



**TOWNSHIP OF MELANCTHON - ELECTRONIC MEETING  
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE  
FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2022 - 10:00 A.M.**

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82925858991?pwd=bUJweXQyV24xS0tvdndFT1d2Sk11QT09>

Meeting ID: 829 2585 8991

Passcode: 048986

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**AGENDA**

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

**2. Land Acknowledgement Statement:**

We would like to begin by acknowledging that Melancthon Township recognizes the ancestral lands and treaty territories of the Tionontati (Petun/Wyandot(te)), Haudenosaunee (Six Nations), and Anishinaabe Peoples. The Township of Melancthon resides within the lands named under the Haldimand Deed of 1784 and the Lake Simcoe-Nottawasaga Treaty (Treaty 18).

These territories upon which we live and learn, are steeped in rich Indigenous history and traditions. It is with this statement that we declare to honour and respect the past and present connection of Indigenous peoples with this land, its waterways and resources.

**3. Additions/Deletions/Approval of Agenda**

Motion - Moved by \_\_\_\_\_, Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the Agenda be approved/amended. Carried.

**4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest or Conflict of Interest**

**5. Delegations**

**6. Approval of Draft Minutes – March 18, 2022**

Motion - Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ the minutes of the Environmental Sustainability Committee held on March 18, 2022 be approved as circulated. Carried.

**7. Business Arising from the Minutes**

**8. General Business**

1. Environmental Sustainability Day in June
2. Phragmites Mapping
3. Toronto Star Article – Canada’s Most Invasive Plant, phragmites
4. Other/Addition(s)

**9. Confirmation of Meeting**

Motion - Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, that all actions of the Members and Officers of the Environmental Sustainability Committee with respect to every matter addressed and/or adopted by the Committee on the above date be hereby adopted, ratified and confirmed; and each motion, resolution and other actions taken by the Committee Members and Officers at the meeting held on the above date are hereby adopted, ratified and confirmed. Carried.

**10. Adjournment and Date of Next Meeting –**

Motion - Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, that we adjourn the Environmental Sustainability Committee at \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_am to meet again on \_\_\_\_\_, 2022 at \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ or at the call of the Chair. Carried.



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## CANADA

# 'Canada's most invasive plant,' phragmites, has largely been spread by human activity

By **Lori Thompson, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter** The Manitoulin Expositor

Thu., April 21, 2022 | ⌚ 6 min. read

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Phragmites is a tall, robust invasive grass in our area and it can destroy natural habitats by eliminating vegetation in wetlands, shores, beaches and other natural places. Judith Jones, coordinator for the Manitoulin Phragmites Project, recently shared her knowledge on what's been called "Canada's most invasive plant" in a series of two webinars.

The first webinar explained what phragmites is, why it's a problem and what can be done about it. The final session, on April 5, discussed the differences between American phragmites and European phragmites. The overall message was, 'Phragmites is an aggressive invasive species, spread mainly by human activity. Learn to recognize it. Don't drive through it but if you do, clean your machine.'

Ms. Jones has been officially working with phragmites on Manitoulin Island for the past seven years, but actually started monitoring the plant in 2011. Since it began, the Manitoulin Phragmites Project has controlled or eradicated phragmites on more than 90 sites. A site can be anything from a few stems to 50 hectares of habitat that contains many hectares of phragmites.

"Our main focus of the talks was to get people more familiar with phragmites and how to take care of it," Ms. Jones said.

Phragmites is a very tall, robust grass with wide leaves and hard, stout stems, almost like bamboo. The plants can grow to as much as five metres (15 feet) tall. Their stems may be red or green, ridged or smooth. The grass flowers in mid-late August through September, later than other grasses of similar size. Tall, dead stalks often stay standing for several years among newer green stems. The leaf stalk has no collar or membrane where it clasps the stem.

"The main way phragmites are spread is through vehicles like ATVs, excavators, snowmobiles, boats and backhoes; basically any machinery that has not been cleaned and has remnants of the plant on them," she said. Bits of stem and seeds get stuck on the vehicles and can spread and start new patches. "If a vehicle has been in phragmites, clean it before going out again. If pulling weeds off boat props, throw material into the boat and dispose of it on land."

Don't throw the pieces back in the water and let them float away, said Ms. Jones. "It spreads by fragments. If a machine drives through it in the ditch and you get phrags on the machine and then you put the machine on a float and drive it to another location and drive it in the next ditch, then you've spread it from one ditch to the next. That's why it's on highways all over Manitoulin."

Phragmites is a problem because it poisons and eliminates natural vegetation, destroys fish and wildlife habitat such as turtle nesting areas and blocks normal water flow in soil. The grass clogs ditches and drains, causing flooding, damages infrastructure and reduces sight lines for drivers, causing human safety risks. The grass also blocks access to shorelines, reduces property owner's enjoyment of the shore and causes loss of property value.

“I shared some of our success stories over the past few years,” Ms. Jones told The Expositor. “For example, when we started the control program for phragmites at Michael’s Bay, there was 19 hectares of property that had phragmites on it and now we are down to four, so hopefully we are close to nothing there.”

Another area worked on was from South Baymouth to Maw Point in Wiikwemkoong. Ms. Jones said the area includes 50 acres of habitat and has almost been cleared of phragmites. “There is some follow up work that needs to be done in a few little sites to have this under control.”

Manitoulin seems to have a lot more American phragmites than most places do. American phragmites is the native North America sub-species. European phragmites originated in Eurasia. “In southern Ontario and the United States, and perhaps some other places, I think you probably don’t have as much American phragmites and this might not be an issue for you, but at least knowing how to identify them is a useful thing.”

European phragmites are more aggressive and grow in greater densities than their American phragmites counterpart. European phragmites are generally taller, with leaves that point upwards, and have green or red-tinged stems that are ridged rather than smooth. Its foliage is often dark blue-green and it flowers later, generally in September/October.

American phragmites tend to be shorter and more slender and have leaves that point outwards. Their dark red stems are usually smooth and often shiny and the foliage is more of an olive green. However, these are general tendencies only, cautioned Ms. Jones. European phragmites can be reddish and sparse and American phragmites can be more than two metres tall.

While American phragmites may be generally less invasive than their European counterpart, that doesn’t mean they should not also be controlled. Ms. Jones suggested some criteria to consider for determining whether to manage American phragmites (the webinars have been posted on the Manitoulin Phragmites Project’s YouTube channel and offer visual descriptions of both sub-species and how to control them).

The two plants are sub-species, said Ms. Jones. “That means they’re basically the same thing, just genetically a little bit different. We have different races of human beings. We’re all the same thing, just slightly genetically different.”

The reason they are considered sub-species is possibly because they evolved in different locations. We don’t know, she said.

The European species was what was used to thatch roofs in the old country. “It was a very important plant and I suspect it may have been brought here on purpose,” she said. It’s known to have been introduced on the eastern seaboard of North America. They were the first area to have it and the spread has been documented from there.

Ms. Jones didn’t want to stress the two sub-species but rather prefers to focus on phragmites in general. “There are cases where you have to manage the American one,” she said. “I feel that in most situations, you do have to manage it, so let’s not even go there. It’s important to learn how to distinguish them but in a lot of cases on Manitoulin Island, they both need to be managed.”

There will be a major effort to get phragmites under control in the Lake Wolsey area this year, as well as continued work in Julia Bay and Roszel Bay.

“We’re in the process of surveying phragmites along the North Channel and we’ve looked at it now from Sheguiandah to Cook’s Dock,” she said. “We still have places we haven’t seen. It’s a long stretch.” They have surveyed more than 80 kilometres of shoreline so far.

She noted it’s important to have many phragmites watchers on hand across the Island. “We always need volunteers, forever,” Ms. Jones said. “Phragmites is always going to be here because it’s always going to be getting reintroduced from someplace, so our strategy is: we’re going to teach everybody how to recognize it and what to do about it, and especially private landowners so if phragmites shows up, they know what to do about it and can get on it right away when it’s two or three stems and then it’s not an issue.”

Manitoulin is a unique place in many ways, she added. “One of the ways we’re unique is we have a lot of team spirit about this Island. For all of our differences, we all love this place and so we can all work on this together. The City of London may not be able to say, come on everybody, let’s get rid of phragmites, but we can do that on Manitoulin Island. We can’t get rid of it in the whole world. I’m not going to take on the whole world. But Manitoulin Island as a whole is worth doing. It’s such a special place. We can’t just let phragmites destroy it.”

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