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News Release

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**Local Boy Scout Troops and Mosquito Control District
FIGHT THE BITE AT LOCAL CEMETERY**
Two Special Districts Unite to Protect Public From West Nile Virus

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA - The Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District (the District), along with local Boy Scout troops and Union Cemetery in Brentwood are collaborating Saturday, June 25 to “Fight the Bite” against mosquito breeding, helping to reduce the risk of West Nile virus (WNV) transmission. Nearly 50 Scouts will tend to 6,000 flower vases on 13 acres at the cemetery, dumping water or adding absorbent so mosquitoes won’t breed there.

“Mosquitoes can breed in just tablespoons of water, and the vases, while seemingly an unlikely mosquito breeding container, certainly can breed mosquitoes if the water is not removed after a period of time,” said Deborah Bass, public affairs manager of the District. “We are extremely pleased to see Union Cemetery and local Boy Scout troops take such a caring and proactive interest in helping to keep our community healthy.”

Experts are predicting Northern California to be the epicenter of West Nile virus this year. The virus is one of a group of disease-causing viruses spread by mosquitoes. It is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito and cannot be spread person to person. Mosquitoes become infected with WNV when they feed on infected birds.

It is estimated that 1 in 5 people bitten by an infected mosquito become ill. People who do become ill may experience more serious and long-lasting symptoms than once believed, such as fever, headache and body ache, lasting several days to several months. Less than one percent of infected individuals require hospitalization. The elderly and immunocompromised are particularly susceptible to illness and death caused by WNV.

“The best prevention method for West Nile virus is to not breed mosquitoes in the first place,” said Bass. “And with an especially wet winter combined with the hot weather we are experiencing, we have the perfect combination for a potentially huge amount of mosquito breeding. The proactive work that Mark White is doing for the Union Cemetery is just exemplary.”

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WHO:

Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District
Union Cemetery, Brentwood
Boy Scout troops #93 and #298

WHAT:

“Fight the Bite Day”

- Local Boy Scout troops are volunteering to help dump water or add absorbent to flower vases to ensure there is no mosquito breeding at the Union Cemetery.
- A West Nile virus presentation will be made by Deborah Bass of Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District.

WHERE:

Union Cemetery
11545 Brentwood Blvd.
Brentwood, CA 94513

WHEN:

Saturday, June 25
8:00 – Welcome and introductions
8:10 – West Nile virus presentation
8:30 – Instructions for tending to vases
8:45 – Go, Scouts, Go!
11:30 – Lunch and applause

WHY:

Mosquitoes can breed in just tablespoons of water. Flower vases at cemeteries can breed mosquitoes because they hold water. Water that stands for more than five days can breed mosquitoes. Mosquitoes can transmit West Nile virus.

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