



**LAMBTON SHORES  
PHRAGMITES  
COMMUNITY GROUP**


# Engaging Communities to deal with Invasive Phragmites

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Conference

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- Background
  - Projects underway in Lambton Shores
  - How Municipalities Can Help?

# Background

- Lambton Shores location
- Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest
- Economic base- Tourism, Recreation and Agriculture
- High shoreline property values=high property tax revenue



**SWIM  
AT  
OWN  
RISK**



## Getting Started

- 2008- Phragmites appeared on the Port Franks beach and in adjacent wetlands
- Attended a Phragmites workshop sponsored by the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation
- Beach Associations began a control project on the beach
- ***NO PUBLIC EDUCATION AVAILABLE!***

# Building A Community Wide Initiative

- Began looking at the big picture – a “**landscape**” approach
- **MUST** deal with the spread vectors- watershed and roadside ditches and drains
- Approached and engaged the Municipality, Conservation Authority, Nature Conservancy Canada and private property owners as partners
- Talked cost! The huge cost of doing nothing
- Began larger projects with our partners support in applying for grants
- Asked the Municipality to hire a wetland ecologist to draft an ***Invasive Phragmites Management Plan for the Municipality of Lambton Shores***

A large, modern house with a grey roof and stone accents, surrounded by lush greenery and a body of water in the foreground. The house has a prominent deck and large windows. The foreground is filled with tall grasses and yellow wildflowers, suggesting a natural or restored shoreline environment.

# Implementing the Management Plan

- Approached other communities along the shoreline
- Set up sub-committees
- LSPCG helped with educational material, community information sessions, grant applications, training volunteers, coordinating restoration efforts with contractor and providing post treatment monitoring

# Roadside Ditches and Drains

- Asked the MLS to treat ditches adjacent to shoreline project areas
- Organized a meeting with Lambton County Public Works and MLS Community Services
- Developed and delivered an education and training session for front line staff
- The County and MLS now have committed funds for Phrag control
- The Ministry of Transport Ontario is treating the Provincial highways in our area
- LSPCG contributed to the “***Smart Practices for Controlling Invasive Phragmites in Ontario’s Roadside Ditches***”
- Addressed concerns associated with the construction of wind turbines
- Continue to draw attention to fire risk associated with standing dead Phragmites

# Fire Statistics

*source City of St. Thomas*

- 1996-2010 New York State had 7,390 Phragmites fires
- Last 15 years Staten Island New York, 103 Phrag fires some with flames 70 feet high
- April 2010 Staten Island, 40 acre wetland Phrag fire, 1 house destroyed and 2 damaged
- March 2012 Auburn Hills, Michigan I-75 and Joselyn Road, Phrag fire took 4 hours to control disrupting traffic flow on a major U.S. freeway
- April 2013 Harsen's Island in Lake St. Clair 150 acre Phrag fire 2000 degree heat created own wind and spread embers
- April 2014 Salem, New Jersey 20 acre Phrag wetland fire destroyed 2 fire vehicles valued at \$200,000



Lake Margaret residence, St. Thomas

Residential  
encroachment  
creates high risk of fire



# Engaging Rural Property Owners



# Agriculture

- MLS referring calls from farmers to the LSPCG
- Organized a meeting with a vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- With wetland ecologist, invited to present to the executive of the OFA at their annual meeting
- Obtained their endorsement for emergency use permits for herbicides, approval of aerial treatment application, establishing a province-wide control program and establishing an Invasive Species Act for Ontario.
- Created a ***Fact Sheet for Controlling Phragmites australis in Agricultural and Rural Areas*** with funds from the Grand Bend Community Foundation

## How Municipalities Can Help

- Recognize that Phragmites is a problem!
- Take a “landscape” approach; look at the big picture

**TAKE THE LEAD!**

# How Can You Do This?

1. New hire or assign existing staff
2. Take a “watershed” approach
3. Form a committee with other stakeholders
4. Create a Management Plan
5. Train front line staff
6. Treat roadsides

7. Track control efforts
8. Ensure disposal is managed properly
9. Make a long-term commitment
10. Consider incentives for property owners with large cells
11. Take concerns to higher levels of government

Thank you!

