



Washington State Department of Agriculture
News Release

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State proposes gypsy moth eradication treatment at South Hill Mall in Puyallup

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) announced today a proposal to treat a 29-acre site at the South Hill Mall in Puyallup next spring to eliminate an invasive introduction of the destructive European gypsy moth. State entomologists have concluded a reproducing population of the gypsy moth exists at the mall after catching seven moths at the site and finding other evidence of gypsy moth activity in the area.

The site is located in the northwest corner of South Hill Mall. No residences are located at the site.

If approved, the treatment will begin in April or early May 2011. Three to five applications of a biological insecticide will be applied during late night hours, three to 14 days apart. This will be the first gypsy moth eradication treatment in Washington in four years. The last eradication project was conducted in Kent in 2007.

WSDA will comply with the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) before deciding whether or not to approve the proposal. 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 completed SEPA checklist and a NEPA draft environmental assessment.

The insecticide WSDA is proposing to use at the South Hill Mall is *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (Btk), a biological insecticide used in the past to keep the gypsy moth 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.

A community open house will be held in Puyallup in late January to familiarize the community with the proposal. Location of the open house will be announced later.

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

For more information on the gypsy moth, call the agency's toll-free hotline (1-800-443-6684) or visit the WSDA gypsy moth website at <http://agr.wa.gov/Plantsinsects/InsectPests/GypsyMoth/>. The website includes a map of the proposed treatment site.

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