

HARROGATE TOWN MEETING

Managing Phorid Flies

Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Meeting Purpose

Continue the process of educating ourselves regarding phorid flies and managing them as a community in a reasonable, timely, and cost-effective manner

Agenda

- Opening remarks – Les Clarke
- Problem description – Roy Schuyler
- Political and agency support – Pete Mrozinski
- How we plan to proceed – Pete Mrozinski
- Q&A – Les Clarke

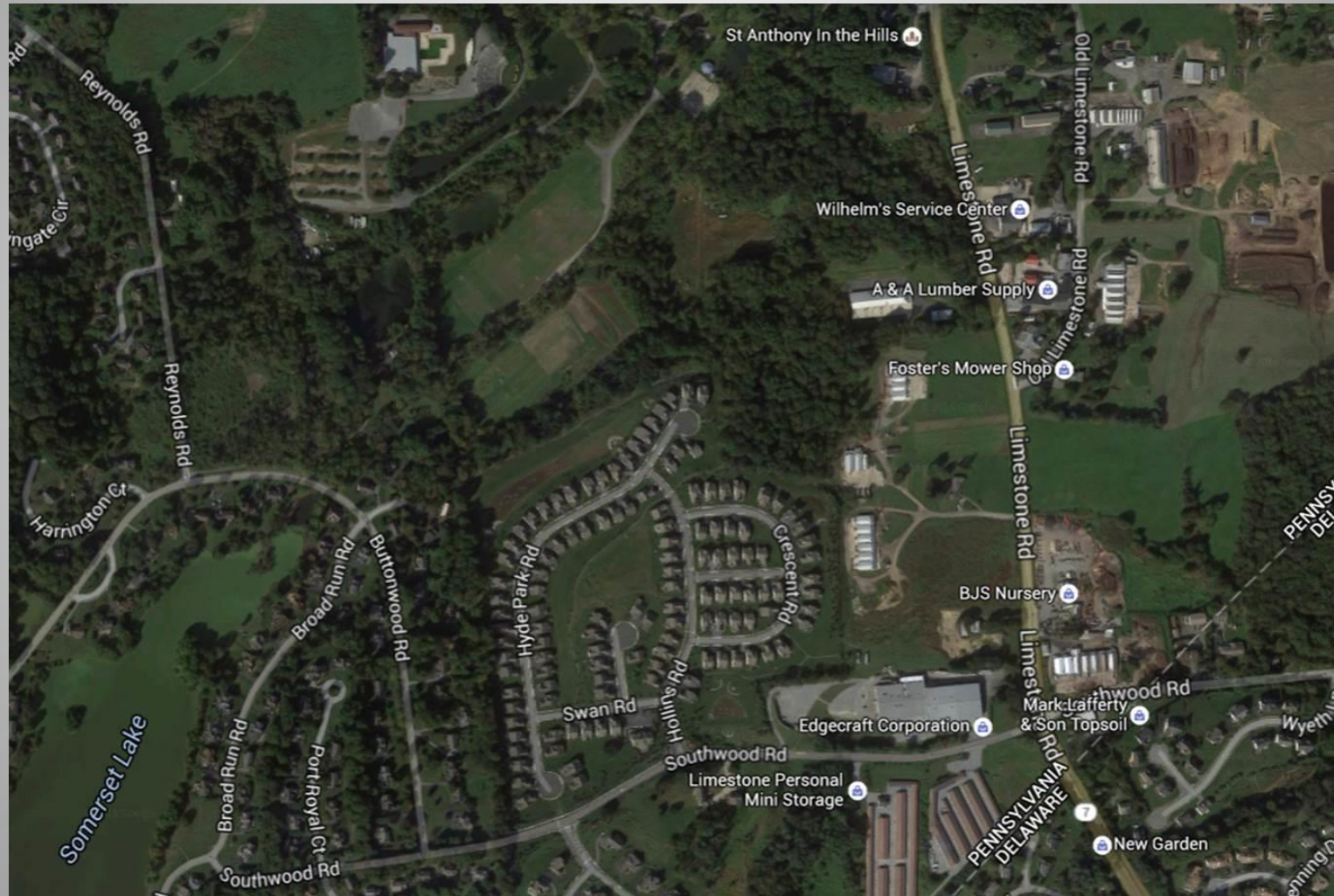
Problem Description

- What we know and/or believe about phorid flies
- Our situation in Harrogate North
- What we don't know

What We Know About the Flies

- Endemic to our area
- Require moist, decaying organic material to breed
 - Mushroom houses
 - Sewer treatment facilities
 - Storage locations for spent mushroom soil
 - Nursery wholesalers with organic mulch inventories
 - Natural areas

Harrogate North Aerial Map



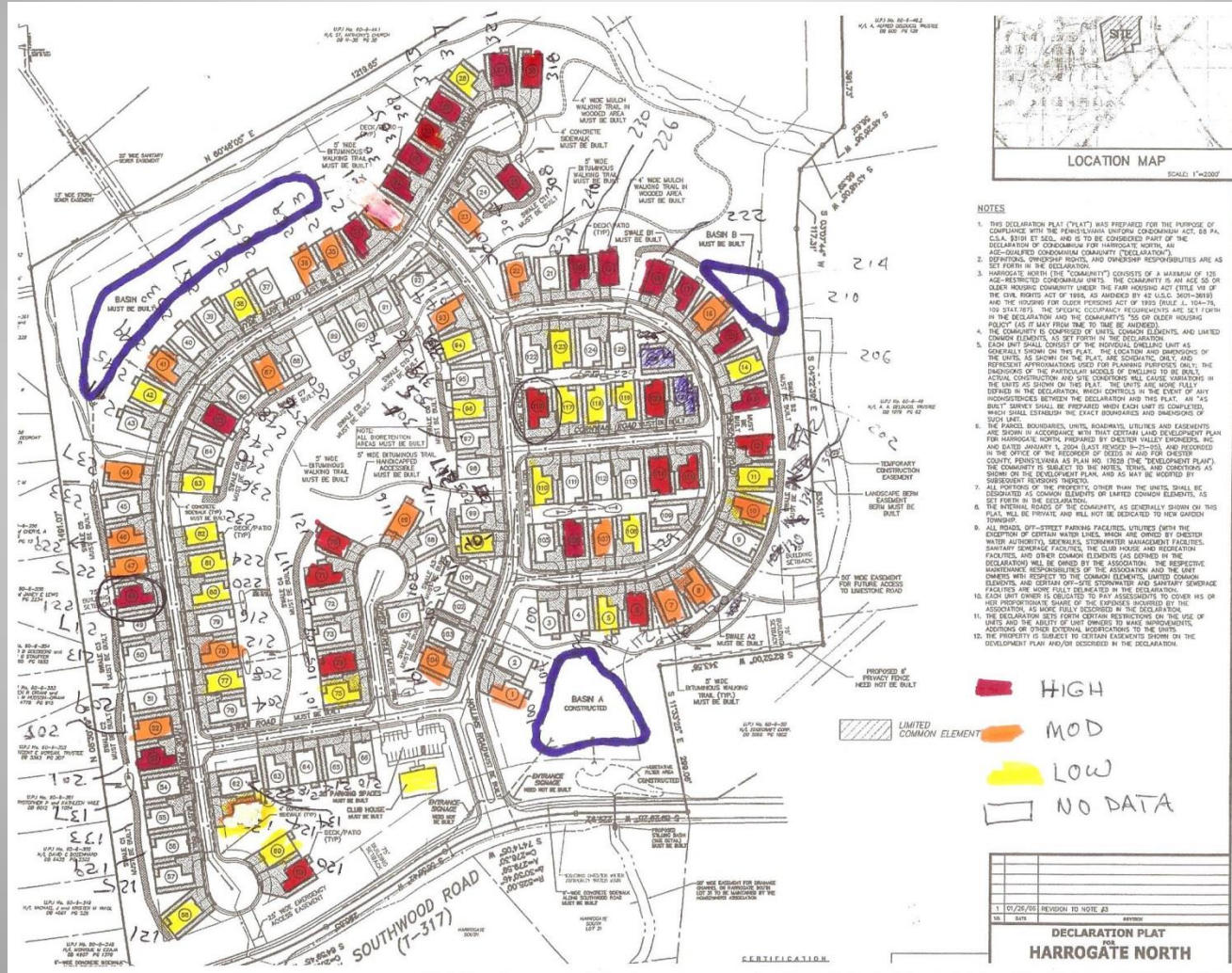
What We Know About the Flies

- Endemic to our area
- Require moist, decaying organic material to breed
- Very poor fliers – wind currents disperse them
- Active in warmer temperatures
- Multiply as the summer proceeds
- Become inactive outside with the advent of sustained cold weather

Our Situation

- Infestations began in 2010
- 2016 survey of Harrogate residents
 - 30 homes seriously infested (25% of all homes)
 - 19 homes moderately infested (15% of all homes)

2016 Survey Results



Our Situation

- Infestations began in 2010
- 2016 survey of Harrogate residents
 - 30 homes seriously infested (25% of all homes)
 - 19 homes moderately infested (15% of all homes)
- Follow-up survey of seriously infested homes
 - Number of infested homes increased over time
- Infestations in 2015 ceased with cold weather
 - Flies breed outside and find their way inside

What We Don't Know

- Where are the breeding sites???
 - Mushroom houses??
 - Within Harrogate North
 - Mulch beds?
 - Basins, bio-basins, storm water drainage pipes?
- A reason for distribution of infestation severity
- Was 2015 infestation typical or an outlier?
- How long will it take to develop an effective fly management strategy?

Political and Agency Support

- Resident attempts to solicit help from state and county agencies
- NGT Board of Supervisors Meeting – February 16
- Meeting with NGT Manager and MS4 Coordinator/Flood Plain Coordinator – March 14
- Meeting with State Senator Andrew Dinniman – March 17

Meeting with State, County, and Township Representatives

- Meeting arranged by Tony Sheivert, NGT Manager
- Attendees
 - State Senator Andrew Dinniman
 - Two members of Senator Dinniman's staff
 - Tony Scheivert
 - Mike Zook - Chester County Conservation District
 - Shelly Dehoff – Ombudsman, Lancaster County Conservation District
 - Chris Barber – Reporter, Southern Chester County Weeklies
 - Seven Harrogate North residents

Some Key Learnings

- Harrogate residents' interactions with the township over the past several months have raised awareness of the issue
- Tony Scheivert has already committed a lot of time and effort
- Both the county and the state want to help
- Bureaucratic limitations

Bureaucratic Limitations

- Agencies with overlapping responsibilities
- Agencies not sharing information
- Agencies without enforcement authority
 - Chester County Conservation District is responsible to work with growers to develop “best practices” plans, yet has no enforcement authority
- Working through the bureaucracy will be time consuming

Integrated Pest Management Committee of AMI

- Recent meeting attended by Tony Scheivert and a member of Senator Dinniman's staff
- Key learnings
 - Phorid flies are a major financial problem for the mushroom industry
 - Flies are expected to be worse this year
 - Limited availability of pesticides
 - Most growers are responsible, but some rogue facilities exist
 - Tony Scheivert held informal discussions at meeting
 - Large infestation in Harrogate North strongly suggests internal breeding sites
 - Storm water management system, particularly bio-basins, should be treated as potential breeding sites

Path Forward

- State, county, and township will coordinate efforts to address fly issue outside of Harrogate North
- Agreement was reached to work directly with AMI
 - Tony Scheivert with help of Senator Dinniman's office
 - Industry wants to control phorid flies
 - Majority of growers are conscientious
 - Visit local growers to assure “best practices” are followed
 - Rely on industry pressure to get growers in line

Path Forward

(Cont'd)

- Senator Dinniman agreed to personally reach out to university extension programs to identify expert academics
- Senator Dinniman's office and Tony Scheivert will coordinate efforts to enroll Harrogate North in a county-funded mosquito control program
- Harrogate North will continue with its program as planned
- Tony Scheivert will continue working with Harrogate North to assure our program meets township requirements and is effective

How We Plan to Proceed

- External to Harrogate North
 - Monitor progress of government agencies
 - Coordinate our internal efforts
- Internal to Harrogate North
 - Assume there are phorid fly breeding sites within the community
 - Specific sites unknown
 - Continue to seek help from outside experts

Specific Internal Plan

- Identify most likely breeding sites
 - Storm water management system
 - Moist decaying organic mater
- Treat these sites with pesticide
- Clean out likely breeding sites when possible

Pesticide Treatment

- Central Pest Control – Toughkenamon, PA
- Focus on Storm Water Management System and other damp areas
- Offer individual treatment of homes

Pesticide Treatment

(Cont'd)

- Natural pesticide
 - *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *israelensis*
 - Safe for humans and pets
 - Targets adults and larvae
- Begin treatment in April
- Every month through June
- Assess treatment program

Clean Up

- Areas in and around inlets to storm water management system
- Stand pipes in bio-basins
- If possible, replace mulch in bio-basins to prevent overflow into Storm Water Management System

Ongoing

- Monitor community
 - Homeowner surveys
 - Monitor treated areas
- Encourage homeowners to audit areas around homes
- Continue to coordinate with the township

Reality

- Phorid flies are endemic to the area
- We cannot expect to totally eliminate them
- Our goal is to manage and control them to tolerable levels
- We will continually audit our efforts and change, when and as needed
- We feel we have developed a workable and cost-effective plan based on the best information available