

WATCHFUL MOSQUITO EYES: Edwardsville, Alton officials monitor and treat areas for West Nile Virus prevention

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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West Nile Virus is something most area residents think about this time of year and after a mosquito pool tested positive in Edwardsville, it has been a recent topic of conversation.

In most area communities, mosquitoes are out in force after an abundance of rain and then extremely hot weather.



Matt Taul, superintendent of streets maintenance in Edwardsville, is heavily involved in the coordination of spraying for mosquitoes in Edwardsville. Taul said it has been a perfect storm this year for mosquitoes.

The Illinois Department of Public Health maintains a disease surveillance system to monitor animals and insects that can potentially carry the virus, dead crows, robins, blue jays, mosquitoes and horses. The virus is commonly transmitted to humans by mosquitoes.

As of Wednesday afternoon, the Madison County Health Department has not had any human cases of West Nile Virus or animal or bird cases.

“I am in pretty close contact with the Madison County Health Department and they say the mosquitoes during the day don’t normally carry the West Nile Virus,” Taul said. “The mosquitoes that come out at dusk and fly and are bigger are the ones that can carry it.”

He said the mosquitoes around Edwardsville are as strong as he can remember.

“It has been an awful year for them,” he said. “The areas with stagnant water have not had a chance to dry up. It is perfect for mosquitoes.”

Taul and his staff have been busy spraying and fogging on certain nights around Edwardsville.

“We start in late May treating our storm sewer inlets and all areas with standing water with larviside,” he said. “That carries on throughout the summer into fall. Every couple weeks we have been treating those areas again and also fogging three nights a week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 6:30 to 10 p.m.”

Taul said the mosquitoes have to be within the fog for them to be killed. The combination of spray and fog are good to treat the issue, he added.

He advised that people mow their lawns earlier in the day and spray themselves with repellent. Those with immune system disorders and the elderly are the most susceptible in regard to the West Nile Virus, he said from what he has been told.

The street department head said any public areas such as the Watershed Nature Center or storm sewer and drainage ditch areas receive spray.

Alton Public Works Director Bob Barnhart said his staff monitors areas and drops pellets when necessary to treat for mosquitoes. He said he has people licensed and

trained to monitor these areas where there could be problems with mosquitoes. He said the key is to keep water off the roads and eliminate standing water around the city which is a priority for his team.

“We haven’t heard too much about mosquitoes but we work hard to prevent stagnant water and constantly monitor our storm sewer systems, making sure the water gets back to the river and is not standing, creating a hazard,” said Barnhart. “Being proactive has paid off here for everyone.”