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What are your thoughts on using chemicals to kill milfoil in Adirondack lakes?

Earlier this week, a chemical herbicide, [triclopyr, was sprayed into Lake Luzerne](#) to control milfoil. It was the first time chemical treatment of milfoil had been allowed in an Adirondack Park lake. What do you think of this plan? Should it be allowed, or is using this chemical setting a dangerous precedent? Are there other forms of treatment that you'd prefer be used, such as pulling the weeds, covering the milfoil with screens (benthic barriers) or deploying weed-eating weevils? Do you trust that these chemicals are completely safe, or do you believe scientists will find some kind of negative residual effect in the future? Should other chemicals besides this one be used instead?



About the author: Mark Mahoney, editorial page editor at The Post-Star, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 2009 for editorial writing on issues related to open government. Also in 2009, the "Your Right to Know" blog received the prestigious First Amendment award from the Associated Press Managing Editors.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, May 19th, 2010 at 2:14 pm and is filed under [Sound Off](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

8 Responses to "What are your thoughts on using chemicals to kill milfoil in Adirondack lakes?"

-  *Joe* says:
[May 22, 2010 at 12:49 pm](#)
All I can envision, if not treated, is a lake looking like the body of water on the right side of 87 south, right before the twin bridges. I've been swimming in the lake all my life and before milfoil, you could swim anywhere and see the bottom. If left untreated, our beautiful lake would be dead. Thank you to those who took the time to "heal" our lake.
-  *jeffjenkins* says:
[May 20, 2010 at 5:11 pm](#)
Well Mark(not mahoney):

I would say asking the general public-in this case including taxpaying residents is appropriate. You can choose to go through life deferring to "people alot smarter than you" if you like. I will form my own opinions.You also can defer to the APA because as we all know, they never make any mistakes.One last point, it doesn't take a person very long to figure out that hand harvesting weeds from a large body of water is ridiculous. Also, I believe the people and lake at Saratoga Lake are still surviving just fine.Sometimes, when you try to sound smart, you just end up doing the opposite.

3.  *Mark Mahoney* says:

[May 20, 2010 at 3:02 pm](#)

First off, asking the public about a public policy decision is not unusual or meaningless. This is as much about policy as science. Plus, many people in our readership have experience with the various methods of milfoil removal. Why not ask to hear from them? Second, if you click on the phrase in the first sentence starting with "triclopr ...," you'll get a link to the story.

4.  *Mark* says:

[May 20, 2010 at 1:38 pm](#)

Asking the general public to comment on an issue as complex as this is quite meaningless, with out ALL the facts. The questions you proposed were done so to have people that are not involved comment solely on the "use of chemicals" in the Park. The better way to approach this might have been to attach a link to the article and other appropriate information so people could have become a little better informed, but the response would probably not have been what you were looking for!The decisions that led up to this program were more that (10) years in the making with many highly knowledgeable people involved from the start of the lake management program. There are always pros and cons to all decisions; otherwise there is no real decision. All known methods of removal were either used or investigated for years, prior to the DEC and APA permits being issued.The reality of it is that many people more knowledgeable than I, concerned people were involved in the decision and in this case, it was the correct plan of action. Everyone has the right to voice their opinion, but at the end of the day I hope everyone that voices their opinion spends some time researching their thoughts first. Mark

5.  *Sandy* says:

[May 20, 2010 at 1:13 pm](#)

I am a cancer survivor and as such extremely mindful of anything chemical, etc. that would be put into our food, environment, etc. that would be harmful. The research done on the herbicide put into Lake Luzerne is so extensive that I have absolutely no concern.We live directly on the lake. This herbicide has been used in other lakes outside of the blue line for years and has proven to be safe to animals, fish, humans, and native plants. The herbicide kills only Eurasian milfoil and its cousins, and because it is applied early in the season when even the cousins haven't popped up, even they are seldom affected. Weevils were considered. They are \$1.00 each...We cannot afford that expense, and there is absolutely no guarantee that they would do the job the herbicide is. As for the mats, while effective, they kill everything beneath them! All plant, animal, etc. life! Handharvesting is a good method, and particularly effective when used inconjunction with the herbicide. I certainly understand anyone's concern about this at first blush, but this is a safe, proven way to kill an invasive weed that is quickly choking the lakes in the Adirondacks. Congratulations to Lake Luzerne for all the work their team put into this effort.

6.  *jeffjenkins* says:

[May 19, 2010 at 6:29 pm](#)

There is no other way to treat this "cancer of lakes". Hand harvesting and bentho. barriers are a joke. The more aggressive the better. This milfoil takes over and strangles everything. It is about time that the APA stopped fighting this and finally showed some common sense.

7.  *Trevor Murphy* says:

[May 19, 2010 at 3:08 pm](#)

I think that it is irresponsible to use chemicals without extensive evidence of the environmental damage that will result from their use. Evidence has been collected on it's effects, and I think that it won't cause as much of a problem as the milfoil does to the ecosystem.

8.



Jay says:

[May 19, 2010 at 2:32 pm](#)

Burden Lake in Rensselaer County was the 1st in NYS to be granted a DEC permit to treat milfoil with the chemical SONAR (fluridone) in 1986 or 1987. This past Monday the lake was treated for the 3rd time. There have been no ill effects in any way and the milfoil is controlled for 6 or 7 years each time.