

History of Mosquito Control in California

INITIAL MOSQUITO CONTROL ACTION IN CALIFORNIA

The first recorded mosquito control efforts in California were under the direction of University of California professors and employed against the salt marsh mosquitoes of the San Francisco Bay marshlands at San Rafael (1904) and at Burlingame (1905).

FIRST ANTI-MALARIA CONTROL EFFORTS

The devastating effects of malaria in California's Central Valley in 1908 led to an education and demonstration program on malaria and anopheline mosquito control conducted by professor William B. Herms of the University of California, Berkeley, and sponsored by the Southern Pacific Railway. The first organized anti-malaria program was undertaken at Penryn in the Sacramento Valley in 1910, and later the same year an anti-malaria program was started in nearby Oroville.

FIRST LEGISLATED ABATEMENT AGENCIES

Enabling legislation for the creation of organized mosquito control agencies was passed May 29, 1915, when the State Legislature approved the Mosquito Abatement Act. The Marin, Three Cities, and Oroville Mosquito Abatement Districts (MAD) were formed in 1915-16, with the Los Molinos, Pulgas, and Dr. Morris (Kern) MADs being established in the following year.

PEST ABATEMENT DISTRICTS

Legislation authorizing the creation of pest abatement districts was passed in 1935, but only a few such districts have been formed for mosquito control. The Carpinteria Pest Abatement District, formed in 1936, and the Eastside District, formed in 1939, are two. In pest abatement districts, the powers and legal bases are very similar to mosquito abatement districts, but the former provide for abatement of "any plant, animal, insect, fish, or other matter or material" as deemed a pest.

COORDINATING ROLE OF STATE HEALTH

The State Department of Public Health (Department of Health Services) created a Bureau of Vector Control (Environmental Management Branch) in 1946. The Branch was staffed with experts who assisted in the formation of many new mosquito abatement districts. The Branch also provided a number of technical services including disease surveillance and research studies throughout California.

CURRENT STATUS OF CONTROL AGENCIES

There were 82 organized mosquito and vector control agencies in 2012, 65 of which were members of the MVCAC. These agencies had a combined operating budget totaling 75.8 million dollars. They provided control measures against mosquitoes, chaoborids (phantom midges), chironomids (non-biting midges), rodents, and other pests and vectors for 37.3 million California residents.



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