



Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District

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For Immediate Release

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Subject: *Un-maintained swimming pools and other mosquito-breeding sources targeted*

Contact: District Manager Matt Ball or Public Information Officer Doug Weseman Contact at (530) 533-6038 or (530) 342-7350

Starting on April 30, 2011, Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District (District) will again partner with Mobile Infrared Systems to conduct aerial surveillance of un-maintained swimming pools and other “backyard breeders” such as, boats holding water, ponds without circulation, unused tires, un-maintained hot tubs, and other man-made objects that hold water. “It is crucial to locate these suspected mosquito-breeding sources early in the mosquito season so that the District’s Mosquito and Vector Control Specialists can eliminate early season mosquitoes to prevent larger populations in the summer, when virus is most active” said Matt Ball, District Manager of Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District. “There are hundreds of un-maintained swimming pools throughout the county and with the continuing high foreclosure rate, the District expects even more this year!” Ball said. Residents are urged to start maintaining swimming pools and removing standing water from their properties now as West Nile virus (WNV) mosquitoes are active.

The Butte County Sheriff and the District have again joined forces in this effort to protect the public’s health. The Butte County Sheriff’s helicopter will be available to assist in some of the flights that will be required to accomplish this project. “It’s great when two public health and safety agencies can work together in a cohesive effort to provide a service that protects the public’s health,” Butte County Sheriff Jerry Smith said.

Public health officials expect the mosquito transmitted WNV to be a serious public health concern in California this year. Last year WNV continued to be active in Butte County, as well as 35 other counties in the state. “Undoubtedly the number of human cases could have been far worse in the state last year if it had not been for this program and others like it. These programs aid the District in locating mosquito-breeding sources early in the season before they can yield large populations of mosquitoes creating a public health concern,” Ball said.

The District has decided to start the helicopter surveillance program in April, like last year. The hope is to locate problem-breeding sources even earlier in the mosquito season lessening the severity of urban mosquito populations later in the year. Mosquito larvae have already been located in many urban mosquito-breeding sources and if the District delayed the program any longer, several generations of mosquitoes would hatch from these areas heightening the likelihood of virus transmission later in the summer.

Residents are urged to protect themselves from mosquitoes by avoiding peak mosquito activity times, wearing repellent, and preventing mosquito breeding on their property. Residents should inspect their properties for any standing water and do what is necessary to remove the water and safeguard their property to ensure water won't stand in the future where applicable. Residents are encouraged to report mosquito breeding areas and mosquito problems to the District at 530-533-6038, 530-342-7350, or www.BCMVCD.com.

Below are measures to help decrease exposure to mosquitoes:

- Avoid being outside in the early morning and early evening when mosquitoes are most active, particularly after dusk when mosquitoes bite the most.
- Cover up! When mosquitoes are present, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks to prevent mosquito bites.
- When outside and mosquitoes are present, use insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, lemon eucalyptus oil, or IR3535 on exposed skin. Follow the label directions.
- Keep mosquitoes outside. Make sure windows and doors in houses have tight fitting screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Remove standing water every three to five days. Empty bird baths, flower pots, buckets, pet dishes, tires, wading pools, wheelbarrows, and other containers where mosquitoes can lay eggs.
- Keep swimming pools, hot tubs, and outdoor spas clean and chlorinated. The mosquitoes from one stagnant pool can affect an entire neighborhood.
- Clean clogged roof gutters often. Leaf matter and debris from surrounding trees plug up the drains and can lead to the production of thousands of mosquitoes each season.
- Remind or help neighbors to eliminate breeding sites from their property.
- Call your local mosquito and vector control district office if you see a significant mosquito problem or a stagnant water problem. Ask about the availability of free mosquitofish for ornamental ponds, un-maintained swimming and/or other stagnant water sources that cannot be cleaned immediately.