



Contact: Randy Gerard,
Manager
West Umatilla Mosquito Control District
541-567-5201

Joseph P. Fiumara,
Environmental Health Supervisor
Umatilla County Public Health Division
541-278-6394

Emilio DeBess, DVM, MPH
Oregon Health Authority
971-673-1111

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Public Health Advisory: West Nile Virus (WNV) positive tests in mosquitoes.

Public Health officials are concerned about widespread West Nile Virus activity throughout the area and are urging residents of all ages to take the necessary steps to reduce their exposure to mosquitoes.

The West Umatilla Mosquito Control District is reporting that West Nile Virus has been detected in at least 25 mosquito samples this year. The Oregon State Veterinary Diagnostic Lab reported on 8/21/18 that 11 additional samples from mosquitoes collected last week have tested positive. The samples were from the Cold Springs Reservoir, Stanfield, Umatilla, and in the Spearman Road area. The West Umatilla Mosquito Control District reported that the virus was initially detected in the Cold Springs area on June 19th but has recently spread throughout the district.

People are encouraged to take appropriate precautions to protect themselves against mosquito bites. Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not become ill. Some may develop mild flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, and occasionally swollen lymph glands or a rash. In rare cases West Nile may cause encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain. Individuals with severe or unusual headaches should seek medical care as soon as possible. Residents of the district should remain vigilant in protecting themselves from mosquitoes and the diseases that they can carry, such as West Nile Virus.

Here are some suggestions to reduce the risk of exposure to West Nile:

- Get rid of old tires and other containers where water can accumulate and serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- Flush or replace the water in horse troughs weekly.
- Be sure to flush or add mosquito fish to ornamental ponds.

- Avoid outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when in mosquito infested areas.
- Use mosquito repellents containing DEET, making sure to follow the directions on the container.
- Screen doors and windows.
- Report mosquito infestations and dead bird sightings to the West Umatilla Mosquito Control District (541) 567-5201

In response to increased West Nile Virus activity, the district will be conducting targeted aerial mosquito control spraying with a twin engine airplane after sunset on Sunday, August 26th, weather permitting. The application will be scheduled for the following day if the weather causes a cancellation. A total of 10,240 acres are to be targeted in areas east of Hermiston. The target area includes the Diagonal Road area between Townsend Road and the Hwy 730 Junction, and portions of the Loop Road area. Further applications will be scheduled as needed to respond to increased vector populations or positive samples as they are found. No areas within city limits are currently scheduled for aerial spraying.

West Nile is primarily a bird disease, and some birds, including magpies, blue jays and crows are especially susceptible. Mosquitoes become infected by feeding on an infected bird and can pass the virus to humans, horses or other hosts when they bite. The public is encouraged to continue to alert district officials when they come across dead birds, so the district can track the spread of the virus.

Because horses are also at risk for West Nile, health officials encourage horse owners to check with their veterinarians for vaccination. Veterinarians can arrange for testing of samples from horses suspected of infection with West Nile Virus.

Updates about West Nile Virus in Umatilla County will be released to local media outlets or you can go to the Oregon Department of Human Services web page at:
<https://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/DiseasesAZ/WestNileVirus/Pages/survey.aspx>

Additional information on West Nile is on the Web at:

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/>

Umatilla County
<http://www.co.umatilla.or.us>

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