



17 Admiral Road
Toronto, M5R 2L4
January 27, 2009

The Honourable John Gerretsen
Minister of the Environment for Ontario
12th Floor, 135 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario
M4V 1P5

The Honourable Donna Cansfield
Minister of Natural Resources
6630 – 99 Wellesley St W
6th Floor, Whitney Block
Toronto ON
M7A 1W3

Dear Ministers Gerretsen and Cansfield,

**Re: Noxious Weed Designation for Common Reed or
Phragmites australis**

I am writing to you at the direction of the board of directors of The Federation of Tiny Township Shoreline Associations (the “Federation”). The Federation is an umbrella organization representing 27 associations comprising some 1,800 households in Tiny Township in Simcoe County.

We have become increasingly concerned about the arrival and spread of the invasive form of Common Reed or *Phragmites australis* inland and along the 72 kilometres of the shore of Tiny Township. We ask for practical assistance in controlling this aggressive invasive plant, namely the designation of *Phragmites australis* as a noxious weed.

History:

Over the last eight to ten years, small patches of Phragmites appeared on beaches and in a few inland ditches in Tiny Township. These spread. As patches of the Reed expanded, property owners who attempted to root it out found themselves in a long, exhausting, and often hopeless battle. We set one such property owner to writing an article about this particular invasive species for the Spring 2008 edition of our newspaper, *The Tiny Cottager*. Part way through researching the article, she asked that we make a deputation to the Township's Council, urging that the Township assess the extent of the problem, and come up with a control program. Everything she had learned about the spread of this invasive plant along the shores of Lake Michigan and the north shore of Lake Erie suggested that prompt action was required if this invasive plant were not to take over.

The deputation was successful in moving Council to assess the extent of the problem. It hired the Severn Sound Environmental Association to report on the number and size of patches of Common Reed on Township owned shoreline property, and the Department of Public Works asked private property owners to report Common Reed on their properties. Late last fall, all this information was gathered into a report.

Meantime, the Federation invited Dr. Janice Gilbert, who is doing research on the control of Phragmites for the Ministry of Natural Resources in parks along the north shore of Lake Erie, to speak at our Annual General Meeting in June 2008. She spoke of an extremely aggressive plant, capable of taking over entire shorelines and replacing native vegetation.

Where we are now:

The Township is currently planning a control program for the patches of Common Reed on its property. However, it is clear to us that there is no hope of controlling Common Reed as long as it continues to grow and spread from privately-owned land.

We are aware that Wasaga Provincial Park, directly south of Tiny Township, is also undertaking a control program.

If the Township is to be successful, it needs to be able to insist that Common Reed be eradicated on private property as well as on municipally owned land.

The Federation has already begun to do its part. After running the front page informative article about Common Reed last spring in *The Tiny Cottager*, we urged our member Associations and their members to report all Common Reed in their areas to the Public Works Department. They did so. We have emphasized that an effective control program requires a professional sprayer. We will continue to be a source of information and encouragement about control methods.

What is needed:

We ask that the invasive form of Common Reed or Phragmites australis be placed on the **Noxious Weeds list**, as this will give the Township the tool it needs to insist that the aggressive, invasive form of Phragmites australis be eradicated everywhere in the Township.

We do not know as yet how much all of this will cost. If it is prohibitively expensive for the Township and for individual landowners, we ask that **funds be made available**, and quickly, so that action can be taken this summer season. We gather that some funds have been made available to Wasaga.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Judith Grant
President, Federation of Tiny
Township Shoreline Associations

Cc: The Council of the Township of Tiny
Mr. Doug Luker, CAO/Clerk, Township of Tiny