



Staff Report

Operations

Report To: 102
Meeting Date: January 31, 2023
Report Number: CSOPS.23.005
Title: 2023 Wild Chervil Management Strategy
Prepared by: Cameron Wilson, Maintenance and Compliance Coordinator

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSOPS.23.005, entitled “2023 Wild Chervil Management Strategy” for their information.

AND THAT Council directs Staff to transition its strategy for the control of Wild Chervil from a proactive strategy utilizing the broadcast application of herbicide to identified sections of the Town’s Rural Road Sections to a reactive strategy utilizing spot spraying individual stands of Wild Chervil.

B. Overview

This Staff Report is intended to provide an overview and history of the Town’s response and activities related to the management and control of Wild Chervil within the Town of The Blue Mountains including public notification; pesticide opt-out options; a summary of herbicide usage; and, ongoing monitoring. The purpose of this report is to inform, stimulate discussion, and to determine how the Town should proceed in addressing Wild Chervil and how it should respond to other invasive or noxious weeds going forward.

C. Background

What is Wild Chervil?

Wild Chervil is an herbaceous biennial or short-lived perennial from the parsley family, introduced to North America from Europe. It was first brought to North America as part of European wildflower seed mix used for plantings along hedgerows and meadows. Wild Chervil is an invasive species and has few checks on its population in North America. As a heavy seed producer, it is easily spread to new locations and can quickly take over an area, displacing native species, negatively impacting agriculture and horticulture lands, and forming dense stands that are difficult to control.

In 2015, Wild Chervil was added to the Provincial Schedule of Noxious Weeds under the *Weed Control Act*.

Why does Ontario have the *Weed Control Act*?

The intent of the Ontario *Weed Control Act* is to reduce:

- The infestation of noxious weeds that negatively impact on agriculture and horticulture lands;
- Plant diseases by eliminating plant disease hosts such as common barberry and European buckthorn; and,
- Health hazards to livestock and agricultural workers caused by poisonous plants.

What is a “Noxious Weed”?

A noxious weed includes a plant that has been listed in the Schedule of Noxious Weeds found in Regulation 1096 of the *Weed Control Act*. This list is commonly referred to as the “Noxious Weed List”.

In general, a species designated as a noxious weed under the Act is one that:

- Is difficult to manage on agricultural land once established and will reduce the yield and quality of the crop being grown;
- Negatively affects the health and well-being of livestock; or,
- Poses a risk to the health and well-being of agricultural workers.

In Ontario, 25 weeds are designated as noxious under the Act.

Impacts of Wild Chervil

Wild Chervil is an aggressive competitor with broad leaves that shade out surrounding vegetation and limits water and nutrients for other native plants. When mature, it forms tall, dense vegetation stands that are unpalatable to livestock and produces large amounts of seed that are easily spread by people, animals, and the wind. Wild Chervil is extremely difficult to control as it is resistant to several herbicides and has a deep root system.

In 2010, the County of Grey began a program of monitoring the spread of Wild Chervil throughout the County, notifying municipalities, and educating residents. The County, in cooperation with its municipalities, participated in Wild Chervil management research conducted by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs and the University of Guelph into the efficacy of herbicide options for the control of Wild Chervil.

In 2012, the Town of The Blue Mountains’ Agricultural Advisory Committee initiated a request for Wild Chervil control within the Town’s Road Allowances and, by doing so, reduce the spread and impact of invasive and noxious weeds on the Town’s agricultural lands and crops. At that time, the Town began an aggressive cutting program to control Wild Chervil. However, cutting alone proved ineffective. It was determined that the only effective means of controlling Wild Chervil was by either killing or removing its roots. Given the extent to which Wild Chervil had spread and established itself along the Town right of ways, the physical removal of Wild Chervil was not a feasible option.

The Town and Grey County worked with the University of Guelph and the Ontario Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Affairs' Provincial Weed Inspector in applying the herbicide Truvist to a number of test plots. These test areas were used to determine the effectiveness of the product. Truvist, was determined to be an effective control measure in suppressing colonies of Wild Chervil as well as reducing its further spread.

In 2015, Wild Chervil was added to both the Provincial Schedule of Noxious Weeds under the *Weed Control Act* and, subsequently, to the Town's Noxious Weed By-Law. In 2015, both the County and the Town began programs for applying the herbicide Truvist to their respective road allowances.

The Town contracts the application of Truvist to a licensed applicator third party. The contractor applies the herbicide to specific areas along the Town's right of ways using a broadcast sprayer, as identified in advance by Town Staff. Staff also ensure the contractor applying the herbicide is properly licensed under the provincial *Pesticides Act*.

How are Pesticides Regulated?

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is responsible for the regulation of pesticides (including herbicides) and their registration (i.e., if it can be used) in Canada under the *Pest Control Products Act*. For a pesticide to be approved and registered for use in Canada, the PMRA undertakes a stringent, science-based evaluation that examines the potential risks posed to human health and the environment and the product's value. If registered, the pesticide's label outlines how it is to be used and applied to avoid human and environmental impacts. In Ontario, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks holds regulatory authority under the *Pesticides Act* which regulates the sale, use, storage, transportation, and disposal of pesticides in Ontario. This also includes ensuring compliance with the pesticide label.

In 2015, the use of Truvist in Ontario was approved under the *Pesticides Act*. At this time and according to the product label, Truvist cannot be applied to crop or pasture lands. According to both the PMRA and the provincial *Pesticides Act*, impacts to the human health and the environment are mitigated by following the requirements listed on the product label (i.e., how it is applied, transported, disposed, etc.).

How has Wild Chervil been controlled within the Town?

Wild Chervil generally grows in early spring and seeds around mid-May to early June. Starting in early spring, Town staff are actively looking for Wild Chervil while working in our rural areas and when found, the locations are recorded including locations provided by residents. This would include both Town and private property. The Town's Weed Inspector works with landowners where we have identified or have been made aware of Wild Chervil on private property.

Town staff determine and summarize the areas where Wild Chervil has been observed and this information is mapped and passed along to the Truvist applicator. As a provincially licensed vegetation management applicator, the Town's contractor is required to apply the herbicide in compliance with the Truvist product label, the *Pesticides Act* and its regulations. As such, the

contractor determines whether the areas identified by the Town are appropriate to spray and whether sections of the identified areas should not be sprayed due to regular maintenance (mowing) or other geological features such watercourses and topography. Additionally, the contractor determines the precise timing of the spraying to ensure appropriate weather conditions for the application. To be effective, herbicide application needs to occur before the plant goes to seed and can disperse and spread. Truvist is applied by the contractor by using a broadcast sprayer.

The Town, through the efforts of previous Agricultural Advisory Committees, undertakes a shared stewardship approach where all property owners and residents are encouraged to actively identify and eliminate Wild Chervil on their own properties in fields, lawns, and gardens to help reduce the spread of this non-native invasive and noxious weed within the Town. The Town's Weed Inspector also works with private landowners using education and a cooperative compliance approach.

Community Concerns with Herbicide Use

In addition to the concerns previously raised by the Agricultural Advisory Committee regarding the impact of Wild Chervil on agricultural lands, there have been concerns expressed by residents about the use of an herbicide (i.e., Truvist) as a control mechanism. Some rural residents have expressed concern about the possible effects on both human health, and that of the environment, which may be associated with herbicide use. As such, these residents have requested that either the Town cease its use of herbicides or, alternatively, that no spraying occur on the Town right of way fronting their private property.

In 2020, both Town Staff and the Agricultural Advisory Committee engaged Pesticide Specialists from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks as well as the Chief Weed Inspector from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to ensure the Town's activities were in keeping with current best practices for managing and controlling Wild Chervil and the associated regulatory requirements. In addition, the Town's By-Law Staff, including the Town's Weed Inspector, have provided cooperative compliance and enforcement options for addressing Wild Chervil on private property.

Since 2020, the Town of The Blue Mountains' Staff have, in tandem with its invasive and noxious weed control program, undertaken a program of communication, education and engagement with residents. Each year Town Staff provided notice, sent media releases, and prepared frequently asked questions regarding the Town's invasive and noxious weed control program. In each instance, Staff have attempted to communicate the rational and objective of the program, the legislative requirements, and the measures taken to safeguard both the environment and the public.

In response to the concerns of some residents, Staff also introduced a system where residents could opt-out of having the herbicide applied to the municipal road allowance in front of their property. Residents choosing to participate in the opt-out, registered their address and were then provided with two Do-Not-Spray signs which were to be placed at the limits of their property's frontage with the municipality's road allowance. In exchange, residents choosing to

opt-out and post signs were asked to regularly cut this portion of the road allowance to help manage Wild Chervil. Although this method is not as effective, the Town recognizes that some residents object to the use of herbicides.

D. Analysis

The Town's Wild Chervil Control Program has been largely successful in containing the spread of Wild Chervil within the Town's Road Allowances and the lane kilometers which received the broadcast application of the Truvist herbicide has declined year over year since 2020 when the Town shifted from broadcast spraying the entire Road Allowance to focusing on Wild Chervil locations only. For reference, Attachment 1 shows the specific areas of anticipated locations of Wild Chervil (heading into the 2022 control season), areas actually sprayed and the location of No Spray Signs requested and installed by residents adjacent to the Town's Road Allowance.

Year	Lane Kilometers Sprayed
2022	10
2021	16
2020	18
2019	188
2018	180
2017	136
2016	132

However, as noted in the Staff Report [CSOPS.22.022 2022 - Wild Chervil Management Strategy](#) Staff have observed the progressive increase in the presence of Wild Chervil stands on private lands and along watercourses. These stands have likely become, and will continue to be, a new source of seed spread within the Town.

As outlined in Staff Report CSOPS.22.022, Town staff are continuing to undertake a proactive compliance approach with private landowners to assist with: identifying Wild Chervil and the potential presence on their property; understanding the impacts and why control is important; various management techniques including their associated effectiveness; and the regulatory requirements (e.g., *Weed Control Act*, *Pesticide Act*, etc.).

Town Staff remain committed to mitigating the spread of Wild Chervil, as they are to reducing the propagation of all noxious weeds and invasive species within the Town which pose a hazard to the environment, to the public, and to agriculture and horticulture lands.

To that end, it is the recommendation of Staff that the Town transition its herbicidal application strategy of its Wild Chervil Control Program from a proactive strategy to a reactive strategy. This

change would align the strategy of the Town's Wild Chervil Control Program with the Town's approach to other noxious weed such as Giant Hogweed, Wild Parsnip, and Poison Ivy. Presently, these other noxious weeds are spot sprayed when they are identified by Staff or members of the public on the Town's Road Allowances, or other municipally owned lands where they are likely to pose a hazard to the public. This approach aligns with how noxious weeds are addressed by Grey County.

While curtailing the herbicidal application component of the Wild Chervil Control Program, Staff are recommending that we continue with the Monitoring, Communication, Education, and Proactive Compliance components of the Wild Chervil Control Program which were previously introduced and which may be expanded, or modified, as may be required.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Town should transition its strategy for the control of Wild Chervil from a *proactive* strategy utilizing the broadcast application of herbicide to identified sections of the Town's Road Allowances to a *reactive* strategy utilizing spot spraying individual stands of Wild Chervil, as identified, and focusing on continuing of the Monitoring, Communication, Education, and Proactive Compliance Components of the present Wild Chervil Management Strategy.

E. Strategic Priorities

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

F. Environmental Impacts

Wild Chervil is an aggressive competitor with broad leaves that shade out surrounding vegetation and which limits water and nutrients for other plants. When mature, it forms tall, dense vegetation stands which are unpalatable to livestock and which produces large amounts of seed which are easily spread by wildlife, human activity, water, and wind. Wild Chervil is extremely difficult to control as it is resistant to several herbicides and has a deep root system. The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks regulates the use of pesticides to manage the protection of human health and the environment.

G. Financial Impacts

The cost to purchase the Truvist herbicide, and the cost for its broadcast application by a licensed contractor for the control of Wild Chervil is funded through the Roads and Drainage Operating Budget for Weed Management. The budget for Weed Management was \$20,000 for 2022, for 2023 the proposed budget for Weed Management is \$18,000.

H. In Consultation With

Jim McCannell, Manager of Roads and Drainage Division

Wayne DeWitt, Supervisor By-Law Services

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Shawn Carey, Director of Operations directorops@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

1. 2022 Completed Roadside Weed Spraying with No Spray Sign Locations Map

Respectfully submitted

Cameron Wilson
Public Works Maintenance and Compliance Coordinator

Shawn Carey
Director of Operations

For more information, please contact:
Shawn Carey, Director of Operations
directorops@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 260

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CSOPS.23.005 2023 Wild Chervil Management Strategy.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 2022 Completed Roadside Weed Spraying with No Spray Sign Locations Map.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jan 19, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Shawn Carey - Jan 19, 2023 - 1:33 PM