

# October 2020 Phragmites Working Group Lake Bernard Season End Report

## **1) Organizing and Participating:**

The Phragmites Working group Lake Bernard had a plan to complete the deliverables from the Ontario Trillium Green People Seed Grant by July 31, 2020. With the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic the plan required modification. The season was a success overall as the following outlines. There is a lot of invasive phragmites on the lake and shoreline – but there is momentum to remove it according to best practices.

### COVID 19 and Cutting Events

The COVID emergency measures restrictions required to safely manage the current health crisis created several planning challenges:

1. The tendered saw service was not an essential service- we could not initially start cutting in water with saws,
2. Group sizes to ensure physical distancing – were restricted to 10 and under in stage two. Many of our large phragmites stands required more than 10 volunteers, or repeated cuts with smaller groups.
3. Forms, use of masks, processes had to match the guidelines that were being developed for the province.
4. Fears and concerns regarding any group events with the new corona virus in Ontario were in play.
5. Seasonal cottage residents who had been phragmites fighters for the program were in lock down -in their home residence. Some were in the United States unable to cross the border. This group of volunteers were not able to assist with the cutting events in person this season. They did however give emotional support from US locations and responded to the emails sent out after each cut to help us keeping positive this summer.
- 6) The High School, and local Public School (k-8) was closed and our plan to recruit students with the support of Guidance Department staff ended.
- 7) Girl Guides were not meeting due to COVID 19 – they had been approached to assist with a cut and with education out to all.
- 8) MNR Rangers – we had asked to be considered for this group to come to assist with cuts – the program was not being offered.
- 9) Garden centres were closed but did eventually open. Our plan to distribute: “Grow This Instead- Northern version” – a pamphlet on preventing invasive plants from gardens and shorelines was delayed.
- 10) A Blue- green Algae bloom was identified in July on the Lake shore near the large West End stand and a visual assessment at each site had to be done with a back up site identified in case we saw obvious algae and had to go to another stand.

We asked for and received an extension to the end date for our grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to allow us to plan to safely conduct the cutting events and allow for the following adjustments to be made to our plans:

- A zoom membership was purchased, and executive meetings of 11 people began online.
- A COVID 19 Screening Tool for volunteers was developed,
- The Safety Briefing was altered to include sanitizing, masks, a dirty bin for used equipment to be disinfected etc.,

- The Volunteer Liability Waiver was revised - signatures were required for parents to allow youth participation
- Event processes changed to include optional use of masks if not able to maintain physical distancing with volunteers not in the volunteer's family grouping
- Hand sanitizer and spare masks were purchased, and use outlined.
- Groups were kept small under 10 and were matched to the size/shape of the phragmites stand to allow enough space /or turn taking between participants/particularly at "choke" points for entering or leaving the water.
- Family groupings were booked on small stands where distancing was a challenge
- Regular Tuesday and Friday cutting days were scheduled/allowing time to sanitize equipment and book heavy/light days – 7 days between saw people and those who could do heavier cuts. (Allowed alternating teams /less chance of spread)
- Volunteers had to email that they planned to attend – no last-minute individuals could assist as numbers/family grouping had to be scheduled. Cuts started at 7:30 am with set up of the boom, signs, tarps and tools. Saws started if needed and volunteers arrived at 8:00 in staggered time starts. We aimed to finish at noon, and volunteers usually left in a staggered fashion. No pizza lunches this year. Volunteers brought their own water. Small packaged power bars were provided with limited uptake.

We had the support of the Near North Eco- Education Centre, the Lake Bernard Property Owners our municipal leaders from the Village of Sundridge, Strong and Joly Townships. We emailed and posted information on Phragmites on their social media sites.

The following is the summary of the activities undertaken from October 2019 until October 2020.

**2020 Season as of October 2020:**

Lead Agency Near North Enviro-Education Centre – administration of funding and mentorship

87 Volunteers have been involved in cutting events this season (77 last season)

100 Lakeshore property Owners on email list of 155 receive information regularly on events

8 Municipal Leaders are receiving information and giving support

6 Lake Bernard Property Owners Association Directors have supported this season

7 Local Businesses have been supported/provided business services (T-shirts, purchased services, signage etc)

4 School Personnel receive information by email/student volunteer forms have been signed

13 Properties cleared have been municipal, business, church, or charity

23 Cutting events, 754 volunteer hours, 128.5 hours saw services

**2) Purchased services:**

The workplan included the purchase of services of a specialized cutting team. We continued with the original team trained on the west end stand in 2019 by the Invasive Phragmites Control Centre. 9 sites required the full cutting team. 5 more cuts required one or two saws in use in order to clear them.

Volunteers skilled in the use of their own saws occasionally assisted. Cutting in water required the saws to be assessed greased /maintained after each cut, as recommended by Dr. Gilbert and the supplier.

**Evaluation:** The recommendation from Dr Janice Gilbert Invasive Phragmites Control Centre to hire a local crew for both the short- and long-term management of large stands was followed. A local forestry business supplied up to four saw people cutting for up to 5 hours with saws, to work along side the volunteers.

**3. Meetings:** Meetings of the executive were held as per the terms of reference for the working group: "6 - 9 annually or at the call of the chair." There are 11 currently on the executive of the Phragmites Working Group Lake Bernard.

Jocelyn Palm – Founder and Director of the Near North Enviro-Education Centre (NNEEC)

Kathy Pike – Founding member of the Phragmites Working Group Lake Bernard /Lake Property Owner

Lois Brisbois – Founding member Phragmites Working Group/Lake Property Owner

Dan Burton – Naturalist, Member Muskoka Conservancy

Marilee Koenderink – Chair, Lake Property Owner

Holly Clarke – Student researcher NNEEC

Dave McGirr – Lake Property Owner/Supporter

Marianne Stickland – Counsellor Strong Township, Supporter

Bob Attwell – Lake Bernard Property Owner Association Director 2018 – 2020, Lake Property Owner

Lyle Hall – Mayor Village of Sundridge

Jennifer Boyce – Lake Property Owner, Supporter

Zoom meetings:

1. **June 18, 2020** 10:00 am – 10:30 am, 9 individuals

2. **July 16, 2020** 7:00- 8:00, 7 individuals

3. **Aug 13, 2020** 7:00 – 8:00, 7 individuals

4. **Aug 31, 2020** 7:00 -8:00 Planning meeting appreciation event, 5 individuals

5. **September 5, 2020** Volunteer Appreciation Event (pre school start up) 27 attended

6. **September 17,** 7:00 – 8:00, 6 individuals

7. **October 15, 2020,** 7:00 – 8:00

**We continue to follow the recommendations for management of the phragmites on Lake Bernard from the final report received October 2019 from the Invasive Phragmites Control Centre.**

The recommendations were in terms of three "areas":

1. The Dam,

2. The West End and

3. The smaller stands scattered along the shoreline in and around the lake.

Consultation with Dr. Janice Gilbert Invasive Phragmites Control Centre (IPCC) in May via pictures and emails.

**What is needed?** The pros and cons of all methods of management of invasive phragmites are outlined and the suggested methods for the Phragmites in and around Lake Bernard in last years report from the Invasive Phragmites Control Centre. Mechanical methods cutting with saws and/or cane cutting are suggested for all the small stands in water. Cane cutting and spading for stands in water too shallow to immediately drown, and on shorelines. Management for the west end stand: Cutting with saws, ongoing stress to plant. With drowning on edge of stand and reassess each season. Mechanical cutting with saws at the dam and along Bernard creek is also recommended. Clearing the phragmites from the ditches at the dam with a tractor and sickle saw are suggested. Use of herbicide is outlined as a choice for dry areas.

**How long will this take and how many stands are there and can be cut?**

The number of small stands is unknown. Many property owners are as per last year removing on their property and some still are unaware of the invasive nature of the plant or have not yet removed. There are small medium and large stands. Management is stand specific and factors such as size, age (how

high and how long established) depth of water (If in 0.6 metres and cut at shore bottom x 6 weeks to effect drowning), the nature of the shoreline (sand-spading to remove versus rock substrate - difficult to cut the rhizome below the ground) are all considerations. We are as of October 2020 still assessing new stands along the shoreline.

There were 23 cutting events held this season along the lake and in water with two more smaller cutting events in wetlands along roadways in Strong township. There are known sites along High Rock drive and Bernard creek yet to have a first cut. We will continue with this plan for two more seasons and then reassess, but it will take many seasons to remove what has become established over a similar time frame.

**3) Organization of Volunteer Cutting events (target 20) at smaller stands on the Lake.** The target for cutting events, defined as a minimum of 4 hours in length and groups of 8-10 volunteers using recommended equipment and cutting removal strategies with transportation of the biomass provided by either the Village or the Township depending on the location. (4 hours x 8 volunteers = 32 volunteer hours approximately per "cut" x 20 cuts = 640 volunteer hours minimum).

### **Evaluation Data Cutting Events Summer 2020: 23 cutting events**

#### **1. West End Stand** Off Tamarack Lane

7:30 am – 2:30

10 volunteers well spread out, 46 volunteer hours

Pictures had been taken of the stand in May 2020 and were sent to Dr Janice Gilbert for direction on management for this large – over 1.3 acres in size main area – across a small channel is a second stand.

**Equipment used:** Pool noodle boom 380 feet to prevent cut phragmites from floating away, fish nets, 3 Saws, cane cutters, toboggans, Rake, hip and chest waders, leaf letter bags and twine, COVID 19 screening form, liability waiver etc., signs to direct traffic,

**Biomass removed:** Left on site in piles to dry – in muskrat like dens. Phragmites behind the garage area was cut for the first time –majority on shore /old stalks, a pool noodle boom was stretched around this stand in case of floaters however there were healthy aquatic plants pickerel weed and bullrush around the lakeside to stop this from happening.

Facing the lake - The right-side edge of the stand was cut with saws and cane cutters and biomass was removed to the dry piles compacted in the inside of the stand. We did not get to the stand across the channel nor to the opposite side of the stand at this first cut of the west end stand. Extremely tough terrain, hard to walk on the uneven stand the cut stalks and the muck along the edge, Considerable time was spent on hauling, cane cutting and piling. Note: The stand is wet in many areas that have been walked on more then a few times.

**Next Cutting event:** Plan to continue with saws as directed along edge and work toward middle. Pile close to middle, work across to channel when able.





## **2. Hands and Sewage Pumping Station Shore/combined sites**

8:30 am – 11:30 am

8 Volunteers, 27.5 hours

During the COVID 19 emergency management lock down, when boat launches were closed- a boat had been launched and brought out at this sight, leaving trenches and exposed rhizomes – these were removed. Spading and cane cutting occurred on sandy shore, rotting rhizomes seen floating in water close to shore in spongy bottom -masses of rotted phragmites roots removed. Sparce strands removed from edge of shore. Some strands reoccurring in water – much less compared to first season. Brush had been removed previous season along treeline – spoke with employee about leaving native plants along shoreline to fight phragmites -provide habitat for wildlife /provide filtering for health of lake/secure shoreline from erosion. Had to return later in season to do in water and some on shore.

**Equipment used:** Cane cutters, spades, leaf litter bags, twine, tarps, toboggans, pool noodle boom,

**Biomass removed:** 4 leaf litter bags, 16 tied sheaves

**Next Season:** Spading on shore, assess shore and work around native plants becoming re-established. Assess for shoots at waters edge and spade. Remove any strands remaining in water. Assess for new growth and remove. Leave native plants – example: ferns below.



### **3. Children's Garden/The Trinity**

(Across from Sundridge Public School- 118 Main Street Sundridge)

8:00 am – 11:00am

10 Volunteers (3 were youth), **25 volunteer hours**

**Equipment used:** Pool noodle boom, 2 rakes, cane cutters, 2 spades (used minimally), Spade next season in soft sand at edge of water.

**Biomass removed:** 2 leaf litter bags, 12 tied small sheaves

Note: This is the third removal for this site. Less growth on shore and much less in water.

**Next Season:** Cane cutters and spades, tarps, leaf litter bags, rakes, possibly toboggans



### **4. 67 High Rock Drive**

7:00 am – 12:30 pm

16 volunteers, 3 saw people, **37 volunteer hours, 22 hours saw people**

Scheduled to arrive/leave in shifts/distributed up and below in two sites for distancing

Stand up near road – cut and piled near driveway for pick up, Stand on shoreline on sand cut – fringe left no need for boom but used in case, Fringe of phragmites left standing around the stand to water. Very hot day. 4 tarps heaped with cut phragmites, some left on stand to bring out next cut. Wet in places on stand – uneven to walk on. Muck near dock surrounded by phrag need to avoid.

**Equipment used:** 5 saws, tarps, cane cutters, toboggans, twine

**Biomass removed:** 3 half ton truck loads approximately

**Next Cut:** next month for in water and fringe removal.



### **5. Sundridge Pharmacy Shoreline**

107 Main Street Sundridge

8:30am – 10:30 am

10 volunteers (5 of them youth under 15) **20.5 volunteer hours**

**Equipment used:** Spades, cane cutters, rakes. Very little in water growth

**Biomass removed:** 4 Leaf litter bags, 10 small sheaves

**Next Season:** Spades for next season. Some growth still on side of property in healthy native plants



### **6. 109 High Rock Drive**

7:30am – 12:00 noon

11 volunteers staggered starts, **25 volunteer hours, 20 saw people hours**

First cut – tall old growth on stand -Spongy surface above water and in water. Spoke with owner and neighbour and he is also removing Phragmites – to remove snorkles and cut new growth if has time later this season. Lots of pickerel weed and bulrush around stand – encouraged both to leave this as aquatic plants are healthy for lake and fight invasive phragmites. Post cards and cane cutters given, info re recommended saws.

**Equipment used:** 5 saws, cane cutters, pool noodle boom (left in for two days), rakes, twine, tarps, leaf litter bags

**Biomass removed:** 5 truck loads of tied sheaves and some loose, 20 leaf litter bags

**Next Season:** Saws, cane cutters and spades, possibly two cuts?



**7. United Church Manse**

7:30 am - 12:00 noon

6 volunteers **22 volunteer hours**

On shore- less. Much more Pickerel weed and cattails. Adjacent property owner at siesta cabins unable to assist this year but present and no phragmites on her shore. Still muck and phragmites on far right near Siesta cabin side.

**Equipment used:** Pool noodle boom to mark area and prevent spread (little wind). Cane cutters, toboggans, rakes, tarps, twine

**Biomass removed:** 3 leaf litter bags, Large truck load  
Will need to return next week to finish at shoreline.

**Next Season:** Possibly cane cutters only - depending on shore regrowth between properties. Pictures: Phrag among native plants – cane cutters to save. Drone shot boom out half cleared shot. Piled on tarps



**8. 16 Birch Lane 2 stands in water up to chest level separated by lot distance**

7:30 am – 12:20 pm

28 Volunteers, 4 saw people, **99.5 volunteer hours, 14 hours saw people**

First stand (60 paces across in water minimal on shore close to staging area, 4 saw people in water at 7:30 /8 volunteers arrived 8 am cleared by 10:30, Second stand 45 paces across, more close to and on shore – boom was moved, and second shift arrived – done by 12:30

**Equipment used:** 5 saws (one used few hours by volunteer), Pool noodle boom, small flat-bottomed boat, toboggans, cane cutters, Tractor trailer

**Biomass removed:** 2 huge tractor trailer loads tied down with tarps

**Next Season:** Hope for 75 percent drowning, return to assess and possibly saws will be needed or team with cane cutters.

Pictures – Stands one before picture, bringing phrag from stand two, Stand two before picture, saw people, cleaning up with noodles, nets, rakes, toboggans, using small boat to carry cut phrag in to the tarps and trailer.



### **9. Presbyterian Church Shoreline 59 Main Street/finished United Church shore**

8:00am - 12:00 pm

18 volunteers **24.5 hours Presbyterian Church shore, (then finished at HANDS shore 5.0 hours, and United Church Manse in pickerel weed plants 8.0 hours)**

Less on shore this year. Stalks smaller. Lots of Healthy Cattail and Joe-Pye-Weed, Orange Jewel weed, Alder, Forget Me Not. Finished at HANDS and United Church manse at same time.

**Equipment used:** Pool noodle boom, Cane cutters, tarps, toboggans, twine, rakes

**Biomass removed:** 16 plus sheaves/truck load, 2 bags cleared prior to cut by volunteers, 7 bags on tarp at HANDS,

**Next Season:** As above - possibly only cane cutters/ may be able to use spades in some areas

**Note:** Permission to clear on vacant lot between United Church Manse and Presbyterian Church shore obtained. Owner obtained a cane cutter and post cards cutting to drown and spading. Pictures – cane cutting among healthy pickerel weed, piling and bundling, cutting among cat tails



**10. Sundridge Town Dock/Lion's Club Shore**

7:30 am – 12:00 noon

Beside Lion's Building

14 Volunteers staggered start and leave times (7 started at 8, 2 at 9, 4 arrived at 9:30 to spread out along opposite sides and four areas of dock and Lions Building shore), **35 volunteer hours Town Dock/12 volunteer hours Lion's Building Shoreline**

**Equipment used:** 2 pool noodle boom, rakes, cane cutters, toboggans,

**Biomass removed:** 3 Truck Loads/1 from Lion's shoreline and 2 from town dock

No waves. Beautiful warm weather. No turtle spotted this year. Long Stolon's. Less phrag. more Pickerel weed. We completed the Dock area quickly and moved to the Lion's Club shore.

**Next Season:** Cane cutters and spades, tarps, leaf litter bags, rakes, toboggans. Possibly two cuts to get any strands that regrow among the rocks. Pictures: Before shots various angles.





**11. 139 High Rock Drive**

8:00 am – 12:00 noon

4 volunteers (cancellation received for small group), **13 volunteer hours**

This is a first cut for this stand in shallow water with some healthy bulrush and other aquatic plants on the perimeter. Some on the shore. One saw and three to gather. Need to return to get another large amount this season.

**Equipment used:** one saw, cane cutters, pool noodle boom, rakes, toboggans, leaf litter bags, tarps, twine

**Biomass removed:** 5 leaf litter bags, 20 + sheaves

**Next Season:** Return this season. Pictures: before shot from shore, volunteer starts to pile, saw person cuts around the inside of boom, phrag. solid to shore, piling on tarps, end pile before covering.



**12. 65 Turtle Lane**

8:00 am – 12:00 noon

8 volunteers, **27 volunteer hours**

Soft sand shore, grass and phragmites on shoreline. Mucky in some edges /places where phragmites has established, lots of native plants on perimeter. Some phragmites in very shallow water. Stand surrounded by pickerel weed, spike rush, cat tails. Owners had cut previous year- made spading easier. Saved grasses as much as possible.

**Equipment used:** Spades, cane cutters, pool noodle boom, rake, toboggans, tarps, twine

**Biomass removed:** 2 truckloads

**Next Season:** Spading and cane cutting/possibly twice



**13. 114 Elizabeth Street**

7:30 am – 12:00 noon

10 volunteers, **35.5 volunteer hours**

Rained last year on this site, rained this year....poured. Boom left overnight. Less this year in water. Considerable amount on far shore and in trees – we did not get it all last year. Thin stalks. No flowers. Much less on sand.

**Equipment used:** saw x 1, cane cutters, pool noodle boom, rake, toboggans, tractor trailer

**Biomass removed:** 1 tractor trailer load

**Next Season:** Spading and cane cutting. Need to spade out snorkels on sandy shore now that old dead stalks are down, and new growth slowed. Pictures of before, cut and after next day.





#### **14. 67 High Rock Drive – cut #2**

7:30 am – 12:30 pm

10 volunteers, 3 saw people, **39 volunteer hours, 12 hours saw people**

Weather great, sunny, no waves, boom out in place when left x 2 days. Volunteer ran a saw as well for 2 hours. Had to pile some cut biomass on stand in dens. Large amounts carried by hand to tarps and piled to dry. Extends into next lot. Will follow up next season with that stand if permission obtained.

**Equipment used:** 4 Saws, cane cutters, pool noodle boom, rake, toboggans, tarps, twine

**Biomass removed:** 6 tarps full, 4 truck loads (3 up high, 1 below brought up later when dry)

**Next Season:** Some will down around the edge of the stand where depths seem to be high enough.

There will be new growth close to shore. Reassess in spring. If assistance requested, expect saws to be needed with cane cutting to coincide with first cut on next property to effectively stress the full stand and all the underground rhizomes. Pictures: start of day, carrying to tarps, removing from water, bringing off stand, gathering near pool noodles, last of dry phrag to go to landfill.



#### **15. Lions Building/Caswell's and new strands at Town dock**

7:30 am – 11:30 pm

7 volunteers, **20 hours volunteer time**

Left over strip extending to Caswell Resort shoreline (permission had to be obtained- dropped off postcards and neighbour helping neighbour letter). Some had flower heads. \need to get stubs of

snorkels out around drain at shoreline. Spaded on Caswell's beach area and used cane cutters into rhizome below ground.

**Equipment used:** spades, cane cutters, tarps, twine, toboggans, rakes, leaf litter bags, pool noodle boom

**Biomass removed:** 7 bags, 1 truck load

**Next Season:** Expect new smaller and shorter growth in drain area, amongst trees and in boggy strip along property between Lions and Caswell's. Spading and cane cutting will be needed



### **16. West End Stand – cut #2**

7:30 am – 12:00 noon

16 volunteers, 3 saw people, **36.5 volunteer hours, 12.0 saw people hours**

Cool weather minimal breeze, Phragmites stalks much easier to cut this season, shorter, some flowers – less than ¼, Side receding “drowning”. Muskrat dens (dried old stalks) from last season smaller closer to edge. Stand shrinking due to drowning. Moving piles closer to middle. Channel can be used to cut across channel next cut – less sucking muck to stop volunteers from walking safely. Adjacent property owner operated a saw for several hours on opposite side of stand. Boom in place all weekend. Small boom added opposite side at entrance to channel next day.

**Equipment used:** 5 Saws, cane cutters, pool noodle boom – full side and one across channel opposite side, toboggans, leaf litter bags, tarps.

**Biomass removed:** 7 leaf litter bags from stand behind garage, Biomass on stand piled on stand in muskrat like dens

**Next Cut:** This season, need to move cut across stand with saws /leaving fringe at opposite side until last cut. Attempt to cut on old growth across channel next cut, if work goes swiftly and this 1.3-acre portion is flattened. Pictures: top three show regrowth since cut in late June on edges and behind garage. Middle Phrag fighters at work on the stand cutting across to middle. Bottom three: Volunteer saw person and two showing progress across the stand at end of cut with the section across the channel that remains uncut- note height of phragmites.



**17. 139 High Rock Drive – cut #2**

8:00 am – 11:00 am

6 volunteers, **15 volunteer hours**

This was the second cut for this stand. Weather was good. Found a second stand to the right of the first stand basically in a reed bed. Cut a perimeter on all sides to shrink the stand as we will not get time to return this season. Flowers were on – no seeds yet.

**Equipment used:** 1 Saw, cane cutters, pool noodle boom, toboggans, leaf litter bags, tarps.

**Biomass removed:** 3 leaf litter bags, 16+ sheaves 1 truckload

**Next Season:** Need to clear the stand and the attached adjacent one to effectively stress all of the rhizomes/root system. Saws and 10 or more volunteers needed. Pictures: perimeter cut, piled and tied phrag, volunteer saw person, pulling phrag pile towards roadway, smiling beside covered phrag, one half of stand cleared





### **18. The Dam**

7:00 am – 12:00 noon

12 volunteers, 4 saw people, **39.5 volunteer hours, 18.0 saw people hours**

Successful cutting event. In water section cleared last season cleared again. Less phragmites, easier to cut, bull rushes, cat tails and other aquatic plants left. Cleared the area on shore beside the closest property owner, cleared the area across the dam on Bernard Creek near dam both sides. Did not clear on road or in ditches (municipal).

**Equipment used:** 4 Saws, cane cutters, pool noodle boom, toboggans, leaf litter bags, tarps.

**Biomass removed:** 3 leaf litter bags, Dump truck load and half ton truck load to landfill.

**Next Season:** Reassess the in-water site – expect less phragmites as it is seen to be drowning on edges. Return to Bernard Creek and continual removal effort. Assist adjacent property owner with on site stands. Encourage Township to continue to manage road and ditches (cut once this season by township). Pictures: Top three Volunteers including guests from KWEF,



Above Signs of caution and advice – Don't Boat or ATV in phragmites stands- stop the spread! Phrag fighter removes phrag near dock, Piled Phrag waiting for Pick up and transport to the Landfill.



Above pictures: Bagged Phrag, piled phrag – ready to cover and transport. Bottom three: Cleared on Bernard Creek side 1st time, cleared in water stand 2nd time, Ditches regrew and management needed going forward.

### **19. 293 High Rock Drive**

8:00 am – 12:30 pm

12 volunteers, **40 volunteer hours – 1 saw run by volunteer for an hour**

Cane cutting in among the aquatic plants – could only run a saw for an hour in water then had to stop to protect plants and shrubs. Cane cutters used for most of cut. Snorkels removed from previous cutting by owner, around sandbar area lots of health rushes and brush – phragmites growing intermixed in this area. A large stand around the point extending into shrubs, shore and sand.

**Equipment used:** 1 Saw, cane cutters, pool noodle boom, toboggans, leaf litter bags, tarps.

**Biomass removed:** 3 leaf litter bags, tarps loaded x 4 truckload

**Next Season:** If owner wishes assistance reassess/ cane cutters will be needed. More than one cut needed to remove stands beside this property. Pictures: top three the before shots, Middle: Volunteers pose for pictures. Bottom three: Cut phrag covered and tarped, and after shot, Large stand around the point for next season and three others bigger than city buses.





**20. West End Stand – cut # 3**

7:30 am – 12:00 noon

13 volunteers, 3 saw people, adjacent property owner worked on his side, **39 volunteer hours, 12.5 saw people hours**

Drone shots obtained, fringe left to catch floaters on side near village, flattened to opposite side. Drowning more each time on edge.

**Equipment used:** 3 Saws, cane cutters, pool noodle boom, toboggans, leaf litter bags, tarps.

**Biomass removed:** 1 leaf litter bags, piled on stand to dry

**Next Cut:** Return this season to remove fringe and pile on stand. Assess to see if there is time to go across the channel for first cut there.





#### **21. West End Stand – cut #4**

7:30 am – 12:00 noon

9 volunteers, 2 saw people, adjacent property owner used his saw and worked on his side, **39 volunteer hours, 9.0 saw people hours**

Removed fringe left on edge from previous cut. Pool noodle boom left in place two days. Worked from edge to pile on stand. Drowning more each time on edge.

**Equipment used:** 3 Saws, cane cutters, pool noodle boom, toboggans, leaf litter bags, tarps.

**Biomass removed:** 2 leaf litter bags, piled on stand to dry in dens

**Next Season:** Will need boats or barge to remove phragmites from section across the channel as the main stand continues to become wet and smaller /across channel portion may be getting wider..





Pictures: Top misty shot of fringe still up far side before boom in place. Hard worker in chest waders, Helpers far side with nets and boom look for floaters. Phrag Fighters finish up and Bottom – stand is flat.



## **22. 1319a High Rock Drive**

8:00 am – 12:00 noon

5 volunteers, **19.5 volunteer hours**

Cool weather 6 degrees Celsius to start, no waves, no wind. Stand in shallow water knee high or less around dock and extending back into shrubs, cattails alder – up to shore of pine trees. Owners will spread the word to others along bay- post cards left for sharing with neighbours. They have been removing flower heads on their stand to prevent spread.

**Equipment used:** cane cutters, pool noodle boom, toboggans, leaf litter bags, tarps, twine

**Biomass removed:** 3 leaf litter bags, 25+ bundles left on tarp /truck load

**Next Season:** Owners will reassess and let us know if assistance is wanted. Some phrag will drown but expect regrowth among sandy areas close to shore.



### **23. Turtle Lane – Garden Area /Tarping Pilot**

7:30 am – 11:30 am

4 volunteers, 2 saw people, **15 volunteer hours, 9 hours saw people**

*Garden area 100' x 100' above shore -near driveway in had become filled with phragmites, Saws used to clear as close to ground as possible, Cut phragmites raked /carried /removed to tarps tied/bagged and left covered on tarps for pick up. Cleared garden area covered with tarpaulins and weighed down with bricks. Will need a few more tarps and bricks. Owners son is aware. Will leave covered next season and reassess x 2 seasons for regrowth.*

**Equipment used:** 3 saws (brush cutters supplied by forestry service), twine, tarps, bricks, cane cutters, ATV to carry brick/tarps to site.

**Biomass removed:** 15 leaf litter bags, 15+ bundles tied on tarp and covered for pick up.

**Next Season:** Owner to reassess for regrowth around edges of tarps and need to reapply tarps that snorkels/new plants grow through. Will mow to edges for ease of management.





#### **24. West End Stand/ High Rock Drive – piling dry phrag**

8:00 am – 10:00 am

4 volunteers, **8 volunteer hours West End Stand,**

2 volunteers, **3 volunteer hours High Rock Drive, Drone shots of West End Stand taken**

2 sites required final assessment and clean up, Dried phragmites piles reassessed and some moved closer to middle of west end stand, Dried and piled phrag moved from tarps on shore up to driveway for pick up at High Rock Drive location.

– 11 hours total

**Equipment Used:** tarps/twine

**Biomass removed:** 1 truck load from High Rock Drive





**Three wetland cuts/not on lakeshore**

**1. Phragmites Cut Albert Street North, both sides of on-ramp**

2 Volunteers, 6 hours

Many long stolon's heading into the swamp area.

Biomass removed 6 large sheaves



**2. Pevensey Road stand**

2nd year cutting here

1 volunteer, 1.5 hours

Biomass removed 1 large sheaf – much less this year.

**3. Wetlands Joly Township**

1 Volunteer, 1 Leaf litter bag, 2 sheaves 1.5 hours volunteer time



### **Seasons Cutting Events Summary as of October 2020:**

**Number of cuts:** 23 plus two small stands in roadside wet land areas

**Volunteer hours:** 754 volunteer hours, plus 128.5 purchased saw services hours

**Number of Volunteers:** 87 individuals have participated in a cutting event this season (72 in 2019)

**Biomass transported:** 28 truck loads, 2 Dump Truck loads, 3 Tractor trailer loads, plus biomass on west end stand piled in muskrat like dens to dry

#### **Significant issues with these events:**

West End stand: Lakeside portion across channel has yet to receive a first cut

The Dam: Bernard Creek has uncut stands, the ditches were cut once /produced seeds in fall

High Rock Drive: Stands remain that have yet to receive a first cut

### **4) Provision of Education Materials and Sessions to the General Public:**

2 Education sessions using zoom were provided:

1. Lynn Short a Professor of Horticulture at Humber College presented on her non chemical research success with spading to remove phragmites on sandy shorelines: Her power point is found on the Tiny Township website here: <https://www.tiny.ca/Shared%20Documents/Environmental/Lynn%20Short%20re%20Phragmites.pdf>

(10 computers) and

2. Judith Jones Lead of the Manitoulin Phragmites group outlined her phragmites removal work in the Manitoulin area. (14 computers) Here is a different presentation accessible on youtube:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikK6IR8yUXo&ab\\_channel=FueltheFireTV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikK6IR8yUXo&ab_channel=FueltheFireTV)

**Handouts distributed:** The Ontario Phragmites Working Group (OPWG) “Cutting to Drown”

<https://www.opwg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/OPWG-Cut-to-Drown-Postcard.pdf> and “Spading”

<https://www.opwg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/OPWG-Spading-Postcard.pdf> postcards are posted on the NNEEC website: <https://www.nneec.ca/phragmites>.

**Names added to volunteer list:** 54 new volunteers participated this season, 33 volunteers from last season participated, 155 email addresses received emails from the initial ice off email out to assess beach fronts in May, and starting in late June weekly until mid September - calling volunteers to assist, providing information and thanking them for their efforts.

### **5) Hands on Demonstrations: at all of the 20 Cutting event locations June -October,**

Demonstrations were given at each site to the owners and neighbours who were present and to new volunteers at the cutting events. Post cards were distributed at each event. Cane cutters were available for a donation.

**6) Offering Homeowner Visits:** 10 homeowners received assistance with identification, education, removal strategies, and/or we obtained a signed Neighbour Information Permission form asking for volunteer removal assistance. 7 Homeowners were given assistance with removal with cutting events as we worked down the edge of the lakeshore heading away from the Village.

### **7) Engaged Community/Lakeshore Business Owners/ Construction Companies/ Real Estate Brokers**

13 Properties cleared of phragmites have been municipal, business, church, or charity

7 Local Businesses – not all on the lake - have provided business services (T-shirts, purchased services, signage etc.)

12 Businesses have provided donations, or assisted in some capacity

One member of the Phragmites executive is a linkage to local construction companies

Two members of local real estate companies have assisted with phragmites cutting events and receive emails.

### **8. Support from Municipal Workers:**

Students from the Village of Sundridge and Strong Township assisted with removal of the cut/ tied /bagged phragmites to the landfill. They returned the tarpaulins/bricks after each truck load to the landfill.

The landfill operator educated individuals on safe transportation of phragmites to the landfill (covered, bagged, or tied and covered) to prevent spread.

Students also assisted with phragmites removal on township property.

We had municipal support from the mayors, councils and works department/ visits to sites, emails of support and appreciation.

Donations were received to assist with the removal from the lake and shoreline. This is a community effort.

### **9) 2020 Enlisting Garden Centres:**

“Grow This Instead – northern version” <https://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/resources/grow-me-instead/> as part of the provincial initiative to educate and encourage growing native plants on the shoreline was sent by email to over 110 on the email out list in the spring, and paper copies were left at Kidd’s Hardware, Nicholson’s and Foodland garden centres once they opened in the spring.

### **10) Recruiting Youth:**

The schools were shut down due to the COVID 19 emergency measures, and we used emails, telephone and networking to find youth that could assist safely with our events.

26 youth assisted with cutting events

10 under 15 years of age assisted this season

3 students from high school requested signed volunteer sheets

### **11) Local business offering casual employment of Phrag Fighters:**

The local business that provided saw services employed four Individuals educated on techniques and with safe chainsaw practices to assist at cutting events to remove Phragmites. This was significant factor for removal this season as this saw team was needed on every Friday cutting event held.

### **12) Communicating Out:**

Three newspaper articles were written for outreach in the Almaguin News:

<https://www.northbaynipissing.com/news-story/9971392-almaguin-residents-encouraged-to-join-spring-hunt-for-phragmites/> and <https://www.northbaynipissing.com/news-story/10054913-volunteers-in-sundridge-work-to-stop-the-growth-of-invasive-phragmites/> and <https://www.northbaynipissing.com/news-story/10175796-almaguin-phragmites-group-celebrates-end-of-unusual-cutting-season/>

The Lake Bernard Property Owners Association provided support over the season with Facebook posts advertising the activities and events of the group. The lead agency the Near North Enviro-Education Centre provided an excellent link on their website to information on provincial sites, the plan from the Invasive Phragmites Control Centre for removal on Lake Bernard and education information.

Two members of the “Kearney Watershed Environmental Foundation” were invited to assist at a cutting event at the Dam and then returned to their group of 16 lake associations to send out a special edition newsletter on invasive phragmites. A professor from Canadore College connected to receive information on removal of invasive phragmites from a ditch area.

The email out list has 155 email addresses at this time and was used from May to October to recruit volunteers provide information on zoom education webinars, the NNEEC web site and information on research.

**13) Additional Resource Material:**

**Web site:** Strong Township has added information on their web site on Invasive Phragmites and how to reach the Phragmites Working Group Lake Bernard.

**Spading/Cutting to Drown post cards:** These resources have been provided to the Village office, the townships offices, and are posted on the NNEEC website. They were brought to cutting events and given out to individuals who requested information they could use to help with management.

**Neighbour helping Neighbour Information /Permission Forms** – three new permission forms received

**Shoreline Buffer Zone/Love your Lake Resources distributed:** Village by law on buffer zone information and love your lake resource sent out with minutes and email list,

**Signs at launch sites:** 6 boat launch signs were printed for use at launch sites.

**2021 Season Planning**

---

With COVID 19 measures still in play we will monitor and adapt/continue to consult with the experts and begin again next season where we left off. Hopefully, many of the smaller sites can continue to be combined as one cutting event and new sites that need a first cut added as we continue to assist with removal on High Rock Drive and around the lake.