

Our Concerns about Glyphosate in Forests

This list summarizes many citizen concerns about the aerial spraying of glyphosate-based herbicide in forested areas of Nova Scotia. It is a living document that will grow and evolve over time.

- **Contamination** of waterways and groundwater. Many small surface flows are unmapped and will get contaminated. There is no guarantee that aerial herbicide application will be limited to the areas being sprayed, and many people live downhill from these sites.
- **Human Health:** There are too many unanswered questions about links to cancer, neurological ailments, endocrine disruption and other problems. Much of the research supporting glyphosate as “benign” is funded by industry and is therefore highly suspect.
- **Environmental Damage:** These herbicides are toxic to a host of organisms, including soil microbes, amphibians, insects and all broad-leaf plants. If they are toxic to humans, they are likely also unhealthy for the wildlife that will feed off the berries and foliage that has been sprayed. This creates biodiversity loss and destroys the resilience of a forest ecosystem, which is the product of interdependent networks of diverse organisms at all scales.
- **Soil Health is degraded** by glyphosate in 2 ways: First, it kills many of the soil organisms that make soils fertile and productive. Second, it is a chelator that binds minerals, making them unavailable for uptake by plants.
- Aerial spraying is only used after **clearcutting**, a brutal and destructive practice that increases the risk of flooding, and tree farms of softwood species are much more prone to fires than the natural, mixed Wabanake forests.
- We don't know the **multi-generational effects** of repeated clearcutting and spraying, but we know that soil erosion and flooding are consequences of clearcutting. Have you ever wondered about the standing dead forests along some of our roads? Many of those are likely the result of flooding caused by clearcutting further uphill.
- Forest productivity depends on living systems (forests) that are complex and interconnected. If you wage war on some of it, you compromise all of it by destroying part of the system that balances and feeds the whole.
- Glyphosate makes the forest dryer and **more flammable** in 2 ways: First, it is a desiccant that dries things out directly. Second, spraying creates small, standing hardwood that dries into kindling instead of laying on the ground, getting damp and decaying as you would have with hand-thinning.
- In the midst of the twin tragedies of climate change and biodiversity loss, aerial spraying of glyphosate on forests is an **outmoded**, toxic practice we can no longer afford. We are part of the natural world. Our health and the future of our species depends upon flourishing ecosystems with **healthy soils and abundant biodiversity**.