

The Mosquito Research Foundation (MRF) based in Sacramento, CA

Here is a purported non-profit whose mission statement is to fund “research that enhances our understanding of mosquito ecology along with strategies for their surveillance and control. Mosquito Research Matters!” [their exclamation]. The MRF “envisions a world that is free from all mosquito-borne diseases.” They have a nifty website and here’s the link <http://www.mosquitoresearch.org/>

Their core problem in existing is two-fold. They’re neither a true non-profit nor are they dedicated to eradicating mosquitoes. This outfit runs at a reported annual loss yet they take in hundreds of thousands of dollars from mosquito districts from around the state. A small fraction of about 1/20th is awarded in grants to researchers from around the country while the vast majority of the funds received goes to administrative overhead. This is exactly what sham non-profits do in every type of field. By overpaying its own administrators, they are able to say that they did not turn a profit for any given year.

Why should we care? Why should any entity with such highly stated aspirations be called out or brought out into the public light? It’s because public money is being funneled to this non-profit from the homeowners who pay their local mosquito control agency, the San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District, on their property tax bill. Around 26 mosquito districts and a dozen other interested parties support this sham non-profit. Taxpayer money is being diverted to out-of-state, non-tax payer causes and to line administrators’ pockets.

As the local mosquito board of trustees president put it in a recent meeting, most homeowners are only paying about ten dollars on their property tax bill so they won’t care about how that money is spent. He compared it to caring about “two beers” worth of money. Who would cry or care over two missed beers? That that appointed trustee or the other nine trustees who laughed in agreement with his boast. But we’re not talking about ten dollars being funneled to the MRF. The San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District sent the MRF \$38,500 in July of 2015, and has sent them a comparable amount every year for their funding efforts. This amount is sent to MRF with no strings attached on how it is spent. It can therefore go to the usual administrative overhead that sham non-profits usually exaggerate in their annual filings.

And who sits as Treasurer of the MRF? Who is the one who receives and deposits the money from our San Joaquin County Mosquito District? It’s John Stroh. Who is John Stroh? He’s the retired manager of the San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District. John Stroh retired in 2012 and our county’s annual payments to MRF started soon thereafter.

It is unclear where the rest of the funds received by MRF goes. The ballpark annual donations received by MRF is about \$500,000. MRF gives out grants to a handful of researchers and these total under \$50,000 annually. So where does the rest of the money go? On renting a nice office space in downtown Sacramento? They do. To having a nice website that touts their efforts and their partners? That’s there too. The rest of their money is simply unaccounted for

on their website. Sending public funds to a non-profit agency eliminates the control and reporting that usually follows public funds.

If their stated goal was to eliminate mosquitoes, then diseases carried by mosquitoes would pass away as well. But their stated goal is control. Control means perpetual funding. Why put yourself out of business, that's bad for business. It's not a surprise, then, that MRF is partnered with chemical manufacturers and distributors. And as to the research, San Joaquin County has its own lab and scientists working on the same goals: surveillance and control. One day maybe we can all live in a world of perfectly healthy mosquitoes but until then let's at least rid ourselves of fake non-profits that suck funds from the taxpayers, both locally and across the country.

Mosquitoes serve no benefit to mankind and eliminating them completely would not significantly reduce the bird populations around the world. In fact, eliminating mosquitoes would reduce the enormous harm that they do to people around the world. Now if that could be done without the overuse of harmful chemicals, then we really would have something that we could aspire towards.