



Proposal for Gypsy Moth Management

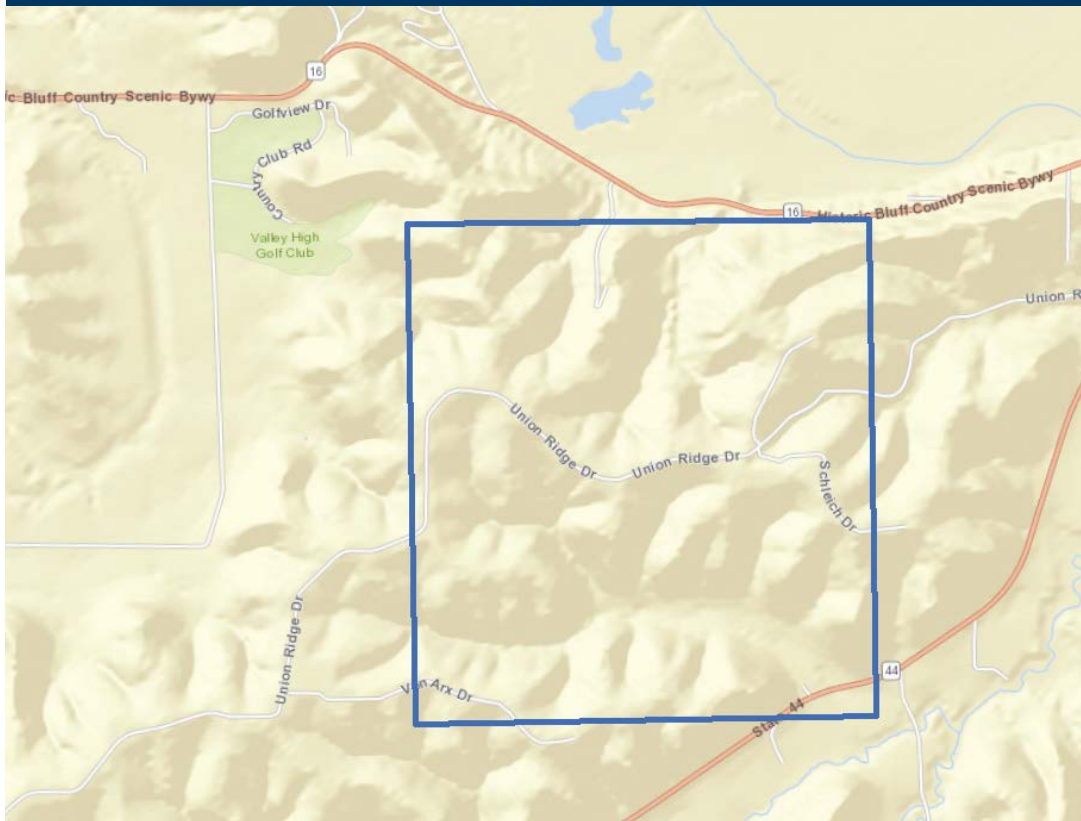


HOKAH, HOUSTON COUNTY, 2020

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), in collaboration with federal, state, and local partners, is proposing to treat an isolated gypsy moth population in Hokah in the spring of 2020. Gypsy moths are an invasive insect, and a state monitoring program has found a high number of moths in the area. These finds, combined with follow-up visits that found gypsy moth egg masses, have prompted the MDA and the Minnesota Gypsy Moth Program Advisory Committee to develop proposed treatments for 2020. The proposal includes treating approximately 1,620 acres for gypsy moth.

A complete description of the 2020 proposed treatment is on the MDA's website at www.mda.state.mn.us/gmtreatments. You can also find out more by attending a local meeting.

2020 PROPOSED TREATMENT AREA: HOKAH, HOUSTON COUNTY



Go to www.mda.state.mn.us/gmtreatments to sign up for text or email messages about the proposed gypsy moth treatment.

Or text **"MDA HOKAH"** to **468311** to receive text updates. Or text your email address to **"MDA HOKAH [your email address here]"** to **468311** to receive email updates.

Information about gypsy moth

What is a gypsy moth and why control it?

The European gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar L.*) is not native to the United States. After being introduced in Massachusetts in the late 1800s, gypsy moth has continuously moved west and south and is now established in northeastern Minnesota. Gypsy moth caterpillars can strip trees of their leaves. They like oaks, aspen, paper birch, basswood and willow, which are all very common trees in Minnesota. They will also eat other types of trees and shrubs. High numbers of gypsy moth caterpillars can cause a substantial public nuisance, a reduction in tree growth, branch dieback, and tree death.

The treatments proposed for 2020 will not only decrease the possibility of defoliation but will delay the arrival and expansion of gypsy moth in Minnesota and beyond. This delay can hold off a costly, full-scale infestation and protect natural and urban forest health, local property values, and the quality of outdoor recreation activities.

How do we control gypsy moth?

Since 1973, the State of Minnesota has been actively surveying for gypsy moth. Minnesota's first gypsy moth eradication project was conducted in 1980. Since that time, and in partnership with the federal Slow the Spread program, over a million acres have been treated in Minnesota to eradicate or slow advancing gypsy moth populations. In recent history, treatments have been conducted throughout southeast Minnesota, including near Mound Prairie in 2016.

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For this proposed treatment, the MDA and its partners recommend using Btk on the approximately 1,620 acre area in Hokah.

Information about Btk and Foray®

What is Btk and Foray®?

Foray® is a water-based, organic biological insecticide that works well at killing gypsy moth caterpillars. The active ingredient is the naturally-occurring bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki* (Btk) and the crystalline proteins it produces. When ingested, the proteins are toxic to certain susceptible caterpillars like the gypsy moth. These proteins do not affect humans and other mammals. Caterpillars stop feeding and die within a couple days. Foray® is broken down naturally by sunlight so two applications about a week apart are used to make sure all gypsy moth caterpillars are exposed to the bacteria.

How and when is Foray® applied?

The proposed treatments will take place in May when gypsy moth caterpillars are very small. Treatments generally take place very early in the morning using an airplane or helicopter. The aerial treatments are at low altitudes (approximately 50 feet above the treetops). The aircraft are equipped with the latest available technology including Global Positioning Systems, or GPS, to help ensure application accuracy. Non-forested areas such as large fields, stretches of pavement, and open bodies of water are not treated. You may see or hear the low flying aircraft in your area for a short period of time.

Exact dates and times depend on weather conditions and insect development. You will be notified days in advance of any treatments through a variety of ways:

- **Check your mail.** The MDA will be sending a postcard in late April to early May that will identify a timeframe for the treatments.
- **Check your email or text messages.** Go to www.mda.state.mn.us/gmtreatments to sign up for text or email messages about the proposed gypsy moth treatment.
 - ▶ Text "MDA HOKAH" to 468311 to receive text updates.
 - ▶ Or text "MDA HOKAH [your email address here]" to 468311 to receive email updates.
- **Call MDA's Arrest the Pest line (888-545-6684).** The phone line will be updated with treatment information frequently.
- **Follow the MDA on social media.** Live updates will be made up to and on the day of treatment.
 - ▶ Twitter at twitter.com/mnagriculture
 - ▶ Facebook at www.facebook.com/mnagriculture

What are the environmental and human health effects of Foray®?

Foray® toxicity is generally limited to caterpillars. Caterpillars are the immature stage of moths and butterflies. To have any effects, caterpillars must be actively feeding within approximately two weeks after treatment, they must eat the Foray®, and they must be susceptible to the bacteria. The MDA works with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify and evaluate impacts to any threatened or endangered species, and ensure that no sites of sensitive, threatened, or endangered species of moths and butterflies overlap with this year's proposed Foray® treatments.



Gypsy moth defoliated this oak tree.
www.entomology.wisc.edu

Foray® is produced from bacteria found in soils, plants, and insects worldwide. It is cultured by fermenting grains and potatoes with firs or cornmeal - a process similar to brewing beer. The final product contains water, Btk, leftover growth medium, carbohydrates, and other ingredients approved as food additives. The product breaks down quickly in sunlight but is extremely potent to gypsy moths and can kill nearly 100% in treated areas under proper conditions.

Numerous studies have documented the low risk of Btk for humans, pets, and other species. Btk is a common active ingredient that is approved for use in organic farming and is an alternative to chemical pesticides. Unlike a broad-spectrum pesticide, Foray® has a very narrow target of caterpillars so it will not disrupt the balance of nature. More information on the treatment product, human health, and environmental impacts can be found at: www.mda.state.mn.us/gmtreatments

If you have individual human health concerns about Foray®, contact your physician or other health care professional. For general questions about health risks or steps to prevent or reduce exposures to Btk, see information from the Minnesota Department of Health at: www.mda.state.mn.us/gmtreatments or call 651-201-4899.

Getting more information

What happens next?

Public involvement and participation is encouraged. You are invited to submit comments about the gypsy moth treatment proposal in writing to the MDA. All comments will be reviewed and a response will be given. Comments received by March 6 will be most useful for identifying issues and alternatives for the required environmental assessment. Contact information is provided at the end of this bulletin.

Comments received by the MDA will be evaluated and considered as a site-specific environmental assessment is developed. A final environmental assessment is expected to be released in April. It will be posted on participating agency websites and will be mailed to those who comment on this proposal. The environmental assessment and public comment will inform decisions to be made on authorizing the proposed treatments by the responsible Field Representative of the United States Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service for treatments on the approximately 1,620 acres.

A postcard will be mailed to residents in the proposed treatment area in late April to early May that will identify a timeframe for the treatment.

Where can I find out more?

The MDA and its partners are providing information about the gypsy moth, survey data, and the proposed treatments at local government and community organization meetings. Please join us at a meeting near you. You are also encouraged to contact the MDA with questions or comments using the contact information below.

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PLEASE JOIN US AT A 2020 OPEN HOUSE

February 25 7–8 p.m.

Hokah Fire Department – 9 Mill Street, Hokah, MN 55941

Experts from participating agencies will be available to explain the treatment proposal and answer your questions.

CONTACT US

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 Robert St. N.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Website: www.mda.state.mn.us/gmtreatments

Email: gypsy.moth@state.mn.us

Arrest the Pest Info Line: 888-545-6684 (MOTH)

Report Sightings to: arrest.the.pest@state.mn.us



CONNECT WITH US

To track the latest news on gypsy moth treatments, follow the Minnesota Department of Agriculture on:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mnagriculture

Twitter: twitter.com/mnagriculture

Email: go to www.mda.state.mn.us/gmtreatments to sign up for email or text updates





Plant Protection Division
625 Robert Street N.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538

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Gypsy moth, an invasive species, has invaded your neighborhood!

Join us February 25 to learn how we plan to stop them from devouring your backyard trees.

