

*City of Alexandria, Virginia***MEMORANDUM**

DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: PROPOSED ALEXANDRIA SPRING 2002 GYPSY MOTH SUPPRESSION PROGRAM AND SETTING IT FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

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**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of the proposed Alexandria spring 2002 gypsy moth suppression program for one area in the City and setting it for public hearing on Saturday, February 23, 2002.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council schedule the proposed 2002 gypsy moth suppression program for public hearing on Saturday, February 23, 2002, and following the public hearing, approve the program as recommended by staff, with the following components:

1. Aerial application of Bacillus thuringiensis (B.t.) over one 91 acre spray block including the Virginia Theological Seminary and a small area in Seminary Hill (Attachment 1). This program will be carried out in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS);
2. Declaration that the aerial and ground spray programs are to be voluntary, that a 200-foot buffer zone will be maintained around the property of any owner who objects to aerial spraying, and that ground spraying will be provided on all properties within a buffer zone unless the owners object, and opt-out of having their properties included in the ground spray program;
3. Authorization for the City to enter into an agreement with a private contractor for the ground spray application of B.t.; and
4. Implementation of other gypsy moth suppression measures to include the distribution of burlap for banding trees and educational materials in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

**BACKGROUND:** Alexandria's gypsy moth suppression program began in 1988 with the spraying of 1,200 acres throughout the City. The suppression program was most intensive in 1989 when 1,800 acres were sprayed. The spray areas varied from 400 acres in 1990 to 200 acres in 1991, 100 acres in 1992, 96 acres in 1993, 57 acres in 1994 and 44 acres in 1995. Two trees on a public right-of-way were treated by ground application in 1998. No pesticides were applied to control the gypsy moth in 1996, 1997 or 1999. In 2000, the suppression elements of the program returned with the spraying of 86 acres in the North Ridge area. The 2001 suppression program sprayed 96 acres, consisting of 46 acres in the Seminary Valley area and 50 acres which included a portion of the Virginia Theological Seminary and Seminary Hill.

Based upon the annual gypsy moth egg mass survey conducted by the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, staff has determined that one area in the City, including the Virginia Theological Seminary and a small portion of Seminary Hill, totaling 91 acres, qualifies to participate in the Virginia Department of Agriculture Consumer Services (VDACS) Gypsy Moth Suppression Program in the spring of 2002. This program is partially funded by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service. The proposed aerial spray block affects 17 properties including 23 houses and 14 other buildings on the Virginia Theological Seminary property, Emanuel Episcopal Church, Beth El Hebrew Congregation Temple, and 14 private residential properties along the south side of Seminary Road. The program includes the aerial application of B.t. to control the gypsy moth population.

In an effort to encourage citizen participation, meet specific requirements for participation in the state program and educate and inform the public, letters were sent to the owners of record and residents of all properties within the proposed aerial spray block and the surrounding buffer area. In addition, a public open house was held December 11, 2001, to provide an opportunity for citizens to review and comment on the proposed program. An additional open house will be held on March 12<sup>th</sup>, pending final approval of the 2002 suppression program.

In response to concerns raised at the City Council public hearing last year, two additional options for the ground spray program were considered. The first option eliminates the ground spray program. The second option would require owners or residents of properties within recommended ground spray area request to have their properties be sprayed, or opt-in to the ground spray program. This option is proposed as an alternative to the past practice that required property owners to request that their properties not be sprayed, or opt-out of the ground spray program. In the 2001 program, 43 properties were buffered out of the aerial application because of one objector in the aerial spray block. Upon the recommendation of City Council, letters were sent to the owners and residents of these properties offering to ground spray the trees on their properties that were subject to gypsy moth infestation, and damage. Only seven responses were returned by mail. Four additional residents requested ground spraying at the time the applications were being made.

City Council also requested that staff make every effort to minimize the size of the aerial spray blocks to the greatest degree possible through the development of more thorough and accurate methods of surveying for gypsy moth egg masses, and other predictors of future gypsy moth populations. While we have increased the number of survey points within areas which have egg

masses present, and have discussed this method of surveying with the USDA Forest Service, the USDA Agricultural Research Service, and VDACS, no new survey methods have been approved by these agencies. We are continuing to work with these groups to develop and adopt a more effective survey methods.

**DISCUSSION:** The proposed suppression program is based on the results of a gypsy moth egg mass survey completed in the fall of 2001. Staff surveyed approximately 200 sites in areas which were historically most affected by gypsy moth, and used these results to determine the limits of the proposed spray blocks. The following options were considered:

1. Application of no pesticides and the distribution of burlap banding and educational materials to the public;
2. Aerial application of B.t. in one 91 acre spray block including the Virginia Theological Seminary and a small portion of Seminary Hill, and the distribution of burlap banding and educational materials to the public;
3. Aerial application of B.t. in one 91 acre spray block including the Virginia Theological Seminary and a small portion of Seminary Hill, and the distribution of burlap banding and educational materials to the public, and the ground application of B.t. on all qualified properties, provided that the property owners do not object, or opt-out of having their properties included in the ground spray program;
4. Aerial application of B.t. in one 91 acre spray block including the Virginia Theological Seminary and a small portion of Seminary Hill, and the distribution of burlap banding and educational materials to the public, and the ground application of B.t. on all qualified properties, provided that the property owners request, or opt-in to the ground spray program;

Staff recommends option 3 be approved for the 2002 suppression program - Aerial application of B.t. in one 91 acre spray block including the Virginia Theological Seminary and a small portion of Seminary Hill, and the distribution of burlap banding and educational materials to the public, and the ground application of B.t. on all qualified properties, provided that the property owners do not object, or opt-out of having their properties included in the ground spray program. In other words, the default is that properties will be treated in the ground spray program. The proposed suppression program is consistent with programs which have been recommended to City Council by the Gypsy Moth Advisory Committee in prior years. Staff recommends that residents be required to opt-out of the ground spray program because of the poor response from residents in last year's ground spray program.

Burlap for banding trees and educational materials will be available to the public in May and June at the Lee Center located at 1108 Jefferson Street; the Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center located at 5700 Sanger Avenue; and Fire Station No. 53 located at 2801 Cameron Mills Road. Banding trees

with burlap helps monitor gypsy moth larvae and determine levels of infestation. Residents who band their trees will be reminded that they must inspect the bands and remove larvae on a regular basis for this program to be effective.

In response to September 11<sup>th</sup>, the following security measures have been added to the 2002 suppression program (Attachment 2). The pesticide tank will be locked and receive a "numbered seal" at the manufacturer. The lock and seal will not be removed until on site at the heliport. The helicopter pesticide tanks will be cleaned and locked on site and a new numbered seal installed at the end of operations each day. The heliport will be a restricted site with enforcement provided by the Virginia State Police. The heliport will have 24-hour armed security also provided by the State Police. The VDACS hopes to have FBI background checks on all helicopter and transportation personnel.

In November 2001 City staff submitted a proposal to VDACS to participate in the 2002 Virginia Cooperative Gypsy Moth Suppression Program. The State requires that spray blocks have a minimum of 250 egg masses per acre, the presence of primary and secondary host tree species, and the potential for additional infestation from adjacent communities (i.e. caterpillars being wind borne into the City from Arlington and Fairfax Counties). The City's proposed suppression program meets these requirements, qualifying the City to participate in the program and receive federal funding for a portion of the program.

The estimated cost of the 2002 Gypsy Moth Suppression Program is \$36,764 (Attachment 3). The City's share is \$19,722. The estimated federal share of the program is \$17,042, which will be the maximum allowed under the State guidelines. The State no longer shares in any of the direct costs of the program. However, the State will administer the program, contract with an applicator, and supervise the aerial application.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The estimated cost of the suppression program is \$36,764. Federal funding is projected to account for \$17,042 of the total cost, reducing the City's cost to \$19,722. The FY 2002 budget includes \$24,084 for gypsy moth suppression.

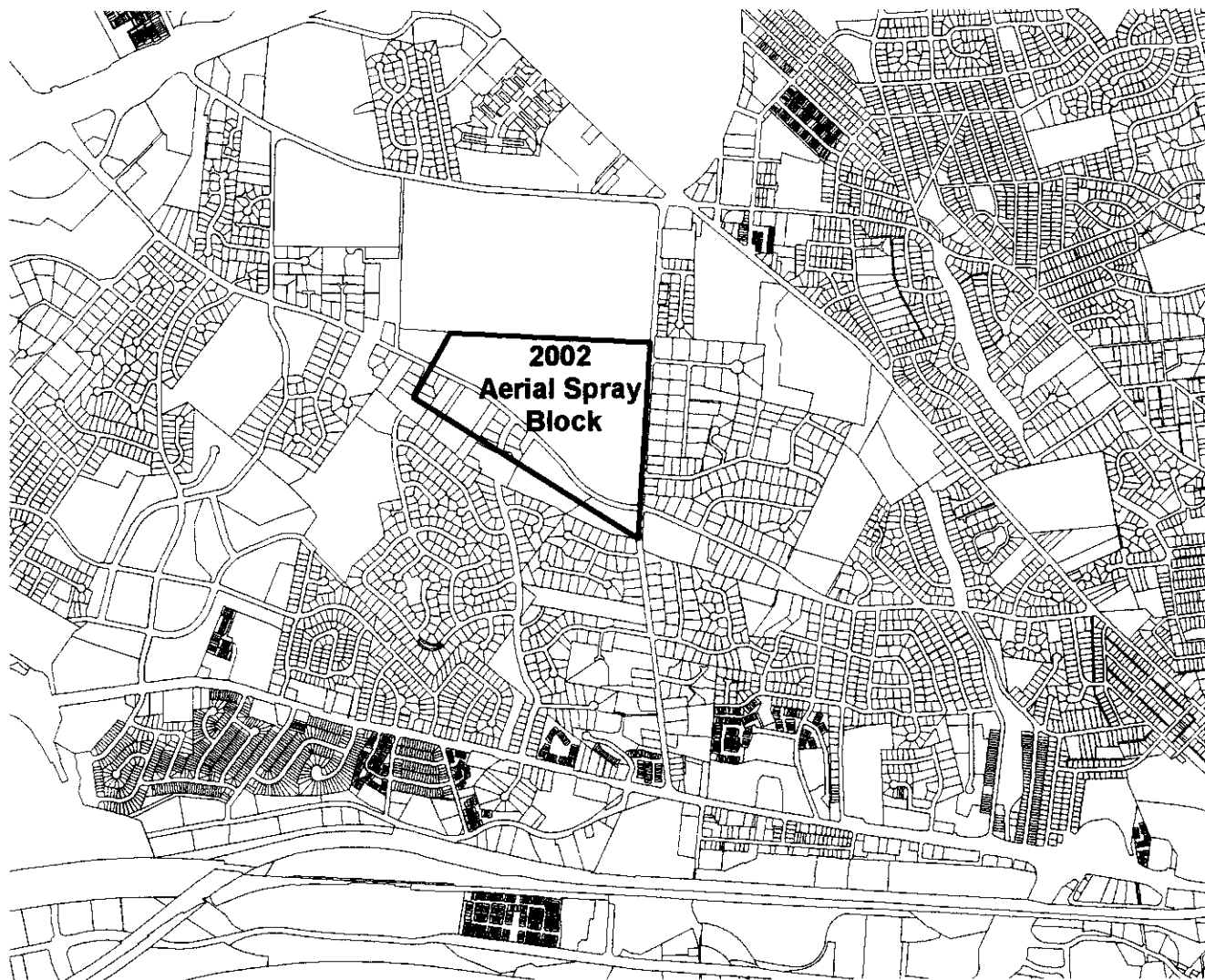
**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 2002 Gypsy Moth Suppression Program Spray Block Map
2. Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Proposed Gypsy Moth Security Procedures
3. 2002 Gypsy Moth Suppression Program Estimated Costs

**STAFF:**

Sandra Whitmore, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities  
Kirk Kincannon, Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities  
John Noelle, City Arborist, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities  
Jerry Dieruf, Arborist/Gypsy Moth Coordinator, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

# 2002 GYPSY MOTH SPRAY BLOCK



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*J. Carlton Courter, III*  
Commissioner

## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Division of Consumer Protection

*Office of Plant & Pest Services*

PO Box 1163, Richmond, Virginia 23218

Phone: 804/786-3515 • Fax: 804/371-7793 • Hearing Impaired: 800/828-1120

[www.vdacs.state.va.us](http://www.vdacs.state.va.us)

### Virginia Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services Proposed Gypsy Moth Security Procedures 2002 Spray Season

#### **Work & Safety Plan (VDACS)**

24 hour armed security (state police) at loading zones

Restricted Loading Zone – establish perimeter around loading zone, no unauthorized persons allowed inside perimeter.

Numbered seal will be placed on all tanks (insecticide, water) and aircraft hopper at conclusion of treatments each day.

Seals and locks on tanks and aircraft hopper will be inspected prior to treatments each day to verify that no tampering occurred.

#### **IFB (Contractor)**

Aircraft hopper and all tanks to be used on spray operation must be empty and clean upon arrival at loading zone. Hopper and tanks will be flushed with water prior to first treatment. This flush water will be captured and stored by applicator.

Locks and seal must be placed on *Bulk* bulk tanks at manufacturer and not removed until arrival at loading zone. VDACS inspector will remove seal after arrival at loading zone.

Dimilin containers must be sealed with:

- inside foil seal

Aircraft hopper and all tanks must be locked at conclusion of spray activities each day.

Aircraft must be disabled at conclusion of spray activities each day.

Attachment 3

**2002 GYPSY MOTH SUPPRESSION PROGRAM**

**ESTIMATED COSTS**

	FEDERAL SHARE	CITY SHARE
<b>AERIAL SPRAY SUPPRESSION PROGRAM</b>		
Aerial spray application (91 acres @ \$44.88/acre)	\$ 2,042.00	\$ 2,042.00
Helicopter rental for defoliation survey and spray observation.		\$ 1,200.00
<b>MAILINGS, NOTIFICATIONS, AND SUPPLIES</b>		
Printing costs (300 pieces)		\$ 90.00
Postal costs (300 pieces)		\$ 90.00
Advertisement		\$ 300.00
<b>PERSONNEL COSTS</b>		
Egg mass survey and suppression program	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
<b>CONFERENCE AND BOOKS</b>		
Conferences and meetings.		\$ 1,000.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 17,042.00</b>	<b>\$ 19,722.00</b>