



City of Rochester Hills
AGENDA SUMMARY
NON-FINANCIAL ITEMS

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Legislative File No: 2019-0105

TO: Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Ken Elwert, CPRE; Director, Parks & Natural Resources Department
Matt Einheuser; Natural Resources Manager

DATE: March 11, 2019

SUBJECT: 2019 Gypsy Moth Status and Treatment Update

REQUEST:

Update to City Council on the status and planned 2019 treatment of gypsy moths within Rochester Hills based on Fall 2018 Egg mass surveys.

BACKGROUND:

Gypsy moth caterpillars are an invasive species that can defoliate host trees by feeding on their leaves, ultimately threatening community tree canopy, in addition to being a nuisance to residents. In the recent decade, natural controls have kept populations at lower levels. The Department has developed a gypsy moth policy going forward that identifies different levels of engagement with residents depending on the severity of the infestation and risk to the community tree canopy. The levels range from minimal interaction and education to spraying targeted areas to control infestation and reduce risk to community canopy.

In 2018, based on resident reports and field observations, the Natural Resources Division performed gypsy moth egg mass surveys throughout the City. Egg mass surveys were completed within every section of the city at sites located in oak canopy and took roughly 86 labor hours to complete. The results showed two areas within the city that are at levels identified as an immediate threat to tree mortality and risk the health of our community canopy. These two locations total 72 acres.

As in years past (RH last sprayed in 2004), Rochester Hills will be working with an experienced aerial applicator to spray an organic product (Bt – *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *Kurstaki*), naturally found in our soils. This product only targets caterpillars of certain size at the time of spraying. This treatment method is commonly used throughout the state for gypsy moth control, it is used by organic farmers regularly, can be purchased over the counter by anyone, and is considered harmless to humans, pets, and other non-target organisms.

Spray will be conducted sometime in May to early June – dependent on weather conditions. Residents directly impacted within the spray blocks will receive prior notification, a legal notice will be posted, and additional information will be provided on our city's website. Cost of the spray will be approximately \$15,890 and funded out of the tree fund.

Forestry staff will continue to provide outreach and recommendations to residents in areas where gypsy moth eggs masses were not observed at such high levels per our new Gypsy Moth Policy. We will continue to monitor this issue yearly through egg surveys and response to resident concerns.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Parks and Natural Resources Department requests that City Council review, receive and file the presented information.

APPROVALS:	SIGNATURE	DATE
Department Review		
Department Director		
Mayor		
Deputy Clerk		