

Stream Cleaning and Mosquito Control

Why mosquito control?

Mosquito eggs, larvae and pupae thrive in stagnant water. The Monmouth County Mosquito Control Division initiates “water management” projects to make water conditions unsupportive to mosquito development. For example, the Division will remove fallen trees, limbs and debris that are damming up a stream to improve water flow. Larvae will not survive in water with even a little bit of current. The Mosquito Control Division may also initiate a project to remove sand and silt from a stream channel to contain normal or small storm flows in the channel.

Just one option for Mosquito Control

This “water management” strategy, however, is only one option available to us to control mosquitoes. The Division has ***no legal obligation or responsibility*** to maintain any stream, ditch, pond or waterway.

Stream cleaning to reduce flooding

Often the Monmouth County Mosquito Control Division is asked to clean a stream because of localized flooding problems. All of our projects **must be** conducted for the purpose of mosquito control. Unless the flooding creates standing water that remains long after a rain event and supports mosquito development, the Division does not have the authority to clean the stream. We cannot get involved in projects that cause temporary flooding of roads or properties during rainfall events but do not create a mosquito problem.

A project moves forward

In support of our public health mission, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Division of Land Use Regulation (LUR) has issued the Division countywide Freshwater Wetlands and Flood Hazard Area permits. For each project conducted under the permits, the Division prepares the following:

- A project description describing the conditions conducive to mosquito development
- A review and mapping of state and federal threatened and endangered (T&E) species and Natural Heritage data and habitat
- Photographs of the project site including access points
- GIS mapping of project site, photo locations and access points on aerial base map, Wetlands Mapping, T&E habitat mapping, Natural Heritage database mapping and USGS map location

Relatively simple projects such as removing snags from a stream or cleaning a man-made ditch may move forward relatively quickly provided property owners give the County permission to work on their land.

But wait!

When a stream cleaning project creates a significant disturbance to wetlands, the project is conducted under our Freshwater Wetlands General Permit #15 for Mosquito Control which involves a project specific approval process that ultimately results in written approval specific to that project from Land Use Regulation.

Currently, the Division submits the items listed above to LUR for a determination on whether the GP-15 process is triggered. The additional approval process includes a number of steps:

1. The Mosquito Control Division must collect mosquito surveillance and/or treatment data that indicates existing conditions are producing mosquitoes.
2. Representatives of NJDEP Office of Mosquito Control Coordination (OMCC) visit the project site to verify conditions are creating mosquito habitat.
3. Concurrently, the Division through the municipality obtains “right of entry agreements” from property owners to access their properties and/or implement the project.
4. The Division places public notice ads in 2 newspapers
5. The project package, including proof of public notice, is formally submitted to the Administrator of OMCC
6. The Administrator of OMCC reviews and certifies in writing that the project is indeed for mosquito control and forwards the package to Land Use Regulation

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7. Land Use Regulation reviews and provides written approval.
8. A pre-construction field meeting is held with NJDEP Enforcement, OMCC, Freehold Soil Conservation District, Mosquito Control Division personnel, and Highway Division supervisors and/or equipment operators to review the details of implementation.
9. The Office of Mosquito Control Coordination and Land Use Regulation monitor the project during and after implementation.

All projects, large and small, are conducted following “Best Management Practices for Mosquito Control and Freshwater Wetlands Management,” Soil Erosion and Sediment Control regulations, and timing restrictions outlined in the countywide permits.

While the Division initiates and plans the project, the actual work is conducted by personnel from the Highway Division and, on occasion, Shade Tree Division. In addition to timing restrictions, scheduling the project is coordinated with the other work demands of these divisions

If not a mosquito project, what can be done?

NJDEP LUR’s regulations contain some Permit-by-rules and General Permits for stream cleaning. Please refer to LUR’s web site by visiting www.nj.gov/dep/landuse/activity/sclean.html reprinted below:

More detailed specifics about the each permit can be found at NJDEP’s Guidelines for Stream Cleaning found at: http://www.nj.gov/dep/landuse/download/fh_012.pdf