



Friends of the Thurston Nature Center

When we see land as a community we may begin to use it with love - Leopold

September 18, 2013

Dear Neighbor and friend of Thurston Pond;

After many years of encroachment in our Thurston Pond, The Thurston Nature Center Committee is ready to move forward with controlling the very invasive and harmful Phragmites plant – **starting this coming Saturday, September 21st, 2013.**

Controlling the spread of Phragmites is crucial to the restoration of our pond, native wetland plant communities and the protection of our wildlife habitat. The Phragmites reed creates tall, dense stands which degrade ponds, wetlands, and coastal areas by crowding out native plants and animals, blocking shoreline views, reducing access for students who use the pond in their environmental education programs, and creating potential fire hazards from dry plant material.

The plants range from 6 to 15 feet in height, yet 80 percent of the plant is contained below ground in a dense mass of roots and rhizomes that can penetrate the soil to a depth greater than six feet. It spreads rapidly due to its vigorous rhizomes (horizontal roots that produce new shoots) which can exceed 60 feet in length, grow more than six feet per year, and readily grow into new plants when fragmented. More information can be located at (http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3313_8314-178183--,00.html)

After a thorough review of various safe treatments and management tools, the Thurston Nature Center Committee has decided to stop this threat to the ecological health of Thurston Pond by using current best scientific practices and the integrated pest management approach as recommended by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

We now have a MDEQ certified permit and approval from the Ann Arbor Public Schools to implement a priority based treatment plan which includes a herbicide treatment consisting of a special formulation of RoundUp called Aquaneat. This chemical is specifically designed and formulated for aquatic habitats such as wetland areas - more information can be located at (<http://www.nufarm.com/USTO/AquaNeatr>).



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We'll be working with a local firm dedicated to creating, restoring, and interpreting native ecosystems and plant communities throughout Michigan and Ohio - PlantWise Restoration (<http://www.plantwiserestoration.com/>) - headed by David Mindell.

Treatment will take place and will be completed this **Saturday, September 21st, 2013** through a combination of backpack spraying or hand-wicking, based on what will be the most appropriate for a given plant population and its location.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact current Thurston Nature Center chairperson Colin Brooks at cnbrooks@mtu.edu. We are hoping we can take of this invasive plant before it takes over even more of the Thurston Nature Center.

Sincerely
Colin Brooks
Thurston Nature Center Committee Chairperson

CC: Tim Gruszczynski
Interim Executive Director of Physical Properties
Ann Arbor Public Schools

Natasha York
Principal Thurston Elementary School

Tom Edsall
TNC-Water Steward

Mike Conboy
TNC-Land Steward