

GYPSY MOTH INFORMATION

Good Afternoon Everyone!

I have been in contact with the different agencies over the last week to get more input on the gypsy moth issue. After all of the research and discussions with my colleagues, DNR, MSUE, and the County, we have decided it is not in our best interest to spray for gypsy moths in our county. Yes, there is funding from a millage years ago that was designated for the spraying purpose, but it was not utilized in many years and was voted by the public to re-designate those funds for other natural resource concerns in the county. It is not economically reasonable to do a spraying. New permits and guidelines for a spray county-wide would require the permission of all county landowners and is very time-consuming, this would not be done quickly, and not every landowner is on board for a county-wide spraying. It is also the professional opinion of these Natural Resource professionals that spraying would most likely not be effective and takes multiple sprays to have any effect on the populations. Although the spray that is used is considered organic, it kills other butterflies and moths, some of which are considered endangered. When we look at the whole ecological system, we have to make decisions that help the sustainability of our ecosystems. I understand the frustration everyone is having with the gypsy moths and unfortunately these pests will be here, but luckily, they leave just as soon as they show up. There are natural pathogens and predators that will kill them and we always hope that happens quickly.

With all of my discussions with the agencies involved, we all believe it would be beneficial to have an educational meeting with our residents of Montmorency county to help them understand the pests, what to watch for, and how we as private landowners can help prevent them in the first place. I am working on arranging this meeting with the other agencies and we will get a date out to the public immediately. This town hall meeting will be open to the public to attend in person or virtually.

I am also working with the county to get equipment, tools, supplies, etc. available for residents to use on their properties to help get rid of the nuisances they are having. Tools such as a power washer with dawn dish soap can be used on trees, houses, cars, garages, etc. to kill the caterpillars and get their messes off of your property. Bands on your trees with any sticky substance at the bottom will keep them from crawling up your trees and then they can be removed into buckets of soapy water to be killed. If they are noticed early, scraping the egg masses off into soapy water kills them as well and eliminates the mess they would create in the spring. If we can have these things available to the landowners at no cost, I would hope it could really help a lot of people.

I have spoken with a lot of residents over the last couple weeks and understand the problems they are having. I am sorry there is no instant fix for these pests, spraying certainly isn't that instant fix that people are looking for either. I hope we can help educate the public on these pests with all of the resource professionals at our meeting and help keep them from reemerging so vastly next year. Thank you for your patience and understanding, I understand not everyone will agree with the ideas being introduced. Please attend this meeting so we can discuss those issues. There will be links and information on our website that all of the above agencies have provided to help explain this information in more depth.

If you are seeing your trees stressed from the defoliation that is happening and are worried about the survival of that tree, please contact our CD Forester, Greg Corace at 989.356.3596 x102 to schedule a site visit. There may be more going on that can be addressed to help those trees.

Thank you Aprille Williamson