



The Corporation of the Municipality of  
**Central Elgin**

**DATE:** October 29, 2013

**REPORT:** PW-83-13

**TO:** To His Worship Mayor Walters and Council

**PREPARED BY:** Renee Kendel, Parks Superintendent

**SUBJECT:** Control of invasive *Phragmites*

**TO COUNCIL:** Tuesday, November 12, 2013

**RECOMMENDATION.**

THAT Council of the Municipality of Central Elgin accepts report PW-83-13 as information AND THAT Council of the Municipality of Central Elgin authorizes staff to participate in a regional networking group.

**REPORT:**

The municipality owns and is responsible for a number of open spaces, wetlands, and drains, including public beaches and harbor lands. Stands of *Phragmites* can be found along municipal roads and ditches also in wetlands, beaches, marshes and similar low lying wet habitats. *Phragmites* is an invasive perennial grass that has caused severe damage to wetlands and beaches in Ontario. Invasive species can disrupt ecosystems, alter food webs, and affect nutrient cycling causing harm and stress to native species by displacing them. Areas with large stands of *Phragmites* have experienced lowered water levels leading to the drying of wetlands with the loss of natural water retention and filtering. These changes are often irreversible and can result in decreased biodiversity. A vast majority of the municipality's drains and ditches do contain the invasive species and large stands have spread to wetlands and the harbor lands posing a threat to our beaches and ecosystems.

If the municipality does not start to control the plants our drains will be contributing to the spread of this species to other areas and eventually it will make its way to our beaches and compromise our ecosystems. Staff recommends putting a control program in place and has been in contact with surrounding municipalities regarding this issue. Staff recommends the appointment of a staff member to represent the municipality in a regional network group currently forming to establish a program for the control of invasive *Phragmites*. The group would include collaboration with private and commercial land owners, conservation authorities, government and non government agencies, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and neighboring municipalities.

Prepared By:

  
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Parks Superintendant

Approved By:

  
Lloyd Peerin,  
Director of Physical Services

Approved for Council by:

  
Donald N. Leitch  
C. A. O. and Clerk

