

Have you heard about invasive Phragmites in Algoma?

Books to look out for : Pat & Dan Kerr's Children's Book & Drawdown

Ontario's Environmental commissioner visits Ontario - We have the highlights

And more... Save the Date for 2019 Sustain Algoma & An invitation to join CAFC

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The Freshwater Connection

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO (ECO) VISITS NORTHERN ONTARIO

This past December, the government of Ontario passed a bill that eliminates the independent office of the Environmental Commissioner. This happened just days before the Environmental Commissioner released a report which criticised Ontario's lack of action in keeping our lakes and rivers clean.

The report call **Back to Basics** is on the ECO website. The report is divided into 4 chapters:

- 1. Respecting the Public's Voice on the Environment** - "gives the people of Ontario a voice in protecting the environment"
- 2. Clean Water** - "government has not taken effective steps to stop agricultural run off a major contributing cause of algae growth"; "poorly monitored programs with too little funding and insufficient regulations that have not worked"; and "government allows industries to dump 58 toxic wastes directly into lakes and rivers, up to limits set 25 years ago to suit the then available technology"
- 3. Wildlife and Wilderness** - "biodiversity is crucial to supporting 'ecosystem services' such as air purification, pollination and disease suppression, many of which offer direct benefits to human health"; and "To protect wildlife and wilderness, the first step is the right information. The Ontario government, in partnership with others, collects much information about nature. But raw data from uncoordinated programs can only get us so far."

- 4. Southern Ontario's Wetlands and Forests** - "Ontario's key failure is that wetlands generally receive no protection until the MNRF has got around to officially identifying each as "provincially significant"... the evaluation process has a 260-year backlog "; and "the province unwisely permits destruction of even "protected" wetlands for many agricultural infrastructure and resource extraction activities"

Below are the links to 3 short news articles on the Environmental Commissioners recent visits to



Manitoulin Island, Sudbury and North Bay.

<https://www.manitoulin.ca/ontario-environmental-commissioner-visits-islanders-at-mchigeeng-complex/>

<https://www.nugget.ca/news/local-news/north-bay-receives-climate-change-warnin>

<https://www.thesudburystar.com/opinion/columnists/gutting-of-enviro-laws-part-of-pro-biz-plan>

SAVE THE DATE for the CAFC Annual General Meeting - this meeting will take place in Bruce Mines @ 1pm on Tuesday, March 26th

INVASIVE PHRAGMITES IN CENTRAL ALGOMA: APPROACH WITH CAUTION

REMEMBER ALWAYS - "When leaving an area containing invasive Phragmites, inspect, clean and remove mud, seeds and plant parts from clothing, pets (and horses), vehicles (including bicycles and ATVs), and equipment such as mowers and tools."

What is it?

Invasive Phragmites - *Phragmites australis* subsp. *Australis* - appears as a dense clumps of tall reeds (up to 5 m tall) generally growing in moist areas. It is also called European Common Reed. It is very important to note that **there is a native variety** of Phragmites that is **not a concern** to the natural environment.

Why a concern in Algoma?

Invasive Phragmites (*Phragmites australis* subsp. *Australis*) is starting to establish in the Algoma area. In 2005 Agriculture and Agri-food Canada identified it as the nation's "worst" invasive plant species. It is a concern in Algoma because it crowds out and can be toxic to native vegetation; provides poor habitat and food for wildlife; and can impact recreational activities such as swimming, boating and angling.

Why Now?

According to Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, "Invasive Phragmites was first collected in Nova Scotia in 1910 and first collected in southwestern

Ontario in 1948. In the 1990s these invading plants had entered a phase of rapid local increase. By 2010, it had spread throughout much of southern Ontario, but the biggest change was its spread into the west including northern Ontario. The rate of spread is increasing and within a decade or two, based on the extent of appropriate plant hardiness zones currently occupied, it is expected to become abundant." <http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/abstract/?id=24348000000109>

Identifying Invasive Phragmites

If you have Phragmites (Common Reed) on your property and want to learn how to identify invasive Phragmites from native Phragmites there are many online resources. One resource is at the attached website with a short training video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mqk7MBwUVjQ>

REMEMBER – you don't want to spread seeds or plant material.

In the fall before the snow comes - here are some identifying features:

- Stems of native Phragmites can appear shiny and red near the base and Glumes (bracts at the base of spikelets measure 4-7 mm.
- Stems of invasive Phragmites can appear dull and tan / green near the base and Glumes (bracts at the base of spikelets measure 2.6 - 4.2 mm.

Get help if you find invasive Phragmites

If you find invasive Phragmites report it to the Invasive Species Centre. Invasive Phragmites is difficult to control as it spread by

seed, roots and stem fragments. You will need to get help to control invasive Phragmites and unplanned attempts to destroy it without a well prepared plan may actually cause it to spread.

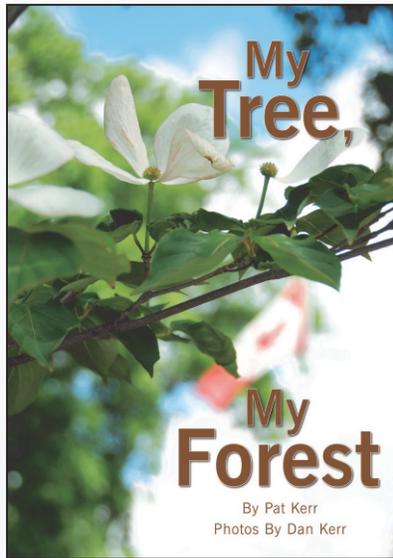
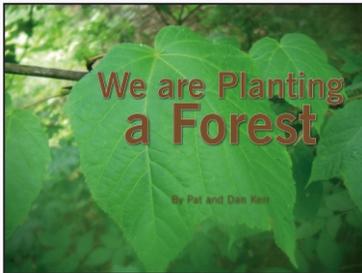


Native Phragmites stems



Native Phragmites spikelets

More information can be found at the Invasive Species Centre website <http://www.invasivespecies.com/invasive-phragmites/>



rural forestry was rarely accessible to urban tree owners, until now.”

"My Tree, My Forest and We are Planting a Forest" were published this winter supporting diverse, urban tree planting.

"We know our rural forests have great economic and environmental value to our nation. Our yard trees are also valuable. The health effects of the trees that grow in our yards were valued at \$227.2 million in 2017. This doesn't count the value to the watershed, and environment. I don't know any Canadian that can afford that level of tax increase. At the same time, we are losing 1% of our community trees every year. There is a slow, steady drain on this huge asset. "My Tree, My Forest" is about caring for and about, the trees that grow around our houses and identifying the trees that deserve a little more attention. "We are Planting a Forest," is a children's book on tree diversity.”

"My Tree, My Forest" and "We are Planting a Forest" can be ordered through Pat Kerr on facebook.com/pat.kerr.395 or at kerrpad@sympatico.ca

Local authors Pat and Dan Kerr have two books on trees - one for adults and one for youth. Pat Kerr is a local gardener and freelance writer, who specialises in urban tree care. She earned an honorary membership in the International Society of Arboriculture in 2011.

"Trees are habitat makers. When we care for one tree, we are protecting our environment, air quality, and tax dollars. The great wealth of information developed for

BOOK REVIEWS: A FEW BOOKS YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN

Drawdown - The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming
edited by **Paul Hawken**

Drawdown is a collection of 100 solutions that can roll back global greenhouse gas emissions within thirty years by taking action as individuals, neighbourhoods, companies and governments. Researchers from around the world identify, research, and model the 100 most substantive, existing solutions to address climate change. Here are some example from the book:

#15 LAND USE - AFFORESTATION

Creating new forests where there were none before is the aim of afforestation. Degraded pasture and agricultural lands, or other lands corrupted from uses such as mining, are ripe for strategic planting of trees and perennial biomass.

#26 TRANSPORT - ELECTRIC VEHICLES

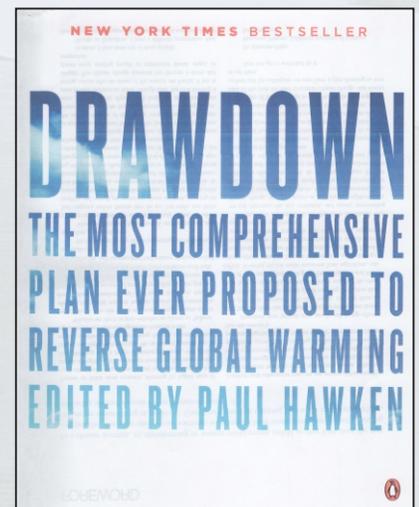
Luckily, there are now more than 1 million EVs on the road, and the difference in impact is remarkable. Compared to gasoline-powered vehicles, emissions

drop by 50 percent if an EV's power comes off the conventional grid. If powered by solar energy, carbon dioxide emissions fall by 95 percent. The "fuel" for electric cars is cheaper too.

#54 BUILDINGS AND CITIES - WALKABLE CITIES

Walkable cities prioritize two feet over four wheels through careful planning and design. They minimize the need to use a car and make the choice to forego driving appealing, which can reduce greenhouse gases emissions. According to the Urban Land Institute, in more compact developments ripe for walking, people drive 20 to 40 percent less.

Learn more at:
www.drawdown.org



**BE A PART OF THE
SOLUTION.
BECOME A
MEMBER OF OUR
COALITION TODAY!**

Your annual membership fee will provide a base budget for the work of CAFC and demonstrate the commitment of local partners working towards a common goal. A strong diverse group is an essential component in meeting the goals of the Central Algoma Region. [Click here](#) to become a member or to renew your membership.

The Sustain Algoma Expo is an annual event which aims to educate, inform and engage the community in sustainable living. This family friendly expo has included vendors such as, MNRF & Smokey the Bear, Clean North, CAFC, Entomica and more... Don't let it pass you by!



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