Department of Transportation Press Releases
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NYSDOT & Village of Cooperstown Agree On Vegetation Control Plan For State Route 80 Adjacent To Otsego Lake

The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and the Village of Cooperstown have agreed on a plan to test the control of vegetation on State Route 80 in the Otsego Lake watershed using the organic herbicide known as "Scythe." The village has agreed to supply the herbicide, which will be applied by NYSDOT forces using state equipment.

NYSDOT manages vegetation on state roads rights of way to address roadway safety matters while also maintaining a responsible balance for environmental considerations.

"The Department of Transportation had meaningful discussions with Village of Cooperstown Mayor Katz and the Otsego Lake Watershed Committee," Regional Director Jack Williams said. "We are sensitive to the community of Cooperstown's concerns. Together were able to address our responsibility to maintain safety for the traveling public and department personnel working on Route 80 while also addressing Cooperstown's desire to change what we use to control vegetation."

"For the past two years, DOT, the Otsego Lake Watershed Supervisory Committee and myself have developed a productive and cooperative relationship," Cooperstown Mayor Jeff Katz said. "The agreement to use Scythe instead of Glyphosate is another cooperative step forward."

In 2013, the Village of Cooperstown expressed concern about NYSDOT's use of Glyphosate based herbicides to control wild, invasive, poisonous and noxious vegetation growing in the State Route 80 right of way. As a result of conversations between NYSDOT, the village and the Otsego Lake Watershed Committee in 2013, the department agreed to not spray herbicides during that year.

A research project by the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry was completed in 2014. The purpose of the research was to evaluate the efficacy of using alternatives to herbicides in controlling roadside vegetation on its rights of way. Herbicides tested were *"BurnOut II"*; *"C-Cide:*; *"EcoEXEMPT HC"*; *"Scythe"*; *"Finale"*. The study results showed that the materials tested were less effective and more costly than synthetic herbicides for controlling guide rail and other edge of pavement vegetation along roadsides rights of way. The research also confirmed that the use of the Glyphosate based herbicide previously used by the DOT in the quantities applied was safe and appropriate. The NYSDOT shared the results with the Village of Cooperstown and the Otsego Lake Watershed Committee.

On April 10, in a meeting with DOT Regional Director Jack Williams, DOT Environmental Specialists and engineers, Village of Cooperstown Mayor Jeffrey Katz and a representative from the Otsego Lake Watershed Committee reached an understanding to forego the use of Glyphosate based herbicides and test the use the herbicide known as "Scythe." The DOT and the

Village of Cooperstown agreed that the village will supply the necessary quantities of "Scythe" to the department. NYSDOT will provide the equipment and labor to apply the herbicide to area to be treated in accordance with the product label and all State and Federal regulations.

The active ingredient in "Scythe" herbicide is pelargonic acid. This fatty acid is commonly found in plants and animals. "Scythe" herbicide could be considered a synthesized "natural herbicide" because the active ingredient is extracted directly from or modeled after plants or animal products. It is a contact, non-selective herbicide that provides a "burn down" effect of actively growing green vegetation.

A "burn down" effect will give the plant a burnt appearance. The parts of plants above ground that come in contact with "Scythe" are killed but the section of plants below ground are still alive and may be able to recover and re-spout.

The area to be treated is three feet wide by 21,500 feet long which equivalent to approximately one-and-a-half acres.

The effectiveness of this herbicide will be evaluated during and after its use.