



Phragmites is a tall, warm-season perennial grass with featherlike plumes at the top of its stems. It can reach heights of up to 12 feet. The highly aggressive strains you commonly see on the roadsides and in wetlands are not native to WI. The non-native Phragmites strain reproduces aggressively and forms large colonies while the native strain appears only to grow in small groups or individually.

- ☠ Stands can become so dense that diverse wetland plant communities are eliminated.
- ☠ Dense plant stands do not provide valuable food and shelter for fish and wildlife that native plants provide.
- ☠ Tall stands can have visual impacts blocking the view of the water.

For more information on the biology and identification of Phragmites, please see the following websites:
<http://www.invasiveplants.net/phragmites/>
http://wiki.bugwood.org/Phragmites_australis
<http://www.botany.wisc.edu/wisflora/>

Does the WI Department of Natural Resources recommend controlling Phragmites?

Yes! A diverse native plant community provides the best habitat and offers a defense for the establishment of invasive species. Although complete eradication of Phragmites will probably never be achieved, it is recommended that you try to control or manage Phragmites as much as possible. As the technology of control evolves, the recommendations on how to do it may change. **The best control method depends on location, size and density of the infestation.** Currently, we recommend to use foliar spray applications for smaller infestations, or the ‘bundle, tie, cut and chemically treat stems’ method for dense stands. For established larger stands, the best management is to chemically treat, and then return and cut (mow) the dead stalks.

When is the best time to control Phragmites?

Begin a control program as soon as exotic Phragmites is observed on your property before the plants become well established. Persistent hand pulling can be effective on new, small infestations. Once established, herbicide treatment (initial and spot treatments) is recommended as the primary control method. Selective cutting of phragmites is advised to allow other native vegetation to grow and compete.

The best time to cut and treat phragmites is late July, August, and early September when the plant is pulling sugars down into its roots to. You can also cut Phragmites from early September to first frost.

Control Methods for Phragmites



- Possible Control Methods***
1. Bundle, Tie, Cut, and Treat
 2. Foliar spray application
 3. Mowing
 4. Water Level Management

* Check state, county, and local ordinances and permit requirements.



For large Phragmites populations we recommend that property owners contract with a certified pesticide applicator for broad-scale back-pack spray operations. For a list of applicators for hire please see <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/lakelist/businessSearch.asp>

A resource on control methods can be found at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-og1-ais-guide-PhragBook-Email_212418_7.pdf

Always be sure to follow any federal, state, and local ordinances when conducting any type of control.



Are there restrictions on cutting/mowing?

All the Phragmites on the lakebed (below the ordinary high water mark) can be cut by hand or with non-vehicle means like a weed whacker or push lawn mower without a DNR permit. [Note, however, that native plant removal without a permit is limited to a 30-foot wide path measured along the shoreline. See NR 109*]. **Permits may be required** from the DNR if you decide to use a motor vehicle like a tractor or ATV equipment because you are driving on the lakebed of a public lake.

In 2009, **Act 377** was passed to allow for driving on the lakebed of outlying waters** without a permit. A person may operate a motor vehicle for control of invasive species if the operation meets all of the following requirements.

1. The operation of the motor vehicle is for the purpose of mowing or applying a herbicide for the purpose of controlling Phragmites australis.
2. The operation of the motor vehicle occurs only on the exposed bed of the outlying water.
3. The operation of the motor vehicle occurs between the period beginning on July 1 of a given year and ending on March 15 of the following year.
4. The mowing or application of the herbicide interferes with or destroys native species only to the degree that is necessary to control the invasive species Phragmites australis.

**According to Stat. 29.001(63), these waters include Lake MI., Green Bay, Lake Superior, Sturgeon Bay, Sawyer's Harbor and Fox River from the mouth up to the dam at De Pere.

If these conditions can not be met there are quick general permits designed for one property owner or there are individual permits available for larger multi-landowner projects.

We recommend property owners organize with neighbors to obtain one individual permit for all of the properties if they wish to cut vegetation with motorized equipment. Mowing controls all vegetation including desirable native plant species, therefore, mowing alone is not recommended as a long-term management strategy. Permit applications for using motor vehicles to control Phragmites must include an invasive species control plan that promotes the restoration of the natural plant community. Information and application materials can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/waterways/construction/dredging.html> or http://dnr.wi.gov/waterways/recreation/beach_maintenance.html.

What can I do with cut vegetation?

Cut plants may not be allowed to float away. If removal of cut parts is desired, we recommend property owners separate and bag the cut Phragmites (seed heads and root parts) in clear garbage bags and label the bags "invasive plants - approved by Wis. DNR for landfilling" and take to a landfill. **We do not recommend composting** invasive plants and their seeds because of the likelihood that they will be spread through the distribution of the finished compost.

Is a permit needed to use chemicals?

An NR 107* APM permit and coverage under the Aquatic Plant Pesticide Pollutant discharge Clean Water Act (WPDES) general permit* may be required if the proposed treatment area is wet at the time of treatment. This means that individuals would get their socks wet if they stood there without wearing shoes. Any herbicide application made near the water or below the ordinary high water mark needs to be done with aquatic approved herbicides. For information on the permit requirements and application forms, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/plants/>.

Wet area application needs to be made by an applicator certified by the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (WDATCP) in the aquatics and mosquito category 5. See the following website for information on how to become a certified applicator: <http://ipcm.wisc.edu/pat/Certification/tabid/94/Default.aspx>. Good information can also be found at the WDATCP website: <http://datcp.wi.gov/>.

What monitoring is recommended?

Yearly monitoring should be done to see if treatments are effective and to see if any native species are coming back.

For Additional Information

Contact your local Aquatic Plant Management Coordinator with the Department of Natural Resources. Contacts are listed at the following website: http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/contacts/Contacts.aspx?role=AP_MNGT.

*NR 109, NR 107, and WPDES information can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/>.



January 2011