

What is Invasive Phragmites?

Phragmites, also known as common reed, is a perennial, wetland grass that can grow up to 15 feet in height. Leaves are often 8 to 16 inches long and 1/2 to 2 inches wide near the base, tapering to a point at the end. Phragmites has gray-green foliage during the growing season, with distinctive purple-brown-silver seed head plumes appearing by late July. These plumes form at the end of stalks, are 6 to 20 inches long and up to 8 inches broad, and have many branches. Phragmites grow in large areas and create dense stands. It is capable of reproduction by seeds, but primarily does so asexually by means of rhizomes. Rhizomes may exceed 60 feet in length and grow more than 6 feet per year and readily grow into new plants when fragmented. Mature plants produce as many as 2,000 seeds annually.

St. Clair County Road Commission

21 Airport Drive
St. Clair, MI 48079
Phone: (810) 364-5720
Fax: (810) 364-9050
E-mail: scrc@mich.com

Phragmites Control Program



St. Clair County Road Commission



Invasive Phragmites

Invasive phragmites is becoming widespread throughout St. Clair County. The St. Clair County Road Commission will be contracting with a licensed commercial applicator to apply herbicides that will control the growth of phragmites in selected townships. Application will be restricted to the road right-of-way.

The purpose of the phragmites control treatment program is to improve visibility and safety for the vehicular traffic and/or pedestrians that use the county roads under the Road Commission's jurisdiction.

Mechanical cutting is one way to control phragmites, however, it results in accelerated regrowth and the expansion of the growth area. After careful consideration, the Road Com-

mission has authorized the use of herbicide treatment as an additional method to be used to control phragmites which will improve clear vision for the public.

The herbicides that will be utilized are limited to those materials that have been approved for vegetation control by state and federal agencies. They have been approved for application in areas open to unrestricted human access and are approved for utilization in areas including environmentally sensitive areas such as lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands.

The specific herbicides utilized in the Road Commission phragmites control program are applied as diluted solutions and are scientifically formulated to work on enzymes found in plants only...not people or animals. The approved herbicides enter the plant through stems and leaves and control the life cycle of the plant from the inside.

The implementation and scheduling of herbicide operations is weather sensitive and therefore, subject to existing weather conditions occurring at the time of the application operations. Exact start and end dates for the program will be estimated.

No Treatment Zones

Landowners will have a choice regarding the use of herbicides. If the landowner prefers that their property not be included for treatment, they have the option to have their property omitted from the program. To exercise this option they must complete an application form for a "No Phragmites Control Treatment Zone" through the Road Commission. The application will need to be received by the Road Commission prior to the date published in the newspaper and posted on our website. As a condition of approval of this application, the landowner must agree to properly clear the road right-of-way abutting the subject property of phragmites. Signs will be supplied by the Road Commission to be placed on the property as a visual indication that the property owner will be taking responsibility for the control of phragmites on that section of road frontage. The area will be omitted from the program only if the area is clear of phragmites at the time of inspection by Road Commission personnel.