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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 21, 2003**

**INITIATIVES AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS CONTINUE IN 2003 IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY**  
**First West Nile Positive Bird Reported**  
**Residents Encouraged to Report Standing Water & Dead Birds**  
**Catch Basin Larviciding Underway**

The Westchester County Department of Health has received notification from the New York State Department of Health that a crow found in Bedford has tested positive for the West Nile virus. This is the first confirmation of West Nile virus in a bird in Westchester County and New York State this year. The dead crow was found on May 5.

Now that mosquito season is here, County Executive Andy Spano is asking the public to help aid Westchester in its fight against West Nile virus.

“It is important that County residents help us fight West Nile virus by eliminating potential mosquito breeding sites around their homes and neighborhoods and that they report standing water that is not easily eliminated,” stated County Executive Andy Spano. “Residents can report this important information to the Health Department by calling the 24-hour Public Health Information Line at (914) 813-5609. Forms for reporting standing water are also provided on the Health Department’s website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health),” said Spano.

The Health Department is not collecting any dead birds from residents for testing this year, however, it is still important that dead birds be reported for tracking purposes. Any resident that sees a dead bird is asked to call the United States Department of Agriculture, toll free at 1-866-537-2473 to report the sighting. This information is important to the county’s effort in understanding and controlling West Nile virus. “Dead birds, especially crows, seem to be a good indication of the presence of West Nile virus in a community,” stated Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of Health. “Residents who report information about dead birds are performing a valuable service, as this will provide us with vital tracking information,” stated Dr. Lipsman.

The County’s catch basin larviciding program to prevent mosquito larvae from developing into adult mosquitoes is currently underway. Certified technicians from the Westchester County Department of Health have begun applying

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briquettes of the larvicide Altosid (methoprene) into state, county and local municipal catch basins as part of its effort to prevent the spread of West Nile Virus. Additionally, on a case-by-case basis, the control agents Vectolex CG, Vectobac G and Bactimos Briquettes may also be used.

Larviciding has begun with the municipal storm water catch basins in the northern area of the county and will proceed south until all of the county's municipal catch basins have been completed. A map of areas receiving larvicide treatment can be viewed at the offices of the Westchester County Health Department, 145 Huguenot Street, New Rochelle, N.Y. during the hours of 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

In addition to the larviciding program, County Executive Spano is encouraging residents to assist with mosquito control activities by taking preventive measures to help eliminate mosquito breeding grounds and avoid mosquito bites.

“On June 6 and 7, residents can participate in the third annual “Spring S.T.I.N.G. Clean-Up,” an organized effort to fight West Nile virus in Westchester County by ridding our communities of potential mosquito breeding sites,” said Spano. “The Spring S.T.I.N.G. Clean-Up event is a wonderful opportunity for residents to get involved and take pride in their communities while, at the same time, emphasizing the point that integrated pest management does work,” he added.

Mosquitoes capable of carrying West Nile virus lay their eggs in stagnant water. The eggs can develop in any pool or puddle of water that stands undisturbed for more than four days. While mosquitoes will breed in any untreated water, old tires, when left outside, serve as extremely popular breeding grounds for mosquitoes that can carry the West Nile virus. To find out where you can recycle old tires in your area, you can view a list of tire reception centers on the Health Department’s website, [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health), or call the County’s Household Chemical Information Line at (914) 813-5425 for the location nearest you.

The Health Department also recommends doing the following around the outside of your home:

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

For additional information on West Nile Virus, call the Public Health Information Line at (914) 813-5609, or visit the Health Department’s website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).