

MCTF Best Practices Subcommittee Meeting Minutes 10 13 21

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

Subcommittee Meeting: Best Practices

October 13, 2021, 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

Best Practices Subcommittee Members in attendance: Richard Robinson, Heidi Ricci, Helen Poynton, Priscilla Matton, Kathleen Baskin, Kimberly LeBeau, Richard Pollack, Russell Hopping. Subcommittee meeting is at quorum.

The subcommittee meeting was called to order and a role call was conducted with all subcommittee members in attendance other than Anita Deeley. Cheryl Kennan provided follow-up on procedural questions from the previous meeting.

- Review of Understory Questions

- ERG consolidated understory questions into one file.
- Cheryl Keenan asked how the group wanted to proceed regarding the understory questions regarding refining the questions themselves or to start discussing the content.
 - Richard Pollack asked to share some additions to the understory questions.
 - Heidi Ricci noted that her submitted comments were more about identifying gaps and potential sources for filling gaps versus formulating questions.
- Priscilla Matton discussed mosquito control done by private applicator and noted that might be good to clarify the scope of the task force as established by the legislation. Priscilla Matton's impression was that the main task was to focus on State and Local organized mosquito control.
 - Cheryl Keenan mentioned that this could be a discussion to have offline about whether there was anything that was out of scope for the Best Practices subcommittee.
- Russ Hopping expressed some concern that three meetings would be enough for reviewing and discussing all information. Cheryl Keenan noted that their approach could be to get everyone's big picture views and figure out common ground, before moving into identifying critical gaps.
- Richard Robinson encouraged everyone to pose any additional understory questions now. He also thought it was good to get on the same page about the scope; he felt like the intention of the legislation was to make sure the committee wouldn't ignore any relevant features and was in favor of keeping a broader scope.
- Richard Pollack presented some additional understory questions:
 - What predators are known to practically diminish the abundance of the main enzootic and epidemic vectors of WNV and EEE – or of any kind of mosquito - in the Commonwealth?
 - What non-target species, or even target species, had suffered a sustained population decline because of any pesticide applied by an MCD for mosquito management in the Commonwealth?
 - What objective evidence supports the contention that mosquito larvicides or adulticides, as applied by a Massachusetts MCD, have caused direct and measurable harm to a person?
 - To what extent have MCD activities caused agricultural products to be rendered harmful or unhealthful to consumers?
 - What kinds and amounts of pesticides are applied against mosquitoes by commercial applicators? Why do those entities not need to identify and enumerate mosquitoes or to comply with many of the restrictions imposed on MCDs?
 - To what extent and for what reasons would MCDs apply pesticides directly to bodies of drinking water?
- Heidi Ricci wanted to pose another question: where is the list of threatened/ endangered species in Massachusetts where adulticide use might be highly toxic to those organisms? What are the current procedures, if any, with regards to these species? Having this list would be helpful for monitoring purposes.

- Priscilla Matton brought up Chapter 333 CMR 13.3 – exclusions and wondered what specifically in there the subcommittee might want to address.
- Subcommittee members discussed their big picture thoughts as it related to mosquito control. Members of the subcommittee shared thoughts on nuisance spraying versus public health spraying, concerns about non-target impacts, pesticides that are applied by private residents/private applicators, benefit of public education, the decision-making process for how to spray, the benefit of looking at other regions and states to gather information on non-chemical mosquito control, and large landowner interests.
 - Heidi Ricci noted that she felt that identifying the overall goal of the program was an important starting point. and pointed to CDC’s and EPA’s recommendations for a science based IPM approach. Heidi Ricci wondered whether public education and personal protective measures were more important for protection. In addition, there was conversation about municipalities wanting resources for education and surveillance and determining how they would get help if there was a hot spot of cases.
 - Kimberly LeBeau commented that her concerns were mostly directed towards directive six and she spoke from the perspective of large surface water body systems and PFAS. She could see the value in developing a QA/QC program for pesticides used within state beyond just the registration of pesticides for use. She thought that the actual chemical supply shipped to MCDs could be vetted through testing labs and concerns about degradation of chemicals in storage could be flagged. Kim also thought that information could be given to water system managers in a more proactive way. For example, by teaching them how to sample for the pesticides before spraying events occur.
 - Priscilla Matton noted that she would be happy to provide her perspective as part of an MCD on how to define nuisance versus disease-carrying mosquitoes, noting that it was very complex. She mentioned that on 10/19, Taryn LaScola would be giving information on how pesticides are registered and approved for use in MA as well as the PFAS testing that has already been done. She pointed to the Department of Fish and Wildlife as being experts when it came to protecting nontarget species and cited the Department of Environmental Protection as the ones having the resources for testing and monitoring in the environment.
 - Kathleen Baskin mentioned that she would be happy to provide the perspective of DEP on sampling and how they engage with public water systems in response to the previous two comments.
 - Richard Pollack cited his experience with this topic for many decades and noted that he felt a bit frustrated about the way the subcommittee seemed to be approaching the first two directives. In his experience as a Commissioner, there was a phenomenal amount of effort put into IPM, such as, education, stormwater management, chemical and other non-chemical efforts for mosquito control. He noted that MCDs do share information and look to other regions, consult journals, and go to conferences for the latest news. He felt that the distinction between nuisance and disease mosquitoes might not be easily resolvable. He would challenge everyone to think about their threshold for tolerating disease and death resulting from WNV and EEE. He rejected the suggestion that there was no data on the efficacy of spraying and disease prevention; he acknowledged the data isn’t great but that these weren’t “spray and pray” operations. Richard Pollack mentioned that the reason why the location of cases couldn’t be released more easily was due to confidentiality issues. He also rejected the claim that natural habitats don’t support mosquitoes, pointing to cedar swamps and cattail stands as examples of habitats that are major mosquito breeding grounds.
- Cheryl Keenan noted that ERG could look through comments on the report and add them to the critical gap spreadsheet. For the next meeting, the subcommittee was tasked with reviewing the comments that had been made available on the report and to continue to identify critical gaps. The focus would be on filling the most critical gaps that are necessary to move forward with recommendations.
 - Heidi Ricci noted that in her submission she thought she was identifying only the most critical of gaps. Even in cases where the issue was a lack of data, she would want there to be a discussion. She noted that one concern she hadn’t raised was about vulnerable individuals, such as, infants, children,

pregnant women. The report talked about recommendations for these individuals to reduce their own exposure, but she wasn't sure how many people these recommendations were reaching. She wondered if relying on these measures was sufficient.

- Russ Hopping suggested having people answer the understory questions and aggregating the results.
- Richard Pollack noted that he was open to finding common ground and wanted Richard Robinson to help educate him on the measurable impacts of MCD pesticide applications to organic agriculture in MA.

- Comment submitted via the Zoom Q&A from LJ Rigsby:
 - Should all public awareness material, - messaging, factsheets, flyers, infographics be managed centrally at EOHHS-level and disseminated thru org chart and available to all municipalities and public. MCDs offer member municipalities support resources for public awareness and prevention. Northeast for example, via a "Municipal Toolbox," gated and accessible only to members. Is it legal for MCDs to restrict access to these "public health" documents? Does each MCD create its own public awareness materials?
From MCD:
 - Educating the public about mosquitoes and mosquito-borne illness is an important aspect of integrated mosquito control. Districts produce educational outreach materials, give presentations to the public, and bring outreach materials to public events, to teach people about the "personal protection" required to prevent mosquito-borne illness. Several Districts also offer comprehensive programs to their member communities that are geared towards K-12