



Tri-County Health Department

Vector Surveillance Technician Internship

Adams County – Summer 2006

Amanda Draine

In the summer of 2005 I had the fortunate opportunity to work for Colorado Mosquito Control in Loveland. I generated the reports for their contracted customers. I learned a lot about the mosquito business, but didn't get much hands-on experience.

This summer (2006) I was given that opportunity to work hands-on with the mosquitoes through Tri-County Health Department. I worked in Adams County, setting light and gravid traps to capture mosquitoes. Not only did I collect the mosquitoes, I identified them and reported the numbers back to Colorado Mosquito Control, who is contracted by Tri-County to larvicide & adulticide for Adams County.

After the mosquitoes are identified, I sent in the *Culex* species to the state lab at Colorado Department of Health and Environment to be tested for West Nile Virus.

Although mosquito surveillance was my first priority this summer, as Vector Surveillance Technician, I also monitored prairie dog colonies in Adams County. We have over 300 prairie dog sites and so I put a lot of miles on my car (notice driving-arm tan line). People sometimes get the wrong idea about what we do with prairie dogs, so I'll explain. No we are not going out to kill them, we just want to watch for colonies that are not doing well, which may indicate a plague infestation.

As with any health department position our number one goal is to protect the community. The people I worked with are fabulous and I have been honored to have this chance to work with them. I feel I've been given one of the best opportunities to be an integral part of the Adams County community, having a direct impact on monitoring mosquitoes & prairie dogs. I recommend this learning opportunity to anyone interested in making a difference... one mosquito at a time. ☺

