



NEWS RELEASE

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**GUNNISON COUNTY DISCONTINUES AERIAL MOSQUITO CONTROL PROGRAM
Resources to be Redirected to Ground Control Efforts**

Gunnison County, Colorado – In response to environmental concerns related to the County’s use of aerial applications to control the mosquito population, and after evaluating the recommendations from a group of local stakeholders, Gunnison County leaders have decided to discontinue the aerial mosquito control spraying for this summer.

Concerns have been raised about unintended negative impacts occurring, especially after the aerial spraying in 2012. Around that same timeframe, the County received reports of two fatalities in the Montrose area as a result of the West Nile Virus which is carried by the Culex variety of mosquitoes. 30% of the mosquitoes trapped in the Gunnison County program in 2012 were of the Culex variety, so County leaders wanted to make sure that any change in the program would not increase the risk of West Nile infections in people. So the County began discussions with its wildlife biologist and mosquito control contractor about how to best mitigate negative impacts of the program while still protecting human health.

Ultimately, a decision was reached to redirect the resources that would go into the aerial spraying to increase efforts on the ground with more applications of larvicide for killing mosquito larvae and ground spraying for adults. The redirection of efforts to the ground and away from aerial spraying should allow for a more targeted and flexible program throughout the summer. The County and its contractor, Colorado Mosquito Control believe that they will be able to more effectively respond to specific events where people are congregated and other problem areas. “We hope to balance efficacy with ecological concerns with this new direction for the program,” said Matthew Birnie, Gunnison County Manager. “Colorado Mosquito Control has collaborated with the County on this, and necessary steps have been taken to ensure a successful season. Some mosquitoes should be expected, though we will work with anyone interested to ensure that they have a safe summer,” said Chris Kruthaupt, Colorado Mosquito Control Manager.

Spraying for the current season has begun and will continue until field surveillance data indicates that it is safe to stop, which is customarily around mid-to-late August. Citizens will continue to have the ability to opt-out of having their property sprayed at any time. To report a problem area or to opt out, citizens should contact Colorado Mosquito Control at (970) 641-4249.

For more details, please contact County Manager Birnie at mbirnie@gunnisoncounty.org.

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