

Consilience of Mosquito Control Operations and Associations

Nolan H. Newton, PhD
Chief, PHPM Section
NCDENR

Consilience?

- Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge
- 1998 book by E.O. Wilson
- Synthesis of knowledge from many (all?) fields

Consilience examples

- Einstein on Brownian motion
- Grand unification theory of modern physics
- Mathematical modeling of biological systems
- “Liberal” education
- Many government policies, especially environmental protection

What's that got to do with mosquitoes?

- Knowledge exists at many levels in mosquito control
- Local programs, state officials, state associations, regional associations, regional federal office officials (EPA), national associations (NAVCO), federal agencies (EPA, CDC), international associations (AMCA, SOVE), researchers, etc.
- Do they all communicate their specific “knowledges” effectively to each other for everyone’s benefit?

- We suffer from compartmentalized knowledge.
- We suffer from restricted knowledge flow up and down the levels.
- We suffer from sporadic knowledge flow up and down the levels.
- We suffer from imprecise knowledge flow up and down the levels.
- We suffer from generally poor communication!
- We don't communicate our knowledge as well as environmental groups, but we have better knowledge of mosquito control.

So what do we do about it?

- INDIVIDUALS at each level of mosquito control have roles, so do the groups.
- Local folks have great access to state and federal legislators, most others have less.
- Have you visited your state and federal folks?
- Been to AMCA Washington day?
- Written (don't email!) your state and federal reps? Asked a relative to do so?

A modest proposal...

- AMCA, SOVE, and NAVCO need to coordinate better on federal issues.
- Each group has allies to “carry the water” to Congress: AMCA has Croplife, SOVE has CMVCA, NAVCO has ASTHO and CSTE.
- These groups need to stop being one note sambas and COORDINATE!
- At the very least, have regular conference calls!

Openness or transparency

- What we do is of vital public health importance, folks need to know!
- Spread the word (knowledge) of what we do.
- If folks know that New Orleans is sprayed 20x/year with dibrom, then maybe they won't freak out when you need one application.
- Know what farm-raised salmon are treated with for sea lice?
- Ovide for human head lice?

Consilience in mosquito control

- Take some lessons from E.O. Wilson's book
- Make knowledge flow freely between all of our agencies and organizations.
- Use our allies to help us disseminate that knowledge.
- Make sure leaders outside our realm, especially legislators and regulators, know the facts.
- Let's get our varied professional groups working together.