

MCTF Best Practices Subcommittee Meeting Minutes 12 06 21

Minutes for the Mosquito Control for the Twenty-First Century (MCTF) Task Force Meeting

Subcommittee Meeting: Best Practices

December 6, 2021, 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

Meeting topics:

- Open Meeting, Roll Call, and Welcome (chair)
- Review the agenda and schedule (facilitator)
- Discuss the list of recommendation ideas from Meeting #5 (chair and facilitator)
- Discuss Next Steps (facilitator)
- Closing Remarks and Adjourn (chair)

The meeting started at 12:02. Richard Robinson conducted roll call and a quorum was established. Subcommittee members in attendance included Richard Pollack, Helen Poynton, Kim LeBeau, Priscilla Matton, Russell Hopping, and Kathy Baskin. Cheryl Keenan shared her screen to show the group the meeting agenda and addressed the content for the session. It is noted that today's session represents the sixth meeting. The full task force meeting will be held on 12/14 and Richard Robinson will be reporting out on progress. Cheryl noted that the next two meetings on 12/20 and 1/3 fall within holiday vacation schedules and to notify Cheryl in advance if members cannot attend to ensure we have a quorum. Richard Robinson entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the first subcommittee meeting on 10/4. Priscilla Matton made a motion which was seconded by Richard Pollack. Roll call was conducted: Richard Robinson (aye), Richard Pollack (aye), Helen Poynton (aye), Kim LeBeau (aye), Priscilla Matton (aye), Russell Hopping (aye), and Kathy Baskin (aye).

Richard Robinson asked what the schedule was for bringing forward approved recommendations to the full task force. Cheryl noted that it was up to the subcommittee on how they wanted to handle moving recommendations to the final draft stage for the full task force. Richard Robinson commented that the group was really at the brainstorming stage and needed to get to the recommendation components. It is noted that the subcommittee group will need to define the elements of background, recommendation, and rationale. Richard Robinson noted that the group will need to be in a position to make full recommendations within the next few meetings as there could be revision and edits that need to be made. Alisha Bouchard noted that legislation put through an extension through the ARPA bill for the task force to 3/31. Alisha also noted that we are still determining when the listening session will be.

Richard Robinson asked committee members if there were questions or thoughts on process at this point. Cheryl noted that if anyone has ideas to bring that up at any time as there are a lot of moving pieces right now. Richard Robinson recommended looking at the whole sheet of documented ideas and recommendations. Cheryl shared the documented content and noted that the content represented the notes she was taking in real-time during the last meeting. Cheryl added in notes in yellow highlighting as an attempt to start grouping things to hone in on. Listed by three directives. Filling in information on what problems that need to be fixed would be helpful. Richard Robinson noted on his comments, he is open to feedback from the group.

Richard Pollack recommended the group go through Cheryl notes line by line to address issues. The group agreed with that approach. The conversation started with the notes about waters systems from Kim LeBeau. Kim noted there was some discussion on how this would roll out. Kim's main point address how the public knows about mosquito control activities. Kim posed the question: was information clearly communicated when there was an aerial based spraying event? Kim noted that she would like to see more active communication regarding aerial based spraying events. Another question posed was: how do we get information out more proactively? Also noted

was the need to know more information about private applicators. Kim also noted that only a having a few days' notice before a spraying event makes it very difficult to alter operations. For example, minimizing demand and shutting down pumps. With more notice, those actions could be deployed.

Richard Robinson echoed that a bit more information could be used to take important actions to protect the water supply. Richard Robinson asked if Kim was also concerned with truck-based spraying. Kim commented that this was information that we don't know much about. Kim noted that she works with DEP to sample before, during, and after a spraying event. Richard Pollack asked to what extent does adulticiding pose a significant risk to the public water system? Richard Pollack noted that he hasn't seen a level of exposure that would have provided a measurable risk. Richard Pollack asked if shutting down pumps addresses the problem. Richard Pollack added that installation of an electronics system to notify water systems when a spraying is going to occur may be beneficial technology. Kim responded that there are minimal sampling events to look at the data long term to determine if there is a larger issue and commented that she thought that more information was needed in assessing efficacy and risk of aerial spraying events.

Russell Hopping noted that he was struggling with why this documentation was under IPM and mentioned that it may be better structured under a different area within the documentation. Russell also noted that there was a piece of this that overlapped with the local engagement subcommittee. Alisha mentioned that one tool for the water suppliers is to utilize the exclusion request platform. Priscilla Matton noted that most water sources do not have an address and it would be more GPS plot location. Priscilla thought that it would be better to use DEP data in MA GIS to isolate what falls within the 300-foot spray zone. Richard Robinson asked Priscilla to expound on that statement. Priscilla noted that isolating public water bodies would be hard but using DEP data may make it more beneficial. Priscilla commented that it would be useful if DEP could make this information available to MCDs to assist in the process. Priscilla provided a similar collaborative example and noted the MCD's have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Fisheries and Wildlife and it may be beneficial to have something similar with DEP to know where water sources are.

Richard Robinson asked the group if there was any additional conversation or questions before moving on. Richard Pollack noted that it would be useful to the MCDs to have entomologists and wetland biologists on staff and commented with the larger projects this is already done. Not sure how it is done with the smaller projects. Alisha noted that the Pioneer Valley MCD is a newly established MCD and has one contract employee who is managing the area with limited-service offerings and no adulticiding. Richard Pollack commented that even with surveillance the MCDs need to understand what type of mosquitos they are addressing. It is noted that Berkshire MCD does not have a full-time entomologist, they have a seasonal entomologist. Priscilla commented that Berkshire has a smaller budget when compared to other larger MCDs. Alisha noted that Priscilla's point about budgets was a good one and commented that if the subcommittee knows there is lack of resources and funding then that should be factored in as part of potential future recommendations.

Richard Robinson noted that he would have thought each MCD would know and understand at a species level of what mosquitos they are trying to control. Richard Pollack noted that is the case with the larger project but was unsure with the scale of the smaller projects. Priscilla commented to the group that all the MCDs they were aware of provide the support and standardization of adulticiding and water management and they are doing it with the available data we have. Richard Pollack noted that private applicators are "spray and pray" operations. In contrast, the MCDs are held to a higher standard and they collect good data. How do we better ensure that those MCDs that do not have those resources can get those resources?

Richard Robinson moved to recommendation number three on the draft recommendation list. Richard Pollack noted his recommendation was an attempt to address his perspective that MCDs should avoid adulticiding individual properties. There should be a regional approach, not just spraying to a particular property. Priscilla agreed with aggregating calls in a certain area; however, Priscilla noted there would need to be a larger education plan to ensure people were aware of the spraying. Richard Robinson noted that the recommendations here may

have an impact on MCD spraying activity. They may impact MCD budgets and may have an impact on private spraying as well. Priscilla asked if the group thought excess spraying would be reduced if nuisance requests were aggregated. Richard Pollack noted that spraying individual properties in isolation will appease the owners of the property but may not be the best plan in managing mosquitos in a neighborhood. Helen Poynton noted that she agrees with the idea that individual property spray isn't going to be as effective if you are trying to protect the community from disease outbreak.

Richard Robinson moved to recommendation number 4. Richard Pollack noted that some members of the public and legislators are confused on mosquito management practice and there may be an opportunity for the MCDs and SRB to define goals of the program to educate people. Richard Robinson noted that as a fine idea and would like to see it happen with clear state level explanations and set of ideas. However, education may not get through to people until there is a public health emergency. Richard Pollack agreed and noted that 10-12 years ago he helped write FAQs and answers for the state. The original questions and answers did address some of these issues and questions, but this document does not exist online anymore. Russell commented that this is an example that there is no centralization of policy or set of standards. For Russell, defining the problem will help assist in determining how IPM thresholds are triggered.

Richard Robinson moved to recommendation number 6. The recommendation address specifics on when and why actions are taken. Richard Robinson noted where we have chronic problems, then it may require a second look of what can be done outside of adulticiding, including land management, habitat change, and water management. Priscilla noted that this is what the MCDs do based on what the data is telling them. Russell responded to Priscilla by noting that the need to use adulticiding should then be reduced over time. Priscilla responded that the MCDs do look to control the problem long term, especially through water management. Richard Pollack noted that non-chemical management is the preferred method but commented that adulticiding is a requested service and that we should not just restrict this to areas known to be vectors. It is noted without individual requests there may be an increase in private pesticide application. Helen commented that you don't want to be reactive you want to remain proactive, and noted that this recommendation may lead to a more of a reactive approach. Richard Robinson noted there is a balance, and this exercise is about figuring out where that balance exists.

Richard Robinson moved to recommendation number 7. Richard Robinson noted the idea was that local communities would have more of a benefit to having different types of service offerings. Priscilla noted that the MCD cost includes the whole IPM plan. There could be municipalities that pay the full amount and only opt get surveillance if that is what they wanted. Adulticiding is part of an IPM plan, but a tiered level approach is not the way the program is set up. Alisha commented that if there was a statewide surveillance program that could be recommended as a separate line item in the budget. Richard Robinson asked about the offering of services. Is this beyond consideration for MCD's? Priscilla noted that if we are looking at IPM, then yes it would be outside of that purview. Priscilla commented that water management is expensive and some towns in Bristol County don't take advantage of water management, but they still pay the full cost of being part of the MCD. Richard Robinson asked if there are any other state offerings/programs to towns that have a fee for service structure. Alisha commented that she was not familiar if other state programs were set up in that fashion.

Russell asked if the group thought surveillance is best done through a statewide program, then is there value in thinking about how water management is funded to incentivize corrective action, so that MCDs don't have to do as much adulticiding? Alisha flagged that a capital investment program might be something for the group to think about, related to a recommendation on funding the MCD's. Alisha noted that the state staff may be able to assist with a decision tree of what would be required to implement. Helen commented on the wording within the recommendation. Helen noted that we have holes in our data and if we want to fix it, then surveillance should be a statewide program. The state should conduct statewide surveillance regardless of if the town is participating in an MCD. Richard Robinson agreed with that recommendation.

Richard Robinson moved to recommendation number 8. Richard Robinson commented that he thought the state should take the lead on all forms of education and that the message be consistent across the state. The state could bring its message to the masses. Richard Pollack agreed with Richard Robinson's comments and noted the benefit of a centralized entity to handle education but argued that DPH does not have the right expertise when it comes to mosquito management. Richard Pollack noted that DPH should be at the table, but MDAR should be the centralized authority. Richard Pollack struck DPH and noted the "state" be principally responsible for statewide education on mosquito management. Russell noted if we don't specify a specific state body to handle education it may get punted. Russell noted to be as specific as possible of the state entities involved in the recommendation.

Richard Robinson skipped over recommendation 9 and went to recommendation 10. Richard Robinson noted that he understood his recommendation was controversial, but he hadn't seen anything that suggests the efficacy of aerial application. Richard Pollack responded that there is benefit to aerial application and there is more benefit than risk. Richard Pollack commented that if there are opportunities to reduce the need to rely on aerial intervention and wherever that is possible it should be explored and used. Richard Pollack noted that it is very complex when determining when it is appropriate to spray. Richard Pollack noted that there is a level of complexity such as weather and season and it would be great if we could plug numbers into a spreadsheet to come up with an answer, but that doesn't exist.

Russell commented that until we have standards, and it gets centralized, we will need to deal with these tough issues before making a recommendation. Russell noted that it would be nice to have some measures, and discuss how to determine success within our recommendations. Richard Pollack asked Russell how he was defining success – reduction of transmission, or reduction in pesticides used. Russell commented that it could be a combination of the two. Priscilla commented that there is available information now and good metrics in the state surveillance and response plan that provide thresholds. Priscilla also noted that spraying is a very difficult decision and there are years where MCD's say no to spraying. Richard Robinson noted that the metrics of success would use a metric reduction of pesticides used and reduction of human disease and he doesn't think reduction of pesticides is a secondary consideration. Richard Robinson recommended plane-based spraying be prohibited.

Richard Robinson and moved to recommendation number 11. Russell noted the need to clearly articulate why mosquito control is happening. What are the standards of why it is being done? Richard Pollack commented that nuisance is generally considered to be a public health issue and if there really was a distinction. Russell thought the group could make the recommendation to define what nuisance means. Richard Robinson noted that the group should try to be as specific and broad as possible on how they recommend structuring mosquito control. Alisha followed up on Russell's questions on thresholds for aerial spray, to note the data comes from DPH.

The conversation moved to recommendations about protecting human health. Recommendation number 1 was reviewed, and Kim LeBeau noted a need for a QA/QC testing program that incorporates testing for all chemicals used for aerial spraying events and MCD application. Richard Robinson asked if this was a significant cost item and Kim noted that it could be, there are significant costs involved, but you should affirm that the chemical delivered is meeting the specifications during widespread application. It is noted that there could be overlap here with the policy structure subcommittee. Kim commented that this gets to the QA/QC program to clarify what gets tested and how to determine what you test to ensure the purity of the pesticide that is being applied.

Richard Robinson moved to recommendation number 3 and noted the potentially vast nature of the relative amounts of chemicals are being sprayed privately versus publicly. Richard Robinson suggested spending some time focusing on individual nuisance control and understanding what the private applicators are doing as well. Richard Pollack noted that private applicators will not want to report any of their applications due to confidential business information (CBI). Richard Robinson commented that he found that concerning. Richard Pollack spoke about CBI and the proprietary nature of private applicators. Kim asked if private applicators were giving us data by town. Richard Robinson noted that the answer appears to be unknown. Russell noted that he is a private applicator and information requested is basic, including type of pesticide used and the amount. Alisha noted if this

topic was tabled for the next meeting, that Taryn could speak to it. Richard Robinson commented that if the subcommittee agreed, he would like to have Taryn give more information. There was no objection. Richard Pollack noted that there was also no data related to private citizens that buy pesticides from the hardware store and apply those pesticides.

Richard Robinson noted it would be good to get more information from MDAR and Taryn. Cheryl noted that documented notes would be circulated around to the group. Richard Robinson asked if there were any assignments for subcommittee member, and what does the group want to focus on from here. Russell had mentioned defining the overall goal of the program. Cheryl noted that may be a foundational piece for the group to focus on. Richard Robinson thought it would be valuable to go through the listing of recommendations. Alisha noted that Taryn can be available to speak to the group during the 12/20 subcommittee meeting. Cheryl noted that she would put Taryn on the agenda. Richard Pollack recommended subcommittee members draft a few sentences of what each thought mosquito control should be. Richard Robinson agreed, and Cheryl stated that this recommendation was a good place to start. Seeing no other comments or questions Richard Robinson took a motion to adjourn. Richard Pollack made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Helen Poynton. All in favor said aye. The meeting was adjourned at 1:58 p.m.