



Pesticide Inspection Narrative Summary
Case 2026-195, 5/20/26

Company involved:

The Pond and Lake Connection
PMBR 2764
1112 Federal Rd
Brookfield, CT 06804
Contacts: Jeff Stahl (Owner)

P: [redacted]

E: [redacted]

Nicholas McMahon (Supervisor)
PMCS 6424, 5

P: [redacted]

E: [redacted]

Complainant:

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

P: [redacted]

E: [redacted]

Nature of complaint:

Complainant lives on Great Hill Pond in Portland, CT which was treated with diquat for curly leaf pondweed on 5/15/26. Complainant washed his tarp with lake water and placed it on his grass to dry. The next morning the grass was brown where he left the tarp and found a dead bird in the patch of grass. Complainant is concerned that the concentration of diquat applied to the lake was above the permitted amount.

Follow-up:

On 5/20/26, Pesticide Management Program (PMP) staff Zach Donias spoke to [redacted] on the phone to gather information about the complaint. After discussing other possible reasons why [redacted]'s grass may have died under the tarp, including the extreme heat and lack of air, [redacted] was still concerned over the dead bird found in the patch of grass. Donias explained that the PMP would not be able to test the lake to determine whether the concentration of diquat was above the permitted amount but explained that we can sample the dead bird for possible analysis of pesticide residues and obtain the Pond and Lake Connection's pesticide application records to determine the type of pesticide applied and the application rate.

On 5/20/26, I met with [redacted] at [redacted], presented credentials, and a Notice of Inspection (**see Pond and Lake-2026-195-Documents**) explaining the reason for the inspection. [redacted] showed me to the dead patch of grass located in his backyard. He explained that he used a garden stake to identify where he found the dead bird in the grass (**see [redacted]**). He explained that he collected the dead bird on 5/19/26. He used grill tongs to pick up the dead bird; triple bagged it in Ziploc bags and placed it in the fridge around 3:00 PM. [redacted] stated that he wrote the date he collected the dead bird on the Ziploc bags. I put on nitrile gloves, placed the dead bird in a polybag, sealed and labeled it "SN 717-26, AP, 5/20/26," and placed it in a cooler.

[redacted] explained that Great Hill Pond has multiple boat launches including one private launch maintained by the volunteer fire department and another public launch along Great Hill Pond Rd. He stated that the Pond and Lake Connection posts signs on telephone poles and at each boat launch. [redacted] receives an email from the Great Hill Pond Lake Association prior to each aquatic pesticide treatment. [redacted] forwarded me emails from the lake association prior to the 5/15/26 treatment (**see Lake_Association_Notification_Emails**). After I left [redacted], I noticed an aquatic posting sign in front of [redacted] (**see [redacted] Photos**).

The dead patch of grass on [redacted]'s property showed damage likely caused by the combination of the tarp, extreme heat, and lack of air. In addition, [redacted] washed his tarp/irrigated his grass with Great Hill Pond water

during the water use restriction of 3 days (2 gals / surface acre) and 2 days (1 gal / surface acre) for irrigation to turf and landscape ornamentals as prescribed by the Tribune pesticide label. The Pond and Lake Connection commercial pesticide supervisor Andrew McMahon explained that they applied 3 tanks of Tribune ^[redacted] 1.45 gals / 1 acre. Aquatic pesticide posting signs posted by The Pond and Lake Connection also indicated a water use restriction of 5 days for irrigation.

Later on 5/20/26, I dropped off the sample to the UConn Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Pathology Lab (61 N Eagleville Rd, Storrs, CT) to test for possible pesticide residues from the Pond and Lake Connection Great Hill Pond aquatic permit (see **10a Great Hill Pond, Portland**) including copper ethandamine mixture, diquat, flumioxazin, fluridone, and imazomax. UConn Veterinary Pathology staff provided me with a copy of the testing form and a lab technician who received the sample completed the chain of custody/history of official sample form (see **Pond and Lake-2026-195-Documents**).

On 6/2/26, PMP inspector trainee Carla Caballero and I met with Jeff Stahl and Nicholas McMahon at 1112 Federal Rd, Brookfield, CT, presented credentials, and explained the reason for the inspection. Inspection forms including the Notice of Inspection and Receipt for Samples were filled out on site via Ideagen Smartforms during the inspection. At the end of the inspection, all inspection forms were emailed to Stahl. McMahon was the responsible supervisor for the 5/15/26 aquatic application to Great Hill Pond although he was not on site for the treatment. Peter Grundy (PMCS 65518, 5) and Glenn Holguin (PMCO 57952) performed the 5/15/26 treatment via airboat. Stahl stated that the airboat holds a 100-gal tank. Grundy and Holguin applied 45 gallons of Tribune (diquat) to about 31 acres of Great Hill Pond for the treatment of curly leaf pondweed and fanwort. McMahon stated that they applied 3 tanks ^[redacted] 1.45 gals / 1 acre. McMahon explained that they normally launch their airboat at the lake association president's house ([redacted]).

Great Hill Pond was first treated by the Pond and Lake in 2024 for curly leaf pondweed. McMahon explained that the lake association usually requests one curly leaf pondweed treatment in May-June and another fanwort treatment later in the season depending on funding. He stated that the next fanwort treatment is scheduled for June or July 2026 pending lake association approval and dependent on lake association funds.

McMahon confirmed that there is a private boat launch across the lake from [redacted] but was unsure who managed the launch. McMahon also confirmed that there is a public boat launch managed by the Town of Portland along Great Hill Pond. Both Stahl and McMahon also stated that there is a dam on the lake that is owned by the state.

Great Hill Pond is considered a public lake due to the public boat launch along Great Hill Pond Rd, therefore the Pond and Lake are required to publish a notice of application in a newspaper of general circulation in each municipality in which the lake is located, as well as post signs at each place of public access. Stahl provided me with the newspaper ad content proof for the Middletown Press newspaper that had a run date of 5/7/26 in the newspaper notifying the public of the 5/15/26 Great Hill Pond treatment. McMahon also stated that Grundy and Holguin posted about 20 signs at every other telephone pole along Farrell Rd, Lake Rd, and Great Hill Pond Rd and at each boat launch on the treatment date. During my meeting with [redacted] on 5/20/26, one Pond and Lake sign was still found on a telephone pole in front of [redacted]. McMahon explained that he emails the Great Hill Pond lake association prior to each treatment, and he explained that the lake association contact then usually notifies all residents on the lake prior to the treatment. Emails obtained from [redacted] from the lake association confirmed this (see **Lake_Association_Notification_Emails**).

Stahl and McMahon provided me with inland wetland notification emails, the Middletown Press newspaper ad content proof, 5/15/26 service ticket, Great Hill Pond aquatic permit, Great Hill Pond maps, invoice, and 2025-2026 treatment cover sheet/pesticide application record (see **Pond and Lake-2026-195-Documents**). 2025 treatment record indicated that 47.5 gals of Tribune (diquat) were applied over about 31.66 acres, whereas 2026 treatment

record indicated that 45 gals of Tribune (diquat) were applied over about 31 acres. Both treatments were within the permitted limits for diquat (x3 applications, 60 gals). McMahon provided me with a copy of the Tribune label (**DOCSN 720-26**) during the inspection.

I reviewed the 2025 and 2026 treatment records with McMahon and Stahl during the inspection and explained that McMahon is listed as the “rep” and should be listed as the responsible commercial pesticide supervisor and initials for each junior operator should outline who the individual is and their certification number. Stahl explained that on the back of each treatment record are all individual names and license numbers. I explained that they will need to be able to identify the junior operator’s name and certification by the initials. McMahon explained that they use codes for each target pest/species (CLP: curlyleaf pondweed, FW: fanwort). I also explained that the translation for each code must also be present on each pesticide application record.

McMahon explained that he is responsible for determining pesticide application rates. He explained that Great Hill Pond was mapped prior to the first treatment which included depth data and location of invasive aquatic plant species (**see Pond and Lake-2026-195-Documents**). Pond and Lake did not use a depth prescribed pesticide application rate for the 5/15/26 Tribune (diquat) application and McMahon explained that applicators are instructed to follow the same application rate as prescribed by the label across the waterbody. Although a depth prescribed pesticide application rate was not used for the most recent application, it is common practice to accept the average waterbody depth and treat with the pesticide application rate as prescribed by the pesticide label when treating waterbodies. According to discussion with the Pond and Lake and aquatic pesticide application records, Great Hill Pond permit conditions, including amount of chemical applied, were met.

According to the 2026 Great Hill Pond treatment record for the 5/15/26 Tribune application, product was applied consistent with label requirements (**see USE INVESTIGATION REPORT-Pond and Lake-Tribune**).

On 6/29/26, UConn Veterinary Pathology emailed me a preliminary report for the analysis of SN 717-26 (**see CVMDL Report Case 263745**). The molecular diagnostics section of the report indicated the bird was identified as an American Robin and was tested for Influenza A Virus and Anticoagulant panel for various pesticide anticoagulant active ingredients. The report indicated that they are awaiting test results from their reference laboratory at Michigan State University for a GCMS Toxicology Screen.

On 7/5/26, I received the UConn Veterinary Pathology final report (**see CVMDL Report Case 263745-FINAL**). The report indicated that moderate hemocoelom and enteric cestodiasis were the most significant findings possibly from trauma, coagulopathies (including anticoagulant toxicosis), vascular injury, or infectious/inflammatory disease. A cloacal swab tested negative for avian influenza virus (IAV) by PCR. Anticoagulant rodenticide screening of liver tissue did not detect any of the tested agents. Anticoagulant testing and interpretation did not contain any of the listed anticoagulant rodenticide active ingredients. The report also indicated that UConn contacted their reference laboratory at Michigan State University to determine whether they can test alternative frozen bird tissue for the requested compounds (copper ethanalamine mixture, diquat, flumioxazin, fluridone, and imazamox).

On 7/8/26, UConn Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory Educational Program Manager Vickie Weidig explained that they contacted several laboratories, including Michigan State University, and could not find a laboratory that has the capacity to test for diquat. She indicated that the available evidence is insufficient to definitively determine the underlying cause of the hemocoelom. The combination of nonspecific lesions and the inability to perform confirmatory toxicologic testing precludes a more conclusive cause for the diagnosis of hemocoelom.

On 7/16/26, PMP staff Zach Donais explained in an email to Vickie Weidig, that the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) can possibly run animal tissue for diquat, but they have not done it before, which will require the purchase of standards and testing equipment. Weidig explained that she will reach out to CAES to determine whether UConn has enough bird tissue to test for diquat.

As of 7/17/26, neither facility has the capacity to test for diquat or pesticide active ingredients listed in preliminary and final report including copper ethanalamine mixture, diquat, flumioxazin, fluridone, and imazamox.

Summary:

The Pond and Lake Connection supervisor Peter Grundy (PMCS 65518) and junior operator Glen Holguin (PMCO 57952) performed an aquatic pesticide application to Great Hill Pond on 5/15/26 applying Tribune (diquat) for the treatment of curly leaf pondweed. The Pond and Lake posted a newspaper notification to the Middletown Press with a run date of 5/7/26 prior to the 5/15/26 aquatic treatment. Grundy and Holguin also posted over 20 aquatic posting signs, which included all required information, along Farrell Rd, Lake Rd, and Great Hill Pond Rd and at each boat launch on the treatment date. Great Hill Pond is a public lake with a boat launch owned by Portland along Great Hill Pond Rd, therefore individual pre-notification to each resident abutting the lake is not required.

Peter Grundy (PMCS 65518) was on site with junior operator Glen Holguin (PMCO 57952) during the 5/15/26 Great Hill Pond aquatic pesticide application providing verbal instruction, therefore supervisory written instructions are not required to be provided to Holguin.

The Pond and Lake Connection pesticide application records for the 2025 and 2026 Great Hill Pond applications did not clearly identify the name and certification of the junior operators and the codes used for the target pest/species. Jeff Sthal explained that they will include the initials next to each junior operator's name and certification number on the back of each treatment record and include a code translation for each target pest/species.

Adam Pakalnis 7/17/26