

# Cost-Benefits Analysis

## PHRAGMITES: AN EXPENSIVE INVASIVE SPECIES IN ONTARIO

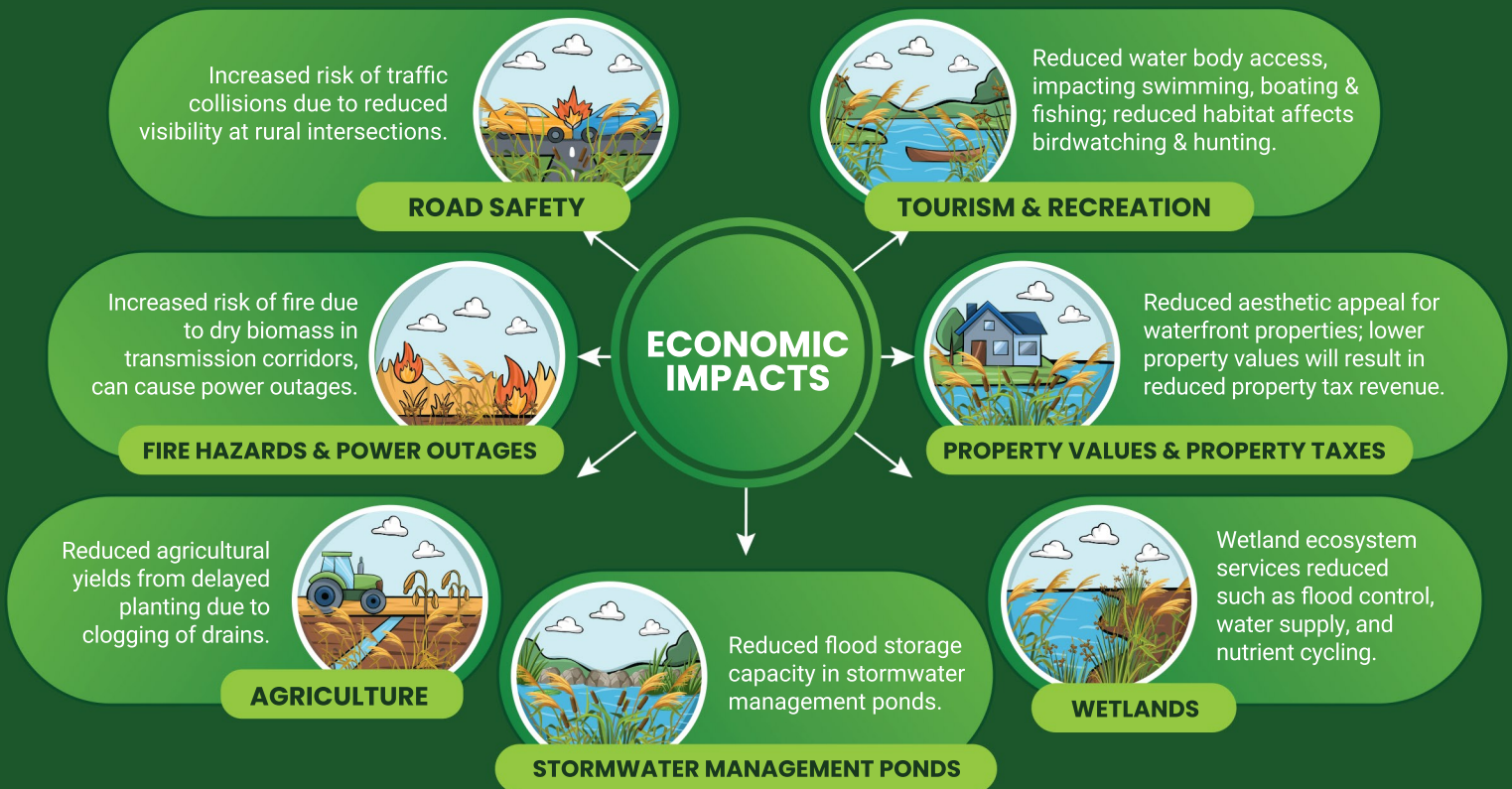
Phragmites, often considered Ontario's worst invasive plant, is reshaping wetlands and putting communities and nature at risk.

The total estimated benefits of Phragmites control is **\$113.4 million annually**



A **one-time benefit of \$357 million** due to a reduction in impacts on waterfront property values<sup>2</sup>.

Invasive Phragmites is an invasive perennial grass, commonly found along roadside ditches, that forms dense monocultures and can reach heights of up to 5 metres. Phragmites reduces biodiversity, threatens Critical Habitat & Species at Risk, and contributes to a variety of economic impacts. Phragmites is part of the larger invasive species issue that is responsible for an estimated 3.6 billion dollars of impact each year to forestry, fisheries, agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, and recreation in Ontario.



In 2019, an estimated expenditure survey completed by Ontario municipalities and conservation authorities determined Phragmites ranked fifth most costly among all invasive species<sup>2</sup>.

It's estimated that in 2019, 6.3% of funding for invasive species control and management in Ontario was directed to Phragmites<sup>1</sup>.

The most common pathway of spread for Phragmites is through heavy equipment.

Phragmites can grow tall, reducing visibility for birdwatchers and hikers.

Costs for roadside Phragmites control often exceeds \$1,100 per kilometre.

Phragmites forms dense stands, restricting access for swimming, boating, and angling.

Phragmites stems and seeds can be flattened, getting stuck in the tracks, and introduced to new areas.

<sup>1</sup>Vyn, R. (2019). Estimated expenditures on invasive species in Ontario: 2019 survey results. Report written for the Invasive Species Centre, July 2019.

<sup>2</sup>Vyn, R. (2021). Preliminary Cost-Benefit Analysis for Prevention, Treatment and Control of Phragmites in Ontario. Green Shovels Collaborative.



Ontario  
Phragmites  
Action

The Ontario Phragmites Action (OPA) program is a jointly delivered program by the Invasive Species Centre, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and numerous delivery partners working together to reduce the impact that invasive Phragmites has across the province. We bring partners, rights-holders, municipalities, conservation authorities, Indigenous communities, and other interested groups together to enable collaborative and coordinated action at a landscape scale. To learn more, visit [ontariophragmitesaction.ca](https://ontariophragmitesaction.ca).