

Finding of No Significant Impact Asian Gypsy Moth Cooperative Eradication Program in Cowlitz County, Washington

Final Environmental Assessment April 2021

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) evaluating the impacts of a treatment to eradicate Asian gypsy moth (AGM) in Cowlitz County, Washington. The EA is incorporated into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by reference and is available at the APHIS website at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/> or from-

USDA-APHIS-PPQ
33400 9th Avenue South, Suite 200
Federal Way, WA 98003

The draft EA evaluated the potential impacts to human health and the environment from a proposed aerial treatment using the microbial insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk) to an approximately 634-acre treatment area located in the southwestern portion of Washington State in Cowlitz County. The use of Btk for gypsy moth eradication was previously evaluated in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as one of six alternatives for treating gypsy moth and found to be the preferred alternative for the proposed treatment. The draft EA for the proposed AGM cooperative eradication program was made available to the public for a 30-day comment period beginning on March 17, 2021 at www.regulations.gov (Docket ID: APHIS-2021-0013). The notice of availability was published in The Daily News newspaper in Longview, WA on March 17, 2021. APHIS and the WSDA received no comments on the EA.

The analysis in the EA suggests that the treatment of Asian gypsy moth located in Cowlitz County, WA with Btk will not result in significant impacts to human health and the environment. The cooperative USDA-APHIS/WSDA program proposes to use *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (Btk) (Foray[®] XG and/or Foray[®] 48B) to treat an AGM detection. For three years following treatments, the AGM cooperative eradication program will conduct delimiting trapping using pheromone-baited traps and inspect for and remove egg masses (especially at any multiple-catch sites) where found. This strategy provides the best opportunity for achieving AGM eradication while minimizing risks to human health and impacts to the environment.

The proposed program would involve three to five aerial applications of Btk to all foliage within the designated treatment area. The first treatment date is determined by biological monitoring and modeling but is likely to occur in late April to early May and would be followed by two to four subsequent treatments at approximately 7- to 10-day intervals thereafter, weather

permitting. Exact timing of the applications will be dependent on development of gypsy moth larvae and/or foliage as determined by WSDA.

USDA-APHIS has determined that the proposed Asian gypsy moth eradication program may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the Lower Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), Lower Columbia River coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), and the Lower Columbia River chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) or their designated critical habitat and requested National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) concurrence with these determinations.

USDA-APHIS has determined that the proposed Asian gypsy moth eradication program may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), streaked horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris strigata*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), and bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*). The proposed program will have no effect on the golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*). The proposed program will also have no effect on critical habitat because none occurs in the proposed treatment area. USDA-APHIS requested US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) concurrence with these determinations.

USDA-APHIS prepared biological assessments and submitted them to each agency on December 14, 2020. USDA-APHIS received concurrence from NMFS and FWS on March 9, 2021.

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." Available risk assessment and toxicity data that is summarized in this EA show low risk to the human population, including children, from the proposed use of Btk. The potential for impacts to historic properties, including sites of tribal importance were evaluated pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. No historic properties are within the proposed treatment area. USDA-APHIS contacted the Cowlitz Tribe on November 30, 2020 regarding the proposed AGM cooperative eradication program. USDA-APHIS will continue to work with the Tribe to answer any questions or address concerns regarding the proposed AGM eradication program.

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 this 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.

Tim St. Germain
State Plant Health Director - Washington
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

4/28/2021

Date