

Phragmites Removal Project – Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) **What does the shore look like one year after the Phragmites is sprayed?**
About 99% of the Phragmites will be killed by spraying the first year. Then at least one more treatment is needed to kill the rest of the plants. As soon as light can reach the soil, native plant seeds will start to germinate. Monoculture areas will be somewhat bare the first year. By the second year, the native plants re-grow and in short order, a healthy, diverse wetland is re-established, bringing back the wildlife that could not survive well in a Phragmites monoculture.
- 2) **Doesn't the Phragmites re-grow into the treated areas?** Phragmites *will* eventually re-invade from untreated areas. It is generally more difficult for exotic plants to invade a healthy diverse wetland, but these areas will need continued “maintenance” management to keep the Phragmites out.
- 3) **Is Phragmites a problem only in these 6 counties?** Phragmites is widespread. It is probably most abundant in counties along the Lake Michigan shore, but can also be found inland through much of the state.
- 4) **Is the herbicide dangerous to wildlife or humans?** Herbicides and pesticides are poisons and it is always important to use them carefully. The herbicide that will be used kills almost all types of plants. (Interestingly, it does not kill white cedars.) It is very effective on Phragmites because it stays in the plant's roots and continues to damage the plant. Used as directed, the herbicide does not affect fish, amphibians, other wildlife or humans.
- 5) **How will we know if an area has been sprayed?** All landowners in the areas to be sprayed will be notified and signs will be posted. It will be important to stay out of areas for 24 hours after spraying. The areas to be sprayed by helicopter are pretty hard to get into anyway because the plants are so dense. In other areas, Phragmites stands will be sprayed selectively with a backpack sprayer. A blue dye is added to the herbicide, so it is possible to tell where spraying has occurred.
- 6) **Isn't there a native Phragmites?** Yes, there is a native strain of Phragmites. It is not nearly as common and is not as invasive.
- 7) **How did non-native Phragmites get here?** It isn't clear how Phragmites got here. Strains of Phragmites are found throughout the world. This non-native strain may have come in ship ballast water or may have even been brought here intentionally. Many invasive species are introduced in these ways. More than 180 exotic species have been introduced to the Great Lakes. Once here, it is expensive, difficult and often impossible to completely get rid of them. Many are very difficult to control at all! That is why it is so important that we all help keep invasive species from being introduced.