



June 22, 2022

Finding of No Significant Impact

Wisconsin Cooperative Spongy Moth Program Slow-The-Spread Environmental Assessment

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Wisconsin

The National Park Service (NPS) has adopted the 2022 Wisconsin Cooperative Spongy Moth Program Slow-The-Spread Environmental Assessment (EA), developed by the United States Forest Service, State & Private Forestry (USFS, S&PF) and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for the treatment of spongy moth within the NPS boundaries of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

BACKGROUND

The spongy moth (SM), *Lymantria dispar* (L.) (formerly known as gypsy moth), has been gradually expanding its range in North America since its introduction into North America in 1869. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative Management Programs for SM fall into one of four categories: (1) a quarantine applied to areas with established populations to minimize the accidental movement of life-stages into new areas; (2) outbreak suppression in areas where SM is established; (3) eradication in areas where SM is not established; and (4) barrier-zone management, which is implemented in the transition zone between the uninfested and infested areas and is currently realized through the SM [Slow-the-Spread](#) (STS) program.

The STS program is a cooperative management program implemented by the USFS Forest Health Protection program in conjunction with state agencies from ten (10) US states. After several pilot programs that demonstrated the efficacy of a barrier zone program against the SM, STS was integrated into the USDA national strategy to manage SM in 2000. The premise of the STS program is to deploy a network of pheromone-baited traps across the leading population front, which extends from Minnesota to North Carolina. Within this trapping area, newly founded colonies that are detected are targeted for elimination in an effort to minimize their contribution to range expansion. Colonies are treated using primarily mating disruption tactics and to a lesser extent the biopesticides *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *kurstaki* (Btk) and Gypchek. The STS program is evaluated by estimating yearly spread rates. Since 2000, the STS program has reduced SM spread by more than sixty percent (60%) compared to historical rates of spread. The reduction in spread is estimated to have prevented SM infestation and the impacts associated with outbreaks on more than ninety-eight (98) million acres over this time. The partnership between the USDA and participating states also promotes a well-coordinated, region-wide action based on biological need. The STS program yields a benefit to cost ratio of more than four (4) to one (1) by delaying the onset of the effects occurring as SM invades new areas.

In Wisconsin, fifty-two (52) out of the seventy-two (72) counties are under quarantine for SM. Pockets of SM infestation flare up periodically within these counties. These outbreaks may range from a single woodlot to thousands of acres. Local communities or individual property owners may choose to spray to suppress these outbreaks, but DATCP generally does not treat in these areas.

In May 2022, an EA was completed by the USFS, S&PF and DATCP to treat outlier SM populations in Wisconsin with either the bacterial insecticide Btk or mating disruption treatments along an area referred to as the Action Zone. Treatments are proposed on fifty-seven (57) sites in seventeen (17) counties totaling approximately 163,491 acres in 2022. The EA Action Zone encompasses approximately 1,073 acres of NPS lands which are proposed for treatment with mating disruption (mid-summer). The NPS acres are all within the Sawyer11 treatment block of the Action Zone along the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (park) ([figures 1-3](#)) located in Sawyer County. Sawyer County is not a designated quarantine area for SM. The presence of SM within park boundaries in this location is likely although exact locations have not been documented by the park. NPS acknowledges the negative impacts to vegetation from SM in the surrounding landscape and approves of the use of this proactive management technique within park boundaries. While USFS, S&PF, DATCP, and NPS will share the same EA, the NPS will issue a separate decision document for treatments that overlap NPS owned and managed lands.

SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

The EA analyzed two alternatives (no action and the action alternative/preferred alternative) and the associated impacts on the environment. Based on the analysis, the NPS has concurred with the USFS, S&PF and DATCP's selection of the action alternative/preferred alternative for implementation. See Section 2 of the EA for a complete, detailed description of the Selected Alternative.

Under the action alternative, a cooperative effort would be made by the USFS, S&PF and DATCP for STS treatments on approximately 1,073 acres of NPS owned and managed lands. The NPS owned and managed lands of St. Croix National and Scenic Riverway would be treated with a single mating disruption application in early to mid-July, prior to the flight period of male SM. The mating disruption is applied at a rate of fifteen grams (15g) of active ingredient per acre and is applied once per treatment site.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires public involvement and notification for all projects using federal funds that may have an effect on the human environment (40 CFR, 1506.6 in Council of Environmental Quality 1992). See Section 1.6 of the EA for a summary of public involvement and notification for this project.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

Spongy moth (*Lepidoptera: Erebidae*), is an exotic defoliator in North America. SM caterpillars feed on the leaves of a wide variety of trees and shrubs. In the Great Lakes region, highly preferred hosts include oak, aspen, paper birch, basswood, and willow, all common tree species across Wisconsin. High numbers of SM caterpillars can cause a substantial public nuisance and a reduction in tree growth and overall tree health. Following large outbreaks, some tree mortality can occur, especially when outbreaks persist in an area for two (2) to three (3) consecutive years. Widespread caterpillar outbreaks can alter water quality, wildlife habitat, microclimate, and soil fertility. The NPS concurred with the USFS, S&PF, DATCP decision to conduct treatments within the park boundary to slow the spread of the SM.

MITIGATION MEASURES

The NPS places a strong emphasis on avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potentially adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources under the jurisdiction of the NPS or as a result of an NPS decision. To help ensure the protection of cultural and natural resources and the quality of the visitor experience, the NPS will implement mitigation measures to avoid and/or minimize impacts.

The selected alternative incorporates the mitigation measures listed in [Appendix A](#) of this document. These mitigation measures will be included as conditions in the Special Use Permit issued to the USFS, S&PF and any others associated with the work.

The Authority for mitigation for this project come from the following laws and policies:

- NPS Organic Act (16 United States Code [U.S.C.] 1)
- Wild & Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542; 16 United States Code 1271 et seq.)
- NPS Management Policies (Chapters 4, 5) (NPS 2006)
- Secretarial Order 3289, Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources. (September 14, 2009)
- Executive Order 13751 – Safeguarding the Nation from the Impacts of Invasive Species (December 2016).

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA REVIEW

Potentially Affected Environment

Approximately 1,073 acres of NPS lands are proposed for treatment with mating disruption. These NPS acres are all within the Sawyer11 treatment block ([figures 1-3](#)) along the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, located in Sawyer County, Wisconsin. The EA classified this block as forest, rural residential, and medium population density. The NPS managed lands in this treatment block consist of approximately four (4) miles of the Namekagon River surrounded by mixed forest, floodplain, and wetland habitats.

Three NPS managed campsites are located within this treatment block and two (2) NPS managed campsites are located to the immediate west of the treatment block ([figure 3](#)). These campsites are 'first come first served' sites and do not require reservations.

No federally threatened or endangered plant species are known to occur within the project area. Additionally, the NPS has determined that the selected alternative will have no adverse effect on state and federally listed bat, avian, mussel, or amphibian species in the park.

Degree of Effects of the Action

The NPS considered the following actual or potential project effects in evaluating the degree of the effects (40 CFR 1501.3(b)(2)) for this proposed action.

a. Beneficial and adverse, short-term, and long-term effects of the proposed action.

The selected action will result in mostly long-term beneficial impacts, along with a few short-term adverse impacts, as described below.

b. Degree to which the proposed action effects visitor use and experience

The selected alternative may cause temporary adverse impacts to visitor use and experience within the project area including excess noise due to low flying aircraft and exposure to aerial mating disruption treatment when visitors may be on site.

DATCP has developed and started implementing a communication plan and worked with the park to identify additional targeted outreach efforts for the campsites. The NPS will conduct additional targeted outreach at their visitor centers and social media platforms. Visitor use mitigations identified in the EA and additional mitigations identified by the park are listed in [Appendix A](#).

c. Effects to federal, state, Tribal or local environmental protection laws

The selected alternative does not threaten or violate applicable federal, state, Tribal or local environmental laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. The NPS has complied with all federal, state, and local laws with relevance to the selected alternative.

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Section 106 of the National Historical Preservation Act and 36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties requires the State Historic Preservation Officer be consulted regarding the proposed activities. As part of the consultation process for the EA, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin-Division of Historic Preservation deemed treatment activities to not meet the definition of undertakings for their review process. The Wisconsin Historical Society stated that the project, as described, should not affect any properties that are listed in, or known to be eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

As described in the EA, DATCP sends a notification to Bureau of Indian Affairs for the overall STS project which includes treatment and trapping activities. In instances where treatments are anticipated on tribal properties, DATCP seeks an approval letter from the Tribal Chairperson. This process typically involves a consultation with their Natural Resources Coordinator (or similar position) or an approval from Tribal Elders. In addition, DATCP conducts a parcel search each year for state, federal, and tribal land holdings that proposed treatment blocks intersect. For 2022, no tribal owned properties lie within or adjacent to any treatment blocks in Wisconsin; and therefore, DATCP did not complete tribal consultation for these blocks. In Minnesota, tribal owned properties are located near proposed mating disruption blocks on the Superior National Forest and Duluth. For those blocks, Minnesota Department of Agriculture contacted the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa due to the proximity of Btk blocks and reached out to 1854 Treaty authority to inform them of proposed treatment blocks in northern Minnesota. The Superior National Forest went through their own consultation process with tribes in the area which included Bois Forte, Grand Portage, and Fond du Lac Bands of Chippewa. They also included 1854 Authority in all correspondence.

In addition to USFS, S&PF and DATCP's Tribal consultation process, NPS communicated with Tribal partners based on the scale, nature, and location of the project within park boundaries. Although there are no overlapping or adjacent tribal lands to the proposed treatment block Sawyer11, the area is within the 1837 Ceded Territory. As such, the NPS communicated with the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) on June 14, 2022, notifying them of the proposed action in the park. GLIFWC represents eleven (11) Ojibwe tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan who reserved hunting, fishing, and gathering rights in the 1836, 1837, 1842, and 1854 Treaties with the United States government. On June 15, 2022, the park

also communicated with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and Natural Resource Department leads for the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and St. Croix Tribe regarding the proposed STS treatment within the Riverway.

US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The USFS, S&PF consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Minnesota-Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and to request concurrence with the determinations of effect presented in Chapter 3 of the Forest Service, S&PF and DATCP's EA. The Forest Service, S&PF received a letter of concurrence on April 15, 2022, which covered all treatment sites for the state of Wisconsin and considered both the Btk and mating disruption treatments. The USFWS concurred with the Forest Service, S&PF's determination that the project 'may affect but is not likely to adversely affect' the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), Higgins eye pearly mussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*), sheepnose mussel (*Plethobasus cyphus*), spectaclecase mussel (*Cumberlandia mondonga*), and rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*). For the rusty patched bumble bee, Higgin's eye pearly mussel, and sheepnose mussel, this determination was made because it is highly unlikely that Btk will have a negative impact or cause toxicity to the species. The northern long-eared bat determination is based on the potential reduction in available food due to Btk treatments, but this reduction is not deemed significant. The Sawyer11 treatment block that overlaps park boundaries is located in Sawyer County and will only receive the mating disruption treatment, not the Btk treatment that has the potential to affect these species. This treatment block does not occur within the rusty patched bumble bee or Karner blue butterfly high potential zone.

NPS consulted the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) portal and WI DNR's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) portal on April 5, 2022 for the potential presence of federally threatened and endangered species within the Sawyer11 treatment block. Within the Sawyer11 treatment block, the park has habitat that could support the Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), and northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). The NPS concurs with the Forest Service, S&PF and USFWS determinations of 'no effect' for Canada lynx. Per NHI data, no occurrences of Canada lynx have been reported in or within two miles of the treatment block. No determination was made for the gray wolf through the Forest Service, S&PF's consultation process. This may be due to USFWS' recent relisting of the gray wolf as a federally threatened species in Minnesota and a federally endangered species in the remaining states. NPS determined no effect to the gray wolf as the mating disruption treatment has been determined to have no direct effect on mammals and the treatment would not affect potential food sources for the gray wolf. NPS concurs with the 'may affect, not likely to adversely affect' determination for the northern long-eared bat. The results of this treatment may result in mostly long-term beneficial impacts to native vegetation and wildlife populations.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on the information contained in the environmental assessment, the NPS has determined that the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) will not be required.

This finding is based on consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality criteria for significance (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1501.3 [b] [2020]), regarding the *potentially affected environment* and *degrees of effects* of the impacts described in the environmental assessment (which is hereby incorporated by reference).

Recommended:

Craig E. Hansen
Superintendent
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

Approved:

Herbert C. Frost, Ph.D
Regional Director
National Park Service, DOI Regions 3, 4, and 5

REFERENCES

National Park Service (NPS)

- 1916 National Park Service Organic Act (16 United States Code 1,2,3, and 4)
- 1966 National Historic Preservation Act (54 United States Code § 306101)
- 1968 Wild & Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542; 16 United States Code 1271 et seq.)
- 1992 Council of Environmental Quality. 40 CFR § 1506.6 (1992).
- 2000 Protection of Historic Properties. 36 CFR § 800
- 1998 General Manage Plan – Upper St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers (July 16, 1998).
- 2002 National Park Service Procedural Manual #77-2. Floodplain Management. (October 2002). https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/upload/PM-77-2_10-2002_508.pdf
- 2006 Management Policies 2006. The Guide to Managing the National Park System. (August 31, 2006). https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/upload/MP_2006.pdf
- 2009 Secretarial Order 3289, *Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources*. <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/migrated/whatwedo/climate/cop15/upload/SecOrder3289.pdf>. (September 14, 2009)
- 2016 Executive Order 13751 – Safeguarding the Nation from the Impacts of Invasive Species (December 2016). <https://www.doi.gov/invasivespecies/executive-order-13751>
- 2017 Foundation Document – St. Croix National Scenic Riverway - Minnesota and Wisconsin. (September 2017).

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- 2022 Environmental Assessment. Wisconsin Cooperative Spongy Moth Program Slow-the-Spread. United States Forest Service, State & Private Forestry, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (April 2022).
- 2022 Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact. Wisconsin Cooperative Spongy Moth Program Slow-the-Spread. United States Forest Service, State & Private Forestry, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (May 5, 2022).

APPENDIX A:

Mitigation Measures

NATURAL RESOURCES

- DATCP will have personnel at airports to ensure that mating disruption application is occurring in accordance with label direction. In addition, aerial observers will be used to ensure that only designated areas are treated.
- Pilots will be thoroughly briefed on treatment site locations.
- Aircraft will be guided using differential global positioning systems (DGPS) with a real-time display. Near real time flight following software are used at the command center so program managers can monitor the spray program.
- Pilots will be instructed not to treat open water such as lakes, ponds, and visible rivers. They are instructed to treat forested areas.
- Ground personnel will be equipped with two-way radios to communicate with observation aircraft, which can, in turn, communicate with spray aircraft.
- Spraying will be done in weather conditions that minimize drift.
- Label directions will be followed. Mixers, loaders, and pilots will wear protective clothing when required.
- Tankers with pesticide at mix/load areas will be guarded and/or secured to prevent vandalism or tampering.
- Consultations with Wisconsin DNR Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation (formerly the Bureau of Endangered Resources) and the USFWS will be done to determine if treatment sites might affect state or federally listed threatened and endangered species. Consultation was completed as part of the EA process.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND NOTIFICATION

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual content (in lieu of open house public meetings) was posted on the DATCP website. Notification of these materials and an invitation to review and comment was made to elected officials and through news releases to local newspapers, radio, and television stations. Questions and concerns can be submitted by email or by calling the *L. dispar* hotline.
- DATCP will send two notification postcards to all carrier routes that intersect treatment sites (Figures 5-6). The first one occurred in early March inviting the public to review and comment on treatment plans. The second one will be sent in early June notifying residents that treatments will occur in the future. Postcards describe aerial spraying operations and low flying aircraft.
- DATCP will send letter and email notifications to government contacts at county, municipal, and emergency services months before as well as day before treatments.
- DATCP will make individual calls or email alerts to residents that request notifications.
- The DATCP website and social media accounts will be updated daily with notifications and progress.

PARK SPECIFIC VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE

- Laminated notification posters will be posted at campsites by DATCP staff the week leading up to the treatment to alert any potential campers and to provide relevant information. Posters will be removed by DATCP staff immediately after the treatment is completed and/or when visitors will no longer be impacted by the project.
- NPS – St. Croix National Scenic Riverway will post notifications on their website and Facebook account.
- NPS – St. Croix National Scenic Riverway will post notifications at their Visitor Centers.
- USFS, S&PF, DATCP, and any contractors or sub-contractors must carry a copy of the approved Special Use Permit while conducting STS operations within park boundaries.

APPENDIX B:
Maps of Treatment Site

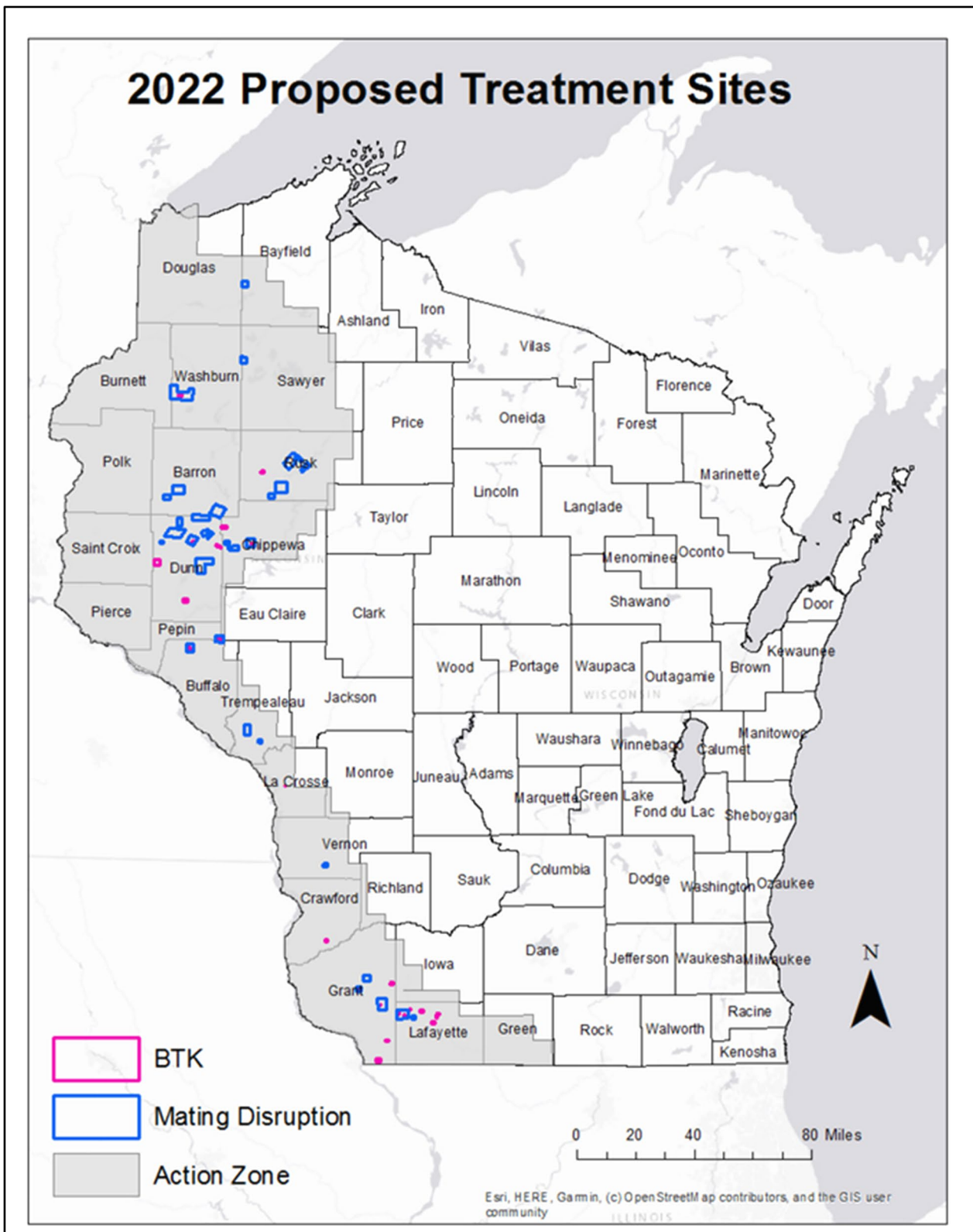


Figure 1. Proposed Slow-The-Spread *Lymantria dispar* treatment sites for 2022 in Wisconsin

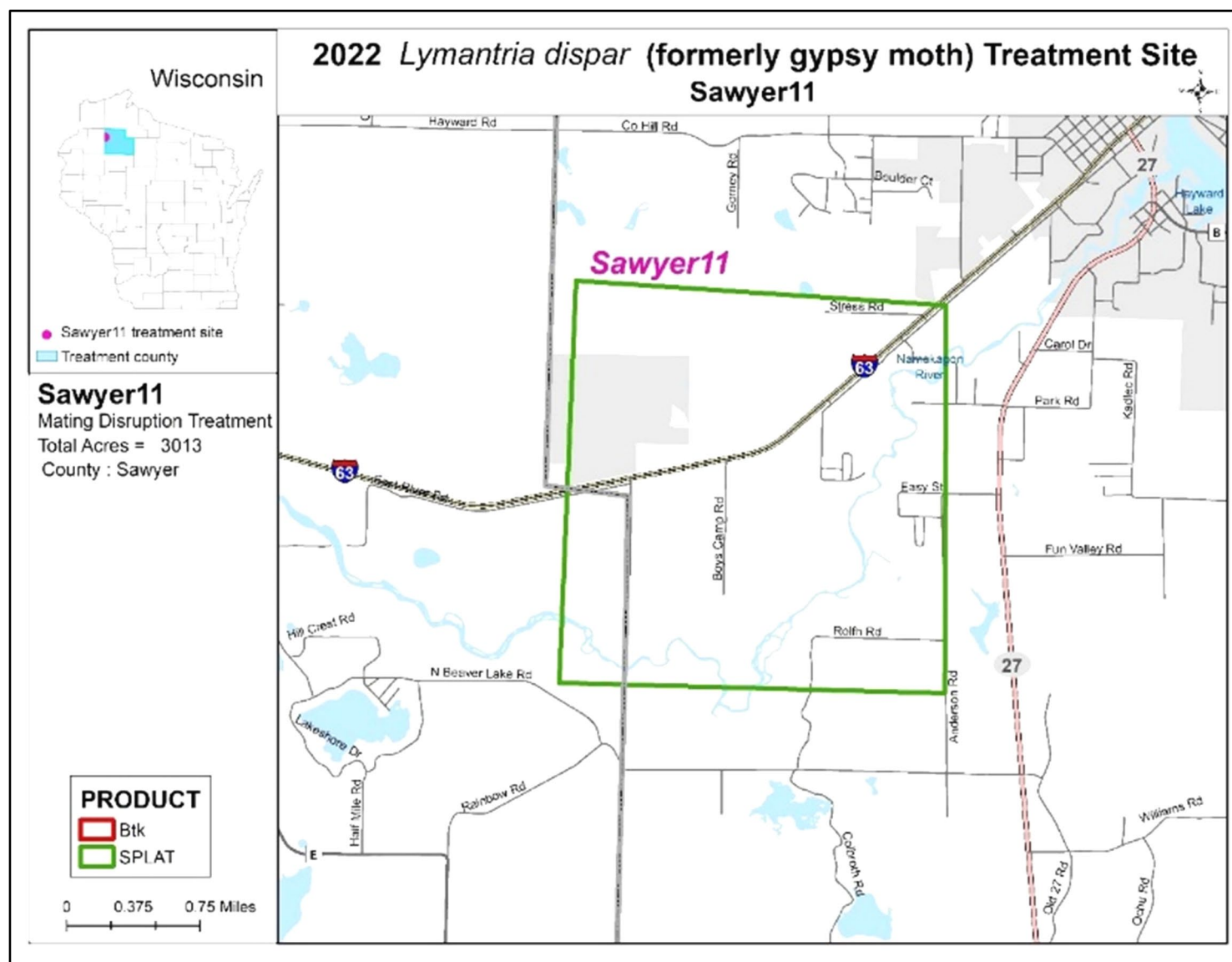


Figure 2. Treatment Site ‘Sawyer11’ that overlaps St. Croix National Scenic Riverway boundaries.

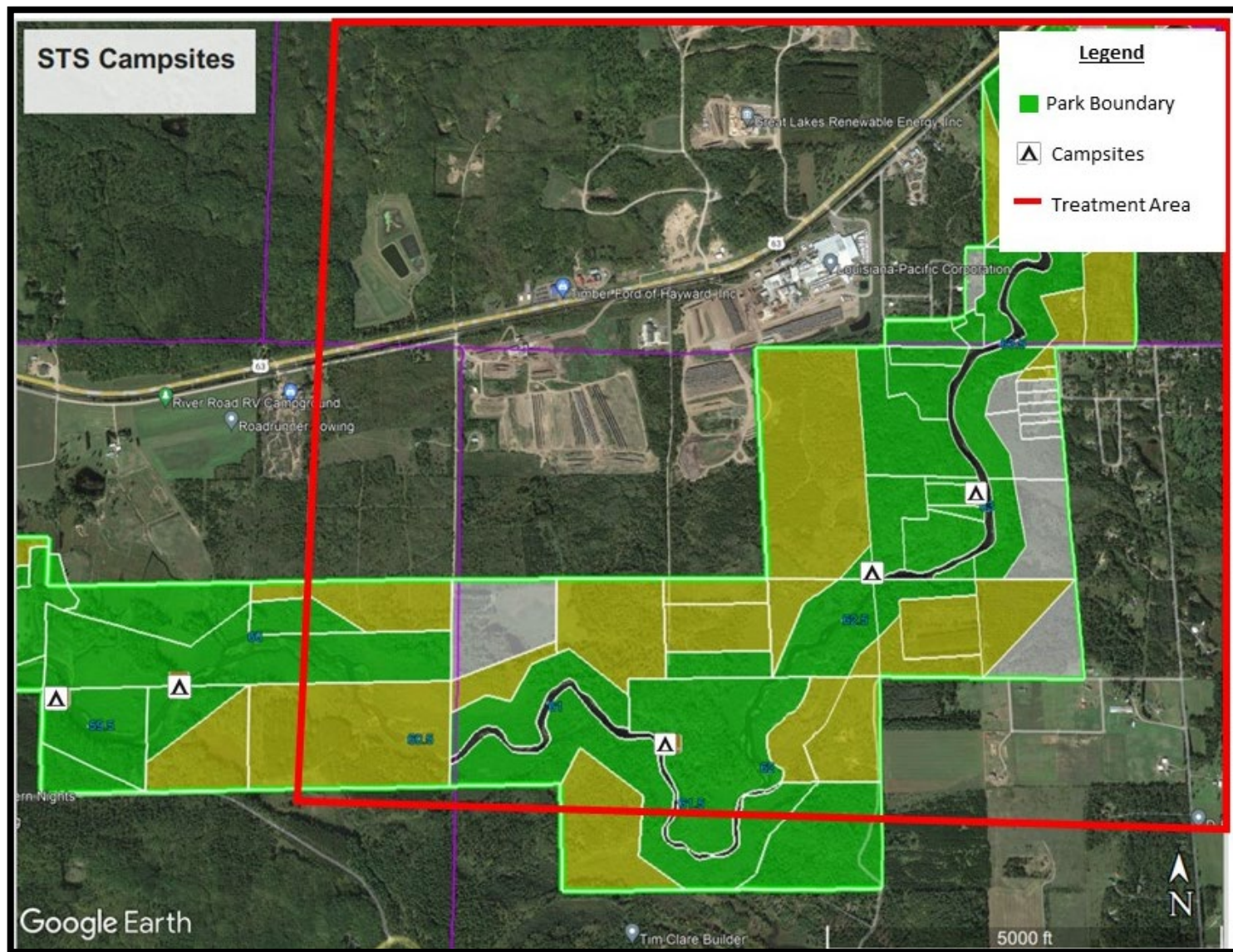


Figure 3. NPS managed campsite locations within and near Sawyer11 treatment block.

APPENDIX C: Outreach Materials

Airplanes hired by WI DATCP's Spongy Moth Program will soon fly near or over your home or business to treat trees in the area. The planes fly back and forth just above the treetops over forests and open areas of land. They are loud and begin flying shortly after sunrise. Planes remain in the area as weather conditions allow for completion of the day's treatment plan.

Why apply treatment? A growing population of spongy moth, formerly known as gypsy moth, is in your area. Left untreated, they can eat all the leaves on trees, become a nuisance pest, and cause human health problems from their droppings and shed hairs.

What is a spongy moth? Spongy moth is a destructive, invasive insect from Europe. It feeds on hundreds of different species of trees and shrubs, and it can eat all of the leaves on trees when present in large numbers.

What will the planes apply? The planes will apply an organic mating disruptant that is dispersed as small waxy droplets. Adult male spongy moths find females by scent. This product releases the scent of the female spongy moth to confuse the male moths. It does not kill any moths; it simply prevents the male from finding a mate to reproduce. The product is certified food grade organic and biodegradable (Tradename: SPLAT Spongy Moth-Organic).

When will treatments begin? Depending on the development of spongy moth, we will apply mating disruptant beginning in late June at select sites in southern Wisconsin. We will move northward and continue applications through mid-July. Applications begin around 6:30 a.m. and may continue into the early evening.

Why do we apply in the morning and so low? The low winds of early morning are optimal for flight and precise deposition of the mating disruptant onto the canopy. Planes also fly low to accurately apply the product onto the canopy.

Is the mating disruptant toxic to people? No, the mating disruptant is not toxic to people; however, those with severe allergies or chemical sensitivities may wish to stay indoors or leave the spray area until the treatments are done. Ingredients in mating disruptant are listed as organic, safe for use, and non-toxic by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The product carries the scent of the female spongy moth, which is undetectable to people, other moths or insects, birds, and animals.

What about animals and bees? The product is not toxic to animals and bees. Noise from the low-flying planes may frighten pets or livestock, so keep animals inside, if possible, or monitor them.

How will I know when treatments will be applied? We will notify local media, or you can call our hotline at **1-800-642-6684** for our daily plans and updates. Daily updates are also available on our website, Facebook, and Twitter pages. Treatment success depends on good weather, so plans can only be made a few days in advance.

For more information, go to **smaerialspray.wi.gov**. Please send any comments or questions to our email: **spongymoth@wisconsin.gov** or toll free hotline: **1-800-642-6684 (MOTH)**.

Thank you for your cooperation.



Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection
PO Box 8911, Madison WI 53708-8911



PRSR STD
U.S. Postage Paid
Madison, WI
Permit No. 1369

*****ECRWSS*

Postal Customer

Figure 6. Back side of 2022 DATCP spongy moth postcard



June 22, 2022

Determination of Non-Impairment

Wisconsin Cooperative Spongy Moth Program Slow-The-Spread Environmental Assessment

St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Wisconsin

National Park Service (NPS) *Management Policies 2006* (Section 1.4) requires analysis of potential effects to determine whether proposed actions will impair a national park's resources and values. NPS decision makers must always seek ways to avoid or to minimize, to the greatest degree practicable, adverse impacts on park resources and values. The NPS has the management discretion to allow impacts on park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of the park, although that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement that the NPS must leave resources and values unimpaired unless a particular law directly and specifically prescribes otherwise.

An impairment is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS decision maker, will harm the integrity of park resources or values, including the opportunities that otherwise will be present for the enjoyment of those resources or values. An impact on any park resource or value may, but does not necessarily, constitute impairment. An impact will be more likely to constitute impairment to the extent that it affects a resource or value whose conservation is:

- necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park, or
- key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park, or
- identified in the park's general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents as being of significance.

An impact may be less likely to constitute impairment if it is an unavoidable result of an action necessary to preserve or restore the integrity of park resources or values, and it cannot be further mitigated. Impairment may result from visitor activities; NPS administrative activities; or activities undertaken by concessioners, contractors, and others operating in the park. Impairment may also result from sources or activities outside the park.

An impairment determination is not made for subject matters such as visitor experience, public health and safety, socioeconomics, environmental justice, land use, and park operations because impairment determinations only relate to resources and values that maintain the park's purpose and significance.

The consideration of impairment to resources at St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (Park) applies to the remaining resources evaluated in the *Wisconsin Cooperative Spongy Moth Program Slow-The-Spread Environmental Assessment* (EA). Additionally, this determination applies only to NPS lands.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The NPS reviewed United States Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), United States Forest Service (USFS), and the State & Private Forestry (S &PF) data to analyze the effects of the proposed action on the three (3) federally listed species that may be present within the Sawyer11 treatment block. One federally listed species (northern long-eared bat) found in the park may be impacted by the proposed action. The other two federally listed species are found in Sawyer County, WI and may be present in the park, but would not be affected by the proposed action (Canada lynx, gray wolf).

The selected alternative may result in some adverse impacts to food sources for the northern long-eared bat but would not have more than minor and temporary impacts to the bat. The northern long-eared bat determination is based off the potential reduction in available food due to Btk treatments but not a reduction that would be deemed significant. The treatment block that overlaps park boundaries will only receive the mating disruption treatment, not the Btk treatment that has the potential to affect these species. Therefore, it is possible the mating disruption treatment may have ‘no effect’ on the northern long-eared bat but NPS prefers to take a more cautionary and conservative approach for this determination.

The assessment concluded that the proposed action ‘may affect but is not likely to adversely affect’ northern long-eared bats and will have ‘no effect’ on Canada lynx. The USFWS concurred with this determination on April 15, 2022. NPS determined a no effect determination for the gray wolf using the same basis and reasoning to make the determination for the Canada lynx. Therefore, the selected alternative will not constitute an impairment to federally listed species.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

No adverse impacts to cultural or historical resources were identified in the EA. Also, there are no known cultural or historical resources located within Sawyer11 treatment block that overlaps park boundaries. Therefore, the selected alternative will not harm the integrity or impair cultural or historical resources known to NPS.

CONCLUSION

The NPS has determined that the adoption and implementation of the USFS, S&PF and DATCP’s selected alternative will not constitute an impairment of the resources or values of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. As described above, implementing the selected alternative is not anticipated to impair resources or values that are essential to the purposes identified in the establishing legislation of the park, key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park, or identified as significant in the park’s relevant planning documents. This conclusion is based on the consideration of the park’s purpose and significance, a thorough analysis of the environmental impacts described in the EA, relevant scientific studies, the comments provided by the public and others, and the professional judgment of the decision maker guided by the direction of the NPS Management Policies 2006.