



**Public Health**

## **Vector Control District to Conduct Large Scale Mosquito Spraying Near Hermiston**

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For Immediate Release:

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### ***Spraying to take place Thursday, September 4, 2008, between 8 PM and Midnight. Weather permitting***

**Hermiston, Oregon – Sept 2, 2008** – To protect the public against mosquito-borne West Nile virus, the West Umatilla Vector Control District will conduct targeted aerial sprayings between 8 p.m. and midnight on Thursday, Sept 4, in portions of western Umatilla County.

“We have detected additional West Nile virus positive mosquito samples that indicate increased transmission between birds and mosquitoes” said Ron Montgomery, program manager of the West Umatilla Vector Control District. “Typically, we see the transmission rates of the virus from mosquitoes

to humans reach its highest levels in late-August through mid-September, which makes it imperative for us to act now.”

"The protection of human health is the cornerstone of the district's mission and the first order of business of the Board of Trustees and of our district's staff" said David Trott, Vector Control District Trustee and Mayor of the City of Umatilla. " For our district to be anything less than proactive in circumstances such as these, betrays the public trust that we will act swiftly and responsibly to protect the health of the families within our district."

The decision to apply treatments from the air was made in consultation with West Umatilla Vector Control District, Umatilla County Public Health Department, and the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS). The use of insecticides for mosquito control in Oregon is conducted in accordance with federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) label guidelines, and approval from the DHS and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The treatment area covers 24 square miles northeast of Hermiston extending from East Highlands Avenue in Hermiston, north to Highway 730 in Umatilla. (see attached map).

Weather permitting, residents in the targeted areas can expect to see low-flying airplanes that will spray Dibrom, an organophosphate based insecticide, at the rate of .5 (one half) ounce per acre. The spray rate is half of the amount approved for safe application by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and should have no adverse effects to ornamental ponds or plant life. Dibrom is an insecticide used throughout the United States for mosquito control. (see attached data sheet)

While Dibrom is considered safe with little risk of toxicity, the Public Health Department recommends some basic steps the public may take to reduce possible exposure to it:

- Children and pregnant women should take care to avoid exposure when practical. If possible, remain inside or avoid the area whenever spraying takes place and for about thirty minutes after spraying. That time period will greatly reduce the likelihood of your breathing pesticide in air.
- Close windows and doors and turn off window air-conditioning units or close their vents to circulate indoor air before spraying begins. Windows and air-conditioner vents can be reopened about 30 minutes after spraying.

“There have been no human or horse cases of West Nile Virus reported in Umatilla County this year” said Genni Lehnert, Administrator of Umatilla County Public Health Department.

“We continue to encourage the public to reduce their exposure to mosquitoes whenever possible” “The risk of West Nile is low but we do encourage people to take appropriate precautions to protect themselves against mosquito bites,” said Lehnert. She offered the following 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.
- 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.

Because horses are also at risk for West Nile, 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.

The State of Oregon has set up a West Nile Virus Hotline at 1 (800) 703-INFO. 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/>

Oregon Department of Human Services

<http://www.ohd.hr.state.or.us/acd/w Nile/index.cfm>

Umatilla County

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

West Umatilla Vector Control District

<http://www.wuvcd.org>