



Maricopa County

News Release

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SUPERVISORS BRIEFED ON COUNTY PLANS TO FIGHT WEST NILE VIRUS

County health experts told the Board of Supervisors today the county is working on a more proactive plan to alert the public about the dangers of West Nile Virus.

The Board has already approved funds for this year's plans. The County plans to budget nearly 4-million dollars this year to fight West Nile Virus. Maricopa County spent 2.2 million dollars fighting West Nile Virus last year.

Fifteen deaths in Maricopa County have been attributed to last year's outbreak of West Nile Virus. Many other victims are still recovering from serious debilitating effects after being bitten by mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus.

Board Chairman Max Wilson said, "Maricopa County will do everything we can this year to get out ahead of this problem. We can't do this without the public's help though. We need them to be our eyes and ears for potential mosquito breeding grounds."

Key points of the county's plan include:

- Citizen education about the risks of mosquitoes and West Nile Virus
- Citizen education on prevention in their community and own backyard
- Comprehensive breeding site identification, elimination, and treatment program
- Comprehensive surveillance and testing program
- Fogging only in accordance with a strict protocol
- Community notice in advance of fogging

County Attorney Andrew Thomas said his office will also be seeking legal action against those people who do not clean up breeding areas such as stagnant pools, after they have been notified.

The Environmental Services Vector Control staff has already begun monitoring for the mosquitoes that carry West Nile Virus. The surveillance program started two months ahead of last year's schedule. Staffing has been increased by 300 percent from 11 inspectors last year to 44 this year.

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