



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 13, 2023

MEDIA CONTACT: Jamar Thrasher, jthrasher@pa.gov

Department of Environmental Protection Begins 2023 Black Fly Suppression Program

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) began its 2023 Black Fly Suppression Program this week. The program involves aerial and backpack spraying on roughly 1,800 stream miles in 37 counties of the commonwealth.

“Pennsylvania is full of beautiful state parks, trails and forests. People across the Commonwealth should be able to enjoy nature without this seasonal pest impeding on their time,” said **Acting Secretary of DEP Rich Negrin**. “Our black fly suppression program ensures safe and effective treatment of the black fly species.”

This year, 48 rivers and streams spanning more than 1,800 miles will be monitored and treated as needed. Spraying activities will be performed both by helicopter and ground crews. The frequency will depend on weather and biological conditions. Treatments cannot occur during periods of heavy rain or when water levels are high as these conditions lower the effectiveness of the treatment and significantly increase the cost of the control operations.

DEP uses Bti, a naturally occurring bacterium, to treat the larval stage of four specific human pest black fly species. This bacterium degrades quickly in the environment and does not harm the aquatic ecosystem, birds, or other insects.

Prior to any spraying activity, DEP notifies county and local emergency management officials. Helicopters can be seen flying over waterways and ground crews using backpack sprayers off bridges and wading in streams conducting control operations on behalf of DEP’s Black Fly Suppression Program. Anyone concerned at the sight of a helicopter or ground personnel is encouraged to call their county emergency management office to verify that a black fly treatment is taking place in their area on that day.

###