HOW TO IDENTIFY NON-NATIVE PHRAGMITES

Non-native Phragmites can look quite similar to native Phragmites and a few other grasses. There are many guides to differentiate the two subspecies. For a direct comparison, search online for Michigan Phragmites Native or Not. Always get confirmation from an expert and report all stands to WDNR.

SIZE: Mature non-native stems can be 18 feet tall and very robust. Thinner native stems reach 10+ feet; other native grasses 8 feet or less.

SEED HEAD: Non-native plumes are large, thick, purple/brown/tan, 6-20 inches long, and up to 8 inches wide. Native plumes are feathery, much smaller and never purple. Both tops contain long silky hairs that may stay on throughout winter.

LEAF SHAPE/COLOR: Non-native has bluish-green leaves compared to native yellow-green leaves. Flat, stiff leaves flag outward from the stem and are 0.5-2.0 inches wide near the base, tapering to a point at the end.

LEAF SHEATHS: (the lower part of the leaf that wraps around the stem) persist on dead non-native Phragmites stems, (even during winter months) Native Phragmites typically sheds its leaf sheaths during the winter.

NATIVE INK DOT FUNGUS ON SMOOTH, SHINY STEMS: Native only can show a black, dot fungus under its leaf sheaths. Non-native stems are ridged & duller with only indistinct blackish molds.

THE VALUE OF WETLAND PLANTS

Food and shelter for wildlife, stable shorelines, reduced flooding, fresh air and clean water

Aesthetics and Recreation:
• Obstructs views on waterfront properties
• Reduces access for boating, swimming, fishing, birding and hunting
• Eliminates desirable native plants
• Reduces food and shelter for watchable wildlife

Safety and Financial Costs:
• Increases the risk of wildfire
• Blocks drainage and irrigation ditches
• Slows water movement and increases mosquito breeding
• Can dramatically lower property values
FIND YOUR BEST PLAN OF ATTACK:

Work through the following three questions, and reference the map below, to determine your best approach to managing non-native Phragmites in Wisconsin.

Further resources are represented by bold colored text in the questions (Contact, Control, Funding, and Prioritizing), and are further explained in the colored blocks on the opposite page.

LARGE NON-NATIVE PHRAGMITES CONTROL PROJECT AREAS IN WISCONSIN (PAST AND PRESENT).

- Door County invasive species team
- Manitowoc County
- Ozaukee Washington Land Trust (OWL)
- WDNR & Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC)
- WDNR and Partners Great Lakes Restoration Initiative treatment areas through 2016
- NR40 line

QUESTION 1:
Do you have non-native Phragmites on your property? (Report all sites to WDNR)
A) Yes: (Confirmed by DNR or local expert) - Go to Q2
B) Not sure or unconfirmed: Learn to identify Phragmites (back page has tips and references), CONTACT WDNR or area specialist to confirm the site. Once confirmed - Go to Q2
C) No: Learn how to identify Phragmites (back pages have tips and references) so you can monitor your area. Should you find any suspicious plants, look at CONTACT list in your area.

QUESTION 2:
In what area on the map are your non-native Phragmites located?
A) In the Green or Purple Areas: Typically smaller stands, many treated, some eliminated. CONTACT WDNR or GLIFWC for FUNDING - Go to Q3
B) East side of NR-40 line and outside of the Green Area: Stands of all sizes, most untreated. FUNDING may be available through existing project CONTACTS in area - Go to Q3
C) West side of NR-40 line: A few small stands. Removal of these stands is very important. You can likely CONTROL small sites yourself, but WDNR funding may be available through their CONTACT information. Joining select local organizations to start joint control efforts is important for FUNDING.

QUESTION 3:
How large or dense is your Phragmites stand?
A) Small or Medium - (Small - can see through it, or up to 1/10th acre, basketball court size): All small sites should be eliminated. Follow instructions for medium stand. (Medium: 1/10th acre to 1 acre, basketball to football field size): CONTROL Phragmites yourself, or hire a contractor. CONTACT DNR officials and your county for permit information, as well as other partners in the contact list, to see if the site can be part of an on-going project that has FUNDING. PRIORITIZING which areas to treat may be important.
B) Large - One acre or more: Large sites require several years of treatments and should be treated by a professional herbicide applicator. CONTACT WDNR to determine if PRIORITIZING sites to control in your area is important, especially if no surrounding sites have been treated. Partnering with other area CONTACTS such as the town, county, lake association or CISMA may be crucial for FUNDING and assistance with labor and maintenance.

RESOURCES BY CATEGORY:

CONTROL
Phragmites control resources are available. Ensure proper permits are obtained. Small sites can be treated utilizing hand wicking/spraying methods. Contractors can assist with all job sizes. Herbicides, mowing, and prescribed fire are typical control methods. Monitoring and follow-up treatments are usually needed. Online resources to plug into your search engine:
- Guide to Management and Control of Invasive Phragmites: Michigan DEQ
- WI Wetlands Association’s Phragmites Control
- Great Lakes Phragmites Herbicide Quick Guide

FUNDING
Partnerships with other organizations to combine treatment areas may be necessary to apply for state funds. Utilize the area and state contacts listed above and highlighted on the map to see if there are existing projects or funding opportunities in your area.

PRIORITIZING
First treat smaller or less dense patches and those nearer to water or wetlands (may need permits/license to treat). Think of your patch’s area and density, nearness to sensitive natural areas and available resources (time/money/manpower).

RESOURCES:
- www.AWRPC.org:
- Gathering Waters Find Local Land Trust:
- www.IPAW.org:
- IPAW CISMA:
- WI Wetlands Association’s Phragmites Control:
- Great Lakes Phragmites Herbicide Quick Guide

PHRAGMITES REPORTED SITES
(map dated: 04/28/16)
- Non-native Phragmites: sprayed
- Non-native Phragmites: untreated
- Native Phragmites

PHRAGMITES CLASSIFICATION ACROSS THE STATE

NR40 PHRAGMITES CLASSIFICATION
- Prohibited Counties
- Restricted Counties

Management resources and strategies may vary based on where non-native Phragmites is located in the state.

Prohibited: Phragmites patches are few and typically small. All sites will be eliminated or controlled, privately or by WDNR.

Restricted: Phragmites patches too numerous or large to eliminate all sites. Control efforts ongoing in most counties. Elimination should be attempted on all small sites and many larger ones.

Possession, transfer, transport and introduction is illegal without a permit.