

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

MADISON – Plans are being finalized for the 2009 gypsy moth aerial suppression spraying program and the public is invited to comment on the Department's environmental assessment.

Aerial suppression spraying will begin, weather permitting, in early May in 23 Wisconsin counties and cover a total of 10,563 acres at 135 locations. Spraying is done at the request of the landowner, community or county and is completely voluntary. Suppression spraying is done to help reduce gypsy moth populations to prevent them from defoliating trees in those areas. Treatments are proposed for portions of Adams, Brown, Columbia, Dane, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Jefferson, Kenosha, Marathon, Marquette, Menominee, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, Shawano, Walworth, Washington, Waushara and Winnebago counties, and on state properties only in Juneau, Marinette, and Sauk counties.

“In preparing the environmental assessment, we've concluded that the suppression spraying program proposed for 2009 does not pose any threat to the areas to be treated,” said Andrea Diss-Torrance, DNR gypsy moth suppression supervisor. “We've researched the kinds of plants and animals that live in the areas to be sprayed, taken into consideration the insecticide to be used, and considered a host of other factors before coming to the conclusion that this spraying is as environmentally safe as possible.” The Department has made a preliminary determination that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be required for this proposal.

To receive a copy of the EA or to make a written comment, contact Dr. Andrea Diss-Torrance at the Department of Natural Resources, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or call Dr. Diss-Torrance at (608) 264-9247. The document can also be viewed online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/es/science/eis/eis.htm>. Written comments will be accepted until May 8, 2008.

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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrea Diss-Torrance at (608) 264-9247