

Phragmites Control in Door County

Phragmites (also known as Common Reed) is a serious threat to the diversity of Door County. Although this plant is native to much of the world, aggressive strains that form dense stands and grow up to 15 feet tall have invaded our shorelines, inland lakes, and wetlands at an alarming rate. Non-native plants like Phragmites do not provide the same valuable food and shelter for fish and wildlife that native plants provide. In addition, the tall stands can be visually unappealing, prevent access to water for recreation, raise the cost of shoreline maintenance or reduce property values due to impaired use. Successful control of Phragmites will often take several years of follow-up work and monitoring.



HIRING A CONTRACTOR:

Wet areas that are invaded by Phragmites may require a DNR permit and the applicator to be certified if being treated with herbicides. The Door County Soil and Water Conservation Department has attached a list of regional contractors that are certified commercial Aquatic Herbicide Applicators by the Department of Agriculture.

YOU PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE EFFORT AGAINST PHRAGMITES!

ADOPT-A-SHORELINE: Help us by monitoring a stretch of shoreline on your property or near it for new Phragmites populations. Remove any pieces of Phragmites that wash ashore and report any newly established plants to DCIST.

CONTROL IT YOURSELF: Through management it is possible to or decrease Phragmites infestations to levels that allow for regeneration of native shoreline and wetland plant communities and the protection of fish and wildlife habitat. See the reverse side for more information on what you need and the steps to control Phragmites.

DCIST has the tools you need to control Phragmites available through our equipment loan program. To reserve equipment, call 920-746-2214.

SHARE THIS INFORMATION: Invite your neighbors to learn more about Phragmites. Encourage your local landowner association or a community group you participate in to join the effort. The Bay Shore Property Owners Association for example, has created a 50/50 grant program to help their members pay half the cost of hiring a contractor to control invasive species on their property. The DCIST coordinator is available to give presentations on Phragmites or training workshops for groups.

Methods for Phragmites Control

* Check state, county and local ordinances and permit requirements before beginning a control program.

The best time of year to chemically treat Phragmites is August and September when it is pulling sugars down into the roots.

BUNDLE, CUT AND TREAT: Phragmites is effectively bundled with sisal twine, a fiber from agave plants. Sisal twine is readily available in spools and degrades in a year or so. Cut lengths of twine about 14" long. Gather a handful of neighboring green Phragmites canes (dead canes will not carry the herbicide down to the roots) and tie together in a bundle firmly with a length of twine. Tie bundles at a convenient height, waist or lower. Cut the bundle with a sharp hedge shears just above the twine, and immediately spray or pain the "stumps" with herbicide. Apply just enough herbicide to moisten the fresh cut edge of each stem. In areas where the stem densities are low and they cannot be bundled, just cut and treat individual stems. Regardless of stand density, follow-up will be needed in subsequent years. For large Phragmites populations, the bundle, cut and treat method will not be feasible. In those situations, property owners may want to contract with a certified pesticide applicator for broad-scale backpack spray operations.

FOLIAR SPRAY APPLICATION: Foliar spray application is done through the use of small hand sprayers or backpack sprayers along the shorelines. Phragmites stems and leaves are sprayed lightly with herbicide to wet (herbicide should not be dripping off the plant), making sure to cover more than 50% of the surface area of the plant's leaves. Proper protective equipment (eye protection, chemical gloves, long sleeves and pants, etc.) should be worn.

MECHANICAL: Persistent mowing or hand-pulling/digging can be effective on new, small infestations. It may not eliminate the plant entirely, but it can keep it maintained within the area it is in. All the Phragmites on the lakebed can be cut by hand or with a non-vehicle means like a weed whacker or push lawn mower without a DNR permit. Cut or dug Phragmites stems, seeds and rhizomes can be bagged in clear garbage bags (label the bags "invasive plants") and disposed on in your local landfill.

A resource on control methods can be found at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-ogl-ais-guide-PhragBook-Email_212418_7.pdf. DCIST has the tools you need to control Phragmites available through our [equipment loan program](#). To reserve equipment, call 920-746-2214.



PERMITS & HERBICIDES:

A state permit may be required if the proposed treatment area is wet at the time of treatment. This means that an individual would get their socks wet if they stood at the location without shoes.

Any herbicide application made near the water or below the ordinary high water mark (regardless of being wet at the time of treatment) requires an aquatic approved herbicide be used. Aquatic approved herbicides should be used in areas that are wet or seasonally wet at the time of treatment. A variety of herbicides are aquatic approved, but some commonly used trade names include Rodeo, Aqua Neat, or Clear Cast.. See <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/plants/> for more information.