



November 20, 2020

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Mayor and Council  
Municipality of Lambton Shores  
7883 Amtelecom Parkway,  
Forest, ON N0N 1J0

Re: Gypsy Moth Infestation, the need for action

Dear Mayor and Council:

While 2020 witnessed an unprecedented number of out-of-town vacationers visiting the shores of Lake Huron, it was also the year of an infestation of an unprecedented number of gypsy moth caterpillars. Millions of gypsy moth caterpillars stripped leaves from trees, caused skin rashes to those unlucky enough to encounter caterpillar feces, caused resident concerns about trees on their property and in their neighbourhood, and gave rise to a visitor public relations issue.

The Chamber believes there is action Lambton Shores must undertake with regard to the gypsy moth infestation to protect our environment, economy and residents.

As Council is aware, the gypsy moth is an invasive species, brought to North America in a failed silkworm breeding experiment (1869). Today, this moth species is a concern across Ontario, damaging native trees and destroying habitat and food sources for other native wildlife. The gypsy moth prefers the oak tree as its host, which is of particular concern in Lambton Shores – the home of 50% of the world's **remaining** Oak Savanna (<https://pinerypark.on.ca/habitats/>).

We have received verbal reports from Port Franks residents as to the devastation to trees, about literally hearing the crunch of millions of caterpillars and dealing with vast quantities of caterpillar feces and dense infestations of larvae. Pinery Park campers and cottagers complained on social media about the moths and their inability to enjoy the park or trail areas as in previous years. Many noted their expectation of a refund of rental and campground fees was not satisfied, which caused poor public relations results on social media. Campers and cottagers believed they should have been notified, prior to making their vacation bookings, of the gypsy moth infestation so they could plan to vacation elsewhere!

The two pillars of Lambton Shores economy are tourism and agriculture. According to the Community Profile on the Lambton Shores website, "beaches, forests and natural attractions in our area, in addition to our picturesque communities, attract tens of thousands of tourists each year. Compared to the provincial average, we have a higher than average number of firms in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector, as well as the accommodation and food services sector."



Gypsy moths endanger tourism. Our businesses are reliant on our natural attractions – such as the forests and native wildlife – to attract money-spending visitors to the area. It is not too much of a stretch to think deforestation by gypsy moth is a real threat to our local economy.

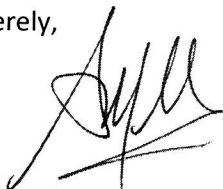
Other areas of Ontario have taken action to deal with gypsy moths. In 2018, the City of Hamilton, determined via a monitoring program, that egg masses per hectare had reached the stage of requiring spray action. An aerial spray program took place May 1 to June 30, 2019. In August 2020, the Township of North Dumfries resolved to formally request and engage the Ministry of Natural Resources to conduct a treatment program and work in collaboration with surrounding municipalities.

With consideration of the potential devastation to our forests and our economy, we respectfully request Lambton Shores take similar action and undertake a collaborative approach to deal with the gypsy moth threat by:

- undertaking to monitor egg masses,
- conducting an aerial BKT spray program on affected areas<sup>1</sup>,
- using TreeAzin, a botanical injectable insecticide<sup>2</sup>,
- educating and encouraging residents to take action on their property<sup>3</sup>, and
- requesting the Ministry of Natural Resources embark on a treatment program partnership with Lambton Shores as part of a broader strategy to deal with the gypsy moth infestation.

We call on the Municipality of Lambton Shores to take immediate and effective action to address the gypsy moth threat before damage is done to our environment and tourism economy.

Sincerely,



Susan Mills, Manager

On behalf of the 2020-21 Board of Directors: Jeff Pacheco, Glen Baillie, Doug Pedlar, John Choma, Veronica Brennan, Matt DeJong, Darren Boyle, Don Windsor and Mark Perrin.

Cc: Monte McNaughton – MPP Lambton-Kent-Middlesex (monte.mcnaughtonco@pc.ola.org)

Lisa Thompson – MPP Huron-Bruce (lisa.thompsonco@pc.ola.org)

Brian Horner - General Manager ABCA (bhorner@abca.ca)

John Yakabuski - Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry (john.yakabuskico@pc.ola.org)

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<sup>1</sup> BKT is used to spray for Gypsy moths. Unlike other pesticides that may be harmful to humans and other wildlife, BKT is a bacteria (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) that only targets caterpillars (<https://www.grca.on.ca/2020/07/29/gypsy-moths-and-how-they-are-affecting-our-watershed/>). BTK is a bacterium found naturally in soils.

<sup>2</sup> TreeAzin is a systemic insecticide injected directly into the base of trees that targets first and second instar larvae to limit tree damage. TreeAzin controls gypsy moth populations. TreeAzin is used by the City of Toronto and City of Mississauga as part of their gypsy moth control programs. (Source: Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association)

<sup>3</sup> Municipality of Middlesex Centre contracted a private company to perform ground based spraying of trees and offered surrounding private property owners the opportunity to contract the same company to spray trees on their private property for a fixed fee.