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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MOSQUITO LARVICIDING PROGRAM COMPLETED
Residents urged to take precautions against West Nile virus this holiday weekend

As you make outdoor plans for this holiday weekend, remember to protect yourself and your home from mosquitoes. The Westchester County Department of Health has prepared for the summer mosquito season by applying larvicide briquettes to catch basins throughout the County in an effort to prevent the spread of the West Nile virus. Residents should do their part, too, by taking personal protection measures and removing standing water where mosquitoes can breed.

Throughout May and June, field inspectors from the Health Department were busy applying briquettes of the larvicide Altosid XR (methoprene) - which kills mosquito larvae - into more than 57,000 state and municipal catch basins over the last eight weeks as part of County Executive Andy Spano's Operation Mosquito S.T.I.N.G. (Stop The Insects' Next Generation). Operation Mosquito S.T.I.N.G is a multi-level program to reduce mosquito breeding and the possibility of outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile virus.

In addition to the catch basins treated with larvicide, more than 12,000 catch basins were evaluated but not treated because the catch basins did not collect water and were an unfit mosquito breeding ground.

"While this work has been successfully completed, residents are still encouraged to take preventive measures to avoid mosquito bites and to help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds," said Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Westchester County Health Commissioner. "While enjoying outdoor activities this 4th of July weekend, residents should be particularly mindful of taking the necessary steps to prevent mosquito bites."

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To help avoid mosquito bites:

- Avoid being outdoors in places and during times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Use insect repellents with no more than 30% DEET, but use them sparingly and with care. Select the lowest concentration effective for the amount of time spent outdoors. Products with concentrations around 10% are effective for periods of approximately two hours. A concentration of 24% has been shown to provide an average of five hours of protection. DEET should not be applied more than once a day. Products containing DEET are not recommended for use on children under 2 months of age. Carefully read and follow directions on the container and wash treated skin when mosquito exposure has ended.
- Wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks when outdoors in areas and at times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

To help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds:

- Get rid of all water-holding containers, especially old tires, cans, buckets, drums, wheelbarrows and bottles.
- Cover outdoor trash containers to keep rainwater from accumulating inside.
- Drill holes in the bottoms of recycling containers that are left outdoors.
- Clean roof gutters and remove standing water from flat roofs.
- Drain water in birdbaths, plant pots and drip trays twice a week.
- Sweep driveways after it rains so that they are free of puddles.

For more information on larviciding and West Nile virus, call the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000 or visit www.westchestergov.com/health.