

Memorandum

Date: May 18, 2021

To: Members of Council

From: Brian Baird, Director, Operations

Subject: Gypsy Moth Update

Staff provided a memo to Council at the July 7, 2020 Council meeting regarding Gypsy Moth. As the Town is part of the Region of Peel Urban Forestry Working Group, that memo was referred to the Region of Peel for consideration. Region of Peel staff provided the attached memo in response on December 4, 2020. Since that time Town staff and Conservation Authority (CA) staff have coordinated efforts on communication to residents advising on action that can be taken by residents to control Gypsy Moth on their property. The TRCA, CVC and Town of Caledon have updated their websites including dedicated web pages containing information on Gypsy Moth identification and control. The TRCA has sent letters to residents abutting TRCA properties. The Town has regularly provided communication in local newspapers and on social media since January, 2021 regarding Gypsy Moth identification, methods of control and where to report sighting on Town of Caledon property. Town forestry staff investigate Gypsy Moth reporting on Town property and determine an appropriate action plan. CA staff are investigating the possibility of joint virtual information workshops for residents. No partner agencies are providing Gypsy Moth control on private property.

TRCA ecology staff have determined the following from research and monitoring on their property. A TRCA letter to residents dated December, 20, 2020 states the following:

“Recent evidence indicates that Gypsy Moth is behaving like a native pest. This is due in part to natural predators that help regulate the population. For this reason, TRCA is not overly concerned about long-term impacts to our natural areas. We are monitoring infestation levels and may act to protect important individual trees or groups of trees on TRCA property if monitoring indicates the infestation will be severe in 2021 (note that this is difficult to predict and there are indications that the current cycle of moth activity may have peaked in 2020). Using an Integrated Pest Management approach TRCA may apply Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) a biological insecticide to some infected trees on TRCA properties in April-May 2021. This insecticide is ingested by caterpillars making them sick or killing them and reducing the defoliation of trees. It is completely safe for people and pets – it only affects caterpillar species. TRCA may also scrape egg masses or hand-pick caterpillars in key areas.”

Staff from all three agencies have taken measures to monitor and determine methods of control on their respective properties. The Town’s forestry division retained the services of William and Associates, Forestry Consultants Ltd to provide review and management strategies for Gypsy Moth over 6 sections

of road across the municipality as well as the Caledon Trailway and Dicks Dam Park where Gypsy Moth egg mass sightings have been observed and reported. A survey of egg mass densities was undertaken and ranked from negligible to very severe. Of the areas reviewed, 9.9% is shown to have heavy to very severe Gypsy Moth infestation and potential for significant tree defoliation with the main areas of concern being the Caledon Trailway from Humber Station Road to Centreville Creek Road and Humber Station Road in the vicinity of the Caledon Trailway. Town of Caledon staff have been actively scraping egg masses from trees along the Caledon Trailway from Humber Station Road to Centreville Creek Road, as well as Stonehart Park and Dicks Dam Park. There are some significant oak trees within Dicks Dam Park that have been identified for ground spraying with Btk by contracted services. Town staff will continue to monitor level of infestation in 2021 and propose an action plan for areas of moderate to very severe egg mass density in 2022 budget deliberations. The TRCA announced on April 30 that they will be undertaking an aerial spray program at both Albion Hills and Glen Haffy Conservation Areas. As Humber Station Road is adjacent to the Albion Hills Conservation Area, it is hoped that aerial spray operations there will assist with the control of Gypsy Moth along that area of Humber Station Road.

There are currently no Town of Caledon staff dedicated to the ongoing and growing concern of invasive species management. This issue is growing beyond ad hoc, reactive action planning and is a threat to the environmental well being of Caledon. Aside from Gypsy Moth, Emerald Ash Borer remains in some areas and Asian Long-Horned Beetle is a threat that has been found in neighbouring municipalities. The spread of Phragmites and Purple Loosestrife is threatening the biodiversity of wetlands and Buckthorn is a threat to forest health. Sightings of Hogweed and Dog Strangling vine has been concerning to residents. As such, staff will be presenting a business case in the 2022 budget for a staff resource and contracted services dedicated to invasive species management in Caledon. Current staffing resources and expertise does not allow for meaningful research, inspection, proactive management planning, meaningful collaboration with partner agencies, coordination of communications and execution of future action plans specific to invasive species.

Attachments

Schedule A: Correspondence from the Region of Peel, dated December 4, 2020