I. Background
There are a total of 17 tick-borne diseases within the US including seven diseases affecting humans that are reportable to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Risks to humans, livestock and companion animals varies depending on the tick species and pathogens vectored. Over the past five years, there has been an increase in tick species distribution which may be attributed to: (1) ecological changes and shifts in land use patterns; (2) increasing deer populations; (3) changes in host availability; and (4) improved identification and surveillance of ticks. There has also been an increase in the numbers of pathogens and pathogen diversity amongst species, and improvements in microbiological identification techniques.

To reduce tick-borne disease incidence, it is key to identify and implement multiple, effective and appropriate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to reduce exposure to infected ticks. As defined by the National Road Map for Integrated Pest Management, http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/pest/pdfs/ipm_roadmap.pdf, “IPM is a science-based, decision-making process that identifies and reduces risks from pests and pest management-related strategies. IPM coordinates the use of pest biology, environmental information, and available technology to prevent unacceptable risk to people, property, resources and the environment.”

Multiple interventions should be evaluated and included to minimize risk of exposure. To develop IPM tools, it is important to understand tick biology, species distribution and pathogens.

II. Mission
To reduce tick-borne disease incidence by collaborating on IPM-related activities and efforts that will ultimately reduce the risk of exposure to ticks and pathogens they carry.

III. Purpose and Scope
Federal, state and local governments, Land Grant Universities, non-governmental organizations, and others agree that it is important to control tick populations to reduce tick-borne disease risk. Consequently, there is an urgent need for these participants to collaborate efforts aimed at reducing the burden of tick-borne diseases both on public and private lands. The purpose of the Public Tick IPM Working Group is to create a forum for improving communications, networking and collaboration amongst all interested parties interested in supporting tick IPM. This forum will include regular conference calls, periodic in-person meetings, a listserv and website.

The Working Group scope includes all IPM strategies including vaccines designed to reduce tick numbers or block the ability of ticks to transmit pathogens, e.g., vaccines designed to prevent infection in mice and other reservoirs to break infection cycles. Vaccines designed to prevent infections in humans or wildlife as a health benefit to individual organisms are outside of the scope. Our geographic focus is US and Canada.
IV. Leadership, Governance and Participation
The Working Group will be coordinated by co-chairs nominated from working group members, including self-nominations, and agreed to by a majority of members. Participation in the working group is open to anyone interested in advancing the mission. Participants will conduct themselves in a professional manner including sharing the floor and respecting the opinions of others. The Working Group shall strive for consensus in decision-making. When consensus cannot be reached as determined by the chairs, decisions will be determined by majority voice vote, with 60% of active members constituting a quorum. Members not participating in four consecutive regularly scheduled calls will be considered inactive.

V. Meeting Frequency and Agendas
Conference calls will be held very second Wednesday of the month, from 2 – 3 PM Eastern Time. Additional conference calls and/or in-person meetings may be held periodically with sufficient advance notice. Agendas will include roll call, introduction of any new members, review of prior meeting minutes, and a call for additional agenda items, and may also include work plan action items and timelines, participant updates on current activities, and educational presentations by members and invited guests. Agendas will be circulated a week before meetings. Participants shall recuse themselves from discussions on topics for which they have a conflict of interest by leaving the call or meeting, and announcing their departure to be noted in the minutes.

VIII. Overarching Priorities:
1. Develop and promote adoption of IPM strategies to reduce incidence of tick-borne disease by reducing risk of exposure to ticks and pathogens.

2. Clarify and minimize risks associated with acaricides and other tick-borne disease management products.

3. Coordinate with the Federal Tick-Borne Disease IPM Workgroup to complement activities.

4. Build partnerships and communicate with diverse stakeholders about the importance of IPM strategies for managing tick-borne diseases and maintaining a safe and healthy environment. Important participants include social scientists, advertisers, graphic designers and web engineers, school boards, public health officials, occupational groups (e.g., NIOSH, farm groups, forestry groups, landscapers, park service workers), recreational groups (ex. American Camp Association, scout associations, state and national camp groups), veterinarians, Pest Management Professionals, non-governmental organizations, advocacy and support groups, federal, state, and municipal agencies, Bureau of Indian Affairs, camping groups and land-grant universities.
5. Facilitate collaborative initiatives within the working group, especially among academic, government and non-government organizations.

6. Develop, maintain and communicate current specific stakeholder priorities for research, regulation, education and management, to be used by the working group, grant makers, grant seekers, regulators and others to identify and pursue stakeholder-identified needs.