

COLUMN: They'd rather fight than talk

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The enmity between Adirondack environmental groups and local people is cultivated by the leaders of the environmental groups as a badge of honor.

With their preference for lawsuits and accusations over negotiation and discussion, they court confrontation and shun compromise.

We see examples of their polarizing behavior in the recent lawsuits filed by Protect the Adirondacks! over the development of Adirondack Club & Resort in Tupper Lake and the construction and grooming of snowmobile trails.

Both projects were worked on for years by other parties, including environmentalists; both were moving ahead after compromises; and in both cases, all the work done so far could be scuttled by these lawsuits.

Now, the Adirondack Council has objected to a long-standing plan by the town of Chester to use triclopyr to kill Eurasian milfoil in Loon Lake.

Adirondack Council's leaders have known for months about Chester's plans to seek a permit for the herbicide. But on Tuesday — two days before the Adirondack Park Agency was scheduled to consider Chester's request — the council released a statement against it.

Near the top of the council's press release, its acting director, Diane Fish, is quoted as saying, "This chemical killed alarming numbers of snails"

But no one knows why a bunch of snails died in 2011 in Lake Luzerne after triclopyr was used in the lake — a fact you can find much further down in the council's press release.

Some snails are known to undergo periodic die-offs, and among them is the banded mysterysnail, which lives in Lake Luzerne. The snails have experienced these die-offs in past years, too, before triclopyr was used in the lake.

Scientific studies of triclopyr show it targets just broad-leafed plants, such as the invasive milfoil, and can be safely applied in lakes.

The press release not only overstates the council's case, its timing is terrible.

Why didn't the council come out against Chester's plan last summer when town officials first talked about it? That way, town officials and APA staff would have had time to respond and work toward a compromise.

Instead, the council objects the very week the APA is meeting to consider the permit. If the council's call for more study is granted now, that will kill Chester's chance to use triclopyr this spring.

The application window is narrow and comes right after ice-out, so other aquatic plants aren't

affected.

The bad timing was no error, but reflects the Adirondack Council's intent — to thwart the town of Chester's program through the release of misleading publicity.

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