



Cascade Charter Township
5920 Tahoe Dr, SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

May 4, 2022

Dear Cascade Resident:

This letter is to inform you that, in the next several weeks, Hamilton Helicopter Service will be spraying for spongy moths in targeted areas throughout the Township. The Entomological Society of America has recently changed the official common name of *Lymantria Dispar* from “gypsy moth” to “spongy moth.” Your area is one that will be sprayed (see map on back). The Township will have 431 acres of property sprayed this year to prevent this invasive insect from defoliating trees and shrubs in the area.

The program area will be sprayed with a non-toxic biological agent called *Bacillus thuringiensis*, or Bt. Residents in spray areas do not need to remain indoors while spraying is underway and can safely go about their regular daily activities. As Bt is released into the air, it will descend upon trees and grounds in a light mist that will be barely discernible. Residents can expect to find dead caterpillar larvae in and around their yards after completion of the insecticide application. Here are some of the most common questions about spongy moths:

What does a spongy moth caterpillar look like?

Spongy moth caterpillars are typically around 2 inches in length and can be identified by their distinctive markings. They typically have a yellow head with black markings, with prominent blue and red spots along the length of their body. They can be found in more than 250 species of trees and are especially common where oak trees are abundant. They do not spin silk tents, unlike the native and relatively harmless Eastern tent caterpillar.

How does Bt affect the spongy moth caterpillars?

Bt is a naturally occurring bacterium common in soils throughout the world. When a spongy moth caterpillar eats leaves sprayed with Bt, the bacterium produces a protein that reacts with the cells of its digestive tract lining. The Bt proteins essentially paralyze the digestive tract of the caterpillars, which will then cause them to stop feeding and eventually kill them. The spongy moth caterpillars will typically die en masse two to three days after spraying occurs.

Is Bt dangerous to people, pets, wildlife or other beneficial insects?

The primary benefit of using Bt to control the spongy moth population is it is a naturally occurring microbial insecticide that is non-toxic and safe for people, pets and wildlife. Unlike most insecticides, Bt does not have a broad spectrum of activity, so it does not kill beneficial insects. These include the natural enemies of insects (predators and parasites), as well as beneficial pollinators, such as honeybees.

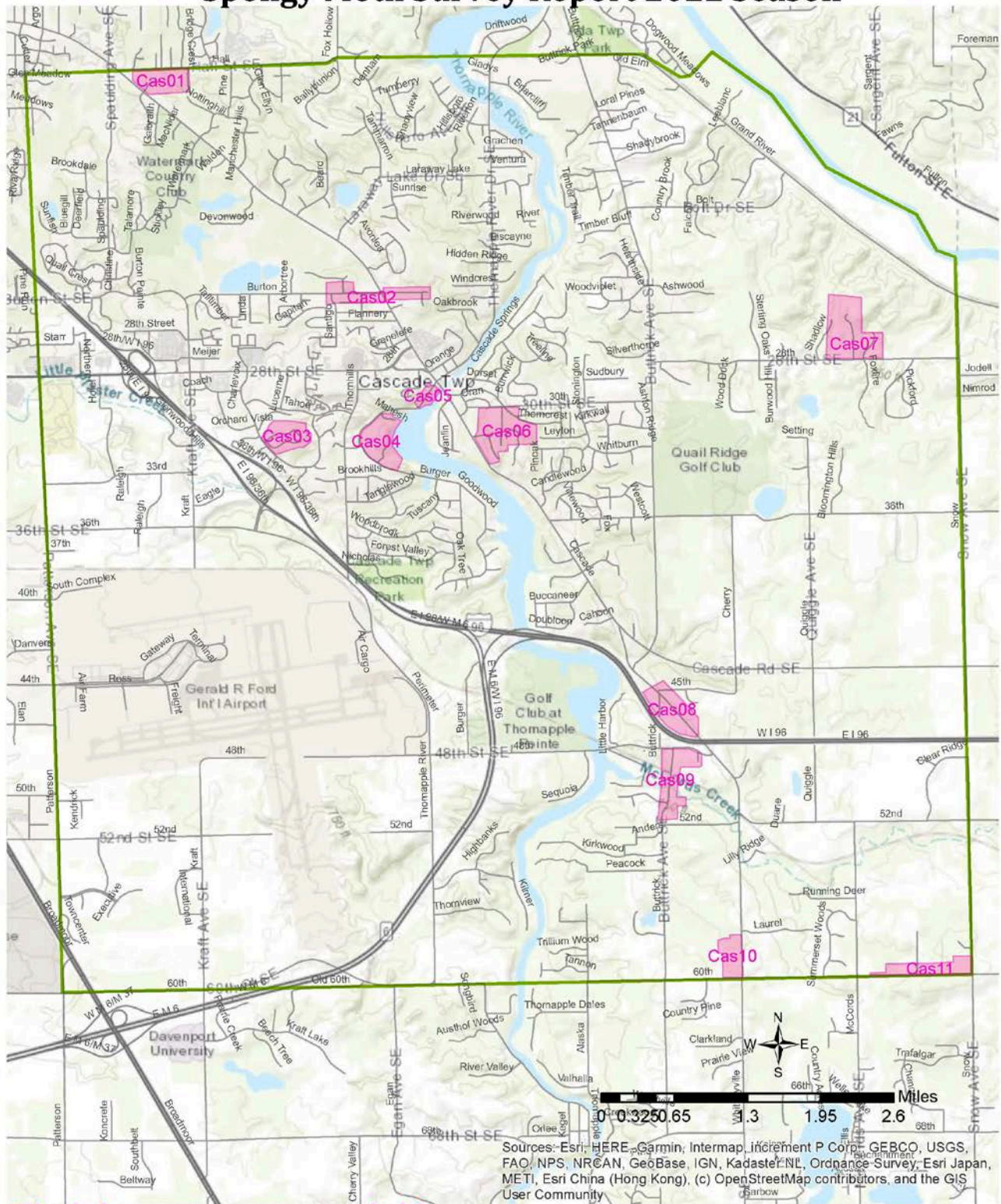
Please visit the Cascade Township website (cascadetwp.com) to find out more information on the spraying program and how to identify spongy moth caterpillars. We will also post the spray date on the website when it is finalized (typically sometime between mid-May to mid-June), as well as the Township Facebook page (facebook.com/CascadeTownship).

If you have any questions, please contact me at 616.949.1500 or via email at bswayze@cascadetwp.com.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Swayze
Township Manager, Cascade Charter Township

Cascade Charter Township Spongy Moth Survey Report 2022 Season



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Shaded areas are recommended for aerial B.t.k. spray in Spring 2022

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