



County of Santa Cruz



OFFICE OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL CSA 53

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Beginning at 8 am, Wednesday, September 26, 2007 (weather permitting) **Santa Cruz County Mosquito & Vector Control (MVC)** will be applying mosquito control granules by helicopter over 40 acres in and near Watsonville: within portions of Struve Slough and Pinto Lake that will reduce the emergence of pestiferous mosquitoes from the shallows of those wetlands. If the helicopter is unavailable or the weather is bad the treatment will be Thursday, September 27, 2007. This is not aerial fogging.

Warm weather and dense aquatic vegetation growth have encouraged the development of the summer species of mosquitoes, which are hatching prolifically from aquatic larvae. A targeted aerial and ground-based larval control effort provides relief from bites and is important for the prevention of mosquito-borne diseases, including West Nile virus. The application of granules by helicopter is a proven method of controlling larvae, which we have successfully used since the inception of the program in 1993.

The mosquito larvicide being applied to the marshes is a biological microbial, *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (Bti). This product is very selective, meaning it effectively reduces the immature mosquitoes (aquatic stages) and prevents the emergence of adult mosquitoes, but is not harmful to humans, birds, fish or other wildlife. By controlling the larval stage the MVC prevents the dispersal of adult mosquitoes into the community and reduces the need for less selective measures such as fogging adult mosquitoes. The helicopter will only be seen for a few minutes in any one area.

The MVC encourages residents to empty yard containers of standing water, wear long sleeves, pants and repellants, obtain mosquitofish for ornamental ponds, notify the MVC of biting mosquitoes and to report dead birds and tree squirrels to the State hotline, 1-877-WNV-BIRD, as they could help locate West Nile virus activity. There have been four wild birds detected with West Nile virus in the County to date, with 257 human cases statewide, and 14 deaths. For more West Nile virus information see <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/>.

Thank you.