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Residents spray for moths

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Fed up with state and county efforts to stop the spread of gypsy moths, a group of Rome residents are taking it upon themselves to rid their property of the invading bugs.

Barb Duxstad has been going door to door for weeks with about 12 others in the Lake Arrowhead, Camelot and Sherwood association boundaries to inform residents the group is working to spray for gypsy moths in Rome.

"I think we all just need to stick together, or we are going to lose our trees, and that could lower our property values," Duxstad said.

Gypsy moths have been spreading westward across Wisconsin for years, defoliating trees enough to close state parks in some places.

The property owners associations might start collecting fees to pay for spraying. Residents can opt out of the plan, but Duxstad has yet to contact anyone opposed to spraying, she said.

After Adams County initially decided not to join the state Department of Natural Resources' gypsy moth spraying program earlier this year, Patt Pisellini who started the group, began talking to local property owners about having their land sprayed privately.

"Anybody that has 20 acres can join in with us," she said.

Pisellini was the Adams County gypsy moth coordinator, but left the post in August. The county has appointed a new coordinator and is seeking to join the state program in order to spray the town of Preston. Pisellini asked Rome not to join so it could save money.

It would cost about \$29 per acre to spray lots under 100 acres; the DNR program is about \$50 per acre.

"We thought we could get a better price if we work together," she said.

The three property owners associations will vote in the coming weeks whether to participate and gather the fees, Pisellini said.

Group members have raised enough money to spray their properties and will gladly take on anyone with enough property to qualify, Pisellini said.

"If the lakes vote not to, then they have enough money to get it done," she said.