

WNBZ

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Staff to Commissioners: Use Herbicide to Destroy Milfoil

Among the topics for discussion at this week's Adirondack Park Agency Board of Commissioners meeting is a proposal to use herbicide in an in-park lake for the first time ever.

On Thursday, the APA board will consider a staff recommendation to use herbicide to treat 11 acres of Lake Luzerne to kill Eurasian watermilfoil.

APA spokesman Keith McKeever told the Associated Press this week that public comments generally favor the use of herbicide to rid the lake of the invasive and damaging plant.

"There's quite a bit of it, and it's clogging up the lake," McKeever said.

But environmental groups are already speaking out against the proposal. John Sheehan of the Adirondack Council says Triclopyr – the herbicide in question – will needlessly kill other plants in the lake.

"Places we're seeing, like Saratoga Lake, it's killing all sorts of plants that shouldn't be eradicated at the same time," Sheehan said this week.

Adirondack Council Executive Director Brian Houseal said the APA needs to continue dialogue with officials from the town of Lake Luzerne before going any further.

"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," he said.

According to Houseal, the APA should review other non-toxic options and establish if those options have been fully-explored, before it – quote – "considers granting a permit to dump 1,500 pounds of herbicide in a portion of this magnificent lake."

An APA staff report indicates that a 72-hour treatment using 1,560 pounds of the herbicide would result in chemical-concentrations lasting between two to three weeks. After that, the concentration would be well below state restrictions for drinkable water.

The Associated Press says an irrigation ban would remain in effect for at least 120 days following the initial treatment.

Still, Houseal says these precautions aren't enough.

"We have seen these chemical control programs employed just outside the Adirondack Park with very little success," Houseal said. "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.”

-Chris Morris, 2-10-10