

# West Virginia Department of Agriculture

Walt Helmick, Commissioner



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### WVDA PROPOSES GYPSY MOTH TREATMENTS FOR SPRING 2016

**Charleston, W.Va.** – The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA), in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture-Forest Service (USDA-FS), is proposing aerial treatment of approximately 12,000 forested acres in Grant, Hardy, Pendleton, Pocahontas and Summers counties to reduce gypsy moth impact under the WVDA Cooperative State-County-Landowner (CSCL) Suppression Program.

Large numbers of caterpillars are expected in the proposed 2016 treatment area, and infestations could reach high enough levels to kill trees unless treated, WVDA officials fear. Water quality, recreation experiences, wildlife habitat and timber production could all be negatively affected.

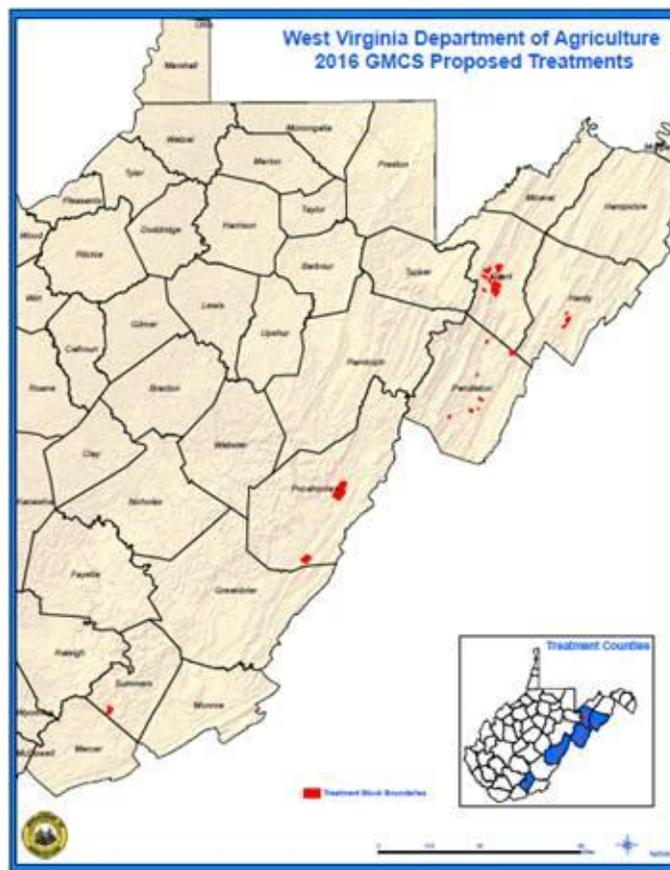
The gypsy moth fungus, *Entomophaga maimaiga*, can help hold down populations. Although it was present in 2015, it did not prevent the deposit of large, viable gypsy moth egg masses in many areas.

Humans are also a factor in helping to spread gypsy moths and other non-native species such as hemlock woolly adelgid and emerald ash borer.

In nature, young gypsy moth caterpillars are spread by the wind, which blows the silken threads they exude, creating a parachute effect. While other pests have different methods of spreading, they all tend to be slow.

Humans, however, have sped the process considerably by unwittingly transporting the pest as eggs or caterpillars on firewood, RVs, campers and other vehicles.

WVDA officials discourage moving firewood into or out of the state. Owners of RVs and campers are encouraged to thoroughly inspect and wash their vehicles before moving them. Even with all of these precautions the gypsy moth will continue to spread, leaving site-specific treatments as the most effective way to prevent population explosions and resulting tree mortality. The WVDA will treat with either Mimic or Btk under the CSCL Program this year.



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The adjoining map shows the general location of the proposed treatment areas. More detailed maps with specific locations of the proposed treatment areas are available for review at the New Creek office of the WVDA Plant Industries Division. These areas will be treated during May 2016. The specific dates will depend on weather conditions and the stage of development of the gypsy moth.

The WVDA consulted with the WV Division of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Biologist and the United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service concerning the presence of rare, threatened or endangered species issues in the proposed treatment areas. Both agencies concurred that no impacts to any rare, threatened or endangered species are anticipated.

Public comments should be submitted in writing to Quentin "Butch" Sayers, Assistant Director, or G. Scott Hoffman, GMCS Coordinator, P.O. Box 9, New Creek, WV 26743 or via e-mail to [ghoffman@wvda.us](mailto:ghoffman@wvda.us) no later than April 15, 2016. The WVDA will use this input to identify any significant issues related to the proposed project and to develop a range of alternatives. General questions about the program may be addressed to them as well.

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