Phragmites australis:
A Growing Concern for our Wetlands

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Special Thanks to
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We're going to spend some time learning about a plant called

PHRAGMITES

(That's frag - my - tees)

Its scientific name is actually *Phragmites australis.*

But first, let's go over a few terms!

Ecosystem

An ecosystem is a community of living organisms (animals, plants, insects, birds, etc.) in a particular physical environment. They are all dependent on each other and when one is affected, there are consequences for all.

WETLANDS

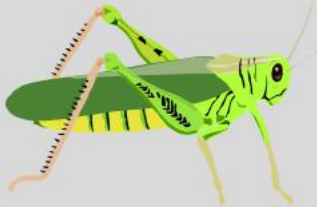
- clean the water that flows through them
- store carbon to fight climate change
- provide a home for many species
- help protect communities from flooding
- provide recreation

Native plants are those which grow naturally in a particular ecosystem.

- wildlife depends on them, including birds and insects
- they provide habitat for wildlife

BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity means that there is a variety of different species living in an ecosystem. This is important because it protects the environment from threats such as climate change, insect infestation and disease. *Can you guess how?*



Phragmites are INVASIVE

They do not belong here and are taking over from plants that are native.

Phragmites form a MONOCULTURE

They become very large stands which push out ALL other plants as well as the wildlife that used to live there.

Phragmites cause problems in cities and farmland too!

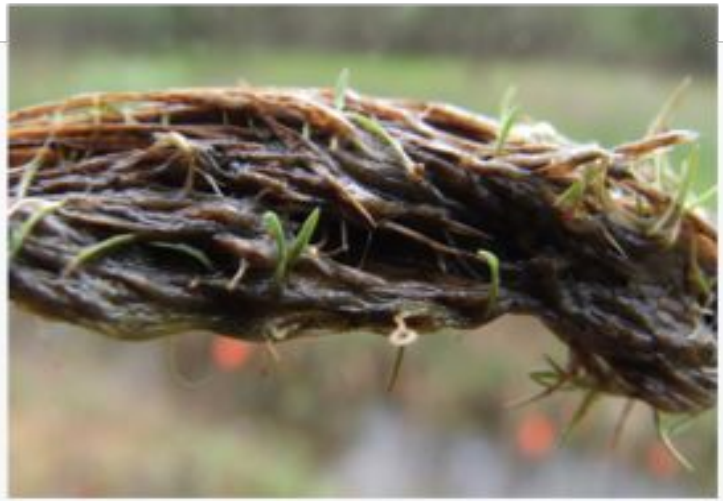
- block storm drainage ditches
- make it difficult to see when driving on roads
- cause a fire hazard
- take over recreational areas such as golf courses
- block views of water

What Does Phragmites Look Like?

LAMBTON SHORES
PHRAGMITES
COMMUNITY GROUP

It is found by roadsides and in ditches.

Once you recognize it you'll notice it in so many places!

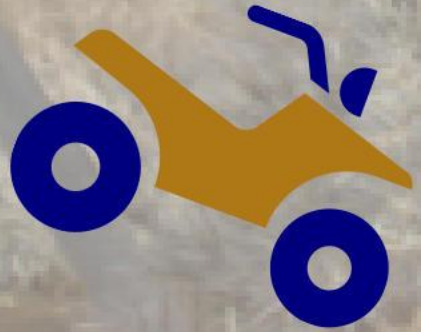


Phragmites are sneaky!

They take over from other plants by spreading their roots over a great distance, then sprouting up in many places along their roots. They release a toxic chemical into the ground which kills other types of plants. Their seeds spread on the wind.

Thousands of seeds!

They can spread many ways.



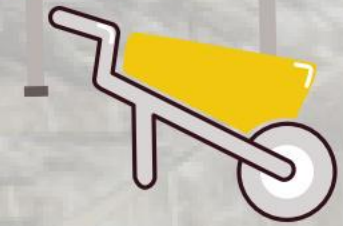
Phragmites are tough!

They can grow in all kinds of places:

- different depths of water
- different climates
- different soil conditions
- even through asphalt!

THINGS PHRAGMITES LOVE!

FOLLOWING WATERWAYS
DISTURBED GROUND



Phragmites are not native, so there is no natural control for them. Wildlife struggles to live in Phragmites and needs native plants to survive and thrive.

HERBICIDES

- Chemicals which are approved for spraying on Phragmites that is growing on land
- You need a licensed person to do this

COOL TOOL ALERT!

Not as cool but they get the job done!

Backpack sprayer.

Spraying from an Argo

On dry land it can be rolled, cut and burned.

Safety first! Professionals only!

On dry or wet land it can be spaded.

This spade, not this!

PHRAGMITES IN WATER

Phragmites stalks are similar to bamboo in that they are hollow.

Using a **cutting to drown** method, Phragmites are cut under the water and their hollow stalks fill up with water causing them to drown. Cutting below the water also deprives the plant of sunlight - do you know why that might help get rid of it?

Cutting to Drown

Cutting to Drown

Cutting using a power saw.

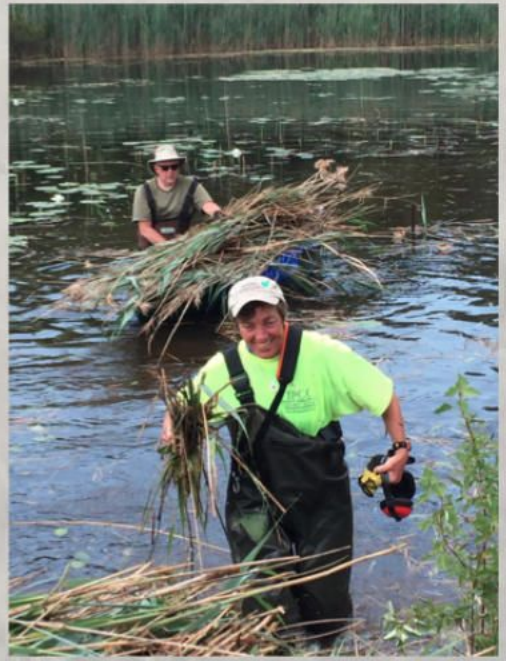
COOL TOOLS ALERT!

For really big jobs you need really big tools!

TRUXOR

This piece of machinery is **amphibious** - it can operate on land or water! It has large blades to cut the Phragmites under water, then the blades can be switched out with large rakes to gather the biomass.

BIOMASS



This is just a fancy scientific word that means all of the cut plant material - like the grass clippings after you mow the lawn. It's very important to gather and dispose of the Phragmites biomass carefully.

Can you guess why?

That’s a lot of Phragmites! Good thing they’ve got this heavy machinery to help!

Success Stories!

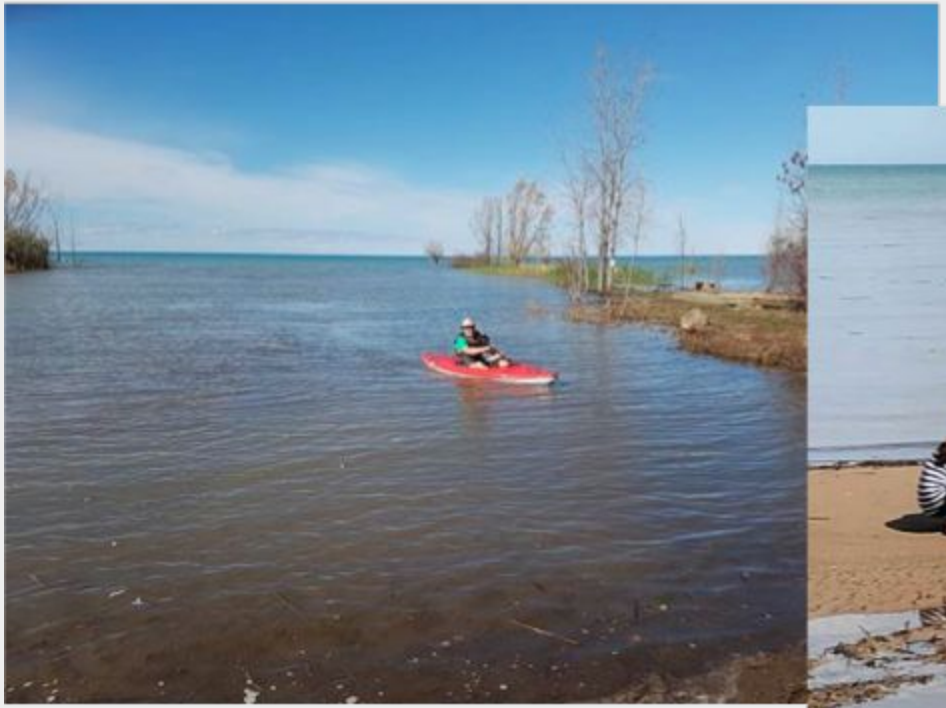
Big and small differences are being made in many places - from large wetlands and critical (very important) habitats to small drainage ditches and ponds.

Have you noticed work along highways and roads in your community?


Mosquito Island, Port Franks

Lambton Centre Camp
A restored view!

Restored recreational activities!



BEFORE:
Phragmites as far as the eye can see!!

AFTER:
Incredible restoration of this habitat!!

Don't Give Phragmites a Helping Hand!

- Keep your dog on a leash, or be sure to wipe or brush it down before you leave a recreational area.
- Use a brush to clean off your boots – don't take seeds to another area!
- Don't pick Phragmites and take it home!
- Tell your parents to always plant native plants in the garden.
- If you see it don't ignore it! You have to respond quickly or it will get out of control.

IPCC
INVASIVE PHRAGMITES CONTROL CENTRE

IPP
IPPERWASH
Phrag
Phighters

CICA
Centre Ipperwash Community Assoc.

FCA
Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

GREEN SHOVELS COLLABORATIVE

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Even one person can make a BIG DIFFERENCE!

Working together in partnership, community organizations and service clubs, conservation authorities, different levels of government and many volunteers can conquer Phragmites!

AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION
CREATING AWARENESS | TAKING ACTION

St. Clair Conservation

NATURE CONSERVANCY CANADA

LAMBTON WILDLIFE INC.

THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAMBTON SHORES

Ontario

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Environnement et Changement climatique Canada

ONTARIO INVASIVE PLANT COUNCIL

IPP IPPERWASH Phrag Phighters

IPCC INVASIVE PHRAGMITES CONTROL CENTRE

LAMBTON SHORES PHRAGMITES COMMUNITY GROUP

Click on the logos above to navigate to websites with more information!

Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group

We are dedicated volunteers committed to working with other organizations and private landowners to restore wetland habitat and beaches

To date, restoration work has been initiated in over 300 acres along the shoreline and watershed.

Our success can be attributed to having developed a *Management Plan* and taking a *Watershed Approach* to stop the spread of Phragmites.

AUSABLE BAYFIELD CONSERVATION
CREATING AWARENESS | TAKING ACTION
2016 Conservationist of the Year Award

Minister's Award for
Environmental Excellence
Honourable Mention for Environmental Achievement, 2013

St. Clair Conservation
Working Together for a Healthy Environment