

State Plans Public Meeting To Explain Gypsy Moth Program

BY ERIC CARLSON

The state will treat large areas of Brunswick County woodlands next spring in hopes of preventing a new strain of tree-eating insects from spreading throughout the southeast, an agriculture official told county commissioners Monday.

A public meeting to explain the program will be held Oct. 28 at 7 p.m. in the public assembly building at the county government complex in Bolivia.

Last July, a German ship docked at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point was found to be infested with Asian gypsy moths, one of the most damaging plant pests ever brought to our shores.

Its close relative, the European gypsy moth, already affects more than 4.2 million acres of forests each year. The Asian gypsy moth, now on the loose in Brunswick County, poses an even greater threat, according to W.A. Dickerson, plant pest administrator for the N.C. Department of Agriculture.

"Comparing the European gypsy moth to the Asian is like comparing an ox cart to a sports car," Dickerson told the commissioners.

While the males of both moth species are able to fly, the female European gypsy moth cannot. She normally lays her eggs where she emerges from her cocoon.

The female Asian gypsy moth can fly up to 20 miles after reaching adulthood, allowing this strain to spread rapidly into new forest lands.

Neither species is native to North America.

Since its introduction into the United States in 1869, the European gypsy moth has become established in 16 northeastern states from Maine to Michigan and south as far as North Carolina.

The Asian gypsy moth was first identified in the U.S. late in 1991 near seaports in Washington, Oregon and British Columbia. It was probably introduced by Russian ships visiting west coast ports. The discovery of Asian moths in Brunswick County is the first on the East Coast.

Agriculture officials want to move quickly to contain the spread of the new pest for several reasons. While the European variety moved relatively slowly through the northeast at a rate of about five to 20 miles a year, an Asian gypsy moth infestation could spread at a rate of 36 miles each year.

Dickerson said the state has not finalized its plan for controlling the spread of gypsy moths. He expects a treatment schedule to be adopted "before Christmas." It is likely to entail the application of pesticides across large areas of woodland between April 15 and May 15.

That's when gypsy moth eggs normally hatch and when the caterpillars begin feeding on tree leaves. Once hatched, the caterpillars move to the tops of trees, attach a silky thread to an upper branch and are carried by the wind to other trees.

They normally feed at night. But when populations are high the larval gypsy moths feed day and night until the foliage of the host tree is stripped. Then they crawl in search of a new food source.

After a week or two in a cocoon, the adult gypsy moth emerges for the sole purpose of mating and laying eggs, usually between July and September. Adults die after the eggs are laid.

While European gypsy moths favor hardwood trees, they will also feed on pines when populations are high. Asian gypsy moths are more voracious feeders—causing more damage to their host trees—and may be more likely to feed on conifers.

Two types of insecticide are commonly used to control gypsy moths. One is a natural bacteria that acts as a poison on leaf-eating caterpillars while remaining harmless to fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals (including humans). Known as *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), it is also harmless to beneficial insects and washes off of foliage in a few days, leaving no lasting residues in the ground or water.

The other insecticide, commonly sold under the trade name Dimilin, works by weakening the cuticle or outer skin of the gypsy moth larva. It can likewise affect the shells of shrimp, blue crab and other marine life and is not allowed to be used over open bodies of water.

Dimilin has the advantage of clinging to a plant to provide long-lasting protection, since it is not easily washed off by rain. However, it may affect other insects.

For more information about gypsy moths and the state's plan to control them, contact Milton Coleman, Director of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service in Bolivia at 253-4425.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Fits To A 'T'

Showing off the T-shirts commemorating this year's N.C. Oyster Festival is Lisa Anglin, staff accountant for the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce.

BEMC Worker Places Fourth In Co-Op Competition

Reno Coleman of Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation, Shallotte, placed fourth among a field of 21 contenders in the 1993 Carolina Electric Cooperatives Pole-top Rescue Competition Oct. 11.



COLEMAN

Coleman, who won a local competition at his own cooperative, raced against the clock to complete the simulated rescue exercise in 2 minutes, 8.94 seconds. Coleman was also a finalist in 1989 and 1991.

Alan Grooms of French Broad Electric Membership Corporation, Marshall, took first-place honors and the \$500 grand prize with a time of 2 minutes, 2.91 seconds.

All the contestants earned an opportunity to compete in the statewide elimination by winning a local contest at co-ops throughout the state. Each of the state's 28 co-ops participated in the program.

In each competition, participants were required to radio an emergency call from a bucket truck, put on climbing gear and a tool belt, climb a 35-foot pole, lower a 105-pound dummy to safety and perform life-saving procedures. Judges selected the winners on the basis of their speed and adherence to safety rules.

Troll Book Fair Slated At Union

A Troll Book Fair will be held in the Union Elementary School library the week of Oct. 25-29.

Hours will be 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. During those hours students, teachers and parents are welcome to browse and to make book purchases.

More information is available from the school.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Stop That Clock

Alice Hill (center) raises her arms to stop the clock as barehanded competitor Dorothy Hill (left) continues opening oysters Saturday in the N.C. Oyster Shucking Championship. Looking on at right is Karen McNeil, later named the new state champion.

OIB Proposal Would Relax Height Limit By Four Feet

BY LYNN CARLSON

Ocean Isle Beach citizens can tell the town commissioners Nov. 9 whether they favor a proposal to relax residential building height restrictions so that new two-story homes built in the V-zone, or flood hazard areas, can conform to both town and federal regulations.

The hearing is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. in the town hall, prior to the regular November commissioners' meeting at 9.

The proposal, submitted to the commissioners Oct. 12 by Planning Board Chairman DeCarol Williamson, will let V-zone homebuilders exceed the current 36-foot height limitation by no more than four feet to allow them "two eight-foot-high ceilings on two living area floors so long as the lowest living floor is constructed within one foot, two inches of the required flood plain ordinance base flood elevation."

Williamson said the proposal will allow homebuilders to meet federal regulations requiring them to build on high pilings in the flood hazard zone without forcing them to have "real flat roofs," which he said sustain more damage in storms than pitched roofs.

The proposal will keep property owners from constructing "funny-looking buildings" in order to conform to local and federal rules while trying to maximize use of their land.

"Everyone (building) on the beach should be able to have two living floors and a 1/2 pitch on their roof," Williamson said.

Building Inspector Drueid Roberson said the latest V-zones, established by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) include an area at the corner of Second and Raeford streets. He added that he has been approached by officials in other Brunswick

County towns about the possibility of conducting an independent flood elevation study, adding that FEMA's maps appear illogical in some areas.

Way to flex those muscles...well, way to hold that clipboard anyway.

Happy Birthday Doug
from the Beach staff



BEGINS AT 7 PM Forum Set Oct. 28 At Seaside Church

Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association will sponsor a candidates' forum Thursday, Oct. 28, at 7 p.m. at Seaside United Methodist Church.

The event is open to all Sunset Beach candidates and residents, said SBT President Clete Waldmiller.

Serving as moderator for the event will be Lynn Carlson, managing editor of *The Brunswick Beacon*. Yolanda Jones, staff writer for the Myrtle Beach Sun-News will question the candidates.

Each candidate will be given two minutes to present a prepared statement of views, after which questions will be asked by Jones.

At Sunset Beach, incumbent Mayor Mason Barber is being challenged by former councilmember Minnie Hunt.

Councilmembers D.G. "Bud" Scrantom, Edward Gore Sr. and Julia Thomas are being challenged

by Paul E. (Ed) Hughes, Therese Regan and Herb Klinker. Three will be chosen from the six.

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