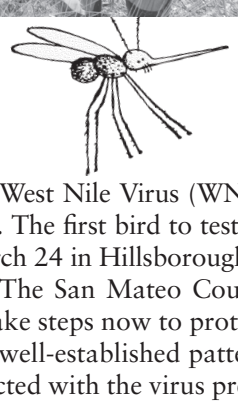
HILLSBOROUGH
SPRING 2005

JOIN THE WEST NILE STING OPERATION

Crews from the San Mateo County mosquito abatement program cut back some brush at Spencer Lake in Hillsborough in preparation for mosquito spraying on Tuesday April 19, 2005.

Richard Chow, foreman of the San Mateo County mosquito abatement crew, hoists a machine used to spray for mosquitos at Spencer Lake in Hillsborough on Tuesday April 19, 2005.



West Nile Virus (WNV) has hit San Mateo County early this year. The first bird to test positive for the virus was discovered on March 24 in Hillsborough. It was a Pine Siskin, a small songbird.

The San Mateo County Health Department urges residents to take steps now to protect themselves from mosquitoes. "There is a well-established pattern in which dead birds and mosquitoes infected with the virus precede reports of human illness," said Dr. Scott Morrow, San Mateo County Health Officer, in an April press release. "There are likely to be many human cases in San Mateo County this year based on other region's experiences."

Hillsborough's large backyards and gardens, creeks and lakes provide a strong breeding ground for mosquitoes, according to Angela Rory, assistant vector ecologist with the San Mateo County Mosquito Abatement District (SMCMAD). The Town's creeks and lakes are continually treated by the SMCMAD which came into existence 100 years ago to fight the swarms of mosquitoes that used to plague the bay marshland areas. The District has kept the mosquito population under control since then. Now, with the arrival of WNV, the District is asking residents to help in vigorously fighting the potentially dangerous bug by vigilantly tending their backyards and gardens.

Remember, mosquitoes love water. Residents should:

• Allow no water to stand more than five to seven days. Empty standing water in flowerpots. Clean and change the water in birdbaths once a week. Change pet dish water. Eliminate containers that can collect water, such as tarps, toys, trash hidden under bushes, cans or buckets and tires. Clean rain gutters.

• Don't over-water a lawn. This leads to standing water.

• If you have a pool, make sure it is treated with chlorine.

• If you have an ornamental pond or a pool that is not used, stock it with mosquitofish. The SMCMAD will deliver fish free for ponds and pools. Call 650-344-8592.

• If you have mosquitoes and can't detect the source, call the SMCMAD at 650-344-8592.

• If you are aware of an abandoned or vacant home with an unattended pool or pond, report it to the SMCMAD.

• On a personal level, try to wear long sleeves and pants at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

• Use insect repellant with DEET. Follow the directions on the package. The higher the percentage of DEET, the longer the repellant will last.

• Make sure your doors and windows have screens in good condition.

Residents can also help with surveillance. If you find a bird that is freshly (less than 24 hours) dead for no apparent reason (no injury), do not handle the bird and call the Dead Bird Hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD or 650-344-8592. Birds most susceptible to WNV are crows, ravens, magpies, jays and hawks. Do not call if you find a dead sparrow or finch.

In addition to the work done by the SMCMAD, Hillsborough's Public Works Department will be especially vigilant about abating standing water sources in catch basins and gutters. Residents who have sump pumps running regularly should ensure that they are draining into natural swales that quickly percolate or evaporate the water or unblocked drainage facilities. Sometimes residents let water run on their frontage and create little mud ponds and shady unimproved swales. To the extent that Public Works can find them, they will contact residents and request a nuisance abatement.

The WNV travels in a cycle from mosquito to bird, from infected bird to mosquito. Horses and humans, plus some small animals on rare occasions, can catch WNV from a mosquito. The virus is not contagious between humans nor can you catch it from a bird or other animal.

Don't panic. WNV is relatively rare. In areas where the virus is circulating, very few mosquitoes are infected. Less than 1 percent of people who get bitten and get infected will get severely ill. The chances of getting severely ill from any one bite are extremely small.

Incubation in humans is two to five days. Four out of five people infected will develop no type of illness. About 20 percent of people infected with WNV will develop a fever, headache, tiredness, body aches, swollen lymph glands and possibly a rash. About one in 150 infected will develop a neuroinvasive or polio-like disease with severe symptoms ranging from headache and high fever to paralysis and coma. Symptoms can last from a few days to several weeks. Approximately 10 percent of the symptomatic cases result in death and are more likely in people over age 50 or immunocompromised individuals. Scientists are working on a vaccine.

To learn more about WNV, check the following Web sites:

• San Mateo County Mosquito Abatement District – www.smcmad.org

• San Mateo County Health Department – www.smhealth.org/fightthebite

• State of California – www.westnile.ca.gov

CALENDAR

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
2nd Monday
6 p.m. - Town Hall

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CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
Study Sessions are held as needed at Town Hall.

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ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING
1st and 3rd Monday
4 p.m. - Town Hall

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DEPARTMENT COMMISSIONERS
Mayor Tom Kasten, Ex officio Commissioner
John Fannon, Community Services
D. Paul Regan, Administration
Vice Mayor Catherine U. Mullooly, Fire Department
Mayor Thomas M. Kasten, Police Department

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HILLSBOROUGH RECREATION 342-5439
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Marilyn Loushin Miller, Superintendent: 342-5193

POLICE DEPARTMENT
Business: 375-7470
Emergency: 911
Alarm Specialists: 375-7472

FIRE DEPARTMENT
Business: 375-7422
Emergency: 911

NUMBERS

TOWN HALL
Administration: (650) 375-7400
Website: www.hillsborough.net

Town Hall Hours:
Mon. – Thurs. 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Emergency after hours and weekends: 375-7470

City Council: 375-7400
Main and Finance Department: 375-7400
Water (service and billing):
Mon. – Thurs. 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Fri. 7:30 - 12:30 p.m. 375-7402
Building and Planning: 375-7411
Public Works and City Engineer: 375-7444

CITY MANAGER
Anthony Constantouros: 375-7400

Comcast
Customer Service: 1-800-945-2288

PG&E (24 hrs.)
Outage Information: 1-800-743-5002
Customer Service: 1-800-743-5000

BFI
Main Number: (650) 592-2411
Hazardous Material: (650) 363-4718

The Hillsborough Newsletter is published on a regular basis by the Town of Hillsborough to keep residents informed of local and Town news.
Editor: Barbara Backer • Design: Owen-Brune Associates