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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 control invasive Phragmites plants along its roads by spraying the plants with a herbicide; the spraying will occur in September and October.

RCOC allocated \$25,000 for the program this year.

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.

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.

“We must all do our part to preserve our environment, and RCOC and our partners have been leaders in addressing invasive species in road rights of way,” noted RCOC Board of Road Commissioners Chairman Greg Jamian. “RCOC helped to form the Oakland County Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (Oakland County CISMA) organization, which is spearheading invasive-species control efforts countywide,” he added.

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

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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 69 miles were sprayed in 2019. RCOC expects to spray 66 miles this year.

The Oakland County 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 control Phragmites and other priority invasive species 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, non-profit organizations and citizens implement invasive-species control and prevention programs.

In 2015, RCOC took the lead in the effort, allocating \$75,000 to cover the costs to treat invasive plants along county road rights of way countywide. 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).

In 2019, the organization received two grants totaling \$205,000, with one grant focused on a newly discovered aquatic invasive species, European frog-bit

Including matches from the communities and RCOC's \$25,000 contribution, a total of \$58,427 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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Editor's Note: A photo of Phragmites along an Oakland County road is attached.