

Town investing in more resources to deal with LDD moth infestation

By Rob Paul

As the LDD moth continues to be an environmental issue in Caledon and across Ontario, the Town of Caledon has received numerous complaints during the outbreak in the spring.

Having the ongoing issue with LDD moths, Council tasked staff with developing recommendations to deal with the issue.

Council passed a motion to approve the recommendations to provide resources towards the infestation.

Two amendments were made to the original motion by the Council to include an interactive map for monitoring pest management ? to be created the Town's ping street app ? and that the 2022 budget include a plan for the potential need of aerial spraying on public property for highly affected areas through a cost sharing program.

Currently there are no Town staff resources dedicated to the research and planning for proactive invasive species management.

Caledon follows Integrated Pest Management (IPM) best practices and works with the Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVC), but additional resources are needed to deal with the issue for the remainder of 2021 and 2022.

These moths lay eggs in masses which hatch into caterpillars in the early spring and feed on foliage for six to eight weeks. In late June they then cocoon for about two weeks and morph into moths?these are an invasive insect and can harshly damage trees.

The recommended LDD control method is using the CVC's strategies of egg mass scraping, burlapping, pheromone trapping, tree banding, or pesticides.

To date the Town of Caledon investigates LDD issues on a complaint basis and received 79 complaints on Town property in 2020 with all locations being egg scraped. The complaints have increased since, with 205 as of June 23, 2021.

Of the complaints, 52 of the 205 are on the Caledon Trailway, rural roadside or within a Town woodlot with 153 being urban street or park trees. Of the 153 urban investigations 113 were found to have low to no level of LDD infestation, 22 of a moderate level and 18 as severe infestations.

Due to the increased issue, more staffing and equipment resources will be utilized in the effort. It will cost \$283,198 annually to deal with the problem as well.

The resources being put towards the IPM program, is employing an IPM coordinator, covering three park staff to work on the problem, as well as a forestry co-op student and investing in specific training and learning methods to deal with the problem. Investment in equipment will be part of the process too with a specific vehicle and spray unit.

Though the amendment to the motion will allow for consideration of aerial spraying if needed, the motion will include a \$100,000 investment into a contracted ground spray service for 2022.

The Town of Caledon Communications team will implement a communications plan designed to educate Caledon residents about LDD moth prevention methods to reduce the impact of the moths on private property in the 2021/2022 season.