Phragmites australis (common reed) quickly spread through St. Clair area marshes and continues to move into new territory. Stands of Phragmites:
- Rob fish, plants and wildlife of nutrients and space;
- Block access to the water for swimming, fishing and hunting; and
- Spoil shoreline views.

Natural resource managers face a challenging problem: save the marsh at Lake St. Clair. Since Phragmites is aggressive and very difficult to get rid of once established, the measures to control the invader have to be equally as strong. Project partners devised a plan to keep the Phragmites in check.

**WHAT WAS DONE?**

- The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approved the control plan and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) approved the required permit for the removal at the Lake St. Clair Metropark.
- Trained professionals from Ducks Unlimited followed the approved control plan.
- Efforts to control Phragmites included aerial and on-the-ground herbicide applications. A helicopter released the herbicide over the specified areas.
- Glyphosate, an EPA-registered and approved aquatic herbicide was used. The only herbicides that are effective in controlling Phragmites are broad spectrum. However, research has indicated that native plants recover within a few years after initial herbicide treatment.
- Controlled burns (in combination with the herbicide treatment) were used to remove dead Phragmites. Burning the stalks down allowed sunlight to penetrate the ground and native seeds to germinate.
- The control plan included a 50-yard buffer zone adjacent to the public land.
- During the application of herbicide, residents and park visitors were not allowed into the treatment area.

**RESULTS**

After the removal of the Phragmites, native species such as cattails can grow back in its place. This creates more open space for use by ducks, herons and other marsh birds as well as muskrat, mink and frogs. It also improves the view for the public to enjoy the marsh and its wildlife.