

**DECISION NOTICE****Nilan Reservoir Eurasian Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) Control Project****DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT**

The department proposed to control a newly discovered population of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) in a small bay in Nilan Reservoir near Augusta, MT. This is a highly invasive aquatic plant, and this is the first detection of EWM in this basin. This is a small population of 1.15 acres with a current water depth of 3 to 4 feet. Treatment would involve the application of fluridone, an aquatically registered herbicide along with installation of a curtain to separate the small bay from the rest of the lake and reduce water exchange.

MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) PUBLIC PROCESS AND COMMENT

FWP prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project to assess potential impacts to the human and natural environment as directed by MEPA. Under the MEPA process, a 7-day public comment period ran from October 29, 2021 through November 8, 2021. Notice was published in the Helena Independent Record and the Great Falls Tribune and was posted on the FWP web page. During the public comment period 8 email comments were received. All respondents directly supported the project. No objections to the proposed project have been received with one respondent concerned that fluridone might not be as effective this late into the season but overall supportive of controlling the population. Considering the timing of the discovery and the current reservoir water level status, FWP feels that fluridone could be an effective treatment to control the infestation. FWP's ability to isolate the infested bay and current limited public use of the reservoir should allow adequate herbicide exposure time to kill the plants.

DECISION NOTICE

After review of this proposal and public comment, it is my decision to select Alternative B. Under Alternative B, FWP will apply the aquatically labeled herbicide, fluridone, to eradicate the small 1.15-acre patch of Eurasian watermilfoil. The herbicide application will begin November 10, 2021 in cooperation with the Department Natural Resources and Conservation and Nilan Water Users Association. There will be a minimum of a 45-day exposure time ending at the earliest December 25, 2021. The bay will be curtained off to prevent water exchange with the remaining lake and will stay separated for the entirety of the winter since the curtain will be frozen in place by the end of the 45-day exposure time.

If there are any questions regarding this project, please contact FWP AIS Monitoring Coordinator Craig McLane at cmclane@mt.gov or 406-444-1224.


Eileen Ryce

FWP Fisheries Division Administrator

11/9/21
Date