

Many years ago these letters were given to Bill Ravlin, a colleague and one of the innovators in gypsy moth management. The story goes that James Nichols, now retired from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, compiled a series of letters that had been sent to state and federal officials (including the President of the U.S.) voicing various concerns and opinions over gypsy moth. The letters are sometimes humorous, sometimes ill-informed, but always sincere and portray a wide range of perspectives concerning the gypsy moth problem and how to deal with it. They are presented here for your entertainment and education. Enjoy!

Dear Mr. Nichols:

I am still on the trail of the gypsy moth. I have devoted 10 years of my life to find a no poison way to destroy this insect. I have made a great discovery that Plaster of Paris dust will kill millions of these gypsies. The action of this dust is suffocation and lock jaw if taken in the mouth as it hardens in 5 minutes. This dust will kill every insect that inhales it. Birds will leave the area as the crop duster appears. If they were caught in the dust they would also die. It will also kill humans if they inhale it. There is one bad feature of this. There is no material left after the second day. Evaporation has lifted it from the leaves and deposited it in the atmosphere for you and I to breathe. I have one more test to make and that will end my career as a gypsy moth killer. My eyes are now so bad I can hardly see. I have to go ahead on this work from the medical and dental professions as they use lots of Plaster of Paris in their work. The only danger is to humans.

Dear Governor Thornburgh:

This is worse than Three-Mile-Island. Couldn't the State evacuate the area for a period of time when they are spraying and do the job thoroughly?

Dear Secretary Jones:

The gypsies are everywhere and we can't get out the door. I am upset and concerned over the lack of interest of the local authorities.

Dear Sir:

Please send us some of your flies to control these gypsy moths. They sprayed down the road after a good battle with the County Commissioners. Thank God the State didn't cut its funding. The County Commissioners will either have to put up or get out of office.

Dear Governor:

This is unbelievable! We just came here from Texas and I'm ready to go back. There was only one egg mass here that we could find. Now we are completely inundated with no warning.

To Whom it May Concern:

I do not want any spraying on my property. Furthermore, P. O. Box ____ is an underground box not used by me. It belongs to criminal snakeface David _____ of Fort Washington who uses it in his illegal Russian espionage activities to defraud our government by using my name illegally--he must be arrested.

Dear Sir:

You money grubbers will find out that you can't take it with you. God will reap his just reward on you people and to these no good objectors to spraying. I am 78 and have worn out two brooms trying to get rid of these damn caterpillars.

Dear Governor Thornburgh:

All vegetation up here is being denuded by the gypsy moth. As a result, all life is being threatened (even human) and life is our greatest resource. As trees die, animal life will disappear, and the water will not be held in the ground. This problem is as great a national disaster as any tornado, earthquake or flood. It just acts a little slower.

Dear Mr. Nichols:

Who authorized any person to make judgments over me? How does any person obtain permission to tell me whether or not my land shall be sprayed? Since this is now in the hands of counsel, whose name shall appear on a temporary injunction order? to whom would we issue an arrest warrant? With whom would we start suit for damages? Thank you for your kind and helpful assistance.

Dear Governor Thornburgh:

The Lord wants the State to do something about the gypsy moths. (Entire letter)

Dear Sir:

I just read how you are getting wasps from New Jersey to kill off the moths. Look no further. We can provide you with as many as you can use, and they are large wasps--not the small Jersey type. Now my question--who's going to control the wasps? I have some that even chew plaster. They are the killers, being the only bugs I know which will stand up and fight back. Don't have one your politicians get my letter, copy it and sign his name to it to show how smart they are. The neighbors around here use this method to obscure my high ideals. If you really want to do something good, get rid of Philadelphia. And get my husband a good job. I am planning on suing the U. S. Government if these wasps attack me.

Dear Mr. Nichols:

A highly selective, safe, effective, and durable principle for the control of gypsy moth has been at disposal since 1965. This accomplishment has been suppressed and sabotaged by all means living within the reach of the countervailing and selfish interest groups. The officialdom has been unbendingly determined to prevent the ascendance into the public domain of the only extent means that alone could have prevented further spread of this voracious pest. The presently commanded and tolerated armamentarium proves spectacularly ineffective for the stemming of this depredation. This is, naturally, in accordance with the plot, with the master plan of the self-serving interests whose world-wide conspiracy is aimed at the preservation of the hegemony of the synthetic toxicants through all sorts of subterfuge and counter-convoluted tactics. Any further discussion of this principle must, with respect to the circumstances, be made contingent upon the preparedness and determination of you and the officials of Pennsylvania to follow a path, a course of action, different from that pursued and thus far enforced by the parties on who conscience the fostering and the augmentation of the current predicaments is resting. Otherwise, your freedom in action remains severely limited by the exponents of seldom concealed malversation. (7 page letter)

To Whom it May Concern: (from a Government Devastated Area, Bucks County)

The answer is NO - if you care not to read on. We were deeply depressed to learn that the "devil", the powers of DEATH, DESTRUCTION and DEVASTATION is to be let loose again this year, after 8 Years and at least 13 DESTRUCTIVE and DEVASTATING bombardments of your DEADLY POISONOUS spraying which FAILED MOST MISERABLY to phase even a single "GYPMO" and HAS CAUSED SO MUCH PAIN, SORROW, DEATH, DESTRUCTION and DEVASTATION to private Citizenry and private property. We are most deeply depressed to learn that THE SCOURGING and THE CRUCIFYING of God's people will resume again by SATAN'S LEGATION, THE CYNICISTS. Our hard-earned money is taken from us and used to DESTROY us and DEVASTATE our properties, to FEED WELL THE PARASITES and LEECHES, who live VAINGLORIOUSLY and LAVISHLY on TAXES IMPOSED on us. For, to possess these

VAINGLORIOUS POWERS, it's necessary to be on the TAXpayers payroll. To possess the GLORIOUS POWERS of compensation, reparation and restitution for ALL EVIL, CRIMINAL and IMMORAL WRONG DOINGS, you must be on God's payroll, where the ETERNAL REWARDS ARE GREAT. TRY IT - YOU'LL LIKE IT.

Dear Secretary:

In view of your strong disinclination to resist the operation of the ubiquitous third law of thermodynamics, I have no choice but to recommend to the Chairman of the CEQ disapproval of Pennsylvania's portion of the USDAFS Environmental Impact Statement. I am arranging a three day meeting to discuss issues. There will be representatives from the Forstliche Bundesversuchsanstalt, Der Bundesminister fur Ernahrung, Landwirtschaft and Forsten, Skogshogakolan, Instituto Federale di Ricerche Forestali and those other interested groups which would be coming from abroad.

Dear Mr. President,

Please do something about the gypsy moth. They are devouring everything. We have written to everyone and the only response we have received is a lot of literature and referrals of one kind or another.

Dear Sir:

I am an avowed environmentalist, a member of the National Wildlife Association, the Audubon Society, the Towpath Naturalists Society, the Wilderness Society and the Environmental Defense Fund. This gypsy moth is something else. They are a scourge. You can stand in the woods and listen to them eat. There were not enough county funds here to do all the needed spraying, so only the worst areas were treated. The caterpillars were all over my house. Last Friday several neighbors and I chose to have our area sprayed privately. Dylox was unavailable and I don't know why. I don't like Sevin because it kills bees, but I had no choice, and it was a terrible decision to make. I was between a rock and a hard place. I really don't blame anyone except for man's greed which is responsible for bringing the gypsy moth here in the first place.

Dear Sir:

I would imagine that finding this fly (a gypsy moth parasite) in this letter is very distasteful to you. My point is this: these obnoxious little pests were literally driving the people away from Colonel Denning State Park. I was informed that the park has been sprayed to eliminate the moth. My question is: what will you import to rid the park of the fly?