

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Ron J. Montgomery, Manager
West Umatilla Vector Control District
(541) 567-5201

West Umatilla Vector Control District Begins Mosquito Control Activities

Hermiston – The West Umatilla Vector Control District has begun implementing its 2009 mosquito control program. The district serves a 525 square mile area in Western Umatilla County, including the towns of Hermiston, Umatilla, Stanfield and Echo.

Between the months of April and October the district will target areas of standing and stagnate water where mosquito larvae thrive. Large water bodies will be sprayed with a helicopter while smaller areas will be treated by truck mounted sprayers or by hand.

To control adult mosquitoes, the district plans to make treatments using truck mounted ultra low volume foggers. This spraying will be done after sunset in areas of the district that have large populations of adult mosquitoes. In rural areas, the district will begin aerial spraying to control adult mosquitoes when mosquito trap collections indicate the need for large scale spraying. Aerial spraying for adult mosquitoes will be done in the early evening hours just after sunset.

To most people, mosquitoes are just an annoying pest with an irritating bite. But these insects can carry serious, sometimes deadly organisms that cause diseases such as St. Louis Encephalitis and West Nile infections along with both Western and Eastern Equine Encephalitis and dengue fever. In 2008, there were 5 confirmed cases of West Nile virus in Umatilla County. All 5 of the cases were isolated in live mosquitoes collected near Cold Springs Reservoir.

About 45 species of mosquitoes are found in Oregon. The common house mosquito (*Culex pipiens*), a very common mosquito in Oregon, has been targeted as the possible vector of West Nile virus.

The West Umatilla Vector Control District encourages homeowners to take actions to eliminate mosquito breeding around their homes. People are encouraged to:

- ✓ Empty or get rid of cans, buckets, bottles, old tires, empty pots, plant saucers and other containers that hold water.
- ✓ Keep gutters clear of debris and standing water. Remove standing water around structures and from flat roofs.
- ✓ Change water in pet dishes, wading pools and birdbaths several times a week.
- ✓ Fill in low areas in the yard and holes in trees that catch water.
- ✓ Maintain your backyard pool or hot tub and be sure someone takes care of it if you are on vacation.
- ✓ Stock ornamental ponds with fish that eat mosquitoes.
- ✓ Cover trash containers so they will not collect water.
- ✓ Water lawns and gardens carefully so water does not stand for several days.
- ✓ Repair any leaking plumbing and outside faucets.
- ✓ Screen rain barrels and opening to water tanks or cisterns.
- ✓ Keep drains and ditches clear of weeds and trash so water will not collect.
- ✓ To help keep mosquitoes out of the house, be sure door, porch and window screens are in good condition.

If for any reason you do not wish to have your property sprayed, please call the vector control hotline at 567-5201 and asked to be placed on the no-spray list. This number is also available for any questions regarding the districts mosquito control program. You can also visit the district's web page at www.wuvcd.org.