



News Release

1450 K.L.O. Road
Kelowna, B.C. V1W 3Z4
Telephone: (250) 763-4918
Fax: (250) 763-0606
www.regionaldistrict.com

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Tussock Moth Aerial Spray Program

The Regional District of Central Okanagan has applied for a Pesticide Application Permit from the Ministry of Environment to combat the infestation of an insect pest in forested areas in several parts of the Regional District.

Under the permit, the Regional District would take part in a Ministry of Forests and Range program to aerial spray Crown lands to combat the Douglas-fir Tussock Moth which has also been identified in three Regional Parks and adjacent private lands.

The Regional Parks impacted by the insect include Coldham, Trepanier Greenway (both in the Trepanier Valley of the Central Okanagan West Electoral Area) and Stephen's Coyote Ridge (upper Glenmore) and an interface area of upper Ellison in the Central Okanagan East Electoral Area. Private landowners in these areas have been or are being contacted to determine whether they wish to participate in this spray program. Consent forms and letters are required in order to have individual properties in these affected areas sprayed as part of this program.

The Douglas-fir Tussock Moth is of particular concern as it not only defoliates and kills trees very quickly, but can also cause health issues with humans, dogs and horses through a condition known as Tussockosis, related to the hairs of the moth. Approximately one in five people have allergic type symptoms ranging from general itchiness, watery eyes and skin rashes to full anaphylaxis in extreme instances.

The Regional District's application to the Ministry of Environment proposes helicopter spraying of infested areas when conditions are favourable and moth caterpillars are feeding from late May to mid-July. The biological insecticide B.t.k. (*Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*) will be used and contains a naturally occurring soil bacterium which when ingested by the feeding caterpillars results in a quick mortality.

Should the Regional District permit be approved, general advertising and media information will advise of upcoming spraying and the temporary closure of affected Regional Parks. Signs will also be posted advising users of these parks of the insect pest spray program. When spraying is to take place, media will be alerted and information will be available on the Regional District website regionaldistrict.com. After spraying is complete, signs at the entrances to affected parks will notify users that the area has recently been sprayed and they may choose to stay out of the area.

Central Okanagan residents and property owners may view the permit and associated maps for the proposed spray program or receive more information at the Regional District office, 1450 KLO Road in Kelowna (weekdays 8:00 am to 4:00 pm excluding holidays) or on the Regional District website, regionaldistrict.com (select What's New). The website also has links to the Ministry of Forests and Range website for more

information and documents regarding the Douglas fir Tussock Moth and its spray program.

Starting May 3rd, the Regional District will have a 24-hour Tussock Moth Information line (250-469-6266) providing information and updates on the RDCO pest management spray program.

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Contact:

Bruce Smith
Communications Coordinator
250-469-6339