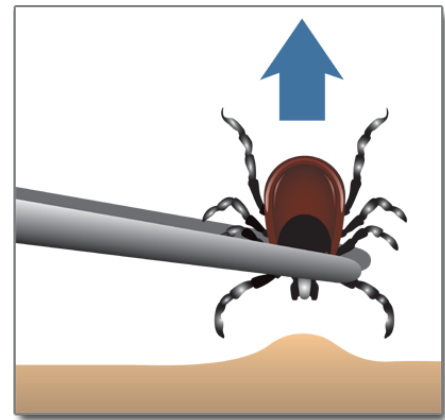
## PROPER TICK REMOVAL

Use a tweezer to grasp the tick as close as possible to the skin.

Pull upward, with steady even pressure, until the tick releases.

Clean the bite area with rubbing alcohol or soap and warm water.

Save the tick in a bag for identification in case an illness develops.



## TICK IDENTIFICATION AND DISEASE

Among the 16 types of ticks in Virginia, only three commonly bite people. The most common tick-borne illnesses include Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and ehrlichiosis. If you develop flu-like symptoms or unusual rashes after being bitten by a tick, please see a doctor.

**Black-legged (Deer) Tick**  
*Ixodes scapularis*



**Lone Star Tick**  
*Amblyomma americanum*



**American Dog Tick**  
*Dermacentor variabilis*

