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INFORMATIONAL SHEET PHRAGMITES CONTROL PROGRAM

The Macomb County Department of Roads (MCDR) 2016 Herbicide Phragmites Control Program will take place in August/September 2016. This program involves the application of herbicides to phragmites in order to improve visibility and safety for both pedestrians and motorists on these roadways.

What is Invasive Phragmites? Phragmites, also known as common reed, is a perennial, wetland grass that can grow up to 15 feet in height. Leaves are often 8 to 16 inches long and ½ to 2 inches wide near the base, tapering to a point at the end. Phragmites has gray-green foliage during the growing season with distinctive purple-brown-silver seed head plumes appearing by late July. These plumes form at the end of stalks, are 6 to 20 inches long and up to 8 inches broad, and have many branches. Phragmites grow in large areas and create dense stands. It is capable of reproduction by seeds, but primarily does so asexually by means of rhizomes. Rhizomes may exceed 60 feet in length and grow more than 6 feet per year and readily grow into new plants when fragmented. Mature plants produce as many as 2,000 seeds annually.

Why do we have a Phragmites Control Program? Invasive phragmites is becoming widespread throughout Macomb County. The purpose of this program is to improve visibility for both pedestrians and motorists on county roads under Macomb County Department of Roads jurisdiction. While mechanical cutting is an option to control phragmites, it results in accelerated regrowth and expansion of the growth area. After careful consideration, we have authorized the use of herbicide treatment as an additional method to be used to control phragmites.

Are these herbicides safe? The herbicides that will be utilized are limited to those materials that have been approved for vegetation control by state and federal agencies. They have been approved for application in areas open to unrestricted human access and environmentally sensitive areas such as lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands. The specific herbicides used for this program are applied as diluted solutions and are scientifically formulated to work on enzymes found in plants only...not people or animals. The approved herbicides enter the plant through stems and leaves and control the life cycle of the plant from the inside.

What are No Treatment Zones? Landowners will have a choice regarding this use of herbicides. If the landowner prefers that their property not be included for treatment, they have the option to omit their property from the program. In order to do this, an application form must be submitted to the Macomb County Department of Roads by July 15, 2016. As a condition of approval of this application, the landowner must agree to properly clear all phragmites from the road right-of-way abutting their property. Signs will be supplied by the Department of Roads to be placed on the applicant's property as a visual indication that the property owner will take responsibility for control of phragmites on that section of road frontage. The area will be omitted from the herbicide program only if the area is clear of phragmites at the time of inspection by Department of Roads personnel.

Questions? Technical information concerning this application may be requested by calling The Daltons, Inc. at 1.888.267.7511. Application forms and other information may be obtained from the Macomb County Department of Roads by calling 586.463.0344, emailing us at geninfo@rcmcweb.org, or downloading through our website at roads.macombgov.org.