Officials will test a new weapon against mosquitoes Monday. But the drone will just look for breeding areas; it won’t blast the flying pests out of the air.

BY CURTIS MORGAN

The drone, a powerful and controversial weapon against mosquitoes, is about to take on a new and seemingly intractable enemy: the black salt marsh mosquito. Seeking a high-tech edge in the daily battle to beat back the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District on Monday will begin testing a next-generation drone developed by a small Gainesville robotics company.

The drone, about half the size of the ones now common from dive-bombing molotovs in the Keys, won’t be equipped to spray or blow bugs. Instead, it will be rigged with a camera designed to survey breeding pools on each marsh for the mosquitoes, most prolific in the island chain.

If the bird’s-eye view in the sky can accurately detect shallow pools where mosquitoes morph from tiny larval worms to buzzing blood suckers in just days, it could disrupt mosquito-fighting strategy.

■ TURN TO DRONE, 2A

Big Bear Firefighter Jon Curtis keeps a close eye on a ‘slip-over’ fire thatjumped a highway near the St. Louis National Forest. Hundreds of firefighters were deployed Saturday to battle, Tumwater City and other communities in the path of the Rin Fire region in California. The U.S. Forest Service says about 4,500 structures are threatened by the Rim Fire.

■ TURN TO SYRIA, 2A

Obama appears to weigh military response

■ Even as Syrian leader Bashar Assad agreed to an inspection of an alleged chemical weapons attack site, U.S. officials said it was too little too late.

BY HANNAH ALLAM, JAMES ROSEN

WASHINGTON — U.S. officials on Sunday called Syria’s decision to allow a U.N. inspection team to investigate the site of a purported chemical attack “too little to be credible,” signaling that the Obama administration was leaning toward a military intervention in the 2-year-old civil war.

But any strike against Syrian President Bashar Assad’s regime would saddle the U.S. with the onerous task of managing a marine, and could draw the United States deeply into a new Middle East conflict, years of entanglement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The fallout from such an action includes likely retaliation from Iran, Russia and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah — all funders of Assad’s regime. — and could draw the United States deeply into a new Middle East conflict, years of entanglement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, many foreign policy analysts argue that al- most any response is too little too late. As Congress appears poised to authorize using U.S. military force to attack Syrian troops responsible for a chemical weapons attack killing 1,000, President Barack Obama has a moral imperative to step in now because of the escalation from the regime’s apparent

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