



MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

Release: May 15, 2006
Contact: Althea Milechman, Public Affairs Office, 503-988-6805

Multnomah County's Vector Control works to take the bite out of summer

Staff is in high gear as mosquito season begins

Multnomah County Vector and Nuisance Control is ramping up efforts to prevent mosquito breeding in what is expected to be a larger than normal mosquito season. Efforts to control mosquito larvae are underway in flood plains of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, swamps, storm water detention facilities and other areas of standing water. Vector staff are also collecting and testing dead birds, testing blood samples from their sentinel chicken flock for evidence of West Nile virus, and testing adult mosquitoes for evidence of disease.

"Our work is to monitor and prevent outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile virus and encephalitis. We recently found a mosquito species new to the area, *Ochlerotatus japonicus*. This Asian species is generally found in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, South China. Our staff is tracking this very closely," states Chris Wirth, Manager of Multnomah County Vector and Nuisance Control.

Health officials ask the public to join efforts to reduce the mosquito population and prevent mosquito-borne disease by:

- **Remove standing water** around the home found in flower pots, gutters, old tires, wheelbarrows, and wading pools.
- Do not allow water gardens or ornamental ponds to stagnate. **Use mosquito fish** available from Multnomah County Vector and Nuisance Control in late May. Call 503-988-3464 for availability for free mosquito fish (while supplies last.)
- **Keep swimming pools clean and chlorinated.**
- When outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk, **wear long pants and long-sleeve shirts.** Avoid wearing perfumes.
- **Wear insect repellent.** Follow application directions, especially for use with children.
- **Repair tears or holes in window screens.**
- Organize neighborhood clean-up days and **report dead birds.** To report a dead bird found in Multnomah County, call 503-988-NILE or fill out an online report at www.mchealth.org/vector

Multnomah County Vector and Nuisance Control is responsible for the mosquito management program throughout the entire county, totaling approximately 465 square miles. This includes the unincorporated rural areas and land within the cities' limits. The county treats approximately 9300 acres of mosquito habitat annually.

###

Note to Assignment Editors: Photo and interview opportunities available of Vector workers in the field, applying larvicide and obtaining mosquito samples.

Public Affairs Office
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., #600
Portland, Oregon 97214
503-988-6800 phone
503-988-6801 fax