



MRC In Touch

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

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Featured Article

New York City MRC Members Conduct Tick Surveillance

Special thanks to Mike Lehrman, New York City MRC member, for submitting this story

On a Monday morning, in the parking lot of the Jamaica Wildlife Refuge in New York City, fellow New York City MRC volunteer Holly Rothkopf and I met John Zuzworsky, Chief Vector Ecologist of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). This was the fourth time for me and the second time for Holly to do field work with the city's vector-borne diseases team. Our "mission" had been described beforehand. As we zipped up our white Tyvek suits, John explained the details of tick biology, ecology, and of most immediate concern, tick surveillance, and sample collecting and identification. Our tools were a magnifying glass, tweezers, and an alcohol-filled sample tube.

Though Holly and I were here on our own time, John's job as a biologist/ecologist is of extreme importance to the field of public health, as his work is integral to determining tick species and their densities in parks and fields that are frequented by the public. He is also closely involved in determining which neighborhoods are sprayed for mosquito control. According to John, the incorporation of MRC volunteers has enabled the DOHMH to expand the range of habitats as well as the seasons of surveillance.

We spent the rest of the day at Fort Tilden, Floyd Bennett Field, and Miller Field in Staten Island, all of which have their unique shades of wildness. We felt privileged to be part of such an effort. We learned that patterns of geographic risk are changing because tick distribution is in flux, and this is one of the reasons why biodiversity is so important. The nuts and bolts of tick sample collection seemed straightforward, but the protocol is a product of scientific sampling and statistical research. Each volunteer dragged a yard-long white corduroy sheet through the brush, along dead leaves and overgrowth, stopping after 20 slow steps to examine every square inch of the cloth for tick larvae, nymphs, and adults.

I must mention that tick nymphs can be smaller than the period at the end of this sentence, and that to pluck a squirming hard-shelled dot from corduroy is no mean task, especially while being buzzed by a variety of flying insects. However, and this is the saving grace, we were surrounded by some of the most beautiful scenery in the state of New York, and we felt that the results of our work would be of practical use in helping to assess of risk of contracting a tick-borne disease in New York City.

MRC/NACCHO Connections

The 2015 MRC Network Profile is Coming Soon!

NACCHO is pleased to announce that work has already begun on the 2015 MRC Network Profile. In the coming weeks, you will receive a personalized link in your inbox to complete the MRC Network Profile survey by early March. The information you provide through this survey is essential for us to best represent the challenges and successes of the MRC network, and allows us to continue to build a strong and sustainable network. Many of you

remember your participation in the the first MRC Network Profile survey in 2013. Those results were published in a [report](#) last year along with [infographics and a PowerPoint presentation](#) that all MRC unit leaders can use.

The data from the 2013 Network Profile report has been a significant resource that has helped shape the strategic direction to lead the MRC network toward greater capability, efficiency, and success. This next report will build upon the data obtained in 2013. With every unit leader contributing to its success, this report can be as useful and robust as the first.

Please ensure that mrc@naccho.org is added to your safe senders list and keep an eye out for this survey invitation. Contact mrc@naccho.org if you have any questions about the 2015 MRC Network Profile.

Announcements

Scholarships for Wellness Coaching Available from the Institute for Wellness Education

A special scholarship opportunity for MRC unit leaders is available through the Institute for Wellness Education (IWE). IWE's mission is to drive cultural transformation through the training of wellness coaches and make health and wellness the norm in communities across the nation. This scholarship is for full tuition to IWE's introductory wellness coaching course, which enables people to become certified as a Wellness Coach Level 1 (Advocate). Advocates model, inspire, and propel wellness throughout the community. They use science-based strategies to help people make sustainable change to live longer, healthier, and happier lives. The 36- to 50-hour course is online and self-paced. It is available for up to 50 hours of continuing education credits for nurses, psychologists, social workers, and counselors; and NASM approved for 19 credits. Students may also earn three college credits in nutrition. Learn more and apply now: <https://www.instituteforwellness.com/mrcscholarships/>.

Are You on MRC Connect?

MRC Connect, NACCHO's social media application for the MRC, now has almost 400 users! Join your colleagues on MRC Connect at <http://mrconnect.org>, and download the mobile application for [iPhones/iPads](#) and [Android phones/tablets](#) to start connecting today.

MRC Connect offers a discussion forum for different interest areas, task reports, and private messaging, allowing users to share best practices and meet other unit leaders. Current discussion items on MRC Connect include the following:

- Unit highlights from 2014 and goals for 2015
- Volunteer recruitment strategies
- New partnership ideas
- MRC statewide meetings

Sign up for free on [MRC Connect](#) today!

2015 Preparedness Summit Plenary Sessions Announced

The 2015 Preparedness Summit will take place April 14–17 in Atlanta, and this year's theme is "Global Health Security: Preparing a Nation for Emerging Threats." In line with the conference theme, three plenary sessions will explore the current global threat horizon, the evolving U.S. global health security agenda, and the local responses to Ebola cases in the United States. Join us to learn how the MRC plays a role as more global health threats are emerging in communities across the United States. Learn more and register now at <http://preparednesssummit.org>. Check the site frequently as this year's full agenda will be posted soon!

Join the Public Health Amateur Radio Club

NACCHO has formed the Public Health Amateur Radio Club to provide a community where amateur (ham) radio enthusiasts within the public health profession can come together for camaraderie, learning, and fellowship. During times of disaster, many public health organizations are turning to amateur radio to maintain communications and ensure continuity of operations. Those interested in becoming a licensed amateur radio operator can take the Federal Communication Commission's amateur radio examination during the 2015 Preparedness Summit, April 14–17 in Atlanta. [Learn more and sign up.](#)

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

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The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice with local health departments.

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