



NAPA COUNTY

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For Immediate Release

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May 2005 Proclaimed Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Awareness Month *Ag Commissioner Launches New GWSS Campaign*

NAPA, Calif.— The Napa County Board of Supervisors has proclaimed the month of May 2005 “Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Awareness Month.” The Napa County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office requested the declaration as part of its innovative new campaign designed to raise awareness about the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) using the theme: “**Not In My Backyard**” (NIMBY).

“Right now we are especially concerned about those individuals who might unknowingly bring an un-inspected plant into the region and inadvertently cause an infestation,” says Dave Whitmer, Napa County Agricultural Commissioner. “There are still many people in this community who don’t know what the Sharpshooter is or are not aware of the devastating effects it could have on the economy. We need to focus on educating those residents about the insect and what they can do to help keep Napa County GWSS free.”

In response to this concern, the Napa County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office (NCACO) has launched “**NIMBY**”, a new public awareness campaign directed at Napa County residents featuring giant size Sharpshooters insidiously lurking in suburban backyards. Cleverly designed posters, brochures and refrigerator magnets developed for the campaign incorporate an element of humor while still remaining focused on the serious facts.

“We want people to pay attention to and remember our message,” says Whitmer. “Adding a bit of humor to this serious topic will help us achieve our goal of reaching all Napa County residents. We even had a giant GWSS costume made! Who could miss that at the Farmer’s Market?”

The **NIMBY** campaign kicks off on May 3, 2005, the official start date of Glassy-wing Sharpshooter Awareness Month. Napa and Sonoma County residents can catch the giant size GWSS on local access cable Ch. 28 and Santa Rosa’s KFTY Ch. 50 in an entertaining new public service announcement that features the insect trying to hitchhike its way into Napa County. The giant GWSS will also make appearances at fairs and farmer’s markets in the coming months.

So far this year, due to continued careful inspection by the NCACO and great vigilance and coordination on the parts of both shippers and receivers of nursery plants, Napa County has managed to maintain its status as a Glassy-winged Sharpshooter-Free County.

“The whole community has done an outstanding job of banding together to keep Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) out of the county thus far,” says Whitmer. “But that doesn’t mean the threat of infestation and crop devastation is over.”

The NCACO GWSS inspection team has seen a lot of action in 2005. Since January, five viable GWSS egg masses have been discovered (and destroyed) on four shipments of plants coming from wholesale nurseries in Riverside, Ventura and San Joaquin Counties. While Whitmer says he is pleased that the community trusts his team to do everything it can to prevent an infestation, he worries that many people will not recognize the problem as something that involves them.

“The Glassy-winged Sharpshooter is everybody’s business,” says Whitmer. “There are a few simple rules that, if everyone follows, will help ensure we never have an infestation in this county and our overall economy will remain strong: Buy plants locally from certified plant retailers, inspect the plants in your yard and share information about GWSS with friends and family.”

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