



ENVIRONMENT BULLETIN

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MURDER IN THE MARSHES

The Plant That Destroys Wetlands

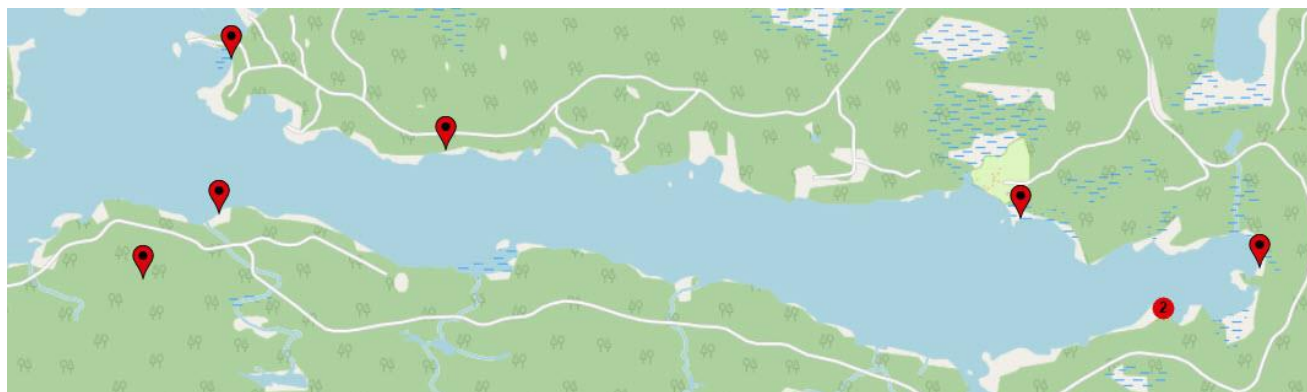


INVASIVE PHRAGMITES: Pine Tree Corners 2018

There is an advancing column of an aggressive plant making its way along our roads. It has one objective: to take over our plentiful and diverse wetlands. This invader is well known to a group of White Lake residents who engaged it at Pine Tree Corners during the summers of 2017-2019. We know from that experience just how tenacious this invader can be. As a lake community we should take this plant very seriously. It is Canada's #1 invasive plant and it poses a foremost threat to all Ontario wetlands.

A common name for this plant is the European Common Reed (*Phragmites australis australis*). As indicated on the map below, this invasive plant has progressed beyond our roadsides. It can now be found on the shores of White Lake. There are seven known locations on Three Mile Bay and another cell near an ATV trail. If these cells are ignored they will eventually spread beyond our ability to control them.

LOCATIONS OF INVASIVE PHRAGMITES ON THREE MILE BAY



EDDMapS. 2022. Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System. The University of Georgia - Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health. Available online at <http://www.eddmaps.org/>; last accessed March 19, 2022.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Ecologists have a long list of reasons why invasive phragmites is a problem; here are some of them:

1. The reduction or elimination in the diversity of plants in wetlands.
 - *Native plants cannot defend themselves against chemicals released from phragmites rhizomes.*
 - *Lower plant diversity reduces the resilience of pollinators during times of drought.*
2. A reduction or elimination of animal habitat in wetlands.
 - *Species-at-risk such as Blandings Turtles are displaced from their habitat.*
3. The reduction in insect populations discourages birds and other insect eaters from living in the affected wetland.
 - *Swallows avoid wetlands dominated by phragmites as there is no food resource for them.*
4. The long term buildup of dead plant material results in permanently drying out wetlands.
 - *Dried out wetlands created by phragmites become a fire risk.*
5. Dense cells of invasive phragmites restrict access and the enjoyment of lakeside properties.
 - *The dead and living stalks of invasive phragmites can totally block out the view of the lake.*

As property owners we can look for solutions to prevent this plant from spreading farther. More can be learned about phragmites at:

[EDDMapS Ontario Species Distribution Maps](#)

[Phragmites - Ontario Invasive Plant Council \(ontarioinvasiveplants.ca\)](#)

[Ontario Phragmites Working Group \(opwg.ca\)](#) [Invasive Phragmites | Georgian Bay Forever](#)

If you need help or advice, please contact us at whitelakescience@gmail.com or visit the [White Lake Science and Information Website](#) .

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