

Mosquito district seeks approval of new insecticide

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- **Opinion**

The agreement to form the first Brandon/Leicester/Salisbury Insect Control District was approved by the voters in April 1978 and a union municipal district corporation (in accordance with all the requirements of title 24 Chapter 121 §4861–§4866 Vermont statutes) was formed.

The members of the BLS board are appointed by the selectboards of the respective towns. In the spring of 1987 following an early warming, we had an early hatch of mosquitoes. My wife fell into a coma and lay unconscious in the Rutland hospital for a week. Fortunately she recovered but had to learn to walk again. The virus that infected her was never identified. I petitioned the Goshen selectboard to join the BLS and with voter approval BLS became BLSG.

I have served on the BLSG board since 1988 and we hope that others will not have to suffer the near-death experience of my wife.

I took the examination and became a licensed pesticide applicator that summer.

The BLSG has always held a noncommercial government license and this license is renewed yearly by the state of Vermont Agency of Agriculture. Prior to 1978, the Lake Dunmore Association had sprayed for mosquitoes and when BLSG was formed they gifted the equipment to us. For the last 37 years the BLS/BLSG has been providing relief from biting mosquitoes with our noncommercial government license under the auspices and with the assistance of the agency of agriculture. The Ag agency in August 1991 issued “Vermont regulations for control of pesticides” in accordance with 6 VSA chapter 87.

We have been unable to find any prohibition in that regulation that would prevent BLSG from treating the private roads of the Lake Dunmore region under our noncommercial government applicators license 7B which we hold. However, in order to expedite mosquito abatement and preserve commerce, we caved and received a commercial license.

Perhaps it was when roads were re-signed for 911 that many of the roads received private signage and hence more visibility.

Comparing the Lemon Fair Insect Control District with the BLSG is like comparing apples and oranges. The Lemon Fair organizational board had several pilots who enjoyed flying and they were able to treat mosquito larvae too by

aerial application of larvicides. In order to pay for the plane they had to treat outside of their own union municipal districts, hence they needed a commercial license. Since the BLSG was only treating within the four union towns, we operated for 37 years with a noncommercial government license with very few problems and great cooperation from the department of Ag.

The BLSG has identified and mapped over 5,000 acres of treatable mosquito breeding habitat in the four-town district, mostly along the Otter Creek drainage. It is primarily the mosquitoes that hatch in this drainage area that are blown by the westerly winds into the Lake Dunmore area.

With the proliferation of organic farming in the valley, 20 percent of the wetlands (approximately 1,000 acres) are now off-limits to adulticide treatment and require organic larvicides for control.

Clarke, a mosquito control company, has such a product, Natular R30, which provides a 30-day effective window of treatment. The U.S. EPA has approved and certified this product.

The BLSG has for the past 2-1/2 years requested that this product be added to our permitted list, but to no avail.

This is where citizens can help by contacting the governors hotline and requesting approval of Natular R30.

The BLSG has always carried insurance; in fact, it represents 20 percent of our budget. We have no intentions of competing with private commercial applicators; we serve the general public .

If Angelo would like to start a new business and run it, I would welcome him to the board (of course with selectboard approval).

I appreciate the excellent coverage that your paper has provided on this important issue and let's keep the pressure on our state representatives and legislators and state officials to get Natular R-30 approved.

We do not need any more deaths.