

# Adult gypsy moth found in San Lorenzo Valley trap

FELTON — For the first time in six years, a gypsy moth has been found in the San Lorenzo Valley. But a spokesman for the county Agricultural Commissioner says the find last week in Henry Cowell State Park does not mean an infestation or a return of the aerial spray-war.

Deputy Agricultural Commissioner Dave Moeller assured it is not that uncommon for single-moth finds to occur.

"It would be pure speculation to state anything more than we found a single adult male gypsy moth," he said. "We'll just wait and see what develops. We're

cautiously optimistic that this was a single-moth event, and nothing more."

Gypsy moths were officially eradicated in Felton in 1986 following a controversial state Department of Food and Agriculture aerial spray program. Seven aerial applications of the non-chemical *Bacillus thuringiensis* was sprayed over 175 acres in the San Lorenzo Valley in 1985 after seven gypsy moths were found. The non-chemical bacterium was used instead of the insecticide Carbaryl only after local residents and county officials won a court case preventing the state from using the stron-

ger insecticide.

The moth's caterpillars are capable of defoliating whole forests if established here. They could be a serious threat to agriculture, forest and recreational land, and are a continuing problem back East and in Oregon. The county Agricultural Commissioner's Office has continued to place and monitor some 350 traps in the county throughout spring and summer in hopes of preventing another infestation.

Moeller said as a precaution the county has placed another 53 traps in the 4-square-mile area where the single

gypsy moth was trapped last week. The additional traps will be monitored daily for a week.

"This will help us decide if there are more moths in the area or if the incident was a single-moth situation," Moeller said.

Gypsy moths typically lay egg masses on household goods, lawn furniture, lumber or recreational vehicles. It is believed the single moth trapped may have "hitchhiked" on a recreational vehicle that came from an infested area, such as Oregon.

*A. C. Smith*