

# Updated Approach for 2026 Chautauqua Lake Herbicide Permitting

February 6, 2026

The Chautauqua Lake Partnership (CLP) is pleased to announce updates to the 2026 wetlands and herbicide permitting approach, developed in collaboration with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). These updates reinforce our commitment to responsible environmental management, public safety, and the long-term health of Chautauqua Lake.

A central feature of the updated approach is a directional move towards adaptive management, a widely accepted lake management practice. While planning remains largely the same, final decisions on where, when, and how treatments occur will be adjusted based on field observations, plant growth, weather, and water conditions. This ensures treatments are effective, environmentally responsible, protective of native species, and responsive to public safety and lake usability needs.

## **1. Greater Flexibility for Effective Management**

In past years, highly specific permit boundaries limited the ability to treat invasive plants that appeared just outside approved areas or timeframes. The 2026 approach expands potential treatment areas and extends cutoff dates to better respond to natural variations in plant growth, weather, and site conditions. This does not mean all areas shown on the treatment planning maps for permit applications will actually be treated in 2026. The larger areas simply provide the flexibility to treat the highest priority areas after final DEC field verification and approval.

## **2. Navigation and Commercial Areas**

Unsafe navigation conditions in 2025 highlighted the need for proactive planning. Beginning in 2026, treatments will prioritize maintaining navigation channels and access to commercial areas, reducing pressure on mechanical harvesting and supporting safe, reliable waterway use.

## **3. Wetlands Permitting and Legal Context**

Wetlands-related lawsuits remain pending. Until outcomes are known, CLP will continue to operate under current permitting requirements. The updated approach remains compliant and adaptable to future determinations.

## **4. Alignment with Long-Term Macrophyte Management Plan**

These updates support the long-term macrophyte management plan, promoting coordinated, adaptive, and sustainable aquatic plant management and efficient use of resources.

## **5. Streamlined Municipal Coordination**

For the first time, participating towns and villages will operate under a single consolidated permit entity. This reduces administrative complexity, improves DEC review and compliance tracking, while the municipalities remain informed about work in their areas.

## **6. Continuing Commitment to Transparency and Stewardship**

CLP is committed to science-based lake management. Increased flexibility and coordination allow for responsible treatment of problem areas, protection of sensitive resources, and clear public communication, as well as ensuring all activities remain targeted, safe, and environmentally responsible.

An [FAQ](#) is available on the CLP web page to anticipate expected questions and throughout the season, updates on permitting and treatments will be shared through riparian owner notifications, municipal coordination, and website updates at <https://chqlake.org/herbicide-treatments-2/>. Register for email updates at <https://chqlake.org/register/> or direct questions to [clp@chqlake.org](mailto:clp@chqlake.org).