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BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES for CLEAN WATER

How to Properly Handle PHRAGMITES

The Macomb County Public Works Office (MCPWO) works with local municipalities, businesses and residents to promote the best management practices for clean water to enhance the quality of life in Macomb County. When it rains, water that drains from buildings, roads or other hard surfaces deposits directly into your local storm drains and begins a journey that ultimately ends in Lake St. Clair. It is critical that we eliminate pollution and other contaminants before they enter our streams, rivers and lakes. Clean water is vital not only to the quality of life in Macomb County, but can serve as a critical component of economic development in our communities.



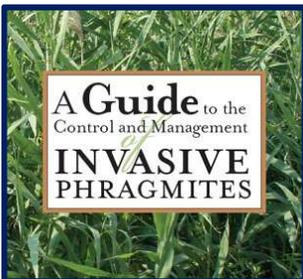
WHAT IS IT?

Phragmites are perennial grasses that grow in wetland areas. There are phragmites that are native to Michigan, but the invasive, non-native variety of phragmites have become an issue for all residents. Invasive phragmites are a concern because they threaten the ecological health of wetlands, especially along the shoreline of Great Lakes waterways.

Phragmites are widespread and the invasive variety can grow to 15 feet in height, creating tall, dense areas of non-native grass that crowd out native plants and animals, and block shoreline views. This reduces access for swimming, fishing and hunting and the dry plant material can create fire hazards.



BEST MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES



According to *A Guide to the Control and Management of Invasive Phragmites, Third Edition* published by the Department of Environmental Quality, there are recommended management strategies when it comes to Phragmites control:

1. The site property needs to be evaluated to determine the density of Phragmites.
2. It should also be evaluated for wetness and size of the area.
3. Understand that a long-term commitment is likely for a comprehensive management plan to be formulated and implemented.

It is important to choose a method that all interested parties can agree upon so that the method for control can be effective and efficiently control Phragmites in the future.

EDUCATION

The Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative (GLPC) was established as a regional partnership that will link people, information and action. It was set up to improve communication and collaboration of Phragmites management, restoration and research that will lead to a more coordinated, efficient and strategic approach in the Great Lakes basin. Information for Great Lakes basin wide Phragmites information through GLPC is available at: <http://greatlakesphragmites.net/>



A key to preventing large dense stands is early detection. This will also be a more cost efficient approach. There is information available on how to use an integrated management approach. Multiple organizations and websites can educate residents on how to handle phragmites control and removal. Here are a few:

<https://www.watershedcouncil.org/phragmites.html>

https://www.michigan.gov/invasives/0,5664,7-324-68001_73817-178183--,00.html

RESOURCES

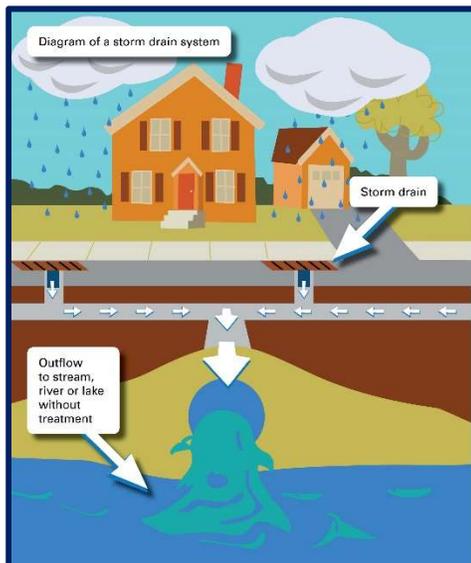
There are many options for controlling phragmites in order to restore native wetland plant communities which improves water quality and protects vital fish and wildlife habitat. There are many resources available that offer herbicide treatment followed by mechanical removal.

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/wrd-ais-guide-phragmites_622427_7.pdf

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/invasives/Invasive_Plant_Disposal_Guide_accessible_word_626157_7.pdf

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/wrd-ais-phragtool-user-guide_444730_7.pdf

<https://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/phragmites/treatment.cfm>



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

It is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain the vegetation, including phragmites, in a county drain easement. The Michigan Drain Code does provide some limitations on property owners with regard to what you can and cannot place in the drain easement, but it is still your property to maintain as you see fit.

Following proper guidelines prevents discharge into the local waterways through stormwater runoff that can enter the local storm drain system or through dumping of chemicals or natural debris in a county drain.

It is everyone's responsibility to keep our waterways clean in Macomb County. Working together on best management practices for clean water, we can improve the quality of life by having clean water to drink, recreate in and use in everyday life.

For more information - publicworks.macombgov.org

DISCLAIMER - Please note that the MCPWO has provided external links because they provide additional information that may be useful or interesting. MCPWO cannot attest to the accuracy of non-MCPWO information provided by third party websites and does not endorse any non-government organizations or their products or services.