

Work completed in 2015

Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) received funding from the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund in 2015 to help restore portions of the provincially significant wetland adjacent to the Lower Spencer Creek trail/Cootes Drive trail. In September of 2015, HCA, Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG), and the City of Hamilton staff sprayed 7700 m² of Phragmites, an invasive reed. Spraying was conducted under the supervision of a licensed pesticide applicator and the necessary signs were placed along the pathways. Monitoring the following summer indicated that approximately 85% of the treated Phragmites was destroyed. Removing Phragmites by hand is not a feasible control method as every bit of plant material must be removed from the site to ensure it does not grow back.

Spraying is done in September/October as;

- The wetland areas are dry
- Most native plants have stopped growing and won't be affected
- Phragmites is still active and when the herbicide is applied directly on the leaves, it is taken down to the roots killing the plant

Work completed in 2016

HCA received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Sustain our Great Lakes) in 2016 to continue Phragmites removal in the wetlands. HCA staff, again worked closely with RBG, sprayed the remaining Phragmites in the previously treated areas.

Why is Phragmites bad for the wetland?

- It creates a dense stand that replaces native wetland plants and is no longer suitable habitat for wildlife
- It releases chemicals from its roots into the soil which stops the growth of and kills surrounding plants
- It can lower water levels and change nutrient levels in wetlands

The work to control the spread of Phragmites will enhance the wetland for native plants and local wildlife populations such as turtles. Without removal, seeds from Phragmites on HCA property flow downstream in Lower Spencer Creek and establish on RBG property. This would reduce the effectiveness of ongoing removal efforts in the RBG and the larger Cootes Paradise provincially significant wetland. Ongoing monitoring will continue to document the success of restoration work and the health of the wetland.

For more information on Phragmites, visit the Ministry of Natural Resources fact sheet at:
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/invasive-phragmites-best-management-practices>

Phragmites is a restricted species under the Invasive Species Act, for more information visit:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/stop-spread-invasive-species>



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