

Finding of No Significant Impact for the Spotted Lanternfly Eradication Program in Bucks, Chester, Berks, Montgomery, and Lehigh Counties, Pennsylvania

Environmental Assessment March 2016

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) evaluating the impacts of an eradication program for the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) (*Lycorma delicatula*) in Berks, Montgomery, and Lehigh Counties, Pennsylvania. The draft EA was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts to human health and the environment from the proposed eradication program for the SLF. The EA was made available to the public for a 30-day public comment period beginning on May 5, 2015, on the APHIS web site at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/>. Notice of the availability of the EA was published in the Reading, Boyertown, and Norristown newspapers. APHIS received no comments on the EA. The analysis in the EA suggests that the proposed SLF Eradication Program will not have significant impacts to human health and the environment. The SLF eradication program proposed several measures to address the recent detection in Berks County, Pennsylvania, as well as Montgomery and Lehigh counties if SLF is detected in those counties in the future. Eradication efforts may include any or all of the following: regulatory control, surveys, egg mass scraping, sanitation, tree removal, and insecticide and herbicide applications.

- Regulatory control - consists of a quarantine established to eliminate intrastate and interstate movement and reduce human-assisted spread of SLF. High-risk host material from within the quarantine area would be prohibited from moving outside the area, except under a permit issued by APHIS.
- Survey/Egg mass scraping - Detection survey will use visual inspection and sweep netting to determine if SLF is present. Egg mass scraping consists of scraping egg masses from plants with a stiff plastic card into bags with an alcohol solution to cause mortality.
- Sanitation - Sanitation of all other green waste within a quarter-mile of SLF detections that may include chipping or grinding the debris, and disposal through incineration or burning.
- Tree removal – The invasive species, tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), will be removed up to a quarter-mile radius from infested trees. Herbicide treatment of the stumps will be used during periods of the year when the phloem moves toward the root.
- Insecticide applications – Insecticide treatments for select tree of heaven trees will be made using ground equipment by certified applicators

The SLF has recently been discovered in parts of Bucks and Chester Counties, Pennsylvania prompting the need for eradication efforts in those counties. The SLF eradication program proposed for Bucks and Chester Counties is the same as the one analyzed in the June 2015 EA.

APHIS determined that the analysis in the June 2015 EA applies to the potential for impacts when expanding the program to include Bucks and Chester Counties, Pennsylvania. The EA is incorporated into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by reference and is available at the APHIS website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/> or from-

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In a previous consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) APHIS determined that the Program may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, bog turtle, and northeastern bulrush. APHIS received a concurrence letter from the FWS dated June 12, 2015. APHIS re-initiated consultation with the FWS about the potential impacts of the SLF eradication program to listed species in the two new counties. The only species that occurs in the additional program counties that has not been considered previously is the small whorled pogonia, *Isotria medeoloides*, which is present in Chester County. APHIS has submitted a biological assessment to the FWS regarding the pogonia and will not implement SLF eradication activities until consultation is complete. Protection measures for species evaluated in the original biological assessment still apply to those species discussed in the original biological assessment that could occur in the Buck and Chester Counties.

There are no disproportionate adverse effects to minorities, low-income populations, or children, in accordance with Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations," and Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks." SLF eradication activities are not currently anticipated on historic properties in each of the five counties; however, in cases where there may be these types of treatments, they would be coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officer and other appropriate contacts to ensure the program will have no impact to historic properties, including sites of tribal importance, pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

I have determined that there would be no significant impact on the quality of the human environment from the implementation of the preferred alternative. APHIS' finding of no significant impact from the preferred alternative is based on the results of the analysis in the EA. Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impact associated with the proposed program, I further find that no additional environmental documentation needs to be prepared and that the program may proceed.



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03/08/16

Date