



News for Immediate Release

Sept. 16, 2011

Mosquito Spraying Scheduled for Luzerne County on Sept. 19

Aerial Spray Will Target 45,000 Flood-ravaged Acres

Williamsport – The Department of Environmental Protection will apply treatments the evening of Monday, Sept. 19, in Wilkes-Barre and surrounding communities in Luzerne County to control adult mosquito populations. In the event of adverse weather conditions, the spraying will be rescheduled.

As a result of recent flooding, high populations of adult nuisance mosquitoes have been detected in this area.

The treatments, beginning approximately a half hour before dusk, will be administered by helicopter at a height of 300 feet to spray residential and recreational areas of the Wyoming Valley with Dibrom concentrate, applied at a rate of .75 ounce/acre. This is the product being used to control mosquitoes in North Carolina, Florida and Texas as a result of the recent tropical activity.

Vector Disease Control Inc. of Greeneville, Miss., will conduct the spray.

Certain mosquito species carry the West Nile virus, which can cause humans to contract West Nile encephalitis, an infection that can result in an inflammation of the brain. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, all residents in areas where virus activity has been identified are at risk of contracting West Nile encephalitis.

Mosquito samples in 57 counties have been identified with the West Nile virus so far this year, and four human cases have been confirmed.

Individuals can take a number of precautionary measures around their homes to help eliminate mosquito-breeding areas, including:

- Dispose of cans, buckets, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar containers that hold water on your property.
- Properly dispose of discarded tires that can collect water. Stagnant water is where most mosquitoes breed.
- Drill holes in the bottom of outdoor recycling containers.
- Have clogged roof gutters cleaned every year, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug drains.
- Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use.

- Turn over wheelbarrows and don't let water stagnate in birdbaths.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools not in use and remove any water that may collect on pool covers.

For stagnant pools of water, homeowners can buy Bti products at lawn and garden, outdoor supply, home improvement and other stores. This naturally occurring bacteria kills mosquito larva but is safe for people, pets, aquatic life and plants.

Additionally, these simple precautions can prevent mosquito bites, particularly for people who are most at risk:

- Make sure screens fit tightly over doors and windows to keep mosquitoes out of homes.
- Consider wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks when outdoors, particularly when mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk, or in areas known for having large numbers of mosquitoes.
- When possible, reduce outdoor exposure at dawn and dusk during peak mosquito periods, usually April through October.
- Use insect repellants according to the manufacturer's instructions. An effective repellant will contain DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Consult with a pediatrician or family physician if you have questions about the use of repellant on children, as repellant is not recommended for children under the age of two months.

For more information about West Nile virus and the state's surveillance and control program, visit www.westnile.state.pa.us.

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