



# Scio Info

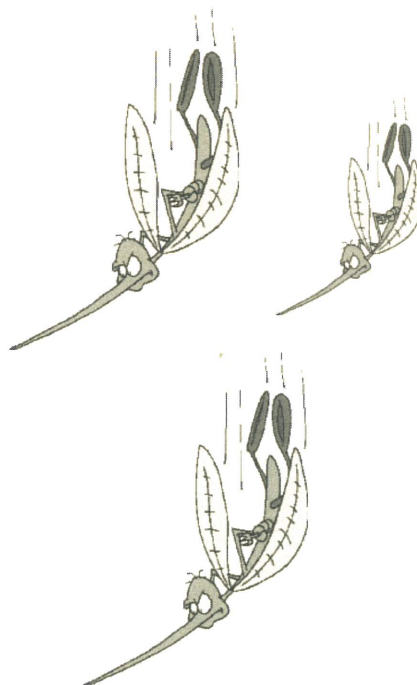
Township of Scio • Established 1833 • Summer 2003 Edition

## Controlling West Nile Virus:

*Protecting Public Health and the Environment, by Kris Olsen,  
Huron River Watershed Council*

With summer here, health officials are bracing for another outbreak of West Nile Virus. Last year this mosquito-borne disease infected 2,862 people across the United States (644 in Michigan), and caused 263 fatalities (51 in Michigan). The Virus is principally a disease of birds that has killed hundreds of thousands of crows, jays, and other species, including some of North America's rarer birds. Mosquitoes carrying the disease between birds can also transmit it to other animals, like horses, cats, rabbits, people, and even alligators.

The Virus, while a serious health problem, poses moderate risks when compared to other diseases. The vast majority of those infected show no symptoms at all. In areas where West Nile Virus has been detected, fewer than one percent of mosqui-



toes carry it. Fewer than one percent of those infected will develop severe illness. Among those who do contract severe illness, there is a 3-15 percent fatality rate, with the elderly experiencing the greatest risk of fatality. By comparison, the flu infects 10-20 percent of the US population (28-56 million people) and kills 20,000 annually.



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Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties accounted for 82 percent of the cases in the State last year, with a total of 529 cases and 41 deaths. Washtenaw and Monroe counties each have had one case and Livingston County has not reported any cases so far.

### WETLANDS AND WEST NILE VIRUS

Proposals to drain natural wetlands in an effort to control mosquitoes would be counterproductive for two reasons. First, the three mosquito species (out of dozens in Michigan) most frequently carrying West Nile Virus, *Culex pipiens*, *C. restuans*, and *C. salinarius*, primarily inhabit small pools of stagnant water in urban areas. They do not typically fly farther than ~ to ° mile from their birthplace. The most effective way to control these species is to encourage residents to clean out places where water collects, like gutters, old tires, and pool covers.

Second, natural wetlands harbor a full complement of predatory insects and fish, birds, and bats that keep mosquitoes in check. In fact, officials monitoring mosquito larvae for West Nile Virus control programs (as well as naturalists at the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy's LeFurge Woods Preserve in Superior Township) have trouble finding them in natural wetlands.

## SCIO INFO

*Scio Info* is published quarterly by Scio Township, 827 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48103, and is provided free of charge to all Scio Township residents, property owners, and businesses with local addresses.

E. Spaulding Clark, Editor

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Draining natural wetlands may make the problem worse because it eliminates the habitat of beneficial insects that eat mosquitoes.

### STORMWATER PONDS AND WEST NILE VIRUS

Stormwater management ponds and catch basins may harbor mosquitoes, and engineers have been researching ways to reduce mosquito habitat, either by reducing the retention time of standing water in ponds, or by stocking them with mosquito predators like fish and dragonflies. Many officials are also applying *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (B.t.i) to stormwater ponds where mosquitoes carrying West Nile Virus have been detected. B.t.i. is a naturally-occurring bacteria specific to mosquito (and other fly) larvae and nontoxic to other animals. The application of mineral or vegetable oil compounds, which coat the surface of the water and suffocate the larvae, to ponds harboring mosquitoes is another safer option.

Stormwater management systems (as discussed in the *Huron River Report* many times) are vital for mitigating the impacts of development. They reduce flooding, erosion, and pollution, and are essential to protecting public and private property, public health and safety, and water quality. Their benefits far outweigh the moderate risk they may pose as habitat for mosquitoes, especially since more productive options exist for mosquito control in these ponds.

### AERIAL SPRAYING

Many communities have attempted to control mosquitoes by spraying pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes. This strategy has multiple impacts on environmental and human health and has *not* proven effective in controlling mosquitoes. In fact, the Center for Disease Control has said that aerial spraying is the *least* effective method of controlling West Nile Virus.

Some communities have used organophosphates such as malathion or chlorpyrifos to control mosquitoes. These compounds are highly toxic to birds and can affect human central nervous, car-



diovascular and respiratory systems. Some have been linked to birth defects and cancer.

Pyrethroids, another set of compounds commonly used in mosquito control programs, are less toxic than organophosphates. According to the US EPA, pyrethroids pose slight risks of acute toxicity to humans, but at high doses, they can affect the nervous system. They are considered dangerous enough that the US EPA allows application only by public health officials and trained personnel. In addition to their primary impact on the human nervous system, they are also endocrine disrupters, with the potential to interfere with human reproductive functions in very small doses. In addition, they are combined with "synergists," like piperonyl butoxide, to increase their effectiveness. Piperonyl butoxide causes cancer in rats and mice and is classified as "likely to be a human carcinogen" by the US EPA.

Pyrethroids are toxic to bees, fish, mayflies, damselflies, tadpoles, crayfish, and other aquatic wildlife. In fact, the US EPA prohibits its use on open water or within 100 feet of waterways. While they may be safe to humans if used strictly according to instructions, many incidents of poisoning have occurred. A US EPA survey of poison control centers found that pyrethroids cause more insecticide poisoning incidents than any other class of insecticides except organophosphates.

Both kinds of compounds are typically sprayed in tiny droplets to keep them suspended in the air, since, in order to kill any mosquitoes, a droplet has to actually hit a flying mosquito. Scientists estimate that less than 0.0001% of the droplets released actually reach a mosquito. However, the suspended droplets *can* readily drift from a target area, to deposit onto residents who have not been notified of the spraying, or onto lakes, ponds, creeks, or wetlands, thus threatening their ecosystems.

Pesticide spraying has been shown to be counterproductive to pest control by actually result-

ing in an increase in pest populations. Spraying of pesticides destroys mosquitoes' natural predators. Secondly, the pesticides kill a certain proportion of the mosquito population, leaving those individuals with resistance to the pesticide alive to breed more pesticide-resistant mosquitoes. For instance, communities have sprayed to kill mosquito vectors of another mosquito-borne disease, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). *Culiseta melanura*, the mosquito that transmits EEE, was sprayed for 15 times over 11 years in upstate New York. In that time, the mosquito population grew 15-fold.

### **PREVENTION IS KEY**

Oakland County and other counties in Michigan, as well as the Audubon Society and the Center for Disease Control, have recommended a focus on prevention and integrated pest management to control mosquitoes that might carry the disease. Recommendations, in order of priority, include:

#### **For individuals:**

- 1 Avoid contact with mosquitoes, especially at night, wear long sleeves, and apply insect repellent.
- 2 Eliminate standing water in buckets, tires, pool covers, gutters, etc. around the property.
- 3 Change water in dog bowls or bird-baths every week.
- 4 Put mosquito screens on rain barrels.

#### **For officials:**

- 1 Educate the public about Virus transmission and the need to eliminate standing water.
- 2 Monitor areas of standing water for presence of mosquito larvae infected with West Nile Virus.
- 3 Consider stocking urban ponds with beneficial insects and fish that are mosquito larvae predators.
- 4 In areas that are confirmed to be infected with West Nile Virus, communities may consider biological controls that kill insect larvae, such as B.t.i.
- 5 Exhaust all other options before considering *carefully targeted* aerial spraying.

## FOR MORE WEST NILE INFORMATION

Check out these web sites, which have links to West Nile Virus information:

Michigan Department of Agriculture:  
[www.michigan.gov/mda/](http://www.michigan.gov/mda/)

Michigan Department of Community Health:  
[www.michigan.gov/mdch](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch)

The Audubon Society: [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org).



## SCIO BRIEFS and more...

**Bus service....**Recent newspaper articles have implicitly criticized Scio Township's "decision" relating to the termination of AATA bus service on Route 210, traveling between Ann Arbor and Dexter Village via Jackson Road. While I can understand the concerns regarding the decision by AATA to terminate this route, it is important to point out that Township has not been a participant in any discussions concerning bus service since 1996. The impression left by the newspaper articles is that Scio Township canceled or backed out of some agreement to fund such services, which has led to its cancellation. Nothing could be further from the truth. While the Township has never agreed to fund bus service, it has also never been opposed to bus service to the extent that a satisfactory arrangement can be found to pay for it.

In order to place the issue in the appropriate context, it is necessary to review the history of bus service in Scio and the adjoining communities. Scio Township was initially approached in 1993 by the AATA, which solicited the Township's willingness to subsidize some portion of the then existing Ann Arbor/Dexter/Chelsea route. At that time the Township Board raised a number of concerns, none of which were ever satisfactorily addressed. One concern related to ridership. That is, would a sufficient number of people utilize the service so as to justify subsidizing it in any amount? A second concern related to current costs versus potential future escalation. That is, what was the cost of the services provided within the Township, and would the AATA be willing to cap future costs, such that the Township would not be liable for ever escalating costs. Both Dexter and Chelsea Villages have struggled with significant rising costs associated with the provision of bus services, and both have now terminated their arrangements with AATA. And finally, there was a philosophical issue as to whether the Township should subsidize bus service for the very few at the expense of the very many. That is, should all of the citizens of Scio Township fund bus service, particularly when it would only be available to a limited few in a very limited geographical area? Associated with this was the recognition that Scio is one of the lowest taxing entities in the state (currently less than 1 mil), compared with the other cities that fund bus service. For example, the City of Ann Arbor taxes at the rate of 17 mils or more, of which two mills are dedicated for bus service.

At the time that the 1993 request was made by the AATA, they were already running bus service between Dexter and Ann Arbor along Dexter-Ann Arbor Road. When the Township indicated its initial unwillingness to subsidize bus service, the AATA decided that not only were they going to continue to run the service, but also they would reroute it along Jackson Road. Their reasoning was that in as much as they needed to travel through Scio Township to get to Dexter and Chelsea, and since they believed

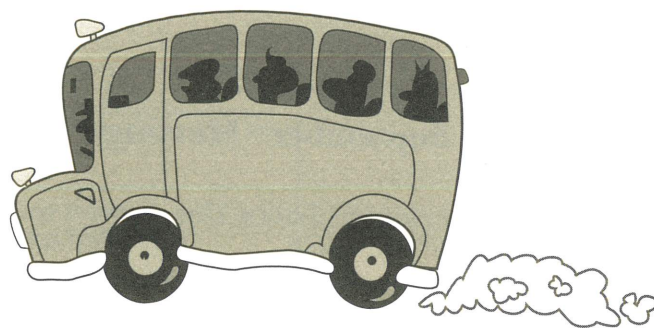


demand existed for such services along Jackson Road, whatever additional fare revenue was achieved by rerouting the bus route would lower the cost of service to Dexter and Chelsea. That is, there would be no extra cost involved in the rerouting, while there was revenue to be gained. This seemed to be an inherently logical decision, and in fact the route change occurred.

In 1996 Scio was again approached by AATA with a request that we contract for and subsidize bus service. This time however, the discussions began with the implicit threat that if the Township did not subsidize the service, AATA would find a different route to Dexter and Chelsea. Having voluntarily initiated the Jackson Road service, and having led their riders to believe they could rely on such services, AATA proposed to abandon the ridership in an attempt to gain a contract and subsidy that Scio had never agreed to. When the Township Board reviewed the issue in depth, they reached the same conclusion that they had in 1993. That is, the ridership did not justify any subsidy, there was to be no cap on escalating costs (as both Chelsea and Dexter thereafter discovered), and the overall policy reasons for not subsidizing bus service had not changed. Bus service in fact continued without any change in the route.

Several additional points are of note in the current circumstances. The West Washtenaw Business Association, as well as specific businesses and persons, have financially contributed toward bus service in the past, but have now indicated that they will no longer continue that financial support. Both Chelsea and Dexter have cited increasing costs relative to service and have both terminated their arrangement with AATA. Based upon newspaper accounts, it appears that Scio would now have to solely fund Route 210 at an estimated cost of \$40,000. As Scio has not revisited the issue since 1996, the Township has requested information from AATA regarding all of the pertinent components of bus service along Route 210, including ridership and cost details. At the same time, the West Washtenaw Business Association is surveying its members, local busi-

nesses and residential complexes along Jackson Road, in order to determine their interest in continuing bus service, as well as their willingness to financially support it. Surveys in the past suggested that Township residents were not in favor of subsidizing bus service, so updated information will allow us to discuss the myriad of issues as well as reach an informed decision. The Township will proceed expeditiously on this path, although there can be no assurance that the Township will be in a position to make a decision before the AATA's deadline for termination of service.



**Miscellaneous....** The Washtenaw County Road Commission is currently working on the **Liberty and Wagner intersection**, adding turning lanes and signalization. A reopening of the intersection is expected on August 4<sup>th</sup>. As noted earlier, MDOT shelved work on the **Baker Road and I-94 interchange**, which was to have begun this spring and was to have mirrored work completed last year at the Zeeb Road and I-94 interchange. This would have included widening the bridge, adding an eastbound on-ramp, some widening of Baker Road north of the interchange, as well as some work to reconfigure the existing entrances and exits. As part of the planned renovation, the existing rest area will be closed and moved to a location further to the west. Unfortunately, with the state budget crunch, the Governor cancelled all new projects, wanting to see moneys go to improve existing roads, and not build new ones. When the expected legislative fight occurred, Oakland County was successful in getting the lion's share of projects reinstated,

*continued on page 6*



# Mark your calendar!

## August Meetings

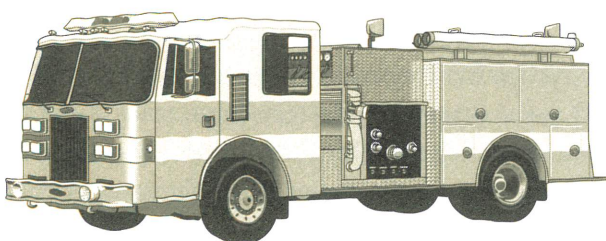
11 - noon	DDA
11 - 7:30pm	Planning Commission
13 - 7:00 pm	Board of Trustees
20 - 7:00pm	Board of Trustees
21 - 7:00pm	Zoning Board of Appeals
25 - 7:00pm	Planning Commission
28 - 9:00am	DDA Roads

## September Meetings

1 - office closed - Labor Day	
8 - noon	DDA
8 - 7:30pm	Planning Commission
10 - 7:00pm	Board of Trustees
16 - 7:00 pm	Board of Trustees
18 - 7:00pm	Zoning Board of Appeals
22 - 7:30pm	Planning Commission
25 - 9:00am	DDA Roads

## October Meetings

13 - noon	DDA
13 - 7:30pm	Planning Commission
15 - 7:00 pm	Board of Trustees
16 - 7:00pm	Zoning Board of Appeals
21 - 7:00pm	Board of Trustees
27 - 7:00pm	Planning Commission
30 - 9:00am	DDA Roads



and Scio lost. Hopefully, it will still stay on the list as MDOT originally agreed, and will be completed by 2005. **Lowes** is currently under construction with an opening date anticipated in November of this year. As part of their development, they have agreed to extend the existing Jackson Road boulevard across the width of their new location. That work is beginning and should be completed by September. These improvements to Jackson Road represent a contribution by Lowes to the Scio community in excess of one million dollars. Lowes had generously offered to mitigate some of the impacts their development would have on the community. **Foster Bridge** restoration is also underway, and is expected to be complete in August. In the arena of **police services**, and with the County and now the Sheriff's Department disavowing the Northwestern University study (that's the one the County used to pass on the costs of police services to local communities), the Township has decided to increase the number of full time deputies to a total of seven, to which is added a sergeant and other supporting personnel. During the 2004-2005 term of the agreement, the Township intends to investigate the issues, in order to determine for us the appropriate number of police officers and their cost, as well as what entity can best provide those services. For those concerned about the spread of the **emerald ash borer** infestation, we are advised that you should be cautious in transporting firewood, since it may result in the transportation of the infestation. There are nearby disposal sites where infected wood may be disposed of free of charge. Information materials are currently available at the Township Hall for examination on this subject. In the realm of **Scio Township** government activity, STFD Engine 1 was recently refurbished and repainted, saving a lot of bucks over the cost of a new one. This finally gives us three red firefighting vehicles. Improved lighting for the STFD parking lot has been approved, as well as a complete resurfacing of the parking lot, all of which will be underway shortly.

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Re/Max Community Associates  
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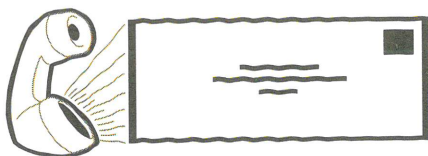


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*web site: [www.twp.scio.mi.us](http://www.twp.scio.mi.us)*

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*Correspondence for Township officials, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Economic Development Commission and Downtown Development Authority should be sent to the individual commission at 827 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.*

**SCIO INFO NEWSLETTER**

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