New sampling of mosquitoes from expanded trapping tests positive for West Nile Virus

City asking residents to be vigilant in following the 3 Ds: Drain, Defend and Dress

A sampling of mosquitoes taken at an expanded trapping site in Cedar Park has tested positive for West Nile Virus. The testing is part of the City of Cedar Park’s proactive participation in the Williamson County and Cities Health District’s mosquito management program. The positive tests were indicated in a lab result from the Texas Department of State Health Services lab in Austin. The City and Health District strongly encourage everyone to remain vigilant about protecting themselves from mosquito bites and preventing mosquito breeding on their personal property – especially in light of the positive test sample’s proximity to outdoor activity at Elizabeth Milburn Park and several nearby neighborhoods, as well as with our recent rainfall.

There are currently no reported human cases of West Nile Virus in Cedar Park. Williamson County has seen no reported human cases since 2016. West Nile Virus should not be confused with other mosquito-borne viruses. For more information about West Nile Virus visit www.wcchd.org or www.txwestnile.org.

The Health District has six traps at various locations throughout Cedar Park. The species that tested positive is Culex quinquefasciatus (southern house mosquito). This species has a flight range of about one mile. All positive results so far this year have come from the area of southwest Cedar Park. This latest positive sample was taken on September 13, 2018 from an expanded trapping site near Cypress Creek Road and Lakeline Boulevard - following a positive test sample collected near the intersection of Cypress Creek Road and Sun Chase Boulevard on September 6, 2018. That trap had a previous positive result from a sample taken at the beginning of August.

The City is continues to follow the Health District’s Best Practices for Integrated Vector Management (IVM) which call for continued enhanced monitoring and testing and increased public outreach and education. City
crews are being vigilant about draining and treating standing water on City-owned land, where possible, but need citizens’ help. Because mosquitoes breed in standing water the City is imploring residents to drain or treat any standing water on their own property. Residents may also report standing water on public or private property by using the CP Connect 2.0 app or www.cedarparktexas.gov/reportaproblem so that City crews may investigate and take appropriate action.

**What you can do**

Mosquitoes breed in standing or stagnant water. **Eliminating places where mosquitoes can breed and reducing the chances of mosquito bites are the most effective lines of defense against exposure to West Nile Virus.** As part of its *Fight the Bite* campaign the Health District recommends the 3 *Ds* of mosquito safety.

- **Drain** standing water in flower pots, pet dishes or clogged gutters so mosquitoes don’t have a place to breed and treat water that can’t be drained,
- **Defend** by using an EPA-approved insect repellent, and
- **Dress** in long sleeves and pants when outdoors.

The City’s Parks and Recreation Department uses *bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) larvicide tablets on public property (such as parks) to treat any standing water that cannot be drained. Bt is a naturally-occurring bacteria that is harmless to people and most pets but it interrupts the reproduction cycle of mosquitoes. You can find Bt for home use at most “big box” hardware retailers.

In addition, the City’s Code Enforcement Division is focusing its efforts on mosquito abatement throughout the community. If you are aware of a location of stagnant water on public or private property, please report it to the City’s Code Enforcement Division via www.cedarparktexas.gov/ReportaProblem, the CPConnect 2.0 app on your mobile device or e-mail at code@cedarparktexas.gov.

For more information on mosquito safety, please visit the Williamson County and Cities Health District’s website at http://www.wcchd.org/services/disease_mgmt/fight_the_bite_-_williamson_county/index.php.

###