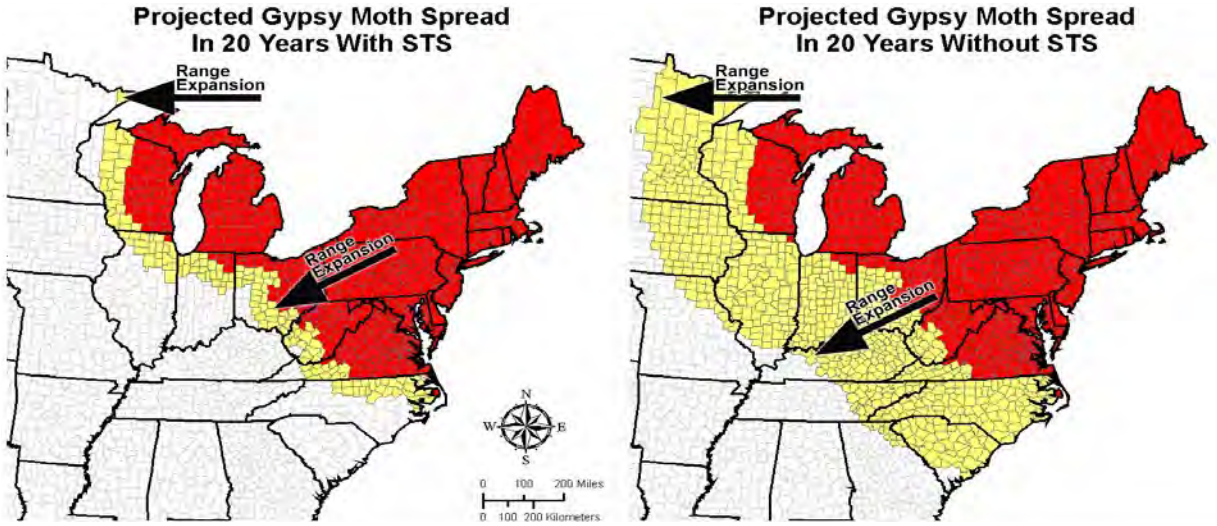
National Gypsy Moth Management Program

Reducing damage and slowing the spread

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry

Description: The gypsy moth is a nonnative invasive insect that was introduced into Massachusetts in the late 1860s. It is now established in all or parts of 19 Eastern States and the District of Columbia, roughly one-third of its potential habitat in the United States. Once gypsy moth is established, outbreaks erupt from time to time. Outbreaks reduce tree growth and increase dieback, eventually killing trees. Gypsy moth has defoliated trees on more than 92 million acres since 1924.



At its current rate of success, the gypsy moth Slow the Spread (STS) program will prevent gypsy moth from spreading into an additional 150 million acres over the next 20 years.

The Forest Service coordinates with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and others to carry out the USDA National Gypsy Moth Management Program. A national environmental impact statement (EIS) guides the response to gypsy moth infestations and outbreaks using three management strategies:

1) Reduce the damage caused by outbreaks in the generally infested area (**suppression**),
2) Eliminate isolated infestations outside the generally infested area (**eradication**), and
3) Reduce the moth's natural and short-range artificial spread into currently uninfested areas (**Slow the Spread**).

The Slow the Spread (STS) project area encompasses 50 million acres and is 1,200 miles long and 65 miles wide. STS covers 11 States from Minnesota to North Carolina and targets small, scattered gypsy moth colonies that are detected along the advancing front of the generally infested area.

Key Issues:

- STS has reduced the gypsy moth's rate of spread by more than 60 percent, from an average of 13 miles per year to less than 5 miles per year. This reduction has prevented environmental damage and financial losses on more than 90 million acres since 2000. The program is expected to prevent infestation of more than 150 million acres over the next 20 years.
- Detecting gypsy moth early and responding rapidly to eradicate isolated infestations outside the generally infested area eliminate the need for larger, more costly, and frequent treatments later. STS has delayed impacts and suppression costs in newly infested areas, resulting in a benefit-to-cost ratio of more than 3:1.

- The largest gypsy moth outbreak in the Mid-Atlantic States since the early 1990s has abated since 2009, which may continue to reduce gypsy moth suppression needs in those areas in 2012.

Accomplishments:

- The national gypsy moth EIS has been updated (Supplemental EIS) and now includes tebufenozide, a new insecticide.
- The Supplemental EIS now has a protocol to guide how new tools are added to the list of approved treatments in the future.
- Gypsy moth populations remained low in 2011—roughly 3,100 acres were successfully treated in New Jersey and Wisconsin to reduce damage. All acreage was treated with the microbial insecticides *Btk* and Gypchek.
- Treatments were applied on about 2,300 acres in Minnesota and Wisconsin in 2011 to eradicate isolated gypsy moth populations and prevent them from becoming permanently established.
- Approximately 526,000 acres were treated in the STS action area to reduce the natural and short-range artificial spread of gypsy moth. The majority of the acreage was treated using a gypsy moth-specific mating disruption product.
- A new mating disruption product was deployed after 2 years of development and 5 years of field evaluation. Competition between the standard and new product resulted in lower prices.
- Ninety thousand pheromone traps were deployed to monitor gypsy moth populations.
- Final editing of the Supplemental EIS was completed and the document was prepared for printing and distribution.

Budget History: Budget figures for suppression and eradication projects represent funding allocated within the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. Figures for the gypsy moth STS program represent the total national funding for the program. Funds are allocated to the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry and Southern Region (R-8) based upon the annual STS plan of work approved by the STS Foundation Board of Directors.

Gypsy Moth Program
($ in thousands)

Projects	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Suppression	$5,538	$164	$193	
Eradication	5	0	75	
Slow the Spread (STS)	$8,000	$10,500	$10,500	

Future Direction:

- Distribute the final Supplemental EIS and sign the Record of Decision in 2012.
- Continue monitoring and providing support for suppression, eradication, and STS treatment needs.
- Promote the STS business model as a template for responding to other invasive forest pests.

Tony L. Ferguson, Director
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
Newtown Square, PA 19073
610–557–4103 (–4177 FAX)
tferguson@fs.fed.us

Mark Buccowich, Assistant Dir.
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
Newtown Square, PA 19073
610–557–4029 (–4177 FAX)
mbuccowich@fs.fed.us

Noel Schneeberger, Entomologist
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200
Newtown Square, PA 19073
610–557–4121 (–4136 FAX)
nschneeberger@fs.fed.us

www.na.fs.fed.us

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