



PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

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RCOC CONTINUES EFFORTS TO CONTROL PHRAGMITES ALONG ROADS

Beverly Hills, MI – The Road Commission of Oakland County (RCOC) this year is continuing to work to eradicate invasive Phragmites plants along its roads by spraying the plants with a herbicide; the spraying is taking place in September.

RCOC allocated \$70,000 for the program this year, an increase over what was spent in most previous years.

The herbicide has proven to be the best way to tackle the growth and spread of Phragmites, which is an aggressive species of reed that is common in road rights of way and can grow to a height of 15 feet.

The herbicide is not harmful to soil insects, earthworms, bees, etc., and leaves the environment quickly while remaining effective in the eradication of Phragmites. In the past, one to two treatments with the herbicide have been effective in combating Phragmites. However, in heavy areas, three treatments may be necessary.

“RCOC and our partners have been leaders in addressing invasive species in road rights of way,” noted RCOC Managing Director Dennis Kolar. “RCOC helped to form the Oakland County Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) organization, which is spearheading invasive-species eradication efforts countywide,” he added.

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The Road Commission has sprayed for Phragmites for four years because the plants can interfere with roadside drainage and can be a safety concern by blocking or reducing sight distances along roads.

RCOC initially sprayed 45 miles of road rights of way when the program was started in 2015. In both 2016 and 2017, RCOC sprayed 68 miles of rights of way. In 2018, 95 miles were sprayed, and RCOC expects to spray 92 miles this year.

Additionally, the CISMA has surveyed all county primary, secondary and natural beauty roads in the county to determine where Phragmites are located.

The state supports efforts to eradicate Phragmites and offers a competitive grant program to encourage collaboration in the effort at the local level. In 2014, to take advantage of the state funding, RCOC, along with 19 partners, created the Oakland County CISMA. Since its formation, the primary role of the CISMA has been to help local governments implement invasive-plant-control programs.

In 2015, RCOC took the lead in the effort, allocating \$75,000 countywide to cover the costs to treat invasive plants along county road rights of way. Also that year, the CISMA was awarded a \$244,000 state grant to further the effort.

Oakland County CISMA participants matched about 50 percent of that state funding, making more than \$440,000 available for 2016 efforts. The CISMA also received two grants in 2017 (\$160,000 total) and one in 2018 (\$60,000).

Including matches from the communities and RCOC's \$70,000 contribution, a total of \$91,000 was available for use this year.

For more information about invasive species in Oakland County, visit:

<https://www.rcocweb.org/514/Invasive-Species-Removal>.

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