

Public comment sought for proposed gypsy moth eradication project in South Lincoln County

January 23, 2003... The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the USDA Forest Service are seeking public comment on a draft environmental assessment for a proposed gypsy moth eradication program in the Fisher (Five Rivers) area of Lincoln County. The 30-day review and comment period ends at 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, February 26, 2003.

Three gypsy moths were detected in the Fisher area last summer. In addition, egg masses and other life stages were located-- strong evidence that a breeding population of gypsy moths exists in the area. The eradication program-- which is being proposed by ODA and USDA Forest Service/Siuslaw National Forest-- would take place this spring utilizing three aerial applications of the biological insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (Btk) over 706 acres of a very rural area. This would be the first time a gypsy moth eradication program has taken place near the Oregon Coast.

Eradication of isolated gypsy moth populations found in the western U.S. is the preferred alternative identified in the USDA's 1995 Gypsy Moth Management in the U.S.-- Final Environmental Impact Statement.

A public information meeting to explain details of the eradication proposal is expected to be held sometime in February.

A final decision on the proposed eradication program will be made by the director of ODA and the South Zone District Ranger of the Siuslaw National Forest once the public comment period and the final project environmental assessment (EA) are completed.

Copies of the draft EA are available at the Siuslaw National Forest headquarters in Corvallis, Oregon; the Waldport Ranger District office in Waldport, Oregon; and the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Plant Division office in Salem, Oregon.

To request a copy of the draft environmental assessment or to submit comments, contact Kathleen Johnson, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Plant Division, 635 Capitol Street NE, Salem, OR 97301-2532, 1-800-525-0137, Fax: 503-986-4786, or e-mail: gypsymoth@oda.state.or.us