

## **Sonar PR being used to treat Sand Creek milfoil**

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07/29/05

*Bonner County Daily Bee*

SANDPOINT -- Officials say the public has nothing to fear about an herbicide being dumped into the pristine waters at the mouth of Sand Creek and City Marina.

The herbicide, which is being used to combat Eurasian water milfoil in the lake, will be applied starting Monday and lasting through all of August.

Even though the swimming area of City Beach will not be treated, some residents are concerned about pellet form concentrations of Sonar PR that Bonner County Public Works/Weed Control will be using to battle Eurasian water milfoil.

The herbicide -- which contains fluridone as its active ingredient -- will be dropped in the middle of the bay north to the jetty of Windbag Marina and into the mouth of Sand Creek from the boat launch to City Marina.

Officials maintain there will be no restrictions on fishing, swimming or even drinking from the treatment.

"I know it seems like a scary thing to people, but why we're using Sonar PR is because from all the research we've done it's the safest herbicide we know of," said Leslie Marshall, the county director of solid waste, weeds, waterways and parks and recreation. "The impact on people is nominal."

But why now, at the height of the summer, when usage at City Beach and surrounding water area is at its peak?

"There's only a small window of time we can treat Eurasian milfoil, and August unfortunately happens to be one of the best times," said Marshall. "Last year when we did it, the results weren't that effective because the plants were already too large."

To be effective, herbicides that treat milfoil should be used to attack it before it blooms and become too tall, added Marshall. Since Sonar PR attaches to the plant and kills the root before it grows, she said September or October would be too late to treat it.

"June would have been better, but Fish and Game won't allow it before June 15 because of fish that are spawning," she said.

Sonar PR has successfully managed the control of other invasive aquatic plants like fanwort and water chestnut weeds in the Northeast. Fluridone has been used to control milfoil on a lake-wide basis without harming native plants, although its use is not allowed in Minnesota lakes.

"Milfoil is a problem here, and we have to deal with it as effectively as we can," said Kim Woodruff, Sandpoint Parks and Recreation director. "I'll be at the beach swimming everyday just to prove that the herbicide concentrations being used (20 parts per billion) are absolutely harmless."

The company manufacturing Sonar PR claims fluridone did not cause cancer in laboratory animals, did not cause birth defects, or interfere with reproduction in animal studies. Other fetal effects, however, occurred only at doses toxic to the mother.

"It is essentially non-irritating to skin," the SePRO Corporation in Carmel, Ind. states regarding potential health effects. "A single prolonged exposure is not likely to result in the material being absorbed through the skin in harmful amounts."

Due to the dispersion of Sonar PR, spot treatments in applying it have not been effective. In the case of managing Fanwort growing in a cove or shoreline area, an entire water body had to be treated for maximum results.

For more information on Sonar PR herbicide product, go to [www.sepro.com/documents/Sonar PR\\_Label.pdf](http://www.sepro.com/documents/Sonar_PR_Label.pdf). <  
[http://sepro.com/documents/Sonar PR\\_Label.pdf](http://sepro.com/documents/Sonar PR_Label.pdf).