



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

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BINGHAM COUNTY PREPARES TO SPRAY FOR MOSQUITOES

Blackfoot - Weather permitting, aerial spraying over specific sections along the Snake River and other strategic locations in Bingham County, will begin Friday evening, September 1, 2006, after sunset at approx. 9:00 pm and will continue for approx. 4-hours, ending around 1:30 am. Aerial applications WILL NOT commence in conditions of rain or winds that exceed 10 miles per hour within the designated spray zone. For more information about the program, where the aerial spraying, fogging, or larvacide will be occurring, please visit Bingham County's website <http://www.co.bingham.id.us/> for current information. If you would like your area not to be sprayed, please contact Craig Rowland at 782-3190.

Bingham County will use the brand chemical Dibrom Concentrate during aerial spraying operations. This pesticide appears on the Idaho Department of Agriculture's approved pesticide list and will be applied according to the product label as directed by state and federal law. As prescribed, Dibrom is not harmful to humans, pets, birds, or fish. Airplanes will spray the pesticide into droplets 30 microns in size approximately 300-feet above the ground. While this microscopic dose of pesticide is enough to kill mosquitoes, it is not expected to widely harm larger insects within the designated spray-zone. Officials say the pesticide is active for only a short period of time and will likely be inert by the time Bingham County residents wake to start their day the next morning.

In addition to the Hi-tech GPS computer controls, crews will also locate pesticide detection devices on the ground to further monitor and track the pesticide application. Officials have been in contact with known local beekeepers about the aerial spraying operation. While the chemical guidelines indicate it will have no adverse impact on insects larger than mosquitoes, beekeepers may consider covering their hives during the spray operation if they are worried about the safety of their bees.

Local officials expect a 90% kill rate on adult mosquitoes within the spray zone. As a follow up to aerial spraying, Bingham County workers will also increase their larvaciding efforts at area ponds and lakes to kill mosquito larva before they hatch into flying adults. This two-pronged approach will significantly impact the area's mosquito population; therefore greatly reducing the risk of any further human West Nile infection.

In addition to the aerial spraying and larvacide treatments, ground fogging will occur in specified areas and will use Kontrol 4-4 fogger system. Kontrol 4-4 is a Permethrin based product and dissipates quickly.

“This pesticide is widely used across the entire United States for the specific purpose of mosquito control,” said Craig Rowland, Director, Bingham County Parks and Recreation. “It has been deemed safe and approved by all U.S. Governmental agencies. The aerial contractor selected to perform the spraying is a highly recommended applicator with all the required licenses and certifications to perform this type of work. The company performs similar operations in dozens of counties in at least 7-states each year. Following hurricane Katrina, the company sprayed approximately 2.5-million acres without incident.”

Vector Disease Control (VDC), the company selected for Bingham County’s aerial spray operation, has been in business since 1992 and is headquartered in Florida with operations based in Greenville, Mississippi. Most recently, VDC successfully completed mosquito-spraying operations in Sacramento, California.

VDC has dispatched two twin-engine Piper Aztec airplanes to perform Ada County’s mosquito control operation. Each plane will carry approximately 60-to-75 gallons of the pesticide, which is capable of covering approximately 10-15,000 acres. Each plane will land; refuel, and refill approximately 2-to-3 times during each evening’s spray operation.

The total cost of this aerial spraying operation in Bingham County is estimated at \$87,000 or \$1.75 per acre. (Note about calculation: Governor Risch’s disaster declaration for Bingham County means the State of Idaho will pay 75% of the cost with Bingham County picking up the remaining 25%.

According to guidelines established by the State of Idaho’s Arbovirus Surveillance and Mosquito Control in Idaho Plan, West Nile infections have reached epidemic proportions in Bingham County. To date, Idaho remains the state with the highest number of human West Nile infections in the entire United States. Currently, Bingham County has 62-confirmed cases of West Nile virus in humans, 43-cases in horses, and 2-cases in birds.

Bingham County officials confirmed the recent West Nile emergency declaration will be followed up with a call for aerial spraying over parts of Bingham County where mosquitoes likely infected with the potentially deadly West Nile Virus are most prevalent. With great concern for public health and safety, the Bingham County Commissioners last Thursday (August 24, 2006) declared a state of emergency as a result of the increasing number of positive human West Nile infections being reported in Bingham County. On Wednesday, August 30th, Idaho Governor Jim Risch acknowledged Bingham County’s emergency declaration by signing a state disaster declaration for Bingham County. This act allows the expenditure of state dollars to help fund Bingham County’s increased mosquito control measures. Last week, the Governor’s office issued two disaster declarations, for Ada County and Canyon County, as a result of the current West Nile epidemic.

WEST NILE PREVENTION TIPS & INFORMATION

To prevent favorable mosquito environments around your home and property:

- If you have a bird bath or decorative pond, change the water or clean it every 3-6 days
- Remove containers on your property that can collect water, such as old tires, children’s toys or flower pots
- Repair or install screens on your home
- Clean your rain gutters and check for proper drainage around your home
- Make sure you don’t over-water your lawn or landscaping and routinely check your yard or property for puddles of standing water

The West Nile virus can be more serious for people who are over the age of 50. You can protect yourself and your family from harmful mosquito bites by taking the following precautions:

- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks when outdoors
- Apply an EPA-approved insect repellent to exposed clothing or skin, following instructions on the product label. For the safety of children between the ages of 2-12 years, follow directions carefully. If using a repellent containing DEET, use one containing 10-percent or less.
- Ask your doctor or pediatrician about using repellent on children under the age of 2
- Mosquitoes can bite anytime, but are generally more active at dawn and dusk, so be extra careful at these times.

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