



# BCT Stewardship Journal: April 2026

Katie's Thoughts from the Trail

## Ticks: Staying Safe in Nature

If you are involved in BCT stewardship, then you are well aware of one of the most notorious challenges we face in the outdoors: ticks. These tiny arachnids may be small, but they have a significant impact on our ecosystem and wellbeing.

Ticks belong to the arachnid class, which also includes spiders and mites. There are several tick species found throughout Cape Cod such as the American dog tick and Lone Star tick, but the black-legged tick (or Deer tick) is probably the most common tick you will spot here in Brewster. Ticks do serve a purpose in our ecosystem as food for various wildlife, including birds and small mammals. Additionally, some scientists believe that they help to maintain biodiversity by regulating populations of their hosts.



However, as most of you know, the downsides of these creepy crawlers definitely outweigh the positives. Ticks are notorious carriers of diseases, including Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis. Lyme disease has been on the rise, with increased reports across Cape Cod. Preparedness and prevention is key when heading into tick-prone areas (which unfortunately include nearly everywhere outside of development). Here are some practical steps you can take to minimize your risk of tick bites:

- **Dress for prevention:** Wear light-colored clothing to easily spot ticks. Long pants and long sleeves can help prevent ticks from getting on your skin. Tucking pants into socks and sleeves into garden gloves will prevent these buggers from getting under your clothing.
- **Use repellents:** Apply insect repellent containing DEET or permethrin on your clothing, not your skin. Be sure to follow the instructions for each product to optimize effectiveness. Another method is to treat your clothing with permethrin in advance. Treatments usually last for around 7 washes. Sprays and treatments I have found to be highly effective are [REPEL Tick Defense](#) for in the field and [Sawyer Clothing Gear and Tent Spray](#) to pre-treat outfits.
- **Stay on designated, well-maintained trails:** When hiking or walking, stick to the center of trails and avoid brushing against vegetation, where ticks will lurk to grab hold.
- **Check for ticks:** Throughout your time outdoors conduct periodic tick checks by scanning your pants and sleeves. After spending time outdoors, perform a thorough tick check on yourself, your family members, and pets. Pay special attention to areas like behind the ears, under the arms, and inside of legs. Use a magnifying glass if needed; tick nymphs can be as small as a poppyseed.
- **Shower after outdoor activities:** Removing clothing and putting directly in the washer and/or dryer will kill any ticks lurking on your clothes. Taking a shower within two hours of being outside can also help wash off any ticks before they attach.



Great examples of tick prevention! Deirdre is rocking the pants-tucked-into-socks and Frank is well prepared with his jumpsuit and long work gloves.