



Panhandle Health District

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Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Nile Virus Confirmed in Boundary County Horses

BONNERS FERRY – Today, Panhandle Health District received notification of two dead horses testing positive for West Nile Virus in Boundary County. Both horses were unvaccinated. This is the first evidence of mosquitos potentially carrying West Nile Virus in Boundary County since 2014.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a potentially serious illness that is usually spread to animals and humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most people infected with the illness, do not show symptoms, although more severe symptoms may occur. People with symptoms may experience fever, headaches, body aches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash typically occurring 2 to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito.

“We know mosquitos carrying West Nile can live in North Idaho and mosquito pools have tested positive in the past,” said Jeff Lee, Staff Epidemiologist at Panhandle Health District. “Residents should be aware of West Nile Virus and take simple precautions to protect themselves against mosquito bites.”

The best way to avoid the mosquito bites is to reduce exposure to and eliminate breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Panhandle Health District recommends the following:

- Limit time spent outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Apply insect repellent to clothing as well as exposed skin since mosquitoes may bite through clothing. Make sure window and door screens are in good repair to prevent mosquito entry.
- Properly dispose of items that hold water, such as tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots, or discarded tires.
- Clean roof gutters and downspouts for proper drainage.
- Turn over wheelbarrows, wading pools, boats, and canoes when not in use.
- Change the water in birdbaths and pet dishes at least every three days.

- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers.
- Trim tall grass, weeds, and vines since mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours.
- Landscape to prevent water from pooling in low-lying areas.
- Repair damaged screens on windows and doors.

For more information on WNV in Idaho, visit Idaho Department of Health and Welfare at www.westnile.idaho.gov .

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