

## Adirondack Council urges public hearing on use of herbicide in Lake Luzerne

ALBANY - The Adirondack Council 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 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.