

### **11.15.21 Mosquito Control Task Force (MCTF) Meeting #18 – Minutes**

**November 15, 2021, 12p.m. via Zoom**

Meeting Topics:

- Call to order and introductions
- Routine business
- Subcommittee updates
- Post DPH presentation questions and discussion
- Public listening session
- Process updates
- Next steps
- Meeting close

Beth Card called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. and provided an overview for meeting process. The meeting agenda and topics were reviewed with the committee. There was a proposal to vote on meeting minutes for the 9/28 and 10/21 Full Task Force meetings. Meeting minutes from other Task Force meetings and subcommittee meetings are being worked on and are close to completion.

Beth Card asked the group if there were any corrections that Task Force members requested to make to the minutes. There were no responses. Beth Card heard a motion to approve from Jennifer Pederson and Richard Robinson. Eve Schluter asked a question about her vote since she was not at one of the meetings listed for minutes approval. Roll call was conducted to approve both sets of meeting minutes from 9/28 and 10/21. Kevin Cranston (aye), John Lebeaux (aye), Nicole Keleher (aye), Kathy Baskin (none), Eve Schluter (aye for 9/28 abstain from 10/21), Heidi Porter (none), Derek Brindisi (aye), Julia Blatt (none), Tonya Colpitts (none), Anita Deeley (none), Russell Hopping (aye), Kim LeBeau (aye), Bob Mann (aye), Priscilla Matton (aye), Brad Mitchell (none), Jennifer Pederson (aye), Rich Pollack (aye), Helen Poynton (aye), Heidi Ricci (aye), Stephen Rich (aye), Richard Robinson (aye), Sam Telford (aye for 9/28 abstain for 10/21)

- Best practices – Richard Robinson:

This subcommittee conducted the fourth meeting about a week prior. There were short presentations from a few members that focused on the extent to which larvicide and adulticide affect non-target organisms. It was noted that this was critical for the subcommittee as it moves forward with its recommendations. A few highlights: First, lab results are not the same as results from the field. Work in the field deals with a lot of variability. Well-designed field studies are relatively scarce. Second, both mosquito and non-target populations tend to rebound after they are knocked down. Adulticides does not permanently solve problems. Third, it was noted that a lack of data does mean there are no impacts. Many beneficial organisms are as small bodied as mosquitoes. Adulticide, aerial and truck-based spraying are designed to kill insects the size of mosquitoes, and other non-target species could be impacted by that protocol.

Richard Robinson said that Priscilla Matton noted that her MCD gets between 10,000-15,000 spray requests over the three months of the summer. Richard Robinson also made the points there may not be strong data supporting or refuting the idea that aerial applications impact human disease risk. In addition, the data is not very strong to confirm what mosquito spraying accomplishes with regard to WNV and EEE. When we think of first approximations for pollinators, we think of honeybees, but we must also think about other pollinators that may be affected by adulticide. Assumptions we make about honeybees do not necessarily apply to many other species that may be impacted. The directive for the next meeting is to bring together draft outlines of recommendations. Richard Robinson noted that he is eager to continue that discussion. Beth Card asked if there were any other inputs or questions from subcommittee or others. There were no comments made.

- Pesticide Selection - Bob Mann

Bob Mann noted that he was reporting out on meeting number three from November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The group identified and approved an alternate chair for the subcommittee in case Bob Mann cannot attend (Nicole Keleher). Bob reviewed the three directives that the subcommittee was tasked with reviewing, and summarized the initial discussions on the three directives. Regarding the PFAS directive, the subcommittee discussed having Hotze Wijnja (MDAR Chemist) present on PFAS/Pesticides. Bob Mann asked to make a motion to have Hotze Wijnja come to make a presentation to the full task force.

Bob Mann noted that the subcommittee meeting held on November 16<sup>th</sup> will dive into submission and directives. Focus will be on directive one and will offer at least the first iteration of the language we would use in our recommendations. Bob Mann asked if anyone wanted to add to the comments. There are no questions or comments from the group. Bob Mann made a formal motion to invite Hotze Wijnja to present on PFAS. Jennifer Pederson seconded that motion. Heidi Ricci commented that she does not object but wanted to note that the task force should be careful whenever it brings in outside expertise, to ensure balanced perspectives. Heidi noted that we need to balance that with expertise from the pesticide registration and regulatory folks.

Beth Card noted that should the committee vote in the affirmative to have a presentation at a future meeting, we can schedule for the next full Task Force meeting, and there will be opportunity for follow up information to be presented. Beth Card noted that the intention would be to not have lengthy presentations. Heidi Ricci noted that she wanted the opportunity to identify another expert with a different perspective for that meeting to create balance. Jennifer Pederson noted that the PFAS presentation was an overview, and not about the entire pesticide registration process. Alisha Bouchard reiterated that the Hotze Wijnja's presentation was an overview of PFAS and was fact based not opinion based. Taryn LaScola added more detail, that the original presentation was an overview to the Pesticide Selection subcommittee of fluorinated compounds and how PFAS fit into fluorinated compounds, including the chemistry of PFAS along with some of the work that EPA has done. Heidi Ricci noted that she has someone in mind as a counter presenter and will check on availability.

Beth Card noted that a vote would need to be taken regarding a presentation from Hotze Wijnja and another individual to be named later. Beth suggested that we vote with the understanding that there will be two presentations at the full Task Force meeting. Richard Robinson asked for confirmation on what the group would learn from the PFAS presentation - if we all agree that PFAS are bad, then what will we gain from the presentation? In response, Bob Mann noted that the presentation serves as an overview, for task force members to more robustly understand what PFAS is and highlights the evolving nature of PFAS. If part of this Task Force's charge is to review pesticide use, then having the factual presentation would be of benefit to the group. Heidi Ricci added that she is happy to see the presentation but noted the PFAS chemicals are of concern from a regulatory perspective. Bob Mann commented that the presentation will address Heidi Ricci's questions.

Beth Card conducted a roll call vote for presentations presumably at the next full Task Force meeting. Kevin Cranston (aye), John Lebeaux (aye), Nicole Keleher (aye), Kathy Baskin (aye), Eve Schluter (aye), Heidi Porter (aye), Derek Brindisi (none), Julia Blatt (none), Tonya Colpitts (none), Anita Deeley (none), Russell Hopping (aye), Kim LeBeau (aye), Bob Mann (aye), Priscilla Matton (aye), Brad Mitchell (none), Jennifer Pederson (aye), Rich Pollack (aye), Helen Poynton (aye), Heidi Ricci (aye), Stephen Rich (aye), Richard Robinson (aye), Sam Telford (aye)

- Policy structure – Stephen Rich

Stephen Rich noted that the subcommittee group has met twice. They were presented with an overview of MGL 252 and have been looking at data gaps identified by the subcommittee. The group has been reviewing policy practices from other states, specifically focusing on how mosquito control is done elsewhere. In addition, subcommittee members are gaining an understanding of the variants and practices amongst the MCDs related to

why they exist and rationale for varying operational practices. The subcommittee's November 18<sup>th</sup> meeting will include development of questions for the MCDs to assist in filling some of these data gaps.

Stephen Rich noted the topics that the subcommittee identified as gaps that fall outside the scope of this subcommittees, including science-based mosquito management and linkages between human health and pesticides that may be best addressed by pesticide subcommittee. Stephen Rich asked the Task Force group for questions or comments. Heidi Ricci wanted to note there was a minority opinion on the vote of human health and pesticides and is still hopeful that this topic will be addressed.

- Local Engagement – Heidi Ricci

Heidi Ricci noted that the subcommittee had their third meeting and has gone through what information is necessary to address directives and gaps. Several references were provided on efficacy and non-target impacts. On the municipal side, Senator Comerford provided an additional letter and the Uxbridge BOH provided a write-up of its experience, which resonated with some other communities as well. The group has those documents in writing and continues to gather more information on the human health and non-target content, including the future public listening session.

In the last meeting, the group focused on the landowner opt-out process. Russell Hopping gave his perspective on why some landowners opt out, including the cumbersome nature of applying, reapplying, and marking. Should opt-out be broader, including for the exclusions during state-based spraying? These ideas are not yet in the form of recommendations, but the group is gathering perspective. The group is also discussing topics that that cross subcommittees and that belong within this subcommittee, including statewide science-based disease management mosquito control programming, standardized protocols with surveillance, municipal options of available services and cost structuring, public education and ways to measure effectiveness, municipal opt out and need for clear guidance and specific criteria, an opportunity to partner with other organizations like Universities and MassWildlife to pilot programs, opportunities for more transparency and reporting on metrics, and increased transparency for landowners that have special habitats and how to involve them with the spraying/opt out process. Heidi Ricci asked the group if there were any questions or comments and there were none.

Beth Card thanked all subcommittee chairs for their hard work and focus and moved to the next agenda item related to questions and discussion from the DPH presentation. It was noted that the presentation was circulated to Task Force members.

- Post DPH presentation questions and discussion

Richard Robinson commented that he was curious to see if there was more information on DPH's educational processes. Are there ongoing educational efforts about protecting yourself from mosquitos and keeping habitat in check? Dr. Brown noted that DPH discusses risk levels of mosquito borne disease and the steps that people should take to protect themselves as part of a summer campaign. DPH's website is kept up to date to include prevention of mosquito habitat for WNV. In addition to the website, DPH has pamphlets and educational material that can be ordered or downloaded for distribution. Richard Robinson commented that the reason he asked is because he hears that the MCDs use education as part of their mission. Richard Robinson thought there could be opportunity for DPH to amplify the message regarding protection and control of habitat. Dr. Brown noted that this is something that DPH talks about every year and absolutely support the MCDs on that effort. Prior to the pandemic, DPH was able to do presentations for local municipalities. This is a common practice, but DPH does not get to every community every year.

Stephen Rich asked a question regarding a slide discussing private vendors doing mosquito surveillance and/or control in the state. The bullet stated: "private labs don't meet minimum quality standards for what DPH requires." Stephen Rich asked what those minimum requirements are. It is not clear how a private vendor could meet criteria that isn't articulated anywhere. Dr. Brown responded that the slide in question was a step toward outlining what

the criteria would be. State public health lab staff are working on a more granular list of criteria they would expect from a lab specifically. Dr. Brown noted that Stephen Rich's question was fair and in process right now.

Heidi Ricci commented that Uxbridge did succeed in hiring a private company to trap mosquitos and asked if they are working with DPH for testing. Dr. Brown stated that those mosquitos went to Wadsworth which is the NY State Department of Health's lab. Dr. Brown noted that there were challenges identified during the process of working with Uxbridge. There could be ways where individual towns can work and communicate closely with the state system but there are certainly challenges. Dr. Brown did not think we received everything we needed to integrate their data within our system within that first year. Heidi Ricci stated it would be good to have that information as we work to build out recommendations going forward. Heidi Ricci noted there have been good examples of successful surveillance and use of data in Uxbridge. Heidi Ricci noted that Dr. Joann Lindenmayer was able to include this in her report because local trapping enabled them to identify several sites with WNV that had not been documented before. In response, they were able to address a municipal property that was creating WNV breeding habitat. This is a good example of successful surveillance and application of the data in solving a problem.

Dr. Brown noted a lot of lessons learned. There are challenges with (for example) twenty different communities doing their own programming, after which data must be coordinated to be entered into the state system. If the task force expects to make recommendations with regard to this process, thought needs to be devoted to the mechanics of operationalizing it so that it benefits local communities and towns. Heidi asked about the questions that she submitted that were not answered and inquired if anyone from DPH was present to address her questions on environmental health. Heidi Ricci stated that this is still a gap that we need to dig into somehow. Kevin Cranston added that we will find an appropriate time to get DPH to provide our Environmental Health expertise so the committee can get their questions answered. Heidi noted that getting her questions answered in writing would be appreciated. Beth Card asked if there were any further questions on the DPH briefing and there were none.

The meeting content moved to public listening session. It was noted that the next meeting is December 14<sup>th</sup> and the hope was that the subcommittees would be able to provide an outline of recommendations at that time. The recommendation is that the task force host a listening session after the December 14<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting where subcommittee recommendation outlines are shared, such that the public can weigh in on the subcommittee recommendations. An alternate option proposed would be to host the listening session even later. Beth Card opened the proposal for feedback from the group, with a request for input on public listening session structure and timing. Jennifer Pederson commented that January would be better, as she is not available post December 20<sup>th</sup>. Heidi Ricci noted that she is fine waiting until January, but it is important to have a listening session sometime soon, doing it in January may be challenging. Richard Robinson noted his subcommittee might be too far along in recommendation development at that time. In response, Caroline Higley noted that the comment portal is open, and that information can certainly be used as a benefit to the subcommittee in anticipation. Beth Card noted that if the Task Force chooses to do a mid-January listening session, the announcement of a January meeting could emphasize to the public that they are able to submit comments via the comment portal.

Jennifer Pederson asked if participants will be able to register in advance for a public listening session. Caroline Higley noted that last public listening session, members of the public could sign up on a rolling basis to speak. Heidi Ricci agreed that is a good way to do it as long as people that did not have a chance to sign up get a chance at the end to speak and give people plenty of notice if you are going to ask them to sign up ahead of time. Caroline flagged that there was a question from the public that sought to clarify the public listening session. Beth Card read the question and provided direction. Caroline confirmed there will be both December and January Task Force meetings, in addition to a listening session.

- Process updates:

The first process update is on the topic of definitions of terms across subcommittees. One example of this is “nuisance mosquitoes.” We are proposing that each subcommittee define terms and words they chose to include in their recommendations, such that the full task force can resolve as a group. Eve Schluter asked if the terms that were identified could be passed around to the subcommittee groups. Caroline commented that nuisance is the only example that has really presented itself to date. Going forward we will be paying attention if additional terms are identified. The second process update is on public comments. An index of all public comments has been shared with task force members and will be posted online. ERG manually coded the legislative directive and created a cross walk to assist subcommittee members when drafting recommendations. Open call for feedback on the structure of the index looking ahead.

- Next steps:

The subcommittees will continue over the next four weeks. The next Task Force meeting will have updates from subcommittees and will include an outline of recommendations from each subcommittee. Subcommittees can continue to send agenda topic requests directly to Caroline Higley. The next full Task Force meeting will be on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Jennifer Pederson asked if the Legislature has extended the deadline past October 31<sup>st</sup>. Beth Card noted that Legislative liaisons are working on it. Priscilla Matton noted the subcommittee meetings between Christmas and the New Years – would those meetings be canceled? Caroline Higley noted that generally it is left it up to the subcommittee to determine if the meetings need to be canceled, rescheduled, or will continue as planned.

A public comment was made regarding recording the public comments listening session. Caroline Higley noted that we are generally using very detailed meeting minutes in lieu of recording the meeting. Minutes have become a bit of a transcript; however, EEA is looking into the possibility of recording the public listening sessions. Seeing no other agenda items and questions or comments from the Task Force, Beth Card asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jennifer Pederson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kathy Baskin. All in favor of adjournment voted aye and there were no dissenters. Meeting was adjourned at 1:39 p.m.