**LFICD Fall 2023 Newsletter**

**Field Conditions:** Despite active surveillance and targeted treatments in the Lemon Fair River valley, this was a difficult mosquito season. Some of the most sustained flood conditions we’ve seen on the Lemon Fair River made tracking and identifying new hatches of mosquito larvae difficult.

The month of August recorded 13” of rain, with one rain event on August 3 yielding 4.7” in about one hour’s time. Combining July’s rain with August, the total rainfall amount was 30”. The Lemon Fair River valley sustained the longest period of floodwater since the LFICD has been keeping records. Repeated rain events generated hatches everywhere (e.g., upland puddles, lawns), not just limited to the Lemon Fair floodplain and Cornwall Swamp. All 8 mosquito traps were set up on a weekly basis. We surpassed 2021’s highest trap year of 64,827 mosquitoes. We are more on the order of 105,000+ for 2023.

Only selective acreages (1 to 30 acres) in the Lemon Fair floodplain had large larval counts and many areas didn’t yield any larval activity. Given these small and scattered areas of standing water, helicopter treatment could not be justified. (North Fork, our helicopter provider, requires 1,000-acre minimum treatment.) From June to August, we undertook hand treatments using a backpack sprayer. Post treatment surveillance proved these treatments were 90% effective.

The LFICD Hotline registered 33 complaint calls. We responded either in person or by phone and email. The goal was to help property owners mitigate mosquito habitat on their properties and empower them to treat areas using larvicides and barrier sprays for adult mosquitoes.

**Moving Forward:** We need the ability to treat 10, 30, 50 to 100/200 acres in a day. At best, the backpack sprayer can treat only 15-30 acres a day. The ideal solution is a drone capable of carrying 40 lbs. of granular larvicide at a time and treating up to 200 acres in a day. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture (“VAA”), the LFICD’s Grant Administrator, has expressed support for using a drone for larvicide treatment. However, before the treatment drone becomes available, there are several hurdles that need to be addressed including VAA funding, establishing applicable regulations, pilot identification, training, and licensing. We look forward to working with the VAA to make this a reality.

**Summer Internship Program:** The LFICD employed two college interns as field/lab technicians as it has for the last three years, Audrey Maxwell from Middlebury College and Ramsey Anis from UVM. The district benefited, not only in conducting “boots on the ground” field and lab work, but also applying data collection skills. They also represented the LFICD at a table set up in the Home and Garden Pavilion at the Addison County Fair & Field Days. A total of 237 people stopped by the exhibit. Thank you, Audrey and Ramsey.

**LFICD Board:** During the last year we have had several board changes. Bridport: Alissa Shethar resigned in March. Cornwall: in April, Bob Cluss replaced Wendy Lynch and in September, David Zarowin replaced David Dodge. Our board members are Bridport: Dinah Bain and Judd Markowski, Cornwall: Chris Chapline, Bob Cluss and David Zarowin, Weybridge: Gary Rodes. We need one additional board member in Bridport and two additional board members in Weybridge. We thank all past and current board members for their service.

LFICD Board and Craig Zondag, LFICD Field Coordinator/Biologist