



## COUNTY OF ST. CLAIR

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR/CONTROLLER



### **PRESS RELEASE For Immediate Release**

**Contact Person:** Lydia Nicholas, 810.294.4965

**Date:** May 6, 2022

### **St. Clair County Spongy Moth Suppression Program:**

#### **Aerial Suppression Treatment Scheduled for May to Control Spongy Moth Caterpillars**

The St. Clair County Spongy Moth Suppression Program monitors for and works to suppress Spongy Moth caterpillars (formerly known as Gypsy Moth), an invasive pest, that affects trees, quality of life, and outdoor recreation activities in St. Clair County. St. Clair County has contracted with a licensed certified pesticide applicator to provide residents with aerial treatment for qualifying areas where spongy moth populations have reached outbreak levels.

Treatment will begin mid-May weather permitting. Exact application dates will be determined by weather and caterpillar development as spring progresses. A follow-up media release will be sent out when the exact date is known. The media release will be posted on the county website listed below and notices sent to the following local radio stations: WGRT 102.3FM, WHLS 105.5FM, WPHM 1380AM and WSAQ 107.1FM. Weather parameters for spraying are average wind speed is less than 10 miles per hour and the relative humidity is more than 50%. Spray operations begin early morning and continue until completed. If weather conditions are outside these parameters, spraying will be postponed until conditions improve.

The biological control, Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*) will be used for this treatment. Btk is a water-based insecticide formulation that is used in certified organic food production and has low impact on non-target organisms such as humans, pets, birds, fish, and other insects. Btk will only affect caterpillars that will be feeding in the tree canopies at the time of application.

Over 5,100 acres will be treated by an airplane flying low over the treetops. Updated maps showing the locations of the areas to be treated can be viewed at [www.stclaircounty.org/caterpillars](http://www.stclaircounty.org/caterpillars). For the 2022 aerial spray, the county is fully funding this effort and there will be no cost for citizens or municipalities.

For more information contact [gypsymoth@stclaircounty.org](mailto:gypsymoth@stclaircounty.org) or 810-294-4965 or visit [www.stclaircounty.org/caterpillars](http://www.stclaircounty.org/caterpillars).

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