



File Code: 2150/1950

Date: December 10, 2008

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Dear Sir/Madam:

We are now seeking comments on the pre-decisional 2009 Gypsy Moth Suppression Project Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA proposes gypsy moth suppression activities on an estimated 13,245 acres of National Forest lands on the Marlinton/White Sulphur Ranger Districts in Greenbrier and Pocahontas Counties. Treatment areas would be aerially sprayed with organic, naturally occurring insecticides where gypsy moth defoliation occurred in summer of 2008. The spraying would occur in the spring of 2009. Alternative 2 is the preferred alternative.

Gypsy Moth caterpillars defoliated over 23,000 acres of Monongahela National Forest land last summer. The moth egg masses in many of the defoliated areas are expected to produce large numbers of caterpillars, which would likely defoliate these acres and more. Hardwood tree mortality would be expected to increase in areas defoliated twice. Pines and other conifers can die after a single complete defoliation. The purpose of the proposed treatment is to reduce the aesthetic, economic, and environmental impacts caused by gypsy moth caterpillars feeding in these specific areas, while slowing the spread of gypsy moths to un-infested areas. Our intent is to accomplish this task with minimal impacts to other Forest species and resources.

Although a preferred alternative has been identified, I have not made a final decision on which alternative to implement. At this time, I am asking for your written review comments on summary Chapters 1 and 2 of this EA. Your comments may be e-mailed to comments-eastern-monongahela@fs.fed.us and should reference the gypsy moth project in the subject line. They may also be sent to David Ede, Supervisor's Office, 200 Sycamore Street, Elkins, WV 24261.

Comments must be postmarked or received within 30 days beginning the day following publication of a legal notice announcing this review period in the Elkins Inter-Mountain newspaper. We anticipate that this legal notice will be published on or around December 11, 2008. Thus, the postmark deadline would be on or around January 10, 2008. Your comments need to be as specific as possible and contain the following:

- 1) Name, address, and (if possible) telephone number;
- 2) Title of the document(s) on which comments are being submitted; and
- 3) Specific facts or comments along with supporting reasons that the person believes the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision.



Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR Part 215.

It is the responsibility of interested parties to respond to this notice within the established time period. No means of communication is perfect. Please contact the persons listed below if a document is not available or not delivered at the expected time, to ascertain its availability, and if necessary, to arrange an alternate delivery method.

If you have any questions or need further information regarding this proposal, please contact David Ede or Glen Juergens at the Monongahela Forest Supervisor's Office, 200 Sycamore Street, Elkins WV 26241 (304-636-1800).

Thank you for your participation in this assessment.

Sincerely,

/s/ Clyde N. Thompson
CLYDE N. THOMPSON
Forest Supervisor