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Guide Brings Attention to Control of Invasive Plant and Habitat Protection

The Department of Environmental Quality's Office of the Great Lakes has released a brochure focusing on the control of phragmites entitled, "A Landowner's Guide to Phragmites Control."

The invasive, non-native variety of *Phragmites australis*, commonly known as phragmites, is a perennial wetland grass that can grow up to 15 feet tall. Phragmites tend to grow creating dense stands which degrade wetlands and coastal areas by crowding out native plants and animals, blocking shoreline views, reducing access for swimming, fishing, and hunting, and potentially creating fire hazards from dry plant material.

Phragmites can generally be found growing in coastal and interior wetlands, lake margins, roadside ditches, and other low, wet areas, although it can also be found in dry areas.

"This extremely tall and invasive plant is becoming widespread and is threatening the ecological health of Michigan's wetlands and Great Lakes coastal shoreline," said Office of the Great Lakes Director Ken DeBeaussaert. "This guide provides landowners with information to help them effectively control and manage phragmites on their property."

The guide was developed as part of a larger cooperative project involving the Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative, the DEQ, other state and federal agencies, and various

stakeholders to address the rapid spread of phragmites in Saginaw Bay and other areas in Michigan. The guide was created to better demonstrate and communicate effective treatment methods and regulatory requirements to the public and resource managers.

Local, state and federal permits may be required for phragmites control. For state permit information and deadlines for applications, contact the DEQ Environmental Assistance Center at 1-800-662-9278 or email deq-ead-env-assist@michigan.gov.

Financial assistance for this project was provided, in part, by the DEQ Michigan Coastal Management Program through a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. For copies of the guide, contact the Office of the Great Lakes at (517) 335-4056 or fax at (517) 335-4053. The guide is also available at the DEQ web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/deqinlandlakes>.

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Editor's note: DEQ news releases are available on the department's Internet home page at www.michigan.gov/deq.

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