

Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Membership Meeting of June 23, 2005
MINUTES

The meeting of FCFCA was held at the Packard Center at 7:30 p.m. (Attendance list is attached.) President Carol Hawn introduced Jorge R. Arias, Ph.D., supervisor of the West Nile Virus Program of the Fairfax County Health Department's Division of Environmental Health.

Program —

Dr. Arias spoke on insect-borne diseases in Fairfax County, focusing on West Nile virus and Lyme disease for this presentation, although others exist.

West Nile virus occurs in certain birds and mosquitos and is exchanged between them. Mosquitos transmit it to both horses and people. About 80 percent of those infected are asymptomatic; about 20 percent get West Nile fever; and less than 1 percent get the central nervous system or neuroinvasive form, which is deadly. The virus was first detected in the U.S. in 1999; there were 62 cases in 4 states that year. By 2004, there were cases in 47 states. U.S. cases peaked in 2003 at 9,862; the numbers now appear lower because some areas no longer report all West Nile cases, only the neuroinvasive ones.

The record of West Nile cases and fatalities in Fairfax County is as follows: 13 cases with 1 fatality in 2002; 3 cases with no fatalities in 2003; 1 case with 1 fatality in 2004. Among horses in the county, there were 3 cases with 1 fatality in 2002, 3 cases with no fatalities in 2003, and no cases in 2004; an equine vaccine for West Nile was introduced in 2002, which may explain this decline. The county program has a four-person staff headed by Dr. Arias. It emphasizes surveillance of the mosquito and bird populations; proactive catch-basin treatment in the affected areas; and education and outreach.

Mosquito surveillance is done using 144 traps in 72 county locations, larval surveillance of breeding sites, and some temporary traps. The traps, which require battery power and appear unusual, have triggered homeland-security suspicions and 911 calls, so the program keeps law enforcement informed of its activities with images and descriptions of the traps. The mosquito surveillance identifies which areas are positive for West Nile virus so that treatment can be focused on the affected areas, not countywide as in the past. The oldest part of the county, including Mount Vernon, Herndon, and Fairfax City, has the greatest West Nile presence, due to poor stormwater drains as well as low-lying land.

Residents who see newly dead birds should report them to a hotline number, and program staff will come and collect them. (The phone number on the county web site is 703-246-2300, option # 1.) The staff is looking for crows, blue jays, cardinals, and raptors (owls, hawks, etc.), although the percentage of crows among the dead birds has dropped. The total dead bird count has also dropped, from 1000 a week in 2002, to 100 a week in 2003, to 20 a week in 2004, but this may relate to extreme weather variations.

Once areas of West Nile infection are identified, the staff treats catch basins in those areas with water-soluble sachets. The program is able to focus on about 35,000 catch basins in about half of the county and does 3 rounds of treatments, making for between 100,000 and 130,000 catch basin treatments a year.

The program's education and outreach efforts include assessments of knowledge, attitudes, and performance (KAP) in different populations, both by age and by ethnicity. Literature is distributed in 5 languages; there are free Deet samples and mosquito dunks in all county supervisors' offices, a calendar, and advertising. The message is that residents should eliminate shallow standing water where mosquitos breed. They should also protect themselves by: repairing door and window screens; wearing long, loose, light-colored clothing; and using repellants—either Deet or one of two new repellants, Permethrin and oil of lemon eucalyptus. Sites where mosquitos may breed include ornamental ponds (stock them with fish), bird baths (flush with fresh water), old tires, standing puddles, puddled water under air conditioners or outdoor faucets, and flexible corrugated pipes for downspout drainage (treat with a larvicide).

Lyme disease is spread only by a type of tick known as a deer tick. The county office is conducting a pilot tick survey this year and provides education and outreach on this disease. May through July is the season for almost all Lyme disease. It takes 24 hours before a tick bite can cause Lyme disease, so the key is to check for ticks right after going outdoors. If ticks are found, they should be removed with fine-tipped tweezers, pulling steadily without twisting or jerking, and it may be appropriate to save the ticks in the freezer for identification in case of later illness. A common symptom of Lyme disease is a bull's eye pattern, but it is not always obvious; a warm shower will make it show up better.

Business Meeting —

a. The minutes for the May 19 meeting were presented without corrections. Rather than take up these small changes, the membership delegated authority to the Board to review and approve these minutes.

b. Flint Webb reported that the new members of the Environment Committee have met twice, but still need a meeting which all can attend. The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee is working toward the new emission controls that will be required by the national ambient air-quality standard for ozone. Legislation is needed in 2007, so the committee must determine appropriate control measures by late 2006; public meetings will start this summer.

c. President Carol Hawn noted a representative is needed for the Criminal Justice Advisory Board and she will request a Federation representative on the Tysons Corner Urban Design Coordinating Committee. Bill Hanks is the representative on the new Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.

d. Art Wells reported the Braddock District Council is conducting its part of the Area Plan Review (APR) process, which is conducted throughout Fairfax County every five years.

e. Judy Harbeck reported for the Mount Vernon Council that the top concern is transportation around Fort Belvoir in the wake of the BRAC recommendations, combined with the already serious effects of shutting down all roads through the fort after September 11. Separately, some homeowners have received information about building restrictions on their properties due to the Chesapeake Bay rules.

f. Sally Ormsby reported the Providence Council is co-sponsoring a town hall meeting on transit-oriented development.

g. President Carol Hawn reported that Charlie Strump of the county Office of Transportation was the guest speaker at the recent Sully District Council meeting.

h. Under old business, Charles Dane asked about the status of the Federation brochure. President Carol Hawn reported that she hoped to have information by the next Board meeting.

i. Under new business, President-Elect John Jennison reported he is serving with Merrily Pierce on a regional committee on emergency preparedness seeking to formulate a consistent local message, and the Federation is encouraged to play a role, including materials for National Night Out. He sees emergency preparedness as a way for the Federation to serve and connect with local associations.

j. President-Elect John Jennison presented President Carol Hawn with a plaque in appreciation of her two years of service as President of the Federation. She thanked the Board and the membership.

Next Membership Meeting: September 15, 2005 (no membership meetings in July or August).

Next Board Meeting: July 28, 2005.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.