

Resources:

Department of Public Health fact sheets on [West Nile Virus](#) and [Eastern Equine Encephalitis](#)

[PVMCD brochure](#)

[Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project Services](#). This document, from the state Department of Agricultural Resources, is very informative about the various interventions used to control mosquito populations.

Slides of the [presentation](#) by Christopher Craig, the PVMCD coordinator

[Environmental Protection Agency's page](#) on the use of BTi for control of mosquito larvae

Here is an updated version of the material we sent out with the February *Our Town* Newsletter

Life-threatening diseases carried by mosquitoes – Eastern Equine Encephalitis, West Nile Virus, and others – are moving closer to our town every year and are considered a major threat to the public health. To combat the spread of these illnesses, Annual Town Meeting voted to authorize funding to join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District.

This is not a spraying program. Nor do we submit to procedures determined by an outside authority. All decisions are ours to make and ours to implement. But we don't have to do it on our own.

What do we get for our money?

Surveillance. Are mosquitoes in Shutesbury picking up viruses that can be transmitted to humans? If they are, how can we get, and act on, the earliest possible warning? To answer these questions, likely mosquito breeding grounds will be identified and traps set. The catch from two or three of these traps will be lab tested each week for 12 weeks in the summer. We will be able to assess the threat – a necessary precondition to being able to do something about it.

Expertise. The district's philosophy is that of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which determines the most effective and environmentally responsible method for dealing with mosquitoes. Whenever possible, mosquito habitat is disrupted, for example by replacing culverts to prevent the accumulation of stagnant water. A next step up from that is to keep mosquito larvae from maturing, using Bti, because if these mosquito babies live to grow up, the only effective way to kill them is by insecticide spraying, either targeted or widespread. This is what we want to avoid. Last year when Eastern

Equine Encephalitis broke out, Governor Baker reportedly came very close to ordering aerial spraying *statewide*; and a bill was recently passed authorizing aerial spraying by the state if the Department of Public Health declares an elevated risk of mosquito-borne disease. Because we are members of a Mosquito Control District we now have the right to opt out of such spraying.

Assistance. In the event of a public health emergency involving mosquito-borne disease, as members of a MCD we will be eligible for state aid, as well as support from other districts.

Joining the district dovetails with other preventive actions to be taken in Shutesbury. At present the town is working toward becoming a “certified MVP community,” that is, participating in the state’s Municipal Vulnerability Planning program, planning for climate change resiliency. Once we achieve this certification the town will be eligible for state aid to achieve its resiliency goals. Some of this aid is specifically earmarked for the \$5,000 annual Mosquito Control District fee, so within a few years this recurring expense could be reduced or reimbursed.
