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Mosquito abatement eyed — for next year

It's too late for this year, but Santa Cruz County officials will look into a mosquito abatement program for 1993.

Watsonville-area Supervisor Ray Belgard brought the issue up several weeks ago after hearing numerous complaints about people being bitten by mosquitoes in the county, especially in the Pajaro Valley.

Belgard asked the county staff to look into the possibility of contracting with the North Salinas Valley Mosquito Abatement District, but that district's board said last week it isn't interested.

An alternative is to form a "county service area" which would charge residents for mosquito abatement, County Administrative Officer Susan Mauriello

said in a letter to supervisors this morning. The North Salinas district charges \$4.50 per household per year.

Supervisors made no commitments, but asked the county staff to develop a plan for a county service area for next year. A report on the plan is due back before supervisors Aug. 4.

It's too late in the mosquitoes' life cycle for any abatement to be effective this year, Mauriello said. County health officials say the mosquitoes do not present a health hazard, Mauriello emphasized.

If a county service area is formed, residents would be charged for it on their tax bills.

— Lane Wallace