



US Army Corps of Engineers

Norfolk District

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 6, 2003
04-16

Corps contracts for aerial mosquito spraying at Craney Island

PORTSMOUTH, VA. – Responding to citizen concern over the mosquito population at the Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has contracted a private crop dusting company to spray the 2,500-acre facility with Dibrom, an adult pesticide.

The spraying is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, August 11 at dusk. In case of inclement weather, Thursday and Friday, August 12 and 13, are alternate spray dates.

“Norfolk District is taking extraordinary measures to do our part in reducing mosquitoes in the city of Portsmouth,” said William A. Sorrentino Jr., P.E., Chief Engineer. “We recognize that conditions at Craney Island contribute to the mosquito population and we are continuing to find new and innovative ways to address the situation. To date, the federal government has spent more than \$1 million on mosquito control strategies, including aerial spraying, ditching equipment, larvicide, studies and consultants.”

The flight will be in addition to the Air Force spraying that has been performed since 1996. The Air Force is currently scheduled to make their initial spray flight between 6 August and 2

September. Additional Air Force flights are expected in September and October, subject to the availability of the aircraft. The spraying on August 11 will only cover the Craney Island federal area and not the Navy Fuel Depot, Coast Guard base or the River Shores area.

Dibrom leaves no visible residue and is not normally harmful except to bees. Area beekeepers should take precautions to protect their hives. Residents who are allergic to Dibrom should remain indoors for at least 30 minutes after the spraying.

The spraying is just one of many tactics that the Corps of Engineers is using to control mosquito population at Craney Island. Under the guidance of an entomologist who has worked with the Corps since 1994, other strategies include reducing standing water; controlling nuisance vegetation; treating standing water with mosquito larvae control products; monitoring larvae and adult mosquito populations; and ongoing coordination and cooperation with the City of Portsmouth and other federal agencies.

The Corps is also expecting to receive a permit from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries next week to stock areas of Craney Island with 3,000 *Gambusia holbrooki*, also known as mosquito fish, top-feeding minnows from the guppy family that have been used for mosquito control since 1905.

For updated information on the spraying schedule residents may call the Craney Island office at 484-1021.

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