

Phragmites: A Growing Concern

by Eric Nixon

If you've only heard about Phragmites in passing, you may wonder what everyone is so worried about. However, once you've encountered the five-metre high invasive plants for yourself, you'll quickly discover why more and more people in Lambton Shores are concerned about the problem. If you're interested in learning more, you'll have your chance at a Phragmites Information Meeting, which is scheduled for Saturday, September 15th at 10:00 a.m. at the Legacy Centre in Thedford.

Topics scheduled for the meeting include "Alien Invasion! The Growing Problem of the Common

Reed", "Control Projects Underway in Lambton Shores" and the "Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group-Who we are and future plans". There will also be an opportunity to have an expert panel answer your questions.

When the plant first arrived in Lambton Shores, most people would never have noticed it. Now, it's hard to miss. In the past few years, the plants have spread rapidly along beaches, riverbanks, wetlands, roadside ditches and islands - and they're creating concerns throughout the Municipality.

Last year, the Port Franks Beach Homeowners Association, the Windsor Park Association and the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority

(ABCA), along with the Municipality, cooperated in an effort to begin controlling the menace in Port Franks. Through their combined efforts, a successful demonstration pilot control project was completed on the Port Franks beach and a small island in the Ausable River.

Recently, a new organization, the Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group has partnered with the ABCA, Nature Conservancy Canada, Rural Lambton Stewardship Network and the Municipality of Lambton Shores to expand the projects in Port Franks and to initiate additional projects along the Lambton Shores shoreline.

To assist with site assessments and create a

five-year plan for the area, the municipality has hired Dr. Janice Gilbert, a wetland ecologist who is recognized as Ontario's go-to person for controlling what has been described as Canada's worst invasive plant.

With the upcoming information meeting, the Community Group hopes to increase the public's awareness of the problem and show why the need to take action is critical. In addition, people can also contact Nancy Vidler at 519-243-2562 to learn more about both the meeting and the problem. As well, they can find additional information about Phragmites online by visiting mnr.gov.on.ca and searching the keyword "Phragmites."

Forest Standard - September 6/12

