

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A GYPSY MOTH A SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

- 1) What exactly is a Special Assessment District and how does it work?
A: A Special Assessment District is a specific area of properties where an assessment is made against a property for an activity that results in an enhanced benefit to the property. Residents around the Tri-Lakes are part of a separate assessment program for Lake Improvements. Assessments are added to the winter tax bill, although they are not a tax.
- 2) If I sign this petition, am I locked in to support it?
A: No. You still receive notices from the Township in order for you to retain the right to protest the Special Assessment District at public meetings or by mail sent to the Township.
- 3) How much is this going to cost?
A: Each parcel will be assessed about \$75-\$100 per year of the program. This amount will be determined by the Township when they prepare a budget for the project.
- 4) How many years am I going to have to pay an assessment?
A: The plan is to request approval for 3-5 years. If gypsy moths are still present after that, another public meeting will be held to determine if the program should be extended.
- 5) Why should I care about gypsy moths?
A: Gypsy moths are capable of defoliating hundreds of trees in a short period of time and can have a negative impact on tree health. They prefer oak and aspen trees, which are common in the Tri-Lakes area. Most healthy deciduous trees will re-foliate. Older trees in poorer health may not. In a severe infestation, conifers (pine, spruce) will not. Sustained infestation over several years increase the chances of tree mortality. Significant loss of trees could impact not only the beauty of our properties, but possible property values. And removing dead trees – at lot owner expense – can run into thousands of dollars. Gypsy moth caterpillars spread frass (feces) on sidewalks, driveways, yard, decks, porches and vehicles. Frass stain surfaces, especially if it is rained on or becomes wet.
- 6) If my properties are not treated, am I still required to pay the assessment?
A: Yes. The need for aerial spraying is done annually. Areas with high concentrations of gypsy moth egg masses are targeted for spraying. Although an area is not targeted one year, the gypsy moths are mobile and will migrate to a nearby area to feed on trees.
- 7) If the Tri-lakes runs a suppression program but the surrounding communities don't, does that still help us control the gypsy moth population?
A: It is hoped that spraying our Tri-Lakes area will prevent the migration of gypsy moths from outside the spray area.
- 8) What exactly is done to treat the gypsy moth caterpillars? Are these treatments dangerous to people?
A: Controlling the gypsy moth is done through an aerial application of a microorganism called btK (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) that will target the caterpillars and not be harmful to other species. The timing of the application is most effective when the caterpillars are newly emerged, usually mid to late May. Hazards posed to humans are minimal.
- 9) Will BtK kill all of the caterpillars?
A: No. If the treatment is applied within the correct time frame and weather conditions are good, it will suppress the growth of the caterpillar population. The program is usually spread over a 3 to 5 year period because the aerial application cannot kill all caterpillars in one year. Hence the term "suppression program".
- 10) Can I treat my own property?
A: Killing gypsy moths will depend on what stage they are in. Egg masses laid in the fall can be scraped from the trees into a bucket of soapy water. However, egg masses may be hard to spot or too high in a tree to remove. Caterpillars can be sprayed with an insecticide specifically effective against gypsy moth caterpillars (read product label), or the caterpillars can be manually removed and put in a bucket of soapy water. See the Tri-Lakes Association website for specific instructions on removal of the caterpillars.

See www.thetrilakes.org for answers to additional questions about gypsy moths and a suppression program.