2021 Ontario Phragmites Working Group Annual Meeting

Agenda

Date Tuesday, January 19, 2021

Time 9:00am – 5:00pm

Location *Virtual*

Schedule

Time	Speaker	Presentation Title
9:00	System Opens	
9:05-9:15	**Brittany Finigan**, Communications Ontario Invasive Plant Council **Belinda Junkin**, Executive Director Ontario Invasive Plant Council	Introduction to our conference software **Remo** (How-To)
9:15-9:40	**Janice Gilbert**, Chair Ontario Phragmites Working Group **MPP Toby Barrett**	Welcome
9:40-10:00	**John Urquhart**, President Ontario Invasive Plant Council **Belinda Junkin**, Executive Director Ontario Invasive Plant Council	Ontario Invasive Plant Council Update
10:00-10:15	**Sarah Rang**, Executive Director Invasive Species Centre	Green Shovels Group: Provincial Phragmites Strategy Project
10:15-10:30	**Belinda Junkin**, Executive Director Ontario Invasive Plant Council	Green Shovels Group Questionnaire: Ontario Phragmites Control Projects
10:30-10:50	Networking Break	
10:50-11:05	**Brad Hayhoe**, Senior Marketing Manager BASF	Update on Habitat Aqua
11:05-11:20	**Will Roberts**, Territory Sales Manager Bayer	Update on Glyphosate products
11:20-11:45	**Robin Egan**, Division Manager Green Stream	MOECP Aquatic Herbicide Permitting Process
11:45-12:05	**Paula Berketo**, Principal Landscape Architect Ministry of Transportation of Ontario	Ministry of Transportation of Ontario: Provincial Update
12:05-12:45	Lunch/Networking Break	
12:45-1:10	**Samantha Tank**, Program Specialist Great Lakes Commission	Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative Update

1:10-1:50	**Francine MacDonald** Ministry of Resources and Forestry **Eric Cleland**, Director Nature Conservancy of Canada **Heather Braun**, Habitat Biologist Environment and Climate Change Canada **Jon Wild** Ontario Parks	Long Point Emergency Use Program Updates
1:50-2:10	**Dr. Rebecca Rooney**, Associate Professor University of Waterloo	Long Point Emergency Use Program Monitoring Program Update
2:10-2:30	**Dr. Joanna Freeland**, Professor Trent University	Phragmites Genetic Research Project
2:30-2:50	**Scott Gillingwater**, Species at Risk Biologist/Herpetologist Upper Thames River Conservation Authority	Reducing the Impact of Phragmites and Phragmites Control Efforts on Reptiles
2:50-3:10	**Networking Break**	
3:10-4:10	**Janice Gilbert**, Chair Ontario Phragmites Working Group	Round Table Discussions: Control Tips, New Tools, Techniques, Research, and Directions for the Ontario Phragmites Working Group
4:10-4:20	**Janice Gilbert**, Chair Ontario Phragmites Working Group	Closing Remarks
4:20-5:00	**Networking**	
5:00	**Conference Software Closes**	

Session Descriptions

Ontario Invasive Plant Council Update

John Urquhart, Ontario Invasive Plant Council
Belinda Junkin, Ontario Invasive Plant Council

The Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC) is a non-profit organization managed by the board of directors comprised of representatives from government, non-government, First Nations, and academic institutions. This presentation will highlight the OIPC accomplishments of the past year and provide a view of the plans for the year ahead. The Ontario Phragmites Working Group is a committee of the OIPC.

Green Shovels Group: Provincial Phragmites Strategy Project

Sarah Rang, Invasive Species Centre

Green Shovels is a collaborative effort of 6 conservation organizations: Invasive Species Centre, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations and the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre. Green Shovels is a series of shovel-ready and shovel- worthy projects to help prevent and manage invasive species and is designed to provide input into provincial and federal economic stimulus efforts. We will provide an update on two Green Shovels projects now underway, Phragmites Strategy and Innovative Tools. We are seeking your advice and assistance in these efforts to develop the best possible projects.

Green Shovels Group Questionnaire: Ontario Phragmites Control Projects

Belinda Junkin, Ontario Invasive Plant Council

In collaboration with the Green Shovels Collaborative, the OIPC is collecting information about the "Current Status of Phragmites Management in Ontario." We want to capture all of the work that is underway, identifying opportunities for improvement and further coordination/collaboration.

To complete the survey visit, https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OIPC_Phrag_ON

Update on Habitat Aqua

Brad Hayhoe, BASF Canada Inc.

After three years of updates, with no product registration, BASF is happy to present that there is movement at the PMRA and that Habitat Aqua's registration is imminent in 2021. This will be a real help in the fight against invasive phragmites and knotweed in the province of Ontario! This presentation reminds the audience of what Habitat Aqua does and how it can be used safely and effectively.

Update on Glyphosate Products

Will Roberts, Bayer

Will's presentation will introduce us to Bayer's newly registered '*Roundup WeatherPro'* glyphosate is approved to control Phragmites in Canada. This update will include a brief label review to include some information around PPE required, recommended application rates and methods. It will also touch on the importance of using approved products for phragmites control programs and clarify the re-entry interval when applying WeatherPRO to phragmites.

Ministry of Transportation of Ontario: Provincial Update

Paula Berketo, Ministry of Transportation of Ontario

Description pending.

Great Lakes *Phragmites* Collaborative Update

Samantha Tank, Great Lakes Commission

Managing invasive species is a wicked problem that requires constant learning and adaptation, and buy-in from a larger management community. Non-native *Phragmites australis* is one such invader that has colonized over 60,000 acres of Great Lakes coastline and many inland areas. *Phragmites* form dense near-monoculture stands that eliminate native vegetation, degrade habitat for economically and culturally significant fish and wildlife species and pose threats to human health and property. Invasive *Phragmites* is a costly species to manage but even more costly to ignore. Individual management efforts may yield short-term, localized success, but this invader's scale requires a strategic, regional management effort.

In 2012, the Great Lakes *Phragmites* Collaborative (GLPC) was established to facilitate communication among stakeholders across the Great Lakes region and serve as a resource center for information on *Phragmites* biology, management, and research. Although the GLPC is administered by staff at the Great Lakes Commission with support from the U.S. Geological Survey, the Collaborate itself is a network of agencies, organizations and citizens impacting or impacted by *Phragmites*. The GLPC is led by an Advisory Committee, representing a bi-national cross-section of *Phragmites* experts and meets bi-annually to share program updates and connect on ongoing regional work.

The Great Lakes *Phragmites* Collaborative recently celebrated two significant accomplishments: the GLPC Common Agenda release and the finalization of the 2020-2026 *Phragmites* Adaptive Management Framework Strategic Plan. This presentation will focus on those and other updates from 2020.

Long Point Emergency Use Program Updates

Francine MacDonald, Ministry of Resources and Forestry
Eric Cleland, Nature Conservancy of Canada
Heather Braun, Environment and Climate Change Canada
Jon Wild, Ontario Parks

Description pending.

Long Point Emergency Use Program Monitoring Program Update

Dr. Rebecca Rooney, University of Waterloo

Dr. Rebecca Rooney will update us on the outcomes of the 2020 monitoring related to the EUR program P. australis control efficacy and share copies of a couple of recent papers she has published on this work.

Phragmites Genetic Research Project

Dr. Joanna Freeland, Trent University
Abagail Warren, Trent University

Early detection of alien invasive taxa can significantly improve the likelihood of successful control, and managers are continually monitoring for novel invaders, including increasingly successful hybrids. The invasive Eurasian *Phragmites australis* in North American is often sympatric with the native subspecies *Phragmites australis* subsp. *americanus*. In southern Ontario, conservation managers at multiple sites have wondered whether stands of *Phragmites* that resemble the native subspecies, but appear to be growing in a dominant manner more consistent with the introduced lineage, could, in fact, be hybrids of the two lineages; if true, this would raise the possibility of newly invasive hybrid *Phragmites*. Therefore, in southern Ontario, conservation managers provided us with leaf samples from 127 *Phragmites* sampled from 'questionable' stands growing at nine different locations. They also recorded morphological characteristics that can differentiate native and invasive lineages. We genotyped these plants at seven microsatellite loci and compared the genetic and morphological data to previously generated data from known native and invasive *Phragmites*. We concluded that 114 of the plants were native *P. a. americanus,* and the remaining 13 were invasive *P. australis*; we, therefore, found no evidence that Phragmites hybrids are invading Ontario wetlands. Our results agree with earlier studies that found that Phragmites hybrids are very rare in eastern North America and suggest that the native American subspecies' ecology is not fully understood. Conservation planning may benefit from future research into factors that promote different growth behaviours in native *P. a. americanus*.

Reducing the Impact of Phragmites and Phragmites Control Efforts on Reptiles

Scott D. Gillingwater, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

The reduction or eradication of *Phragmites australis* is necessary for reptile populations' long-term health that depends on shallow water and near-shore habitats. Simultaneously, strategic phragmites control approaches in areas known to maintain important reptile populations are paramount in ensuring these animals' long-term viability and protection. Due to often already impaired populations, combined with limiting ecological and biological constraints, even low reptile mortality levels can be a significant factor in overall population decline and loss. Over the past 25 years, reptile research has been conducted in areas heavily impacted by the spread of *Phragmites australis* and sites that have received some of the most extensive phragmites mitigation efforts in the province. It has been found that turtles and snakes are at risk of direct and indirect impacts of phragmites control when efforts do not include alternative options for certain sites. Reptiles are at risk of drowning, being buried, frozen, crushed or driven from appropriate habitats during Phragmites control activities.
Additionally, areas of critical habitat may be completely lost due to machinery, with few options for resident animals to use. Even the most experienced machine operators will not, and cannot, see most of the species that are impacted by machinery. The vegetation is generally too thick and the animals too cryptic to effectively be seen and avoided. There is also often an assumption that reptiles will move from areas of dense Phragmites. However, with few options for movement available, many species are forced to remain out of view in these phragmites-dominated sites. Treating critical or significant wildlife habitat areas, even if impacted by phragmites, must be done with caution. New perspectives and approaches must be adopted to effectively remove phragmites without further reducing populations of highly susceptible species. An overview of reptile life history, habitat needs and options for phragmites control will be discussed.

Thank you to our sponsors.

This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Government of Canada