

Mosquito Control Update October 24, 2012

West Nile virus activity in St. Tammany Parish has continued to decline over the past two months. Since September 9, there have only been three positive mosquito pools out of 329 tested. The three positive pools were isolated from *Culex quinquefasciatus*, the southern house mosquito. These results indicate very low infection levels in the southern house mosquito population. Breeding of the southern house mosquito in roadside ditches has increased over the past three weeks. District personnel continue to spray the roadside ditches by the use of six right hand drive vehicles every 5-7 days. The product used to spray the ditches is a bacterial spore, *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis (Bti)*, which does not have any residual properties. As a result, more southern house mosquito eggs are deposited in the ditches shortly after treatment and the breeding cycle continues. If left untreated, huge populations of the southern house mosquito could build up in a relatively short time.

Up until about a week ago, woodland floodwater mosquitoes were a considerable problem in some areas of the parish. These mosquitoes were produced from heavy rainfall received about three weeks ago, when some areas received 5-7 inches of rain. The areas most affected were Bush, Tallisheek, Hickory, Pearl River, and Folsom. These were the same species, *Psorophora ferox* and *Aedes atlanticus*, that affected practically the entire parish after Hurricane Isaac. Timely aerial adulticide applications brought these mosquitoes under control.

Lately, the primary pest mosquito species have been *Culex salinarius* and *Anopheles crucians*. These species are permanent water breeding mosquitoes and develop mainly in marshes bordering Lake Pontchartrain. It is common for these two species to increase in the early fall when temperatures begin to cool. Two nights of aerial spraying involving 35,840 acres along the coastal areas of the parish were recently conducted, to reduce these populations.

As temperatures cool and as we further progress into the fall and winter, mosquito activity will decline. District personnel will then begin to work on the many winter projects, such as preventative maintenance of equipment and sprayers, updating maps, and facility maintenance. Mosquito inspection and surveillance will continue and treatments will be employed on the warmer days when mosquitoes become active.