

Peterborough Examiner Article - No plans to spray widely for moths in Peterborough County: Smith

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Peterborough-Kawartha MPP Dave Smith says the provincial government is hesitant to spray widely for *lymantria dispar dispar* moths, also known as LDD moths, because of the effect on other species and because the government feels the worst of the invasion is over.

“The expectation is that it will significantly drop off next year, and the following year we will have virtually no LDD moth infestation,” Smith said, addressing Havelock-Belmont-Methuen Township councillors at a regular meeting Tuesday. Smith spoke to councillors as part of a Queen's Park update.

Coun. Hart Webb said the township has been hard hit by an infestation of the moths this year and asked Smith if the province plans to deal with the situation in some way or provide funding to the municipality to help because “last year was bad but this year is getting really bad. The number of people going to private spraying is increasing.”

Smith said the province has had “significant conversations” regarding the moths.

A study was done after the last widespread spraying in the late 1980s and early 1990s, he said.

“What that study found was that prior to spraying, the life cycle was approximately seven to eight years. We are entering the seventh season right now.”

“The other thing that may occur is we’re expecting a much harsher winter which will kill off some of the eggs.” Smith said.

The study also found that when the spraying was done it extended that cycle of infestation by a number of years, he said

“In some areas they sprayed for three years and the extension of the cycle was three years beyond that. There was significant money spent on it and, also, a number of other species were killed as a result.”

There was a reduction of the population, in particular, of wild turkeys who feast on the moths, Smith continued.

When the moths were sprayed, it poisoned the caterpillars, and then the turkeys ate them and died “so we’re really hesitant to do a widespread spraying because of the effect on some other species. Based on what we’ve seen from these cycles, our expectation is that this year will be the worst of it and we’re going to see a significant decline over the next two years.”
