

## Spraying Effective in Reducing Mosquitos

By Bob Niedbala, Staff writer [bniedbala@observer-reporter.com](mailto:bniedbala@observer-reporter.com)

WAYNESBURG - Spraying completed September 4 at two sites in Greene County appears to have been effective in lowering the number of mosquitoes in those areas that could carry West Nile virus.

However, increased mosquito surveillance will continue in those areas until the end of the mosquito season in the fall, said Dustin Teegarden, County Environmental Program Specialist.

Spraying was completed after mosquitos collected in a trap August 5 at the Reesman's Trailer Park sewage plant in Morgan Township tested positive for the disease.

Spraying was conducted August 21 at the plant and at the nearby trailer park as well as at the Waynesburg sewage plant in Franklin Township, where a large number of mosquitos were found, though none with the virus.

After the first application failed to reduce the number of mosquitos at the sites significantly, a second spraying was conducted September 4.

Brian Ratica, the Conservation District's new West Nile Coordinator, said mosquito trapping conducted after the second spraying showed a decrease in mosquito populations at the two sites.

Trapping at the sites was conducted during a 24-hour period on Sept. 1, prior to the spraying, and again on Sept. 8. At the Waynesburg site, the number of mosquitos decreased from 123 to 39; and at Reesman's the number dropped from 95 to 12, he said.

No further spraying is planned, though trapping will continue at the two sites as well as at other locations throughout the county, Ratica said.

The change in weather, including rain yesterday and slightly cooler temperatures, represents a mixed blessing, Teegarden said. Cooler temperatures are good because mosquito larvae develop in warmer weather, he said. The rain, however, is bad because it provides the habitat where mosquitoes lay their eggs.

He urged residents to help eradicate mosquito breeding grounds around their homes by disposing of containers that hold stagnant water, cleaning roof gutters and chlorinating unused pools.

People also should take precautions to avoid getting bitten by mosquitos by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors, particularly when mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk.

DEP also suggests people use insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus.

West Nile is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause encephalitis. Most people bitten by an infected mosquito never develop symptoms, and only one in 150 with symptoms develop the more serious encephalitis, according to DEP.

For information on the West Nile program, call Ratica at 724-852-5278. Information also is available about West Nile on the state's West Nile Web page at [www.westnile.state.pa.us](http://www.westnile.state.pa.us).