

News Release

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SIGNUP FOR 2015 GYPSY MOTH SUPPRESSION PROGRAM TO BEGIN JULY 1

Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick is urging West Virginia landowners to help the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) fight gypsy moths, the state's number one forest pest, through the Cooperative State-County-Landowner (CSCL) Gypsy Moth Suppression Program.

The gypsy moth is still one of the most serious forest pests in West Virginia according to Quentin "Butch" Sayers, Assistant Director of Plant Industries Division for the WVDA. "The gypsy moth is a non-native, invasive insect that feeds on over 500 species of trees and shrubs, including West Virginia hardwoods" said Sayers. "Defoliation by gypsy moth caterpillars can kill trees, making them more susceptible to other pests and diseases. This treatment program helps to safeguard our forest resource including homeowner's trees and our timber and tourism industries, which are vital components of our state's economy. Without control measures, our water quality, recreation experiences, wildlife habitat, and timber production could all be negatively affected" said Sayers.

The CSCL Gypsy Moth Program will accept gypsy moth egg mass survey applications from landowners in Barbour, Berkeley, Braxton, Brooke, Doddridge, Gilmer, Grant, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Harrison, Jefferson, Lewis, Marion, Marshall, Mineral, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Nicholas, Ohio, Pendleton, Pleasants, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Ritchie, Taylor, Tyler, Tucker, Upshur, Webster, and Wetzel Counties. The signup period runs from July 1– August 31.

Landowners must provide a 7½-minute topographic map or aerial photo with property boundaries clearly marked. The WVDA cannot map your property for you. Maps are available from the United States Geological Survey at 1-888-ASK-USGS or their website at <http://store.usgs.gov>.

The minimum acreage required to participate in the program is 50 contiguous acres of wooded land. Adjoining landowners may combine their properties to meet the acreage requirement. The presence of electrical transmission lines, communication towers, etc. may prohibit some blocks or portions of some blocks from being sprayed.

Application forms and brochures detailing the program are available at the WVDA's Plant Industries Division website at:

wvagriculture.org/images/Plant_Industries/CSCL_Program_Brochure-3-10-11.pdf, your local WVU Extension offices, and at WVDA field offices in Charleston (304-558-2212) Morgantown (304-285-3133), New Creek (304-788-1066), and Moorefield (304-538-2397).

Once applications are received, a forest health protection expert will visit the landowner's

property to determine if the level of gypsy moth infestation meets program guidelines. A final decision to participate in the program must be confirmed by signing a contract and making a deposit to the WVDA by early December 2014. A final payment to the WVDA will be required prior to actual treatment. Notification of the deadline for final payment will be by mail.

For more information, contact WVDA Plant Industries Assistant Director, Quentin “Butch” Sayers at 304-788-1066 or qsayers@wvda.us.