

## **Spongy Moth Aerial Spraying At State Properties Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: Why is the spraying done?**

**A:** Spongy moths feed on the leaves of many trees in residential and forested settings. Their populations can grow to the point that they eat all the leaves off of trees, which can kill trees in some cases. Surveys have shown that populations of the pest at Devil's Lake State Park and Kettle Moraine State Forest Southern Unit are large enough to cause extensive damage this summer if no action is taken. The parks have arranged for this treatment to protect trees and the experience they provide visitors.

**Q: What insecticides will be used?**

**A:** The aerial spray program will use a bacterial insecticide called 'Foray', a brand name for *Bacillus thuringiensis* kurstaki (commonly called Btk). 'Foray' contains a naturally occurring soil bacterium that interacts with bacteria in the caterpillar's digestive tract to kill spongy moth caterpillars when they eat it. It is approved by the Organic Materials Review Institute for use in organic food farming. The insecticide will only be sprayed on state land.

**Q: Does the spray hurt people?**

**A:** Btk has been used for more than 40 years for spongy moth control and has undergone thousands of lab and field tests that demonstrate its safety. It is possible, but very unlikely, that people with severe food allergies or asthma may react to the spray. It is easy to avoid exposure by calling, receiving emails or following social media as described below to find out when the parks will be treated. You can then stay out of the property until 30 minutes after the spraying is finished. The spray may give off an odor like stale beer until it dries, which typically takes 15 to 30 minutes. This odor may be detectable away from the treated area.

**Q: Does the spray hurt other animals?**

**A:** Btk is harmless to all animals except caterpillars that feed within a week of its application. However, in the immediate area of the spray, the planes fly low enough that they may frighten pets, so you may want to keep them inside during spraying if possible.

**Q: Will the spray damage the paint on vehicles?**

**A:** No. Spraying will only be done within the state property. However, if you are driving on the state property during the treatment, you may need to take your car through the car wash twice or wet it down prior to washing to loosen the dried-on residue. Avoid any wax application until the spray residue is removed.

**Q: When will spraying occur?**

**A:** Each treatment area will be sprayed once between mid-May and early June. The exact timing depends on the weather and growth of the caterpillars. **Spraying may begin as early as 5:15 a.m. and may continue into early afternoon if weather conditions allow.** However, each location within the spray block only takes 10-30 minutes to spray, so planes will not be flying in your vicinity for the entire length of the treatment.

You can find out which areas will be treated and when several ways.

- State or regional press releases are sent out in early May prior to the start of the spray program. This is when you should start checking the daily updates at the options described below.
- You can call a toll-free telephone number (1-800-642-6684) in May and June to hear where spraying is scheduled to occur the following day.
- You can sign up for direct email notifications of spray activities. The emails have the same message as the 1-800 number and will arrive daily during May and June until the spraying is complete. Subscribe or unsubscribe anytime online at [gypsymoth.wi.gov](http://gypsymoth.wi.gov).
- You can also find updates on the progress of the spraying by following DATCP on Facebook or Twitter.

**Q: Why do you have to spray so early and fly so low?**

**A:** The high humidity and low wind conditions typical of early mornings are needed to assure the insecticide droplets do not evaporate and/or blow away before they land on the trees. Program managers also want to minimize the number of people active on the DNR properties during spraying.