

## **20. Model for Local Government Paper: “The South Cook County Mosquito Abatement District”**

The South Cook County Mosquito Abatement District is responsible for the prevention of mosquito borne disease through various mosquito control management programs. The district's stated mandate is to “abate effectively and economically the mosquito problem, using modern, scientific, and practical methods of control applied in an orderly and systematic manner while giving due consideration to the rights of property owners, residents, and political subdivisions of the district.”

### **PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**

#### **Legal Basis**

In 1927 the Illinois Legislature passed the Mosquito Abatement Districts Act (Chapter 111-1/2, section 82 (9) Illinois Revised State Statutes, 1965) that enabled the voters, by referendum, to organize tax supported abatement districts.

The South Cook County Mosquito Abatement District was organized in March of 1953 and became operational in 1955. The district is the largest mosquito abatement district in the state of Illinois and one of the largest in the Midwest. The district serves 340 square miles, which, in general, include the area bounded by 87th Street in the city of Chicago on the north, the Indiana state line on the east, the Will County line on the south and west, and DuPage County on the northwest side. Four mosquito abatement districts together serve a little more than three-fourths of Cook County's total area.

## **Departmental Programs**

### *Current Programs:*

The district's Mosquito Control Management program is based mainly on the biological and environmental concept of insect pest management. Routine, systematic survey and surveillance of all potential mosquito producing sites are implemented for maximum larval control. Safe organophosphate chemicals, or highly dispersible oils, are applied to producing sites. Since the mosquito is most centralized, relatively immobile, and accessible in the juvenile or larval stage, the district is able to kill large numbers of the larval population and by doing so prevent large numbers of emerging adult mosquitoes from entering the community. According to the district, the best solution to all mosquito problems is concentrating major control efforts on the mosquito producing sites.

Once adult mosquitoes have emerged from their aquatic environment and are in flight, there is very little effective control work that can be accomplished. In a very limited number of cases concentrations of adult' mosquitoes can be driven away or may be killed in areas where they rest in woods, grassy vacant lots, or bushy patches of back yards. Generally, operations of this sort are limited by weather conditions. Mild temperatures and low wind speed are needed for good results. This is basically true of the Ultra Low Volume (ULV) application control treatment. Costly, specialized ULV machines are needed to disperse the insecticide in very minute droplets (5-15 microns) into the adult harborage areas. While weather conditions occasionally may be ideal on a calm evening, results are frequently unpredictable and very inconsistent. Some 2,000

miles of traffic-crowded streets and alleys within the district make this operation impractical, rather dangerous, and decidedly too expensive to employ on a night by night basis during the summer. However, the district has made effective and efficient use of complaint calls from citizens by sending field operations to spot sites of mosquito invasion. This was supplemented by field crews taking biting or landing counts at sites of complaint.

The specific programs of the district's control management program include:

Field Operations: field inspections of potential breeding sites and spot treatments

Larval Surveys: larviciding, the district's primary control method, involves locating, identifying/recording, and killing mosquito larvae in their breeding habitat

Adult Mosquito Surveys: trapping, identifying/recording, and spraying mosquito aggregation sites

Post Inspection: monitoring day-to-day field performance

Education/Outreach: providing educational materials to local school districts and the community

## **ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

The district is governed by a Board of Trustees composed of five nonpartisan, tax-paying residents of the district who serve without salary. Members of the Board of Trustees are appointed for four-year terms by the president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners. A manager-entomologist administers and directs all operations in the district.

Meetings of the Board of Trustees are open to the public and are scheduled for the second Monday of each month, at 3:30 p.m. at the district headquarters, unless otherwise announced.

There are seven divisions in the district. Four are based on geographical demarcations (i.e., the Central, Eastern, Southern, and Western Divisions) covering the entire district. The remaining divisions include: the Laboratory, Garage, and Ground Maintenance.

**Executive Personnel**

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Board of Trustees	President	Lawrence Gulotta	333-4120
Board of Trustees	Vice President	Clarence Bobbe	333-4120
Board of Trustees	Vice President	Wallace Young	333-4120
Board of Trustees	Secretary	Theodore Cook	333-4120
Board of Trustees	Treasurer	Fred Massat	333-4120
Headquarters	Manager	Dr. Kilian Liem	333-4120
Headquarters	Assistant Manager	Nick LoBue	333-4120
Central Division	Division Supervisor	Douglas Wright	333-4120
Eastern Division	Division Supervisor	Elwin Brady	333-4120
Southern Division	Division Supervisor	John Komafel	333-4120
Western Division	Division Supervisor	Frank Gordon	333-4120
Laboratory	Entomologist	Dr. Khian Liem	333-4120
Garage	Mechanic	Frank Grys	333-4120
Ground Maintenance		Ronald Celebuski	333-4120

**Decision-Making Structure**

The manager/entomologist administers and directs all operations in the district.

### **Mayoral Control**

Each mosquito abatement district in Cook County has a five-person board. Appointments to the board are made by the Cook County board president. The mayor of Chicago has no jurisdictional authority.

### **Number of Budgeted Employees**

1983	30
1987	29
1988	29
1989	29

### **Interdepartmental Connections**

The district interacts with the following agencies:

- Illinois Department of Public Health
- Local and County Health Boards
- Illinois Department of Agriculture (for public pesticide licensing)

### **DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET**

#### **Appropriated Amounts**

1983	\$1,221,540	General Fund*
1987	\$1,344,500	General Fund
1988	\$1,400,420	General Fund

1989            \$1,658,200            General Fund

\* Revenue for the general fund is collected from the property tax, personal property replacement tax, and interest on investments.

**Expenditure Amounts**

1983            \$1,139,610

1987            \$1,250,494

1988            \$1,307,414

**SERVICE AND PROGRAM DELIVERY**

The total budget of the fiscal year 1988/1989 is projected at \$1,805,060 to cover 340 square miles. The cost for providing the mosquito management program per average homeowner is approximately \$3.00.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Board meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at the District Headquarters, 15440 South Dixie Highway, Harvey, Illinois 60426. They are open to the public.

**PHYSICAL LOCATIONS**

Headquarters and Central Division

15440 South Dixie Highway

Harvey, Illinois 60426

Western Division

143rd Street and 108th Avenue

Orland Park, Illinois 60462

Southern Division

Eastern Division

State and Sauk Trail

41 East 137th Street

South Chicago Heights, Illinois 60411

Riverdale, Illinois 60627

## **OVERVIEW**

The functions of the current agency seem to be well performed. However, the principal issue raised by all special districts, such as this one, is whether the service ought to be performed by general governments like the county or the city through line agencies (e.g., the Department of Health). While it is possible the same 29 employees might be needed, there might be some administrative, clerical, secretarial, or budgeting positions that could be eliminated in such a merger. The separate property tax could be eliminated and the service paid for out of the general government's funds, which might include property taxes. Most importantly, a better-known body such as the County Board of Commissioners would bear ultimate responsibility and would be more accountable to citizens.