

May 10, 2016

Re: Review of Lanark County Herbicide Spraying Decision for Wild Parsnip

To Whom it May Concern:

I am providing this letter of support for the review of current herbicide spraying decisions in Lanark County from Pollinator Partnership Canada (P2C) at the request of residents with concerns over the impacts this management strategy might have on pollinators and other beneficial insects.

P2C is a national conservation notforprofit with a mission to support, protect, and promote pollinators across all landscapes. We commonly work with many land managers to help develop and promote Best Management Practices (BMPs) that allow the land manager to achieve their goals and at the same time support pollinators.

Regarding roadside weed management, or any weed management, we promote the use of Integrate Vegetation Management (IVM), making use of mowing, hand removal, grazing, and chemicals only as a last resort in dealing with pest and weed issues. To this end we are developing a set of guidance documents for the Province of Ontario as part of the Pollinator Action Plan that provide land managers with the background, tools, and research to allow them to support pollinators within their management plans.

There is concern that the use of herbicides, especially when applied as a more generalized broadcast spray, can negatively impact pollinators such as monarch butterflies, bees, and flies, by removing food sources in the landscape. This can happen due to drift of herbicides onto non-target plants, but also from the removal of the weed species itself which can serve as a food source. We recognize the need to address invasive species but promote approaches that minimize risk to pollinators.

Our guidance documents are currently in review with OMAFRA and will be released within a few months. I have included an excerpt from the section in the Roadside Manager's guide that speaks directly to BMPs for herbicide use and the concerns about risks to pollinators. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information or clarification.

Best regards,



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Herbicides

Direct impacts of herbicides on local pollinator communities generally come from a reduction in their food supply, which has been seen in patterns and trends of milkweed loss throughout the Midwestern United States¹⁸. Removing any flowering species will impact forage for pollinators, subsequently making populations less viable.

- Carefully diagnose your weed problem. Before applying herbicide(s), make sure the weed population has reached a level where chemical control is necessary.
- Eliminate or at least minimize the use of herbicides. Eliminating herbicide applications will allow the growth of floral resources that pollinators need to survive. If herbicide treatments are necessary, consider completing applications before pollinator forage plants are in bloom.
- Treat the managed landscape in thirds. Approach weed management decisions by treating the landscape in thirds to avoid the creation of pollinator food deserts.
- Minimize drift and broadcast spraying. Use a back-pack or belt applicator when possible. This will avoid over spraying or killing desired flowering plants. Also consider spraying the cuts of multi-stemmed woody plants immediately. This will prevent the cut from healing over and allowing the undesired plant to persist and thrive.
- If using a motorized spray rig, always shut off the sprayer when making turns at field ends near gardens, ponds, or other areas that may be used by pollinators and other wildlife.