

Mosquito Control Update January 9, 2015

Winter is the time of year when most of our repairs and preventative maintenance is performed on all of our vehicles, equipment and sprayers. A lengthy check list of inspection items have begun to be performed on each vehicle. Major inspection items include checking and replacing where needed, all hoses, cooling system, transmission flush, oil change, fuel filters, brakes, air conditioners, fuel injectors, tires, front end and suspension, radiator, battery terminals, engine compression, shocks, electrical systems, spark plugs, and other general maintenance. In addition, all ULV sprayers will receive maintenance checks and repairs on such items as chemical lines, spray heads, blowers, engine mounts, oil change, de-carbonizing engines, compression checks, pump inspection, carburetor inspection, fuel filter change, wiring harness, electrical systems, pressure gauges, and calibration. All of the larvicide units will also receive a detailed inspection with repairs performed as needed. The same will be performed on all of the airboats, forklift, generators, trailers, backpack sprayers, four wheelers, light traps, gravid traps, and other field equipment. Some field personnel will be assigned in the shop to assist with all of the preventative maintenance and repairs.

Field operations such as adult and larval surveillance and control is performed on a limited basis, since mosquitoes are relatively inactive during cold temperatures. Some field personnel will be conducting larval inspections for the southern house mosquito in the roadside septic ditches during the winter and performing controls where needed. Although mosquito breeding will be little, the thinking is that if we can put some controls in place when the populations are very low during the winter, this should result in lower populations of this species emerging during the spring, and perhaps the population build up will not be as large during the peak season. Light traps and landing rates will also continue this winter. Testing for the presence of West Nile virus in mosquitoes will be performed on a limited basis with the collections we receive from the New Jersey light traps. Setting out gravid traps for collecting the southern house mosquito for testing will begin in full swing at the beginning of March. Last year there were four reported human cases of West Nile virus in St. Tammany Parish. We received a total of 41 positive mosquito pools out of 2319 pools tested.