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PRESS RELEASE-For Immediate Release

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West Nile Virus Alert Issued for Twin Falls County

TWIN FALLS-South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) officials and the Twin Falls County Pest Abatement District (TFCPAD) have confirmed a West Nile Virus positive mosquito pool in Twin Falls County caught in district traps between Twin Falls and Kimberly. No human cases have been reported to date.

“TFCPAD traps mosquitoes to test for the virus throughout Twin Falls County during the summer. Some species are more prone to carrying diseases than others and we try to focus our work on those species. We have already increased surveillance and treatment in the area of the positive pools,” Kirk Tubbs, TFCPAD Manager. “In light of all the recent rain, it is important that people drain standing water from all containers around their houses. Standing water is where mosquitoes lay their eggs and larva develop prior to hatching.”

West Nile Virus is considered endemic to Idaho and everyone in the Magic Valley should take precautions, not just those in Twin Falls.

West Nile is a potentially serious illness that is usually spread to animals and humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most people infected with West Nile do not show symptoms. However, people with symptoms may experience fever, headaches, body aches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, eye pain, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash typically occurring 2 to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. More severe infections may involve the central nervous system. Tubbs said that it is important that everyone knows about the disease and how to protect themselves against it.

- When you are outdoors, use insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient, such as DEET or Picaridin (apply it according to manufacturers' instructions.) Parents are advised not to apply repellent that contains more than 10 percent DEET on their children. In addition, certain products which contain permethrin are recommended for use on clothing, shoes, bed nets, and camping gear. Follow the directions on the package.
- Use insect repellent and wear long sleeves, pants, and loose-fitting clothing at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active and feeding. If possible, consider staying indoors during these hours.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by draining standing water from flower pots, buckets, and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths and feeding troughs, at least twice a week. Drill holes in tire swings or old tires so water drains out. Keep children's wading pools empty or on their sides when not in use.
- Don't over-irrigate your lawns, gardens, or pastures.

For more information on West Nile, visit SCPHD's website at phd5.idaho.gov or the TFCPAD website at <http://tfcpad.org/>.

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