

**ADIRONDACK COUNCIL URGES PARK AGENCY TO HOLD FORMAL PUBLIC HEARING ON
PROJECT TO USE HERBICIDE IN LAKE LUZERNE**
***Permit Would Allow First Chemical Poisoning of Invasive Plants in an Adirondack
Water Body; 1,500 Pounds Would be Dumped in South End***

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ALBANY, N.Y. --The Adirondack Council today called on the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) to require an adjudicatory hearing on the use of an herbicide to control the invasive plant Eurasian watermilfoil in Lake Luzerne before considering whether or not to grant a permit. The agency has never granted permission to use an aquatic herbicide in an Adirondack lake or pond.

"We believe the commissioners of the Adirondack Park Agency need to seek additional information from the Town of Lake Luzerne about its application to use a chemical in part of the lake," said Brian L. Houseal, Executive Director of the Adirondack Council. "It appears from the record that the town has taken some steps to remove invasive plants without using an herbicide, but that those programs were short in duration and very limited in scope. The APA needs to review the available, non-toxic options, and whether they have been fully explored, before it considers granting a permit to dump 1,500 pounds of herbicide in a portion of this magnificent lake."

The permit application (P2009-256), would allow the Town of Lake Luzerne, Warren County, to apply 1560 pounds of triclopyr (brand name Renovate OTF) this spring. The project area would include about 11 acres of the 111-acre lake, at its south end. The permit application record indicates that the treatment area is adjacent to a public swimming area, public boat launch, private docks, children's summer music camp and private residences.

The federal government warns against using any water treated with this chemical for any irrigation purpose for four months after treatment ends, the application notes. Treatment would run from May to June 2010.

"At least one plant species that is protected by the laws of New York State, *Bidens beckii* is located within the area where the herbicide will be applied," noted Houseal. "According to the APA, this plant is known to be 'highly susceptible to triclopyr.'"

There are at least three other protected plant species in the lake, with *Myriophyllum alterniflorum* included on the State's Rare Plant List. While this plant is not confirmed to be located within the chemical treatment area, the effects of the herbicide on these native plants is unknown. It is also unclear whether the curtains the town plans to use to contain the herbicide in specific areas will actually prevent the spread of the chemical, or just slow it down.

The Town has already been granted an APA permit for controlling invasive Eurasian Watermilfoil with hand-harvesting and benthic barrier techniques. Its current permit is valid until 2011, when the Town would then become eligible to apply for a simplified, general permit using these same methods.

"We have seen these chemical control programs employed just outside the Adirondack Park with very little success," added Houseal. "Chemicals are reapplied over and over again, year after year, and yet the invasive plants grow right back, while the loss in native and protected plants is not even figured into the equation."

"The existing control program for the lake cost less than \$15,000 per year, when it was in practice," he said. "Now, despite the clear success of these methods on Lake George and Upper Saranac Lake, the Town wants to spend much more money on a method that will require still more herbicides in future years."

The Lake George Park Commission and FUND for Lake George removed 30 tons of invasive milfoil last year and has placed 30 acres of benthic barrier on the lake bottom to prevent re-growth around public boat launches and docks. Local experts believe they have the problem well in hand, using no herbicides. Similar successes have been achieved at Brant Lake and Upper Saranac Lake.

The Adirondack Council was a party to two adjudicatory hearings regarding similar permit applications to use herbicides in Lake George. The most recent was in 2002. After much expert-witness testimony, the APA's commissioners voted to deny the permit in January 2003.

"The Commissioners should look back at the Lake George case," noted Houseal. "There are many similarities and most of the reasons for denying that project also apply to Lake Luzerne," he said. "Chemical herbicides can alter the character of entire lakes. Inside the Adirondack Park, we should be especially careful. They should be considered only as a last resort, when all other methods have been fully explored and have failed. That is not the case in Lake Luzerne."

The Adirondack Council is currently working with a coalition of organizations interested in securing federal funding to manage all Eurasian watermilfoil infested lakes in Adirondack Park with non-chemical methods. This group is currently working with the Adirondack's Congressional delegation on funding opportunities.

Founded in 1975, the Adirondack Council is a privately funded, not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. With members in all 50 United States, the Council carries out its mission through research, advocacy, public education and legal action.