



**COUNTY MANAGER
COUNTY OF LUZERNE**

Robert C. Lawton
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June 12, 2015

Alicia Stier
Rice Township
3000 Church Rd.
Mountaintop, PA 18707

Dear Ms. Stier,

Thank you for contacting the County Manager's office to express Rice Township's concerns regarding this year's gypsy moth infestation.

The State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) offers a cost-sharing gypsy moth suppression program, with County logistical support, to assist private homeowners.

Luzerne County has not participated in the program since the 2009 spraying season. Only one Pennsylvania county-Carbon County-made the decision in 2014 to participate in 2015.

I wish Luzerne County could instantly join the program but, as organized by the State and based on the gypsy moth's life cycle, it requires literally a year's head start.

In July and August, after the gypsy moth lays its eggs, a county coordinator would check to see if properties qualify for spraying, based on property size and location, the size and type of trees, the number of gypsy moth egg masses and similar factors. Not all areas of Luzerne County may qualify.

In the Fall, and based on the information accumulated over the summer, the coordinator works with DCNR to create spray blocks so an aerial spray contract can be put together for all participating counties. Through the bidding process, DCNR hires an aerial applicator to spray in May or June after the caterpillars have reached a certain size and have started feeding.

Healthy trees defoliated one year usually survive, but those defoliated two or more years in a row are at much greater risk.

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I can't tell you why the County Commissioners' government withdrew from the gypsy moth program, but Luzerne County has rejoined for the 2016 spraying season and will not allow our participation to again lapse.

Luzerne County's coordinator is Keri Skvarla of the County's Division of Operational Services, she can be reached at 570-820-6347. The County and the Bureau of Forestry will soon hold a public meeting to inform property owners about the spraying program to respond to inquiries.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert C. Lawton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Robert C. Lawton
Luzerne County Manager

cc: Leigh L. Bonczewski, Office of State Representative Gerald Mullery
Tom Yoniski, Office of Senator Lisa Baker