



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Contact: Mike Louisell (360) 902-1813

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560
Visit our Web site at: agr.wa.gov

State Department of Agriculture holding gypsy moth open house in Kent Feb. 6

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) will hold a gypsy moth open house next month in Kent, the site of more than half of all the gypsy moth catches statewide this past summer. WSDA staff will be on hand to answer questions on its proposal to conduct a biological insecticide treatment in Kent this spring to eradicate a gypsy moth infestation.

Of the 75 gypsy moths caught in Washington last summer, 43 were caught in Kent. All the catches were within approximately a quarter mile of the intersection of W. Willis St. and Washington Ave. S. No residences are located in the proposed treatment zone.

The open house will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Feb. 6 in the multipurpose room at Kent Elementary School, 24700 – 64th Ave. S. in Kent. Individuals are invited to drop in anytime during this period.

The insecticide WSDA is proposing to use is *Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki* (*Btk*), a biological insecticide used in the past to keep gypsy moths out of Washington. *Btk* is registered for use in the U.S. by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is found naturally in the environment.

Before reaching a decision on the proposal, WSDA will comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). WSDA will consult with state and federal agencies, and prepare two documents for public review and comment that assess the impact of the proposal on the environment. The two documents are a SEPA checklist and a NEPA draft environmental assessment.

The gypsy moth has been detected in Washington state every year since 1977, but permanent populations have not been established because of aggressive trapping and eradication programs.

For more information on WSDA's gypsy moth program, call the agency's toll-free hotline (1-800-443-6684) or visit the agency's Web site at www.agr.wa.gov/plantsinsects/InsectPests/GypsyMoth/default.htm.

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