Finding of No Significant Impact Asian Gypsy Moth Cooperative Eradication Program in King, Pierce, Thurston, and Clark Counties, Washington

Environmental Assessment
April 2016

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) evaluating the impacts of a treatment for gypsy moth in King, Pierce, Thurston, and Clark Counties, Washington. The EA is incorporated into this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by reference and is available at the APHIS website at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/ or from-

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The draft EA was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts to human health and the environment from the proposed treatment of 10, 457 acres in seven locations in King, Pierce, Thurston, and Clark Counties, WA, with the microbial insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (Btk), for gypsy moth control. The use of Btk for eradication was previously evaluated in an Environmental Impact Statement as one of six alternatives for treating gypsy moths and was found to be the most effective method for treating gypsy moth outbreaks similar to the ones described in the seven locations in Washington. The EA was made available to the public for a 30-day public comment period beginning on March 1, 2016, on the APHIS web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/, and on the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) web site at http://agr.wa.gov/plantsinsects/insectpests/gypsymoth/ControlEfforts/EnvironmentalImpactStatement/2016EIS.aspx. Notice of the availability of the EA was published in four newspapers, the Seattle Times, the Columbian, the Olympian, and the Tacoma News Tribune, on March 1, 2016. Other public outreach activities were described in the EA and included five public Open Houses, some of which occurred during the public comment period for the EA. Five commenters submitted comments to APHIS and WSDA in response to the EA. Four of these commenters were in favor of the proposed program. One commenter was against the program because of general concerns regarding an aerial pesticide spray, but did not raise any concerns specific to the proposed action.

The analysis in the EA suggests that the treatment of gypsy moth in 10, 457 acres in King, Pierce, Thurston, and Clark Counties, WA with Btk will not result in significant impacts to human health and the environment. A minimum of three applications of Btk will be applied with an interval of approximately seven to 14 days between each application. These applications are estimated to start sometime in mid to late April 2016. The exact date of application will be timed so that the applications occur during the early larval stages when gypsy moths are most

susceptible to treatments. WSDA will notify occupants in the affected area about the upcoming eradication activities through bulk mailings and social media. WSDA offers a prior notification list upon which interested parties can request to be placed. Persons on the list will receive calls and/or e-mails or text messages the day before applications occur.

APHIS consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and determined that the preferred treatment alternative may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect various salmonid species, the Pacific eulachon distinct population segment (DPS), and North American green sturgeon DPS. NMFS concurred with this determination in a letter dated March 30, 2016. APHIS met with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on February 3, 2016 and determined that there would be no effect to listed species under FWS jurisdiction in the program area.

There are no disproportionate adverse effects to minorities, low-income populations, or children, in accordance with Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations," and Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks." The potential for impacts to historic properties, including sites of tribal importance, were evaluated pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. APHIS consulted with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and received a letter dated March 2, 2016, concurring with the APHIS determination that the proposed program would not affect historic properties in the treatment areas.

I have determined that there would be no significant impact on the quality of the human environment from the implementation of the preferred alternative. APHIS' finding of no significant impact from the preferred alternative is based on the results of the analysis in this EA. Lastly, because I have not found evidence of significant environmental impact associated with the proposed program, I further find that no additional environmental documentation needs to be prepared and that the program may proceed.

Diana Hoffman

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April 6, 2016
Date