



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

8B

Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: February 25, 2025

Title of Item: Spogy Moth Treatment in Aitkin County

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	Action Requested: <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Only
Submitted by: Dennis (DJ) Thompson		Department: Land
Presenter (Name and Title): Kimberly Thielen Cremers, Plant Pest Regulatory & Mitigation Section Manager		Estimated Time Needed: 20 Minutes
Summary of Issue: Kimberly from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture will be giving a presentation on a treatment for spongy moth that will be in Aitkin County this summer. Spongy moth is an introduced invasive species that defoliates mainly hardwoods species.		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:		
Recommended Action/Motion:		
Financial Impact: Is there a cost associated with this request? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$ Is this budgeted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i>		

Spongy Moth Management Is Proposed In Your Area

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) in collaboration with federal partners has identified areas in your districts that need to be managed to slow the spread of spongy moth in Minnesota.

What is spongy moth?

Spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) is an invasive insect that is a significant threat to the economy, environment, and human health. Spongy moth has caused billions of dollars in property damage and defoliated millions of acres of forested land. Spongy moth caterpillars can feed on over 300 tree species, including some of Minnesota's most common trees.

How is spongy moth managed?

There are two types of management strategies used in Minnesota, both are by applying an organic product via low flying aircrafts to the tree canopies. The two products used are Btk and Mating Disruption. Applications generally happen early in the mornings, with planes often flying in the area for several hours.

Btk

Bt is a naturally occurring soil bacteria. When formulated into Btk it kills spongy moth caterpillars. Used widely in agriculture, Btk is one of the most frequently used pest control tools in the world. Btk has a proven safety record with people, pets, birds, fish, livestock, and other insects such as bees; and has been registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use in the U.S.

Mating Disruption (MD)

Mating Disruption halts the spongy moth mating process by saturating an area with female pheromones which prevent adult males from finding adult females to mate. The MDA utilizes a Mating Disruption product called SPLAT GM-O (Specialized Pheromone and Lure Application Technology Gypsy Moth-Organic). SPLAT GM-O is harmless to humans and animals. All the ingredients in SPLAT GM-O are listed by the EPA as safe.

How many acres in my district are proposed for management? What product will be used?

The MDA is proposing to manage spongy moth on 85,438 acres in 32 geographical areas in Aitkin, Carlton, Itasca, Pine, and St. Louis counties.

Management options to be utilized:

- *Btk (Table 1) and*
- *Mating Disruption (Table 2)*

*See Appendix 1 for a map of locations and treatment specifics by area. An interactive map of management activities is also available online at www.mda.state.mn.us/spongymothmanagement

Table 1. 2025 northeast Minnesota proposed Btk spongy moth management.

County	Area Name	Proposed Management	Acres
CARLTON	BERTHIAUME	BTK	137
CARLTON	EAGLE LANE	BTK	122
CARLTON	GILLOGLY RD	BTK	172
CARLTON	KEOCHER RD BTK	BTK	195
CARLTON	MAHTOWA REST AREA	BTK	181
ITASCA	GRAND RAPIDS	BTK	340
ST. LOUIS	MEANDER LAKE	BTK	171
ST. LOUIS	WILSON RD	BTK	148
TOTAL			1,466

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

How do community members and I stay informed?

With high visibility aerial management of Mating Disruption/Btk, communication with the public is key to success. The MDA uses several methods to inform residents of spongy moth management and how it affects them.

- **Public Meetings/Open Houses**

The MDA hosts several virtual or in-person public meetings, typically in the month of March to inform citizens about the proposed project.

- **Postcards**

The most significant communication tool the MDA uses are postcards. All residents with addresses within a management area receive at least one outlining what spongy moth is, the MDA's management proposal, and ways to learn more about the program.

- **Text/Email Alerts**

For the most up-to-date information on spongy moth management activities the public can sign up to receive text messages and emails that provide specific information on management timings in their area. The public can subscribe by visiting www.mda.state.mn.us/spongymothmanagement

- **Press Releases**

The MDA also issues press releases to advertise public meetings and announce upcoming treatments.

- **Listserv**

To keep local government informed on MDA activities, all relevant local government leaders are added to a local leader listserv. This listserv is an opportunity for local leaders to learn more about spongy moth activities, receive updates, and see what the MDA will be sharing with residents. If you would like to be added to our listserv, please let us know.

- **Cooperation**

We work closely with local government communication staff to help publicize spongy moth management activities on their websites and social media before and during treatments.

Table 2. 2025 northeast Minnesota proposed Mating Disruption spongy moth management.

County	Area Name	Proposed Management	Acres
AITKIN	BALSMA	MD	643
CARLTON	BARNUM	MD	10,120
CARLTON	EAGLE LAKE	MD	8,821
CARLTON	FDL STATE FOREST	MD	3,692
CARLTON	KETTLE RIVER	MD	5,381
CARLTON	KOECHER RD MD	MD	342
CARLTON	MAHTOWA	MD	9,045
CARLTON	MOOSE HORN RIVER	MD	326
CARLTON	MOOSE LAKE TWP	MD	6,599
CARLTON	OLESIAK RD	MD	902
CARLTON	OTTER CREEK	MD	1,503
CARLTON	SPIRIT LAKE RD	MD	836
ITASCA	CROPLESS LAKE	MD	1,472
ITASCA	SISEEBAKWET	MD	319
ITASCA	TANK LAKE	MD	730
PINE	NEMADJI FOREST	MD	4,608
ST. LOUIS	ALLAVUS RD	MD	1,977
ST. LOUIS	BROOKSTON	MD	13,146
ST. LOUIS	CHISHOLM	MD	2,118
ST. LOUIS	CULVER	MD	1,579
ST. LOUIS	HIB TAC	MD	1,382
ST. LOUIS	NEW INDEPENDENCE	MD	2,085
ST. LOUIS	PRAIRIE LAKE	MD	5,884
ST. LOUIS	TOIVOLA	MD	462
TOTAL			83,972

More Information

www.mda.state.mn.us/spongymoth

Key Contacts

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Appendix 1

Proposed Activity

Number of management areas: 32

Figure 1. 2025 proposed spongy moth management areas in northeast Minnesota.

