



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
101 S Webster, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707
Phone: (608) 266-6790 TDD: 711
dnr.wi.gov www.wisconsin.gov

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CONTACT: Andrea Diss-Torrence (608) 264-9247

SUBJECT: *Public comment sought on environmental analysis of DNR's gypsy moth suppression plan*

MADISON – The public may provide written comments until May 10 on a Department of Natural Resources environmental assessment describing agency plans for conducting aerial suppression spraying to control gypsy moths this spring in portions of Wisconsin.

The Department has made a preliminary determination that an environmental impact statement will not be required for the proposed treatment.

“In preparing the environmental assessment, the department has concluded that the suppression spraying program proposed for 2007 does not pose any threat to the areas to be treated,” said Andrea Diss-Torrence, DNR gypsy moth program coordinator. “We’ve researched the kinds of plants and animals that live in the areas to be sprayed, considered the insecticide to be used, and analyzed a host of other factors before concluding that this spraying is as environmentally safe as possible.”

Aerial suppression spraying will begin, weather permitting, in mid-May in eight Wisconsin counties covering a total of 1,235 acres at 24 locations. Treatments are proposed for portions of Adams, Brown, Dane, Door, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Sauk and Waushara Counties.

Spraying is done at the request of the landowner, community or county and is completely voluntary. Suppression spraying is done to help reduce invasive gypsy moth populations to prevent the insects from defoliating trees in those areas.

Two different insecticides are used depending on the area being sprayed. A biological insecticide containing Btk, a naturally-occurring soil bacteria, kills gypsy moth caterpillars by causing them to stop feeding and die. Btk is generally not harmful to people, pets or other wild species. Some people with severe allergies may wish to avoid areas to be sprayed on the day that spraying occurs.

The other insecticide used, called Gypchek, is a viral insecticide that affects only gypsy moth. It is produced in limited quantities and used in areas where endangered butterflies or moths may be harmed by Btk. This year Gypcheck will be sprayed in Adams and Waushara counties only.

To receive a copy of the environmental assessment or to make a written comment, contact Dr. Andrea Diss-Torrence, DNR, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or call her at (608) 264-9247. The document can be viewed online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/Forestry/FH/gm/eacomment.html> Written comments will be accepted until May 10, 2007.

Gypsy moths are native to Europe, Asia, and North Africa and were introduced to the United States in the late 1860s in an attempt to breed a hardy silk worm. The moths have flourished in the eastern United States and were first detected in Wisconsin in the late 1980s. Populations of the moth and its destructive caterpillar can explode in early summer every five to 15 years. They feed on oaks, crabapple, linden, willow, birch, aspen, and more than 250 other species of trees. The caterpillars hatch in May and feed through early July.

More information about gypsy moth and its management is available at gypsymoth.wi.gov.