

**Gypsy Moth Cooperative Eradication Program in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin,
Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties, Minnesota**

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 Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) evaluating the impacts of gypsy moth (GM) eradication treatments in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties, Minnesota. 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 -

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The draft EA evaluated the potential impacts to human health and the environment from the proposed treatment using the microbial insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk). The use of Btk for GM eradication was evaluated previously in an Environmental Impact Statement as one of six alternatives for treating GM. The preferred alternative in the EIS is the preferred alternative for the Proposed program area in Minnesota. The EA was made available to the public for a 30-day public comment period beginning on March 21, 2021 on the Regulations.gov web site at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/APHIS-2021-0015>. The notice of availability was published in the Star Tribune. APHIS and the MDA received no comments on the EA.

The analysis in the EA suggests that the treatment of gypsy moth with Btk will not result in significant impacts to human health and the environment. Under the proposed alternative, APHIS would provide funding for GM treatments in GM outbreak areas located in the counties covered in the EA. MDA would apply Btk using either Foray[®] XG or Foray[®] 48B, or a comparable formulation, at labeled rates using ground equipment or low flying aircraft. Two applications will be made within each treatment block with a 5- to 10-day interval between applications. In areas where GM populations are high, MDA may make a third application.

Two applications will be made within each treatment block with a 5- to 10-day interval between applications. In areas where GM populations are high, MDA may make a third application. The MDA estimates these applications to occur in mid-May. The exact date of application will be timed so that the applications occur during the early larval stages when GM caterpillars hatch from their eggs and are most susceptible to treatments. The program will survey the treatment block for two years after treatment using pheromone-baited GM traps to ensure that the treatment was effective. Traps are baited with disparlure, a synthetically produced sex pheromone that mimics the natural pheromone female GM use to attract the male GM.

There are nine federally listed species within the proposed Program area, none of which have proposed or designated critical habitat. APHIS has determined that the GM eradication program in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties will have no effect on Minnesota dwarf trout lily (*Erythronium propullans*) and prairie bush-clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*).

APHIS has determined that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), Higgins eye (pearly mussel) (*Lampsilis higginsii*), sheepsnose mussel (*Plethobasus cyphus*), snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*), spectaclecase (mussel) (*Cumberlandia monodonta*), winged mapleleaf (*Quadrula fragosa*), and rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*).

APHIS requested concurrence with these determinations from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). APHIS prepared a biological assessment and submitted it to the USFWS Twin Cities Ecological Services field office on February 9, 2021. APHIS received concurrence from the USFWS on April 16, 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. 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.

Erin Stiers
State Plant Health Director - Minnesota
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

___04/28/2021___
Date