

# West Nile virus detected in mosquitoes in Morrow County

Irrigon, Ore.—West Nile virus, which is spread by mosquitoes, has been detected in mosquitoes at a testing site in Morrow County, Ore., according to Oregon Public Health officials.

The mosquitoes, found approximately 3 miles west of Irrigon on the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge McCormick Slough, are the first to test positive for the disease in Morrow County in 2024.

Health officials are advising people in Morrow County to take precautions against mosquitoes to avoid the risk of infection, including preventing mosquito bites. Most infected people will show little or no signs of disease. People who are infected may develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with febrile illness due to West Nile virus recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months. It is important

that you contact your health care provider if you experience any of these symptoms and get tested for West Nile virus. Testing is available in most private laboratories.

The incubation period is usually two to 14 days. Rarely, infected individuals may develop neuro-invasive disease (infection of the brain or spinal cord) that can be severe or may cause death. This is especially of concern to people 50 and older, people with immune-compromising conditions, and people with diabetes or high blood pressure.

Communities and individuals living in or spending significant time outdoors, particularly near irrigated land, waterways, standing water, and used tires—including those working in agriculture, such as migrant and seasonal farm workers—may be at increased risk of mosquito bites and related diseases.

The virus also affects wildlife and domesticated and farm animals. Horses

are a risk of developing West Nile Virus. Consult your veterinarian about vaccinating your horses against WNV.

The number of mosquito pools—samples of 10-50 mosquitoes—that test positive in any area may indicate the risk of human exposure and infection, said Greg Barron, Manager of North Morrow Vector Control District. He recommends people and animals be protected against mosquito bites.

“Although mosquitoes are an inevitable part of summer, mosquito bites don’t have to be—they are preventable,” said Emilio DeBess, public health veterinarian. “You can take simple steps to protect yourself and reduce the risk of contracting West Nile disease.”

Dr. DeBess offers these tips for protecting yourself against mosquitoes:

Eliminate sources of standing water that are a breeding ground for mosquitoes, including water-

ing troughs, bird baths, ornamental ponds, buckets, wading and swimming pools not in use, and old tires.

When engaged in outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, protect yourself by using mosquito repellants containing DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus or Picardin, and follow the directions on the container.

Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants in mosquito-infested areas.

Make sure screen doors and windows are in good repair and fit tightly.

Additional information about West Nile virus:

Oregon Health Authority website: <http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/DiseasesAZ/WestNileVirus/Pages/survey.aspx>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>

# Heppner City Council discuss animal ordinance and tiny home development in recent work session

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reservations about the letter, he acknowledged that it was the course of action they were taking.

City Administrator Matt Jensen joined the meeting via Zoom and expressed his appreciation for the council’s feedback. He mentioned that the purpose of sending the IGA to the cities was to solicit their opinions and explore alternatives. Jensen noted that a resolution of support from the county alone could be considered. He assured the council that he would relay their decision to the health district but recommended sending an email as well for written documentation.

The council turned to discuss the town animal ordinance. John mentioned that the review of ordinances on animals was requested and he had taken a look at ordinances from other cities for ideas. He emphasized the need to establish a process for citizens to approach the city about animal permits without having to bring it to the city council.

During the discussion, Sweeny pointed out that there seemed to be two different aspects to consider - the matrix of what is allowed and the fact that the council has always made decisions based on individual cases that can be revoked at any time. John recalled a previous incident where the council quickly approved a permit for 40 chickens without much discussion. He expressed his concern for the welfare of animals and suggested that maybe no farm animals should be allowed in town, except for situations involving 4H projects.

High supported Doherty’s ideas and suggested that the city manager should have the authority to deny applications directly. If applicants wanted to challenge that decision, then they could bring their

case to the council.

Doherty already had some preliminary ideas, which he shared with the council. He proposed grandfathering in people who already have valid permits for existing animals, while making it a violation for those without permits. He also expressed a desire to limit the number of poultry to five per property, with no males, turkeys, or possibly geese allowed. Other factors to consider included enclosure and sanitation regulations, limited duration yearly permits for 4H projects, beekeeping, and penalties for permit violations such as a one-year waiting period before reapplying and potential impound fees. John also suggested that city hall should grant permits to avoid the need for individuals to attend council meetings every time.

Questions arose regarding the allowance of cows and horses, with Doherty expressing his preference for not allowing them, except for those who have already been grandfathered in. Another council member shared their agreement, mentioning their dislike for a horse on Jones St. Sweeny proposed that there should be no appeals if an ordinance had already been set and an applicant had been denied by city hall. Cody disagreed, stating that citizens have the right to appeal any decision made by the city.

One council member suggested that Doherty should have the authority to authorize most animals, but if an animal exceeded a certain weight limit, the applicant would have to come to the council for approval. Sweeny pointed out that this still placed the decision on the council. The councilman responded by saying that it would free up time during council meetings. Ultimately, it was decided that John would put

together a packet with his proposals, and further discussions would take place based on that information.

Next on the agenda was the discussion of a moratorium on AirBnBs in town due to a shortage of housing.

Council member Ian Murray expressed his opinion, stating that while he understands the need for rentals for tourists, he believes that there are already too many single-family homes being rented on AirBnB. He suggested that allowing only owner-occupied properties or multipurpose buildings for rentals would be more reasonable. However, he also acknowledged the lack of housing available for visitor’s attending events in town.

High raised a point, mentioning that if property owners are unable to Airbnb their homes, there is no guarantee that these properties will be rented out at all. He emphasized the importance of considering the economic implications of such a decision.

Doherty chimed in, highlighting that teachers, nurses, and other professionals often struggle to find housing in town. He emphasized the seriousness of the housing crisis in Heppner.

Sweeny disagreed with the idea of restricting AirBnBs, arguing that forcing property owners to give up their AirBnB businesses would infringe upon their rights. Doherty countered this by saying that other cities have imposed moratoriums on AirBnBs, suggesting that it is not unconstitutional.

High drew a comparison to homeowners’ associations (HOAs), stating that while they may not be unconstitutional, it is still a questionable move to restrict certain activities. Sweeny then reiterated that AirBnBs are necessary for events like the fair and

rodeo.

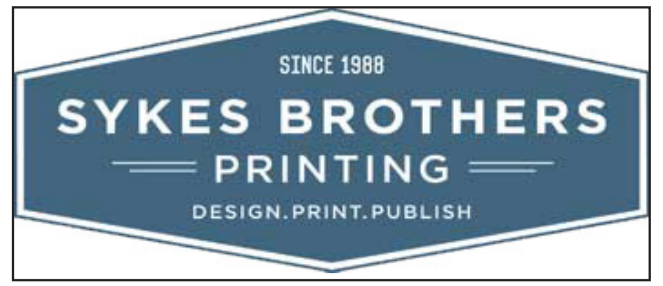
Another council member raised concerns about the impact of AirBnBs on local motels, noting that some individuals are permanently residing in motels due to the lack of housing options. Sweeny mentioned that there are currently five homes for sale in Heppner, indicating that there are opportunities for people to buy instead of relying on rentals. However, Doherty refuted this argument, stating that not everyone can afford to purchase a home in town.

Murray requested more data on the situation, suggesting that having concrete information would be helpful in making a decision. Another council member mentioned that there are currently five AirBnBs within city limits.

The discussion then shifted to the topic of noise ordinance permits. High proposed adjusting the noise ordinance to match the city curfew of 12 am saying “we let kids run around until midnight.” The council agreed to research noise ordinances in other cities before determining any updates.

Furthermore, Doherty suggested revising the mobile home ordinance, particularly the age limit for mobile homes. Currently, the age requirement is set at 30 years, but Doherty proposed reducing it to 15 years. Sweeny agreed with this suggestion, and the council decided to bring it up for discussion in a future council meeting.

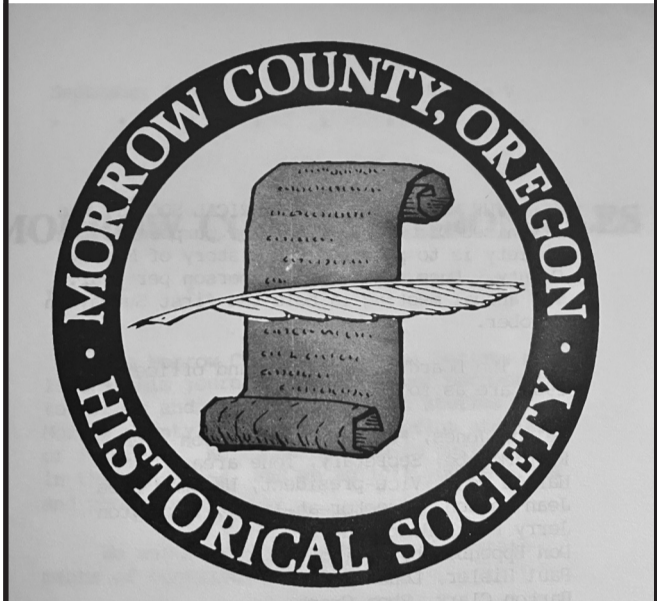
Lastly, the council discussed building permits, specifically mentioning a potential construction project for tiny homes on a lot on Chase St. This development could potentially free up some homes for families in need according to Doherty.



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