

**Subject:** Public Works Invasive Species Management Policy

**Recommendation:**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2023-0130 Public Works Invasive Species Management Policy, for information;**

**AND THAT Council repeal Spongy Moth Policy S802-03 and approve Public Works Invasive Species Management Policy;**

**AND THAT staff be directed to prepare the necessary by-law for the establishment of an Invasive Species Management Reserve Fund AND THAT this reserve fund be effective for the December 31, 2023 year end.**

**Background:**

In 2019, Council directed staff to develop a Spongy Moth Management Policy in response to the ongoing infestation of Spongy Moth. In February 2020, Council approved Policy S802-03 (Appendix A) which identifies how the periodic infestation of Spongy Moth is managed by the Town of Pelham.

Other invasive species have negatively impacted the Town of Pelham in the past, such as Dutch Elm Disease, and the Ash Tree Borer Beetle, as well as a number of invasive plant species. Currently, Southern Ontario is threatened by two new species on its eastern and western borders. The Spotted Lanternfly has expanded its range across the eastern United States and has been spotted just over the border in Western New York, while Oak Wilt, a fungal disease carried by beetles, has been found in Michigan along the Detroit and St. Clair River.

This report seeks to highlight the need for an overarching Invasive Species Policy to allow the Town to act more quickly and consistently against emerging threats.

**Analysis:**

An invasive species is an organism that causes ecological harm in a new environment where it is not native. This includes all organisms, including vascular plants, animals (including invertebrates), fungi, bacteria, and viruses. The vast majority of these threats are introduced through human activities and are spread

through transportation corridors giving species an opportunity to expand their range very quickly.

Total eradication of invasive species is extremely difficult and may be unachievable for Town of Pelham to accomplish given its geographic location, and relative size. The Town shares a border with six municipalities within the Niagara Region and is in close proximity to an international border and a major transportation route through the province.

Invasive species pose a significant threat to the Town's tree canopy, local ecology, economy, agriculture, and public health. While no two invasive species are identical, the proposed Invasive Species Management Policy provides a framework to identify and address all invasive species through prevention, public awareness, detection, and control measures. The proposed policy is attached to this report as Appendix B.

The proposed Invasive Species Management Policy prescribes that prevention, and early detection of invasives through public awareness, and staff education are to play an important role in reducing the spread and damage caused by invasive species.

Once an invasive species has been identified, a survey will be undertaken on public lands to determine the population density and disbursement of the pest, as well as potential damage. Once the survey has been completed, a species-specific management strategy and procedure including control measures will be developed according to best practices developed by the Invasive Species Centre of Canada, and other agencies or experts.

Control measures are to include a Council-approved Invasive Species Action Threshold or (ISAT). An ISAT represents the population density or damage level that must be achieved prior to deploying control measures including synthetic pesticides or herbicides. A current example of a Council-approved ISAT can be found in Appendix A of the proposed policy and is 2500 Spongy Moth egg masses per hectare.

The existing Spongy Moth Policy S802-03 guides staff through the management process to maintain tolerable spongy moth populations at any point in time. The policy has been rewritten as an internal procedure PW-IS-01 that continues to outline the response to periodic infestations including communication to both the public and Council. PW-IS-01 is attached to this report as Appendix C.

## **Financial Considerations:**

The Public Works Invasive Species Management Policy identifies how invasive species are to be treated by the Town of Pelham as part of an overall Invasive Species Strategy.

Due to the unpredictability of invasive species emergence, infestations cannot always be properly planned for through the budget process. The proposed Policy requires an Invasive Species Management Reserve Fund to be created to fund programs related to invasive species infestations within the Town of Pelham.

Future invasive species management programs will be funded through the Invasive Species Management Reserve with Council approval.

As per Policy No, S400-08 Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy, section 4 (iv): Reserve Funds shall be established by Council by-law, which governs the purpose, funding sources, drawdowns, and investments of the Fund.

**Purpose of the Fund:** the Invasive Species Management Reserve Fund will fund programs related to invasive species infestations within the Town of Pelham.

**Funding Source:** The current operating budget has \$150,000 for the Spongy Moth program. The last egg mass assessment done for the Spongy Moth has determined that in 2023 the Town will not need to spend all these funds for a spray program. \$25,000 is required annually to complete the egg mass surveys in the winter. For 2023, \$125,000 can be allocated to the Invasive Species Management Reserve Fund. The total amount in the fund should be the value of two years' invasive species budget based on what is in the current budget, which is \$300,000. For 2024 budget the allocation will be \$50,000 a year. There will be a \$50,000 annual allocation until \$300,000 is reached in the reserve fund.

**Drawdowns:** the amounts will be drawn down as required for managing invasive species infestations.

**Investment in the Fund:** The funds are to be kept in a segregated bank account with interest revenue allocated on an annual basis.

## **Alternatives Reviewed:**

Council may decide to direct staff to create individual policies to manage each individual invasive species that threaten the Town or approve the proposed

overarching Invasive Species Management Policy, along with the Invasive Species Management Reserve Fund.

**Strategic Plan Relationship: Environmental and Climate Change Adaptation**

Invasive species pose a significant threat to the local ecology, economy, agriculture, and public health.

**Consultation:**

Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer – Teresa Quinlin-Murphy

**Other Pertinent Reports/Attachments:**

Appendix A – Spongy Moth Policy S802-03

Appendix B – Proposed Invasive Species Management Policy

Appendix C – PW-IS-01 Spongy Moth Management Procedure

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