



Steven W. Troxler
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services
Plant Industry Division

Bill Foote
Director

Joy A. Goforth
Plant Pest Administrator

Diane Farrer
Seed and Fertilizer
Administrator

January 30, 2025

Ms. Kadisha Molyneux
North Carolina State Clearinghouse
Department of Administration
1301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1301

Dear Ms. Molyneux:

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USDA-FS), the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Pest Quarantine (USDA-APHIS-PPQ), and the Slow the Spread Foundation, Inc. (STS) is considering courses of action in response to spongy (formerly gypsy) moth infestations in North Carolina. We would like to solicit public comment on the proposal discussed below in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. Please include these proposals in your next edition of the Clearinghouse Bulletin.

The NCDA&CS conducts a joint intervention program with USDA-APHIS-PPQ when the infested site is less than 640 acres, and with USDA-FS when the infested area is greater than or equal to 640 acres. However, there is one ongoing cooperative federal/state project in North Carolina that can alter this typical relationship. This program involves the STS Foundation, Inc. and functions in northern North Carolina. Any projects conducted in this area are carried out jointly by NCDA&CS and the STS Foundation regardless of size. All STS Foundation, Inc. work is funded through the USDA-FS.

Three sites have been identified where intervention is currently being recommended by the NCDA&CS for implementation during the spring of 2025. The proposed intervention for all sites is one application each of *Bacillus thuringiensis var Kurstaki (Btk)*, a treatment in which a larvicide is applied using aircraft to areas with tree cover within the treatment blocks according to site-specific factors.

All three of the proposed treatment sites are located within the Slow the Spread (STS) Project area. The Slow the Spread Pilot Project started in 1992 with a goal of demonstrating that the rate at which spongy moth populations colonize new areas can be reduced. The project uses techniques that are both

Divisional Phone: (919) 707-3730 Toll-free: 1-800-206-9333
Fax: (919) 733-1041 <http://www.ncagr.gov/plantindustry/>
1060 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1060
TTY: 1-800-735-2962 Voice: 1-877-735-8200
An Equal Opportunity Employer

environmentally safe and cost effective. This pilot program became operational in 2000. Management decisions within STS are primarily based on the presence of male spongy moths in any given area. The presence and density of spongy moths is determined by utilizing traps baited with the female spongy moth sex pheromone. The project currently operates in portions of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, North Carolina, Minnesota, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Delimit trapping will be conducted in 2025 for all sites as part of an overall strategy of pest management.

For maps and block descriptions, please refer to the following website:

<https://www.ncagr.gov/proposed-spongy-moth-management>

Questions and comments may be addressed to Sara Lalk, Forest Health Research Operations Manager, North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Plant Industry Division, Plant Protection Section, 1060 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1060; phone 919-707-3743; fax 919-733-1041; e-mail: sara.lalk@ncagr.gov.

Thank you,

Sara Lalk
NCDA&CS Forest Health Research Operations Manager