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Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Superior  
National  
Forest

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**File Code:** 1950-1/3400

**Date:** May 1, 2006

Dear Interested Party:

We are pleased to announce that the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the 2006 Gypsy Moth Slow-the-Spread Project is available; a copy is enclosed for your information. The EA is also available on our website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior/projects/>). This cover letter briefly describes the project and procedures for filing objections.

The 2006 Gypsy Moth Slow-the-Spread project addresses the recent increase in gypsy moths on the North Shore of Lake Superior. The purpose of this project is to effectively manage the gypsy moth population in Cook County in order to delay the wide-spread establishment of gypsy moths in Minnesota. The proposal would also reduce the negative impacts of gypsy moth caterpillars. It is important to act now when the population of gypsy moths is low and treatment methods with very few adverse environmental impacts are effective.

Four areas, covering 133,275 acres, are identified for treatment. The proposal is to treat all acreage within those four areas with a gypsy moth pheromone that prevents male moths from finding female moths, reducing their reproductive success. The pheromone is only detectable by gypsy moths so no other species would be affected.

This project was developed and analyzed collaboratively between the USDA - Forest Service and the State of Minnesota. In addition to the Superior National Forest interdisciplinary team, the expertise of the Forest Service State and Private Forestry Northeastern Area staff and the State of Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Department of Natural Resources have been critical to this project.

In addition, the public took advantage of involvement opportunities during project development and analysis. After several meetings and other contacts with partners and local residents, we sent a public involvement package to almost 500 people for a 30-day public review and comment period. This package gave people enough information so they could provide meaningful comments. We also held four public meetings along the North Shore to provide more information and answer questions. In total, 14 comments were received that aided the planning team in presenting information and looking at different ways of managing gypsy moths in the EA.



Mike Prouty, Field Representative for the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, and I are the Responsible Officials; we will each sign a decision for this project. As the Forest Supervisor for the Superior National Forest, I am the Responsible Official for the decision to treat National Forest System land, while Mike Prouty is the Responsible Official for the decision to treat all other ownerships.

This project is being planned and analyzed under authorization of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003, which was designed to expedite the preparation and implementation of forest health projects on federal lands. Use of this authority helps streamline the planning process and allows us to implement the Cook County Wildfire Protection Plan that was developed by numerous local and state organizations and agencies.

The decision to treat National Forest System land is subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR part 218, subpart A and is not subject to the notice, comment, and appeal procedures found at 36 CFR part 215. The Forest Service is providing respondents with a 30-day objection period. See Section 4 of the EA for more detail on this process.

When the objection-filing period has ended and the objection Reviewing Officer has responded to any objections, we may sign the decisions for the project. The Reviewing Officer will issue a written response to any objectors within 30 days following the end of this objection-filing period. If no timely objections are filed, a decision can be made on the fifth business day following the close of the filing period. Implementation may begin immediately after the decision is made.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in this planning effort. Working with partners has been a tremendous value to this planning process and managing non-native invasive species in general. We are confident that this project would best meet the needs of the public and the forest ecosystems in Minnesota.

For more information, contact the project leader, Erica Hahn, at (218) 626-4300 or [ehahn@fs.fed.us](mailto:ehahn@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,

JAMES W. SANDERS  
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure